

EDUCATION

Bachelor's program designed for military students

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The Reed School of Media and Communications at West Virginia University continues its commitment to supporting military members and veterans through its continued partnership with the Department of Defense's Defense Information School (DINFOS).

The partnership with DINFOS was initially established in 2012. In the eight years that followed, the WVU Reed School worked to establish a discounted rate for military students and created a curriculum in the online Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) master's degree program that provided flexibility for military

life and deployment. The school launched its first dedicated cohort of DINFOS students in 2021.

Most recently, the Reed School has launched a new online bachelor's degree in IMC with the same dedication to providing military personnel with access to flexible and affordable education.

Similarly to the master's degree, the bachelor's degree is a fully online, asynchronous program, allowing courses to be completed anytime, anywhere in the world. The IMC program has a flexible transfer policy – advisors work directly with each student to review their military transcripts and apply

all applicable credits toward WVU coursework, decreasing the number of courses and costs for students to earn their degrees. The WVU Reed School also offers a variety of minors, provides discounts on tuition and allows students to pause and continue the program as needed.

The Reed School aims to provide each participating service member with the ability to not only apply what they're learning to their military assignment, but also offer an advantage for readjusting to civilian life. Finding work in a civilian role is often challenging for veterans who have spent extensive time serving. Receiving an IMC degree while in active duty can open the doors to a smooth transition

from a military career into various media and communications roles.

"I'll be able to combine over 20 years of practical experience with a solid academic background, giving me an advantage in both military and civilian roles. The IMC program has equipped me with knowledge and skills that will remain relevant and valuable wherever my career takes me," said Alexandra Longfellow, an undergraduate IMC student and DINFOS alumna who has served in the Air Force as a photographer and public relations specialist for 18 years.

DINFOS is a part of the United States Department of Defense's Defense Media Academy, which trains U.S. Military DoD civilian, international military and interagency students in media and communications. The Reed School established its partnership with the academy in 2012 and worked to provide discounted tuition for its military students. The school is grateful for its ability to expand the partnership to the creation of the IMC degree programs.

"This program is 100 percent worth the time for military students," said cohort student Mark Halliday. "Between transferable credits from PACS-Q, DINFOS discounts, and my remaining GI Bill, I didn't spend a dime on this well-developed and challenging program."

PHOTO OP



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

One of West Virginia University's signature – and highly Instagramable – Personal Rapid Transit System cars (PRT for short) was on display for photo ops this week at Woodburn Circle. Here, Madison Taylor takes a picture of friends Wesley Palmer and John Paul Jones.

MON COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.

Quitting for a day might help you quit forever

WAY BACK DURING A DIFFERENT DECADE AND IN A DIFFERENT COUNTY, I WENT TO A BAR TO SEE A FRIEND OF MINE PERFORM WITH HER BAND.

I could only make it through a few songs before the thick, secondhand cigarette smoke I was inhaling made it impossible for me to breathe comfortably. So I left.

Later, I found out that my friend wasn't super happy having to sing with all that smoke swirling around either.

I mentioned it to a smoking coworker, who said, "But you went to a bar, so you must have known there would be cigarette smoke." He later changed his tune when he complained about a coworker's smoke. He had quit, and had to admit that I was right.

Smoking is gross, and once you are no longer accustomed to it (i.e., you gain back your sense of smell), it's not fun to breathe in it.

I grew up around smoke. Both my parents and one grandmother smoked. Car rides weren't a whole lot of fun.

But when I was around 13, my father caught a cold and quit smoking for the duration. And then ... he never picked it back up. He became like my former coworker and couldn't stand it anymore.

I consider it the cold that helped extend his life. Coincidentally, just as I was moving away from home, the "no smoking" movement was gaining



MARY WADE BURNSIDE

ground. For the most part, I've spent my career not having to deal with other people's bad habits.

This topic is relevant year-round in West Virginia, where smoking rates top those of every other state at 21%, nearly twice the national average of 11.5%.

But as we approach Thanksgiving and the new year, and with Lung Cancer Awareness Month taking place in November, it's a great time to highlight the Great American Smokeout.

This annual event, launched by the American Cancer Society in 1977, takes place this Thursday with a goal of urging smokers to go one day without a cigarette.

The hope is that if you give up smoking for one day, maybe you'll consider doing it for another day, and then another.

If you quit on Nov. 21, one week later, on Thanksgiving, your turkey dinner will taste a little better because smoking dulls your taste buds and they would be perking up again already.

As the American Cancer Society points out: 20

minutes after quitting, your heart rate and blood pressure drop. After 12 hours, carbon monoxide levels in your blood drop to normal.

After two weeks to three months, circulation improves and lung function increases.

After one to nine months, coughing and shortness of breath decrease. Cilia start to regain function in your lungs, increasing their ability to clean the lungs and reduce the risk of infection.

Several of Monongalia County Health Department's programs have been vital in their fight to decrease the incidence of smoking among West Virginia residents.

As of March 9, 2012, smoking has been prohibited by the Monongalia County Board of Health in enclosed spaces, including, but not limited to, restaurants and bars. MCHD Environmental Health sanitarians are responsible for enforcing the Clean Indoor Act (monchd.org/services/clean-indoor-air), which was amended as of Feb. 1, 2017 to include electronic smoking devices to the prohibition.

The effect of this not only protects non-smoking customers, but also the employees of these establishments as well as any musicians who might be playing, like my friend that I had wanted to see several years ago.

Also, patients at MCHD Dentistry receive a very thorough oral cancer screening during their checkups and smoking cessation information is available not only through that program, but also MCHD Clinical Services and MCHD WIC.

Check out Monongalia County Health Department's website at monchd.org to see if any of our services would be right for you.

State residents also can turn to the West Virginia Tobacco Quitline (https://quitnow.net/westvirginia), which offers not only counseling but also products to help people ditch this dangerous habit.

These services are especially important in our state, because in a report released earlier this year by the American Lung Association, West Virginia was listed as "the worst state in the nation for adult smoking and high school tobacco use; and among the worst for tobacco control policies."

Smoking is addictive and it's not easy to quit. Setting goals and seeking help is a great way to start.

And when Jan. 1 rolls around, you could be well on the path to completing one of the most important New Year's resolutions you'll ever make.

Email Mary Wade Burnside, public information officer at Monongalia County Health Department, at Mary.Wade.Burnside@wv.gov.

THEATER REVIEW

'A Real Pain' explores how we express emotion

MAKING CALCULATED EFFORTS ABOUT WHEN AND WHERE TO FEEL YOUR EMOTIONS CAN BE A HEALTHY CHOICE FOR PEOPLE WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE TEND TO BE CONTROLLED BY SAID EMOTIONS. However, in "A Real Pain," writer and director Jesse Eisenberg examines how that practice can ultimately be harmful if you refuse to acknowledge those emotions at some point.

Following the death of their grandmother, cousins David (Jesse Eisenberg) and Benji (Kieran Culkin) take a trip together to visit their grandmother's ancestral home in Poland. They join a tour of various Jewish landmarks led by James (Will Sharpe), along with other Jewish people, all there to find some connection to the atrocities their people faced during the Holocaust.

While the nervous yet professionally put-together David walks through the tour closed off to the reality of what he is observing, Benji fully immerses himself in the experience.

"A Real Pain" asks if there is a correct way to process the trauma that we experience. Benji is very open with his emotions, which has some positive impacts - he is able to convince James that he needs to engage more with the information that he is presenting.

He connects with Marcia (Jennifer Grey), a woman struggling with loneliness following her divorce. But we also hear stories of how his lack of control was the cause of significant issues for his family.

This is a relatively small cast, but the standouts in the group are definitely Grey, Sharpe and Kurt Egyiawan, who played Elogie, a Rwandan convert to Judaism. For a film that is focused on a family relationship, they serve as helpful surrogates for the audience, watching from a distance. Eisenberg gives a thoughtful and restrained performance, which plays beautifully against the



ALISE CHAFFINS

kinetic and unbridled energy that Culkin brings to his character.

The pair do an excellent job of creating a sense of family particularly family that was close at one point but has drifted apart. In their interactions, we see the easy way you have with people you've known your whole life. But they also highlight the disconnect that can happen over time when you no longer regularly communicate.

"A Real Pain" is more a slice of life than a full narrative, and those can be tricky to pull off. The end of this movie will no doubt leave some unsatisfied, but it plays into the larger theme of dropping into someone's life when you haven't been in contact with them and trying to find your footing. There is a kind of rhythm that exists in those spaces, but also a feeling of imbalance, and the film echoes that beautifully.

As we come upon the holidays following a contentious election season, emotions can run high. It may seem prudent to simply push emotions down, but "A Real Pain" asks us if we could do something else. Instead of ignoring them or fully indulging our worst instincts, maybe it would be better to try to express those emotions in a healthier way. To feel our pain, but also to try to let that pain go.

Alise Chaffins is a Morgantown writer who loves movies and sharing her opinions. She reviews a movie from a streaming service every Saturday and one new in theaters every Sunday. Find more at MacGuffin or Meaning on Substack.