Gary Shank, the Duquesne education professor who was fired for using a racial epithet in a Sept. 9 lecture, may now be able to return to teach at Duquesne.

On Friday, Feb. 5, university President Ken Gormley issued a statement responding to Shank’s grievance that he filed against the university in November. On Jan. 14, the University Grievance Committee for Faculty (UGCF) found that while Shank’s use of the racial epithet was misguided, “it was not malicious,” and recommended that he be able to return to his job at Duquesne.

According to Gormley’s statement, Shank will undergo mandatory diversity training as determined by Dr. Tilley and complete additional independent training as determined by Dr. Tilley, according to the statement. Following the training, Shank will be required to write and submit a substantive reflection to Gormley, “according to the statement.

As the Duquesne community reacts to the news that education professor Gary Shank has the opportunity to be reinstated, alumnus George Yancy, a Ph.D. recipient from Duquesne, shares his thoughts on the matter. In an open letter to the Black students of Duquesne, Yancy speaks to the issue of race on campus.

Open Letter to Black Students at Duquesne University

Editor’s Note: Last semester The Duke committed to addressing the issue of race on campus as part of the Poynter College Media Project. We believe this column helps drive that dialogue.

I apologize for not writing when I initially heard the disturbing news that Dr. Gary Shank used the N-word in his Educational Psychology course, on September 9, 2020. That year, the killing of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd galvanized protests against the killing of unarmed and innocent Black bodies by white police officers. As it was for me, I’m sure their deaths impacted the core of your Black psyche, leading you to ask: will I be next? The question grows out of a collective understanding that Black lives do not matter in white America. What you felt in Shank’s course was a microcosm of a larger form of societal and historical anti-Blackness.

I say this, because as Black people, we have earned the right to articulate how we feel. We know what anti-Black racism feels like, what it looks like, and what it sounds like. It is not our fault that many white people do not understand the magnitude of our plight, that they do not know what it means to be Black in a country that has systemically failed to address, let alone fully acknowledge, our pain and our suffering under white supremacy. I want you to know that I see you, I hear you, I feel your pain. When it comes to anti-Black racism, let no one tell you that you are a prisoner of political correctness, or that you are part of a larger problem called “cancel culture.” Had Shank been better educated about his whiteness, and about how the structure of whiteness functions as a site of willful ignorance, he would have understood that using the N-word, as he did, was not just about poor judgment or misguided behavior, but was selfish, pedagogically incompetent, and violent.

Simultaneously, Shank’s whiteness endorsed and invalidated that permission. Imagine me giving “permission” to male students to use the B-word or the C-word without serious pedagogical work on the real violence and ugliness of sexism. Imagine me giving “permission” to heterosexual students to use the Fa-word. Imagine me giving “permission” to nondisabled students to use the R-word. The
Shank narrows down path to permanent reinstatement

from SHANK—page 1

Gormley of what he learned from the training, including how it impacted his view of his behavior on Sept. 9. "Dr. Tillery will be asked to certify to the president, based upon his extensive experience, that Dr. Shank understands the seriousness of the conduct he engaged in and its potential impact on his students and the campus community," the statement said.

Shank will also be placed on a "performance improvement plan with a specific emphasis on teaching methodology." And Shank will work with Duquesne’s Center for Teaching Excellence (CETR) to "restructure, rewrite and organize his lessons in all courses."

A formal reprimand will also be placed in Shank’s permanent file, which will make "clear that if Professor Shank does not engage fully with Duquesne’s Center for Teaching Excellence (CETR) to ‘restructure, rewrite and organize his lessons in all courses,’ he will be subject to immediate termination."

"If Professor Shank takes the above required steps, he will be permitted to return to the classroom in the fall semester of 2021," Duquesne spokesperson Gabe Welsch said. "However, if this does not occur, the decision makes clear that there will be no additional chances."

Shank’s conduct “deying clear sanctions”

The timing of Shank’s behavior, Gormley said in the statement, made it “especially disturbing and inappropriate in the fall of 2020.”

“Students and faculty alike had ‘just returned to on-campus activity after a difficult summer grappling with the COVID pandemic, and marked by racial unrest sparked by the murder of an unarmed Black man, George Floyd, by Minneapolis police,'” Gormley wrote. "One would have to be completely divorced from reality to be unaware of the fact that students of color and other members of the Duquesne community were already feeling up-set, vulnerable and concerned by recent events that highlighted existing racial injustices and inequities in our society."

Gormley, with interim school of education dean Gretchen Genereit, provost David Dausery and the UGCF, said that the sanction addresses the seriousness of misconduct Shank displayed.

"It is also designed to make clear that conduct of this sort is not acceptable by any faculty member and will make him subject to immediate termination," according to the statement.

The statement said that students in Shank’s class -- and Duquesne students, more broadly -- have suffered from his conduct, and his actions require "meaningful, genuine work to redress the harm caused."

While Professor Shank’s actions may have lacked intent to cause harm, they nonetheless were harmful to the students in the class and to the entire campus community and deserving of strong sanctions," the statement said.

Gormley is allocating an additional $50,000 of special funding to Duquesne’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion, "to create opportunities for students to engage positively on the issue of respectful language and behavior on the issue of race."

Argument of academic freedom rejected by the university

Gormley wrote Friday that “academic freedom and tenure do not provide a safe haven for faculty members to engage in conduct which is disrespectful or harmful to students. Nor is a faculty member immunized from responsibility by sitting in front of a Zoom screen and stating, ‘this is pedagogical,’ before launching into a series of offensive racial slurs to make an ill-advised comment about nature again, he will be subject to immediate termination."

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Educational Psychology student: “I don’t want future students to go through what we went through on that day”

Following Gormley’s announcement Friday evening, Duquesne sophomore Zeke Daure sent an email to students in Shank’s fall 2020 Educational Psychology class, and to a social justice class, regarding things Shank has said.

"I don’t want future students to go through what we went through on that day,” Daure said, “that was unaccept- ed; the way it occurred. He egged on students to say it.”

When Daure received the campus-wide statement, he said he was "pretty upset.”

“I don’t know if he deserves to be back in the classroom...even with all the training,” he said. “As someone who wants to be a teacher, I don’t see a place for him.”

As of Monday afternoon, Daure said that he heard from a couple students who had experiences with Shank.

“I knew other people spoke about other instances with Shank,” Daure said. “I’m just trying to see what else there is, and use the stu- dents' voice behind my own. One incident may be an accident, but two or three, it’s really not.”

The secondary English education major noted that Shank was “very comfortable” when he said the racial epithet, and was “conscious” of his actions.

"He even said, you know that’s not OK, after he said it,” Daure said. “I don’t want future students to go through what we went through on that day.”

Abby Zanelli — who had Shank’s Educational Psychology course in the fall of 2019 — said that Shank should not return to his job at Duquesne because "he is not a good representation of the school of education.”

"There’s no ‘pedagogical reason’ to say the word, especially if you’re an older white male,” she said.

Pattern here would reflect a sense of unquestioned authority, the power of normativity, and a failure to understand both the violence embedded within those slurs and the marginalized who are assault- ed by them. If you add to these examples the tenor of Shank’s peda- gogical disrespect, then you create an environment where Black stu- dents will not feel safe, will not feel respected, will not feel “at home.”

Add to this the predominantly white undergraduate student body at Duquesne University, and its predominantly white faculty, this only creates those private mo- ments when Black students ask themselves: Am I wanted here? Do I belong here? Why does this university not reflect more stu- dents and faculty who look like me? At predominantly white aca- demic institutions, white people do not pose those uncomfortable race questions. Why? It is white privilege. Shank not only failed you pedagogically by using the N-"word, he insulted you with white arrogance and took your Black critical pedagogical identity and humanity for granted. That is one thing that white privilege does. And even if it does this unconsciously, our col- lective hurt is no less painful. To add insult to injury, not only does white privilege go unchallenged by white students, it also creates a space that disproportionately white institutions, but our wounds are neither acknowl- edged nor attended to.

White anti-Black racism is not always spectacular. The storm- ing of the Capitol is one obvious example of spectacular white racism. However, for the most part, anti-Black racism thrives on banality. It does not an- nounce itself; it dwells within spaces that are considered “nor- mal.” In fact, it was right there in your classroom passing itself off as “free speech” and “pedagogi- cal permission.” We know that this is an excellent academic in- stitution, and one we greatly respect, but we must shout with a resounding voice that Duquesne University has a whiteness prob- lem! The proverbial ball is now in its court.

Dr. George Yancy
Samuel Candler Dobbs Profes- sor of Philosophy at Emory University
Ph.D., Duq, 2005
Memorial held for deceased Duq student, Lucas Traverse

Katia Faroun  
features editor

Hundreds of candles were carried on A-Walk by students, faculty, friends and family on Feb. 4 in memory of Lucas Traverse, a Duquesne student who died last week.

The vigil, which took place at 1 p.m. following a memorial mass, invited the Duquesne community to support Traverse’s family and friends. Attendees gathered outside of the Laval House on A-Walk to collect a candle and prayer card and listen to some of Traverse’s friends and family share memories of his life.

“Lucas Traverse really was the best of us, and it breaks my heart that I can’t spend another day with him,” said Michael Bunce, a sophomore and president of Sigma Tau Gamma (Sig Tau), Traverse’s fraternity.

A sophomore in the Palumbo-Donahue School of Business, Traverse died on Saturday, Jan. 30 after being struck by a train in the South Side near Fourth Street and Color Park. His death is still under investigation by Pittsburgh Police, and his manner of death is still pending, according to the Allegheny County Medical Examiner’s Office.

Before the vigil, a private memorial mass was held in the Duquesne Chapel in remembrance of Traverse. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, only members of Traverse’s family and fraternity were invited to attend the memorial in person, and masks were required in the chapel. Duquesne President Ken Gormley also attended the service.

Fr. Bill Christy — who is also the adviser for Sig Tau — led the service, sharing prayers, songs and passages of scripture that celebrated the gift of life. His message focused on the unique quality of human life, and how in the Christian faith, life is believed to be eternal, continuing beyond death.

“[Lucas] is still part of us: of family, of university, of fraternity. For that life, that spark, that breath — that is eternal,” Christy said.

Immediately following the memorial mass, Traverse’s vigil was held outside on A-Walk for safety reasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic. About 200 members of the Duquesne community attended.

Both the memorial mass and the candlelight vigil were live streamed for friends and members of the Duquesne community who wished to attend the memorial.

“Our hope is that in time, the pain of losing him gives way to the joy in remembering him,” Patricia Traverse said.

Volunteers stationed at tables handed out candles and prayer cards for those attending the vigil. Before gathering on A-Walk, Duquesne hosted a memorial mass in the chapel to celebrate Traverse. Due to COVID-19 precautions, the memorial mass was only open to Traverse’s family and members of his fraternity.

The event was live streamed for friends and members of the Duquesne community.

Traverse’s vigil was held outside on A-Walk for safety reasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic. About 200 members of the Duquesne community attended.

Students, faculty and staff joined Traverse’s family and fraternity brothers after the memorial. Fr. Bill Christy led the crowd in prayer to begin and end the event.

Preparing a prayer card

Members of Traverse’s fraternity, Sigma Tau Gamma, stand on A-Walk outside of the Laval House during Thursday’s vigil. A few of Traverse’s fraternity brothers gave remarks during the vigil, including chapter president Michael Bunce.

Anthony Anzevino, a senior at Duquesne that organized the vigil on behalf of Sig Tau, shared memories of meeting Traverse during recruitment, and how Traverse’s down-to-earth personality caught his attention.

“I remember saying, ‘This is a genuine and authentic guy. Someone who’s loyal and trustworthy. Someone you can count on.’ And that’s exactly who Lucas was to me and so many others,” Anzevino said. “What more could you ask for in a brother?”

Bunce echoed Anzevino’s statement, reflecting on his friendship with Traverse over the past two years.

“In my perspective, Lucas was just someone you wanted around you, someone you could trust, someone you could rely on when you needed it the most and someone who saw the bigger picture in life than being a 19-year-old college student,” Bunce said.

On behalf of herself and her husband, Robert, Patricia Traverse thanked the Duquesne community for its support of her son, and mentioned his excitement at returning to campus two weeks ago. Though the struggle of losing a loved one is shocking and painful, Patricia encouraged those close with Traverse to focus on his memory and the joy that comes along with it.

“Our hope is that in time, the pain of losing him gives way to the joy in remembering him,” Patricia Traverse said.

Before Christy ended the half hour-long vigil with a prayer, Patricia ended her remarks with a reminder for those who were close to Traverse.

“Lucas was loved by his family, his friends, his brothers, and please know that he loved you too,” she said.

Recordings of the memorial mass and the vigil can be found on the Spiritan Campus Ministry’s Facebook page and the Duquesne University Conference and Event Services YouTube page, respectively.

“Lucas was loved by his family, his friends, his brothers, and please know that he loved you too,” she said.

More on the death of Lucas Traverse

Photos By:
Katia Faroun  
features editor

Students, faculty and staff joined Traverse’s family and fraternity brothers after the memorial. Fr. Bill Christy led the crowd in prayer to begin and end the event.
Vinyl record sales have surged in recent years stemming from a renewed interest by both young and old consumers.

The long-awaited return of vinyl

Imagine this scenario. You are taking an afternoon walk and stumble upon a record store on the corner of the street. In slight disbelief and genuine curiosity, you walk in the front door and observe as an employee carefully places the stylus of a turntable on a polyvinyl chloride disc. After a few moments of warm crackle, “Stairway to Heaven” by Led Zeppelin begins blaring across the store as a small crowd of eager shoppers peruse through hundreds of records on display. I know what you’re thinking. An actual record store in my hometown? Ten years ago, this scenario would’ve been inconceivable as vinyl had taken a back seat to CDs and online streaming amongst the digitalization of the music industry. That being said, with a nearly 450% increase in per unit vinyl sales in the U.S. since 2012, I am here to inform you that the record player has indeed made its grand return to center stage.

Not only did vinyl sales surpass CD sales in 2020 for the first time in 34 years, but the vinyl market also grew for its 13th consecutive year. Not to mention, as surprising as it may be, young adults under the age of 25 currently account for half of the buyers driving the resurgence of the record player.

Although it is unlikely that vinyl will ever eclipse streaming as the most popular format for listening to music, industry experts still project vinyl sales to maintain steady growth for years to come. In other words, the record player is here to stay and prepared to contend with the most formidable of competition — Tidal, Spotify and Apple Music. The Vinyl Renaissance is of particular interest to me as I believe it is an excellent example of the retrospective trends that continue to grow in popularity amongst the consumer markets, and in all honesty, it sparks my curiosity as to why retro products are rearing back into style.

The reasoning behind vinyl’s unexpected rise in the past decade requires a two-fold explanation. On one end of the spectrum, nostalgia is undoubtedly a determining factor as older generations — those who grew up around turntables — are increasingly interested in experiencing the original analog sound and reliving their adolescence.

However, nostalgia alone fails to entirely explain the surge in demand of vinyl since sales hit a low in 2006, especially considering that one-half of this growth is attributable to millennials. If someone didn’t own a record player during youth, how can he or she be nostalgic about it?

This brings me to my second point. The most significant factor leading to this revival is the unprecedented enthusiasm by younger generations to experience the full effect of listening to a vinyl record on a turntable — the crispy sound, relaxed vibe, and romanticized aesthetic. From visiting the local record store and studying the one-of-a-kind artwork, to opening album jackets and listening to the crackly but inherently smooth analog sound, a growing number of youngsters view the record player as an exciting alternative to streaming music.

For these reasons, coupled with the wide availability of turntables at fair prices and the emergence of record stores across America, consumers both young and old are rushing to get their hands on a record player to either reminisce on old times, or to experience music in a new way.

Although the heyday of vinyl nominally lasted long behind us, I still find this renaissance as favorable and valuable to our society as it encourages younger generations to slow down, put their phones away, live in the moment, and listen to music as an activity rather than as a backdrop.

Since receiving my turntable as a gift this past Christmas, I have spent many hours listening to my collection of records with friends and family, and in many cases, even by myself. The truly immersive musical experience that accompanies a record player is truly unparalleled. It is my sincere hope that more young people continue to experiment with vinyl as in all honesty, they’ll never know what they’re missing until they try it.

Noah Wilbur
opinions editor

The Vinyl Renaissance is of particular interest to me as I believe it is an excellent example of the retrospective trends that continue to grow in popularity amongst the consumer markets, and in all honesty, it sparks my curiosity as to why retro products are rearing back into style.
The key to faster vaccine distribution may lie at independent pharmacies

Mohammad Sajjad  
staff columnist

My mother recently asked me to help her find a location where she could receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Not being tech savvy, she sent me a link a friend had forwarded to her and asked me to investigate.

After about half an hour of researching, I found out that despite being eligible to receive the vaccine, there were no locations within a reasonable distance where she could even get on a waitlist, let alone schedule an appointment.

Vaccine rollout over the past couple of months has gone slower than we hoped. While many of us are frustrated, what else did we expect? Vaccinating an entire country is not easy, given that there was no plan for distribution by the previous administration, according to a Biden official.

Demand for the vaccine was at an unprecedented high after a year of our lives was turned upside down. Getting the American people vaccinated was not made any easier, given that there was no plan for distribution by the previous administration, according to a Biden official.

Despite the current administration’s initiative in distributing the vaccine, how can we further improve vaccination rates among Americans? The answer may lie at your local, independent pharmacy. While the Biden administration has pledged to make more shots available at chain and independent pharmacies, there needs to be more emphasis on getting the vaccine to the latter.

Regardless of the time of year, chain pharmacies are constantly busy with the number of prescriptions they fill and shots they administer. When the vaccine becomes widely available, their workload will only intensify.

Independent pharmacies can work to offset any potential back-up, and many are locally-owned pharmacies that have been able to administer vaccines to independent pharmacies, which will only ease the burden of vaccine distribution.

Independent pharmacies are in a position to considerably improve vaccination rates. As Christina Barrille, Executive Director of the Virginia Pharmacists Association, puts it, “[Independent pharmacies] have the ability to encourage community members to get vaccinated. If we do not prioritize getting the vaccine to independent pharmacies, many areas across the U.S. won’t be served, and many individuals will be left wondering when they will get the vaccine. Another reason vaccine rollout has been slower than anticipated is people’s hesitation in receiving the vaccine. Long before COVID-19, people have been skeptical of vaccines and mistrust their use.

If anyone were to convince people otherwise, however, it would be independent pharmacies. Since their relationship with the community is strong and they are a trusted entity, they have the ability to encourage community members to get vaccinated. In addition, there are more opportunities for patients to have one-on-one consultations with their pharmacist at independent pharmacies, which will only ease concerns patients may have.

Although vaccine rollout has been slow in many parts of the country, there are states that are ahead of the curve. West Virginia, for example, has administered 85% of its delivered doses, which is second in the country behind North Dakota. Because West Virginia has relied on independent drug stores, instead of activating a federal partnership with CVS and Walgreens, they have been able to administer vaccines more effectively. States that have prioritized this strategy have been successful in getting people vaccinated.

NFL continues to tackle diversity with 2021 Super Bowl performances

Sarah DuJordain  
staff columnist

Arguably, 2020 was a time like no other. We felt on the verge of a nascent, yet still tentative, and at times hopeful future. This was also true for the NFL, the pinnacle of the American sporting landscape. The腊月 2021 reflected the NFL’s commitment to enhance league-wide diversity.

Representation like this is astronomical. Many people fail to realize there even is a “Black National Anthem.” Unless you watched Beyoncé’s “Homecoming” on Netflix, you wouldn’t even know she incorporated it into her 2018 Coachella set.

My parents sat there, confused as to what this performance truly meant. So, here is some background. ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing’ was originally written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson. His brother, John Rosamond Johnson, then set it to music in 1899. Of course, this performance was met with conflicting opinions and controversy, but tying this song full of rich history and culture into something as big as the super bowl was monumental.

Black female artists continued to dominate the stage during the remaining performances. Singer H.E.R. gave a goosebump-raising twist on the classic ‘America the Beautiful’ by singing her own song by providing a powerhouse voice and an epic guitar solo.

She did not miss a beat with this rendition. Many deemed this as the best performance of the night, to which I would agree. Preceding her appearance, we had an unlikely duo join together in the singing of The National Anthem. Jazmine Sullivan and Eric Church, who both come from very different musical backgrounds put their own spin on this duet.

Sullivan is an R&B singer, while Church is a country singer. Many mixed reviews came from this pairing, as it started off promising and then their different styles started to compete, not completely meshing together.

Before the highly anticipated halftime show, Amanda Gorman delivered an original poem titled, ‘Chorus of the Captains.’ She recited this poem prior to the coin toss by the three people chosen as honorary captains in the toss. Tramaine Davis, a Los Angeles teacher; Suzie Dorner, a nurse, and James Martin, a veteran representing Pittsburgh.

The final performance of the night wrapped with The Weeknd’s Super Bowl halftime show. A performance completely live and not pre-recorded compared to years prior finished the story he established for months.

People were always very harsh and critical of any halftime show, but I thought The Weeknd gave us quite the show despite COVID-19 safety guidelines. My only complaint about his performance would be technical issues.

Since this was completely live, his mic had some quirks almost making it hard to completely hear him. Regardless, he poured $7 million of his own money into one of the better halftime shows, in my opinion.

The Super Bowl saw a lot of progression in its representation of Black artists and anti-racism efforts. Despite these acts, the NFL has a long way to go with its anti-racism efforts.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell released a video statement committing to donating $250 million over a 10-year period to combat systemic racism. While acknowledging that this is a positive contribution, we must not forget this is also the same organization that nearly four years ago punished NFL player Colin Kaepernick for his acts of peaceful protest.
Mother-daughter duo inspires art with pottery studio

Gillian Fitzgerald
staff writer

Pottery, canvas, glass, oh my! At Kolor-N-Kiln, located in the Robinson Mall, there’s not much you can’t paint or create.

The mother-daughter duo, Jeaniane and Alyson Blackburn, opened up their pottery studio in 2012 as a way to spend more time together through something they love doing. The Pittsburgh natives used to paint pottery as a hobby when Alyson was younger, and as soon as she was out of college it became a business opportunity for the two of them.

“I had just retired from my corporate job and really didn’t know what I was going to do, and it just came up in casual conversation about opening a business together. She kept going, ‘Mom, I thought we were going to do this,’” Jeaniane said. “I retired in February, April we had a conversation and in June, voila, we opened our business.”

The fast track to their studio was the perfect way to make it happen. And now, the familial experiences at the store are a reflection of their desire for customers to feel at home during their time at Kolor-N-Kiln.

Not only has the pottery studio brought Jeaniane and Alyson closer, it also brings others together.

“There are other pottery painting places around, but the thing we know that we’re known for is our friendly, family-like environment. People come into our store, and they come back over and over again—we have made so many friends,” Jeaniane said. Jeaniane is proud to be known for their welcoming atmosphere, especially considering how crucial yet challenging it can be for small businesses to create a customer base when first starting out.

Kolor-N-Kiln has moved studios four times over the years, so they had to learn who their audience is and depend on their growing customer base as they settled into their current studio at Robinson. No matter the space they’ve been in, the staff has been able to connect with their customers while remaining one of only two minority-owned pottery studios in the area.

As a small-Black owned business, they are always excited to see different artists coming into the store and the amazing things they create—whether it be mosaics, wood paintings, or their new clay-building creations coming in the summer.

“We don’t shy away from the fact that we are a minority-owned business. We celebrate that, because we know that we are one of the only two minority-owned paint-your-own pottery studios around doing everything that we do,” Jeaniane said.

The two women constantly celebrate the diverse backgrounds of their customers and staff. And during Black History Month, Kolor-N-Kiln is using its Instagram and Facebook to highlight Black artists by sharing facts and profiles throughout history.

Different types of techniques or styles can easily get passed around or claimed by people as their own. By showcasing the achievements and methods of Black artists, followers on social media are able to learn more about historically excluded sculptors and painters that they may not know about.

“We always want to make sure that when people come in, they have some type of inspiration by letting them know about different artists and different techniques,” Jeaniane said. “That inspiration in art is important for Jeaniane personally, but it’s also important for her as a business owner. Just as Jeaniane was inspired by her daughter Alyson to start Kolor-N-Kiln, her inspiration and passion to succeed also comes from a simple piece of advice: Dream big.

“As a minority business owner, you have to dream big and think out of the box. Dream as big as you can, and look for opportunities or niches where no one else is really traveling that way and put your own spin on it,” Jeaniane said.

She encourages others to follow their dreams and make them a reality, while creating a space for people to express themselves at Kolor-N-Kiln. She hopes the creation of their pottery studio will leave a legacy for Alyson’s future family.

“My favorite thing about being one of the owners is that I am leaving a legacy for my daughter,” Jeaniane said. “For her and I to do this together … and one day, when I’m gone, she’ll be able to tell her children about this.”

Human Rights Film Series focuses on race, violence, technology

Emily Amberry
staff writer

This year marks the 14th Annual Human Rights Film Series (HRFS) at Duquesne. Throughout February, the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures is presenting the series entirely virtually.

Its theme, “Race, Rights, and Responsibility,” was selected by the HRFS Committee consisting of German professor Edith Krause and Spanish professors Mark Frisch and Leonardo Bacarreza. The films focus on issues of race, gun violence, the consequences of technology and the use and misuse of gene science.

“All these are compelling issues that have been at the forefront of our national discussion and our self-understanding as a nation,” Krause said. “They address both our rights and our responsibilities as individuals and citizens.”

John Lewis: Get in the Way (2017) was streamed virtually on Feb. 1, and was followed by speaker George Yancy, a professor of philosophy at Emory University. Gil and Gun (2018) was streamed on Feb. 9, followed by speaker Detective Joseph Bielevecz of the Pittsburgh Police department.

“During the summer and fall semester, we all watch a number of different films; there are some issues that are particularly relevant in Pittsburgh, in the country or in the world, and we look for films relating to them,” Frisch said. “The human rights films series seeks to highlight problems we all face or others face and ask people to recognize the humanity of others and try to work together to solve the issues.”

Death by Design (2018) will be streamed on Feb. 17 at 7 p.m. and will host speaker Jim Weber, who is a professor of Business Ethics & Management at Duquesne. A Dangerous Idea: Eugenics, Genetics, and the American Dream (2017) will be streamed on Feb. 25 at 7 p.m., and will be followed by speaker Michael Seaman, an associate professor at Duquesne’s Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences.

The HRFS has always been free and open to the public, but with this year’s completely virtual format, the series has been able to reach farther than the Duquesne and Pittsburgh communities.

“It’s the first time we’re experimenting with a completely virtual event, and the results have been quite favorable,” Bacarreza said. “The virtual environment has allowed us, for example, to invite Professor George Yancy from Emory, and we have also expanded our audience to online viewers in other universities and in the Pittsburgh community.”

The film series promotes diversity of thought and experience. It aims to reach beyond the modern languages department to the larger campus community by engaging students in the conversation through the promotion of human rights films followed by an interactive debate with an expert on the topic.

“It was very informational and emotionally engaging that when the hour passed, I was surprised it had already been an hour,” said Amber Delprince, a third-year Spanish major who attended the first film.

Delprince attended the viewing for John Lewis: Get in the Way and felt that the film’s purpose was clear. “I thought the message was also really important because even though we’re taught about some of the big names that contribute to a movement, there’s a lot of other people involved who usually get little-to-no credit even though the movement wouldn’t have been possible without them,” Delprince said.

The focus on human rights in the Duquesne community continues with the tradition of the HRFS, and inspires dialogue about the most critical issues facing today’s world.

“Human rights are conceivable because there is a foundational dignity, shared by all human beings, in which we need to believe,” Bacarreza said. “As language educators, we understand that words can and need to be used to denounce abuse, and that they can also be used to build community, to bring people together, to have intelligent discussions that ultimately solidify the foundations of society.”

All livestream and discussion recordings are available for viewers to watch if they missed the live event.
Women's hoops HC Dan Burt: “This is our second season”

Adam Lindner
sports editor

Today marks the 25th day in a row since the Duquesne women’s basketball team last saw the court. No matter which way you slice it — 600 hours, 36,000 minutes, or four weeks — a 25-day mid-season pause is a long time away from action for any team.

Heck, the last time the Dukes played, classes hadn’t even resumed yet. Duquesnian students now find themselves wrapping up their third full week of coursework.

Feb. 12’s matchup at George Washington, set for 5 p.m., will be the Dukes’ first contest since their Jan. 17 loss at La Salle. It will also serve as an opportunity for the team to secure its first victory since Dec. 11, when it toppled St. Bonaventure for its only conference victory to date.

That was a whopping 62 days — or, within the context of a college basketball season, approximately two moons — ago.

Currently sitting at 2-7 overall with a 1-4 mark in the Atlantic 10, Duquesne is mired in one of its worst seasons in recent memory, albeit a decidedly challenging and unusual one. Aside from COVID-19-related pauses, postponements and cancellations, the Dukes have also dealt with a rash of injuries to key players, including all-league guard Libby Bazelak (played 11 minutes in her first game of the season Jan. 17 after missing the first eight with an injury) and guard Amanda Kalin, who was suffered a season-ending injury at Dayton Jan. 3.

Sitting near the bottom of the A-10’s standings with roughly one month remaining in the regular season, it would be fair to posit that the Dukes have their work cut out for them if they’re to salvage their campaign.

Never mind that.

In Head Coach Dan Burt’s mind, its first season is done. Season No. 2, Burt says, begins Friday in the nation’s capital.

Approximately three weeks from now, Burt hopes the team’s third season will be beginning — at the A-10 tournament in Richmond, Va., that is.

Following the team’s (nearly) full practice in weeks on Wednesday, Burt took the time to speak with The Duke over the phone. Burt spoke about the team’s elongated pause, its day-to-day goals and Bazelak’s return to full health in the conversation transcribed below. Burt noted that portions of The Duke’s conversation with Burt have been edited for brevity.

The Duke: Personally speaking, how have you been dealing with the pandemic?

Burt: You know, it’s exhausting. I’m blessed — my family and I have not had any COVID going on. Whether it’s my wife’s family or my family, my children, my wife or I. We’ve all been very blessed to be healthy. … I think we’ll be wearing masks this time next year, but hopefully we’ll have most of America vaccinated by the end of summer and we’ll be able to get on with our lives a little bit more normally. … I know I just want to travel. I want to go on vacation (laughs). I know that I miss live music and going to see bands. Heck, I miss going to practice. I can’t go watch our men’s team practice. But I understand why.

The Duke: You guys are set for the GW game on Friday, correct?

Burt: We are going to play against George Washington. Today is the first day that we’ve practiced with most of our team — we’re missing two starters today, but otherwise we had most of our team at practice today for the first time in about a month.

The Duke: What can you say about your team’s conditioning level after such a lengthy pause?

Burt: Well, in isolation or quarantine longer than others. There’s so many different protocols that we have to go through for all the different characteristics that COVID presents itself with. … It’s very — I don’t want to say unvaried — but it’s very different to huddle up in mid-January, or even in February, and you have three players. It’s very different to practice two days before you play a game and see that you have 11 players today that will be having their first practice together as a team in weeks. It’s going to be very challenging, but it’s good to be doing something. George Washington is coming off of a pause tomorrow, so I have no idea how they’ve been practicing. Who knows who’s available to them from a player standpoint? You almost can’t do much from a scouting perspective — you look at George Washington and you don’t know who’s available. They haven’t played since Feb. 1. You have to go with what they’ve done in the past, but your greater focus has to be on yourself and your players. How can we run and execute what we do at the highest level that we can in the condition that we’re in? … We are 0-0. This is our second season, and that’s how we are approaching it. It will be anywhere between five and seven games, and then we hope that we are playing on March 7 in the conference championship [game]. That is our goal. We have 28 days from today until March 7, and our focus is on Friday. It is understanding that we’ve got probably about six games between now and the end of the regular season, and then after that, it’s a third season with the conference tournament.

Editor’s Note: There are 25 days between Feb. 10 and March 7.

The Duke: I would imagine that playing a simpler style of game will be imperative given your team’s current situation.

Burt: Very good observation. A simpler style [for us] will be playing a little bit more in transition, playing with very few set rules [in the open court] and allowing the kids to have a great amount of freedom. That’s what our goal is. … There’s about six sets that [our players] know and can do them in their sleep. We want to make sure we’ve got those six or seven sets — really, there are probably three or four [sets] that we know can get us a good shot anytime we want. We want to know that we can run those and rehearse those as we prepare for Friday. … The simpler that you can make things, the better it is for the kids. We’re dealing with very high-achieving individuals that have had, I believe, 10 games canceled — some not because of their own COVID positives, but because of others’. It’s just been unfortunate that others have had to cancel games with us. That’s a very tough thing from a mental health standpoint, when you’ve been jerked around and you have games canceled three hours before you’re supposed to play. You fly to St. Louis and, for example, you have a game on Feb. 12, but you have 11 players today that will be having their first practice together as a team in weeks. It’s going to be very challenging, but we’re just trying to be as prepared as we can be for our first practice tomorrow. George Washington is coming off of a pause tomorrow, so I have no idea how they’ve been practicing. Who knows who’s available to them from a player standpoint? You almost can’t do much from a scouting perspective — you look at George Washington and you don’t know who’s available. They haven’t played since Feb. 1. You have to go with what they’ve done in the past, but your greater focus has to be on yourself and your players. How can we run and execute what we do at the highest level that we can in the condition that we’re in? … We are 0-0. This is our second season, and that’s how we are approaching it. It will be anywhere between five and seven games, and then we hope that we are playing on March 7 in the conference championship [game]. That is our goal. We have 28 days from today until March 7, and our focus is on Friday. It is understanding that we’ve got probably about six games between now and the end of the regular season, and then after that, it’s a third season with the conference tournament.

To read The Duke’s conversation with Burt in its entirety, please visit our website at www.duqsm.com.
Penguins task Hextall, Burke with leading team

Montour O-lineman McLaurin set to bolster Dukes in trenches

February 11, 2021
I t doesn’t matter who performs, what they sing, what they wear or how they dance — there is always going to be extensive criticism when it comes to the Super Bowl halftime show. Taking the field in “blinding lights,” The Weeknd performed a soloist repertoire that progressed in a narrative he has been brewing for months since the release of his 2020 album, {quote}After Hours{quote}. Each dancer wore a bandaged mask that covered the whole face except for the eyes, setting an ominous tone. Now that the choreography appear ritualistic and borderline satanic, it is hard to tell what was being conveyed.

The Weeknd’s chilling lower range fully transitioned to his older hit, “Blinding Lights,” which confused audience members, leaving them in wonder. The Weeknd performed his old hits and newer works alike, with a sense of normalcy with performers were much like on-stage, the sit-down choir/instrumentalists were cool in theory, but more complicated work in my days in the music industry and how he worked his way from the bottom to the top, but it flew over the audience’s heads. How can we be distracted by such simplicity? Was that done on purpose for the message he was trying to convey? Before we could even question it, the Weeknd then got swarmed by the bandaged dancers, dizzying audiences as they ran circles around him like wasps on the prowl. I certainly laughed a lot at this part, but I think it fit the buzzing energy of the song.

Returning to the stage, The Weeknd kept the middle of the setlist simple and traditional in style, treating the show like a regular performance rather than garnishing it with elaborate props, costume changes or daring choreography, hence the transition to “I Feel It Coming.” I think he did this to allude to a sense of normalcy with performing outside of the pandemic again, which many artists have been longing for.

The cityscape background with the glittering lights, paired with his sparkly red suit made for a great pair in both “Save Your Tears” and “Earned It.” These two songs were more for himself than for the audience except for the eyes, setting an ominous tone. Now that the choreography appear ritualistic and borderline satanic, it is hard to tell what was being conveyed.

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THE DUQUESNE DUKE

'RIO SCARCELLI

staff writer

Many children and young adults growing up in the 2010s could have also associated that time with the now Nickelodeon classic television series iCarly. With the show’s five-year run coming to an end in 2012, Netflix has recently aired the first two seasons of the show in preparations for a spinoff series to be released on the new streaming service Paramount+.

iCarly follows teenager Carly Shay (Miranda Cosgrove) as she navigates high school while simultaneously running a hit web show called “iCarly” that updates people on her life. With the help of her best friend Sam Puckett (Jennette McCurdy), her cameraman Freddy Benson (Nathan Kress) and her older brother Spencer Shay (Jerry Trainor), the four were able to create countless stories all filled with their characteristically random humor throughout.

Starring as Megan in Drake & Josh, iCarly was Cosgrove’s breakthrough as a main role.

While the show received mixed reviews from critics, the sitcom resonated with fans which can be shown within their ratings. The most viewed iCarly episode, “I Slaved Your Life,” garnered 11.2 million views: making it the second most-viewed telecast in Nickelodeon history.

For nostalgic teens, it may have been no surprise to see the show air again on Netflix. The first two seasons debuted on Feb. 8 with Netflix waiting to comment outside of the series. They will be releasing seasons three through six to complete the rest of the series. Until then, fans can enjoy seasons one and two alongside spinoff show Sam and Cat seasons one through three.

Because iCarly was a show heavily anticipated by its viewers to be put on Netflix, many fans are wondering why now is the time they chose to do it. On Jan. 27, Cosgrove took to Instagram to post a picture amongst her former co-stars to announce the fact that a reboot of the series would officially be releasing in 2021. In conjunction with the new platform Paramount+, a bulk of episodes are scheduled to be released on the streaming service’s premiere as an added selling-point.

While not much is known about how the show’s plot line will span out, it is said to be following Carly through her 20s, taking a lot more risks than they could have on Nickelodeon’s TV-Y7 rating.

The cast has been posting updates on the progression of the show as script-writing, filming and producing ensues.

Excitement for the revival has rippled amongst the show’s fans, but many are asking the same question of who is actually involved. Cosgrove, Kress and Trainor or have all openly advertised about the fact that a reboot of the show is in the works.

Although she has provided no explicit reasoning as to why she would not be on the show, there’s speculation about prior statements that the star has made on her website jennettemccurdy.com in regards to her experiences with childhood acting.

I started out as a child actor... that certainly lent some psychological trauma (sound guys can be especially creepy!) McCurdy said.

Despite her outside success, McCurdy said she felt ashamed of “90% of her resume” and ultimately unfilled, so she turned to alcohol; but since that didn’t work, she quit acting and began pursing writing/directing in 2017.

“There was something about the shallowness of my success that made me resent it. That resentment festered, providing even more fuel for my disordered eating. I actively began to engage in anorexic behavior again,” McCurdy said.

Her exposure of how she viewed her experiences during the times of iCarly and Sam and Cat have also gotten her to add to the fact that she would prefer to step out of the spotlight as the show comes to an ending.

While it is unknown whether she is involved in this new installment, her role in the show by fans; the writers, I’m sure, are actively working around this to fill in the gaps the show will be missed by fans; the writers, I’m sure, are actively working around this to fill in the gaps.

As of now the show’s specific air-date is unknown; until then, people can choose to occupy their nostalgia with the first two seasons of iCarly in preparation for future works.

WandaVision episodes 4 and 5 transform the show from an entertaining yet perplexing ride with a hint of intrigue to some of the best content in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

This episode bundle begins and ends on extremely high notes. Episode 4’s cold open is one of the best of the MCU, and episode 5’s ending reveal is not only a paradigm shift for the series — but it changes the franchise forever.

WandaVision Episode 4 “We Interrupt This Program” kicks off with the moment from Avengers: Endgame: Endgame that everyone is brought (or ‘blipped’ as the show calls it) back. This time, it’s from the perspective of Monica Rambeau (Teyonah Parris), rematerializing in a hospital that in the moment of return is thrown into complete chaos. This opening is a glimpse into what kind of traumatic impact everyone returning from the blip might have had on the world — it’s a look into the average human perspective which is so often overlooked and overshadowed in the larger-than-life superhero storylines.

“We Interrupt This Program” breaks the formula of previous chapters, taking place almost entirely outside of the sitcom world. If the previous three installments left you frustrated with its dearth of meaningful answers and lost as to where the show was possibly headed — episode 4, thankfully, buck’s this trend.

Episode 4 puts context to the seemingly confusing choice to focus so entirely on the sitcom elements from the previous episodes. Darcy (Kat Dennings) discovers that the barrier around Westview is emitting a broadcast frequency, when she tunes in with a vintage television the sitcom begins to play. This places the characters in the same shoes that we were as viewers, watching the show Wanda is putting on and asking many of the same questions.

This episode ushers in the return of Darcy from the first two Thor films, as well as Agent Jimmy Woo (Randall Park), the endearing FBI agent from Ant Man and The Wasp.

These Marvel television shows are a perfect opportunity to explore the flesh andoutside characters that only have a limited screen time in the films. WandaVision uses Darcy and Agent Woo elegantly — it’s lovely that these characters have not been tossed to the wayside.

“On a Very Special Episode” begins in somewhat of a return to normalcy for WandaVision, opening in the sitcom world, this time set in the ’80s with beautiful as-always production design and costing, capturing the look and feel of shows such as Full House. The show is now split between the sitcom and the characters in the outside world, giving ample time for both.

As Vision uncovers more secrets and Wanda’s grip on this fabricated “perfect” reality continues to slip, the tension between the characters comes to a boil. These moments are where the episode shines the brightest.

Paul Bettany continues to completely steal the show every minute he’s on screen. It’s clear through his performance that Vision’s fits of rage are not seeded in anger but utter confusion and loss at the secrets Wanda is keeping from him.

Elizabeth Olsen conveys beautifully how lost the character of Wanda truly is, how much it pains her to keep secrets from Vision but knowing full well, this painful fabricated reality is the only one in which she can live a life with the man she loves.

The last moments of episode 5 are jaw-dropping and world-breaking in a way that I’ve never seen in any form of media. What this moment will mean for the remainder of the show and the rest of the MCU from this point forward remains to be seen.

WandaVision has been a wild and confusing ride, but I know for a fact that I will be tuning in on February 11, 2021 to see what the next installment has to offer.

February 11, 2021

New 'Wandavision' episodes astound viewers

GRAFFINE PEDERSE multicad media editor

WandaVision episodes 4 and 5 transform the show from an entertaining yet perplexing ride with a hint of intrigue to some of the best content in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

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