

# Spanish study abroad cut short by COVID



*Elizabeth Chambers in Spain*

Elizabeth Chambers was having a wonderful time in Spain.

That was the goal of the Judith Muhlberg Study Abroad Award, a grant given to selected UW communication students studying abroad. In addition to books, tuition, or other expenses usually covered by scholarships, the Muhlberg is meant to be spent experiencing the culture of

foreign locale.

Chambers received the Muhlberg award for the 2019-2020 academic year and headed to Spain, where she took courses at University of Salamanca taught entirely in Spanish.

"Spain really does have a different pace of life from the U.S. That's definitely a cliché about the country, but it's true," she said. "For starters, their concept of time is much looser. No one bats an eye if the professor walks in ten or 15 minutes late. It's just normal."

Salamanca is a place of beautiful architecture. The university itself was established more than 800 years ago and is home to many ancient buildings. Being in Europe, it was easy for Chambers to travel. She even backpacked across several countries for six weeks during the break between semesters.

Then came COVID-19.

"I was seeing it on the news and heard about it from my friend in Beijing. I was talking to her and then she was sent home," Chambers said. "I did not imagine for the life of me that it would reach Europe so quickly and become the same problem for me."

But, of course, it did. In February, the virus ramped up in Italy. By late March, Italy would lead the world in number of confirmed cases and deaths. But it wasn't long after the virus hit Italy that it hit Spain as well.

At first, Chambers and other exchange students in her building considered staying put for the duration of the

outbreak, self-isolating in Spain rather than heading home.

"When global travel shutting down, it was, 'Okay, we need to get home now,'" she said.

That change happened quickly. At first, cases and deaths began to trickle in, but then started to accelerate.

"The CDC didn't issue any warning for Spain until the blanket Level 3 warning on all of Europe," Chambers said. "So, really it went from zero to 60 in 24 hours because we had no advanced notice."

She said the news of a sudden travel ban was terrifying.

"That threw everything into disarray," Chambers said. "The university was shut down and our program was cancelled. The prime minister announced a complete lockdown — the strictest in the world actually. So, we were just stuck at home, figuring out what to do, how to get home."

The ban excluded Americans returning from abroad, and motivated them to go home.

Chambers took a private car to Madrid, where she was holed up in a hotel room, eating food out of cans for a few days, trying — and failing — to get in touch with the overwhelmed U.S. embassy. On March 19, Chambers flew to Germany and then to Washington, D.C., where she was screened upon reentry into the country. Chambers took yet another flight to Denver, where a blizzard stranded her for a few days before she was finally able to get home.

She arrived in a country that had only just started taking the virus seriously, and was bracing for the impacts she had already witnessed in Salamanca. Chambers said she felt like a time traveller.

"Everyone in Spain was cooperative with the government because the problem was obvious," she said. "But while the bodies were piling up in the morgues in Madrid, I'm reading in the news about people fighting over toilet paper in the U.S."

Chambers is safely home in Wyoming now, but said she has a wider view of the world after her study-abroad. It's easy to write off tragedies on foreign shores. People have a limited bandwidth for news, and different countries can feel like different worlds.

But Chambers is reading Spanish news on a daily basis, maintaining that connection formed in Salamanca.



# Gladney named Outstanding Former Faculty

Every college-educated reporter working today can tell you who their favorite journalism instructor was.

For many, that instructor was Professor Emeritus George Gladney, who made famously complex topics, such as media law, easy to parse and enjoyable to learn.

Honoring Gladney's commitment to his students, the College of Arts and Sciences recognized the Department of Communication and Journalism professor as this year's Outstanding Former Faculty Member.

Few could be more deserving.

Gladney taught at UW from 1991-2013, mentoring countless students in every area of journalism — from media law to ethics to history.

He taught a news writing to journalism majors, so playing a pivotal role in the education of countless young reporters who came up through UW's journalism program for more than two decades.

"He taught a generation of aspiring journalists how to write," Former Department Head Ken Smith writes in Gladney's nomination letter. "As a former news editor himself, he demanded discipline, accuracy and attention to style."

"He also taught our very demanding Media Law course. The course content intimidated many students, but George taught it in a manner that reduced student anxiety."

Gladney enjoyed an illustrious career before coming to UW, writing for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Colorado Springs Sun*, and *Colorado Springs Gazette*, and serving as the managing editor of the *Jackson Hole News & Guide*.

Once in academia, he found no shortage of interesting

opportunities and prestigious honors.

He was a Fulbright Scholar in 2005 for the Centre for Social Studies at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, Poland.

In 2013, he was a visiting professor in the Department of Journalism at al Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and at Shanghai University's School of Social & Political Sciences through the College of Arts & Sciences cooperative agreement.

Additionally, he received honoraria from different U.S. embassies to give invited lectures about journalism in Bulgaria, Moldova, and Ukraine.

"George thinks deeply about his scholarly work which is reflected in his publications," writes fellow emeritus professor Mike Brown. "As a teacher he was demanding and rigorous in a way that brought the best out of students and earned their respect."

Gladney published in many different journals, including *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, *Newspaper Research Journal*, and the *Journal of Business Ethics*. He was also a member of the Editorial Board for *Mass Communication and Society* and *Newspaper Research Journal*.

But it's the generation of students — now reporters and public relations specialists across the country — that remember Gladney most fondly.

"He inspired me to use my intellect; he insisted that I was a strong thinker and writer; he submitted papers that I had written to professional organizations; and, finally, he encouraged me to apply for graduate school," writes Diana Waggner, Director of Communications for the Catholic Diocese of Cheyenne.

"I was not the only student whom he guided and encouraged. Several of us benefited from his quiet determination that we could be whatever we dreamed."

The Outstanding Faculty Member award honors a former faculty member — retired at least five years — who taught their students more than just the facts, who inspired students and served as a role model.

Nominations must include several supporting letters from former students and colleagues attesting to the faculty member's teaching talents, research accomplishments, and community service.



*George Gladney*



*George Gladney, hard at work and sporting a memorable fanny pack. (Photo courtesy of Eglia Yetnayet Negussie)*

# A&S, department recognize excellence

Several COJO students and faculty won prestigious awards during the Spring 2020 semester that recognized achievements in all areas of academia.

## **Teaching & Student Awards**

Several UW faculty members, both past and present, were recognized for their contributions to educational excellence.

Academic Lecturers Justin and Mitzi Stewart were named among the winners of the Promoting Intellectual Engagement (PIE) Awards.

"The PIE Award honors instructors who inspire excitement, inquiry, and autonomy in first-year courses," according to the award's online description. "Recipients of the PIE Award are nominated online by sophomore students, and then selected by a committee

based on thoughtfulness and volume of student nominations."

The PIE Award is co-sponsored by LeaRN, Ellbogen CTL, Residence Life & Dining, and Advising, Career Services & Exploratory Studies.

The College of Arts and Sciences honored Senior Academic Lecturer and Oral Communication Center Director Beau Bingham with the Extraordinary Merit Award, recognizing him as an extraordinary teacher.

Additionally, communication major Rebekah (Bex) Hutchinson from Riverton was named among the College of Arts and Science's top 20 graduates. Since 1991, the college has recognized its top 20 graduating students for their successes both inside and outside the classroom.

## **Outstanding Thesis Awards**

The department usually awards both an Outstanding Thesis award and an Outstanding Project award, honoring a master's student from each available track.

This semester's graduating cohort included only theses, however, so two exceptionally well researched, well-written and well-defended theses were identified as the best of the best.

Raena Bush was named a co-winner of the Outstanding Thesis Award for her work, "A Grounded Exploration of Feminism, Race, and Rebellion in BioShock Infinite through the Lens of Cultural Studies and Black Feminism."

The nominating letter for Bush's award highlighted her thoroughness and clarity.

"Her detailed yet systematic coding and writing

of both the verbals and nonverbals of game-players reactions have demonstrated her qualifications as an excellent qualitative scholar and can serve as a model for future students," the letter reads.

"Undoubtedly one of the best theses that I have read at UW."

Lauren Johnson was also named a co-winner of the Outstanding Thesis Award for her thesis, "A Feminist Standpoint Phenomenological Study of the Consequences of Speech Code Violations in Cross Examination Debate from the Perspective and Experience of Gender and Sexuality Muted Groups."

The nominating letter for Johnson's award noted the graduate student's creation of a new methodology for the field.

## Gib Mathers scholarship honors late Wyoming journalist

Gib Mathers was an award-winning Wyoming journalist for many years.

An avid outdoorsman and conservationist, Gib's primary focus as journalist was aligned with his great love for the outdoors and the wildlife species that inhabit Wyoming's wild country.

He was also a UW journalism graduate, and his legacy is now being honored by the Department of Communication and Journalism's newest scholarship.

The scholarship endowment, when fully funded, will be \$25,000, though it's too early to say how large the scholarships themselves will be.

"The intent of the Gibson Lee Mathers Memorial Scholarship Fund is to support quality journalism in

Wyoming" Gib's brother, Earl Mathers, writes in a letter to the UW Foundation. "It is our fervent hope that those served by these scholarships help to extend the legacy of authenticity and integrity in journalism that were so steadfastly represented by Gib Mathers throughout his illustrious career."

Gib's lifelong love of the outdoors is what drew him to journalism. Understanding and living in nature, he hoped to share his love of Wyoming with others through his writing.

"As a young man, he worked in carpentry, on mountain survey crews and in Yellowstone National Park for several years," Earl writes in an email. "He was around 40 years old when he embarked on his career in journalism."

After graduating from UW in the nineties, Gib worked for newspapers in Casper, Cody, Evanston and Kemmerer, and eventually for the *Powell Tribune*, where he wrote for about 12 years until his death.

"Gib spent many days in the wild, most especially in the environs of the North Fork of the Shoshone River west of Cody where he ultimately perished from hypothermia during the winter of 2017," the Foundation letter reads.

"Due to adverse weather conditions and the remoteness of the location, it was well over a month before his body was found."

Gib might have died young, but his memory will live on as other students pursue their own passion for reporting.



# Larsh Bristol, Muhlberg awards support talented UW students

COVID-19 turned the spring semester on its head, but the Department of Communication and Journalism's most prestigious grant programs are going strong.

Conor Mullen, a social work graduate student, was named the 2020 recipient of the Larsh Bristol Photojournalism Fellowship. And communication major Allie Midkiff is the most recent recipient of the Judith A. Muhlberg Endowment for Study Abroad scholarship.

## **Larsh Bristol Winner: Conor Mullen**

The Larsh Bristol Photojournalism Fellowship provides a stipend for University of Wyoming students to showcase strong visual storytelling and has supported young Wyoming photojournalists for more than a decade.

Mullen plans to take his camera north, documenting COVID-19's social, economic, and environmental impacts on the Greater Yellowstone Area.

"Individuals, organizations and businesses in places like Cody, Jackson, West Yellowstone, Gardiner, Silver Gate and Cooke City will undoubtedly experience difficulties and challenges due to the standing closures and possible late openings of Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Park," Mullen said. "The parks will also experience disruptions due to the pandemic, with park staff, facilities, and ecosystems facing uncertain shifts in visitation and activity."

Throughout the summer of 2020, Mullen will interview people living or working throughout the region, capturing the probable hardship and possible beauty of a truly unique time in Mountain West history.

The project will culminate with an exhibition of 19 framed photographs as well as an accompanying feature story and presentation — which will,

for a time, be on display in the COJO Department's fourth-floor wing of Ross Hall.

"I believe that the visual results of this project will be stirring and at times hard to take in," Mullen said. "But I am hoping that this is a story that can help to prepare future generations for challenges that they may face."

Larsh Bristol graduated with a journalism degree from UW in 1974.

He went on to work as an award-winning newspaper photojournalist, noted for his photographic portrayals of human emotion. He died in an accident in 2006. The fellowship commemorates Bristol's life, work and vision.

## **Muhlberg Winner: Allie Midkiff**

The Judith A. Muhlberg Endowment for Study Abroad supports a communication major who studies abroad while taking classes at the University of Wyoming.

Midkiff will use the scholarship to study abroad at the University of Stirling in Stirling, Scotland, during the 2020-2021 academic year. Pursuing a career in film and television production, Midkiff said she hopes to take advantage of a year at one of the United Kingdom's top film production programs.

"Supplementing my University of Wyoming education with the film-related classes available at the University of Stirling will better prepare me for my future career," she said. "It will also allow me to make career connections with other film students, as well as film companies that partner with the University of Stirling. I also hope to learn more about the impact film and television have on society."

Scholarship funding can be used for costs related to the student's education overseas, and is intended as a way to help students experience the life and culture of their host country.

## Q&A with ASUW Pres. Talamantes

Political science major Riley Talamantes has been on the UW Debate team for three years and is now president of ASUW.

**COJO:** What do you do on the debate team?

**Riley Talamantes:** We do a lot of things! Like any other competitive team, we travel to debate tournaments to compete with other schools from all over the United States. It is a lot of time that I spend out of my week, but debate is incredibly interesting to me and I love all of the friends I have made through the activity.

**COJO:** How did you decide to run?

**RT:** During the 2019-2020 school year, I was the President's Chief of Staff. The more I continued to learn about ASUW, the more I was interested in leading this organization. We have incredible power and influence here on campus and I wanted to see us do more to help the student body, especially in conversations with upper admin. folks.

**COJO:** Did debate experience help?

**RT:** I think the public speaking skills I have gotten throughout my time in debate were incredibly helpful at communicating our ideas for the campaign. Although our election was entirely online, my vice president and I still met with many RSOs to talk about our goals for ASUW. Being in debate helped me develop answers to potential questions we may have gotten and made me feel a lot more comfortable speaking to a crowd of people about platforms we were passionate about.

**COJO:** Will your debate background help when it comes to leading ASUW?

**RT:** Absolutely. Debate has taught me so much about considering everyone's point of view, making decisions in a holistic manner, and ultimately, defending our arguments and positions when they are contested.

# Going Virtual

## The pandemic drove students and faculty online for classes and even thesis defenses

March 13 was the last day any University of Wyoming students attended class on campus.

The following week was spring break, and by the time students were scheduled to return, UW had closed campus and pushed all courses online.

Senior Academic Lecturer Beau Bingham said he was in a fairly fortunate situation for that shift.

Two of his four courses for the spring 2020 semester were already online.

"The biggest change is that class seems to go all day, with answering emails and developing course material, and responding to different

things that come up," he said. "You finish one project and something else comes up and is added to it."

Bingham said the move online requires a lot of work if a course is not already prepared for online delivery.

"When teaching online, a lot of the work is upfront — developing the lectures, recording the lectures, developing the tests, quizzes, the assignments, implementing them and putting them online," he said. "Once it's on there, it's more monitoring it and making sure the day-to-day goes effectively. But it's that upfront work that takes a lot of time."

Online students still have assignment deadlines, but the accessible nature of the course allows them to access some content, quizzes, and homework at their own convenience — which is important since students were also adjusting to the new normal in the weeks following spring break.

Bingham also oversees the Oral Communication Center.

The Center had already been preparing to offer online consultation and tutoring. Closing campus accelerated that effort.

"All of the consultants that work in the Oral Communication Center can conduct their hours through Zoom and they say it's going very well," Bingham said.

"They're able to share their outline they're working on, they can both see it on the screen, they can discuss it together and talk back and forth."

The educational impacts of COVID-19 extend beyond virtual instruction.

As the pandemic accelerated in late March and early April, the department's second-year graduate students were racing to finish

their theses — the crowning achievement of many hard-fought master's degrees.

It soon became clear that they would all have to prepare for an online defense.

"I still had to make a PowerPoint and a poster, but it all happened electronically," said Lauren Johnson, who defended via Zoom in mid-April.

Johnson said she had been looking forward to defending in person.

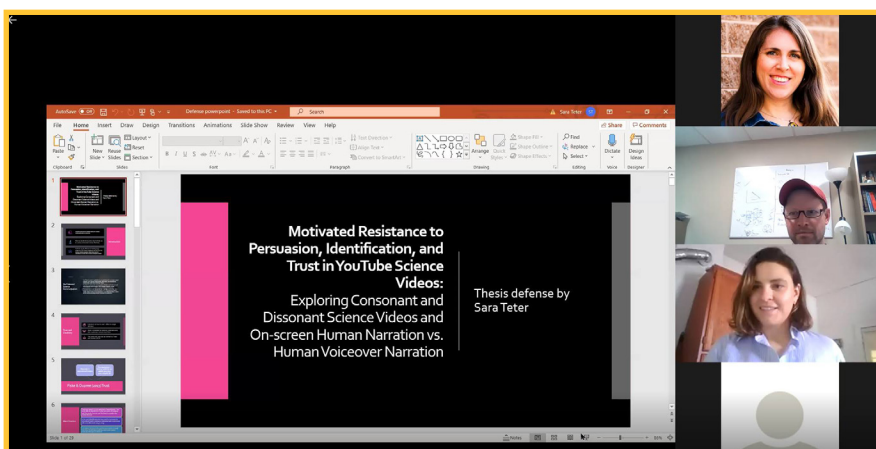
As a UW Debate captain, the prospect of confronting a crowd was not as daunting as it might have been to others.

She was sad to hear the defense was online.

"But, it turned out that more of my friends and peers were able to 'come' to my defense because it was online. My parents even watched," Johnson said.

"So, looking back, while I didn't get the anticipated moment to stand up in front of people I look up to and present my research, I got to share my work with far more people than I had expected."

All defenses during the Spring 2020 semester were conducted virtually.



Screenshots of Sara Teter and Jeff Victor's virtual thesis defenses. The defenses were conducted via Zoom in adherence to social distancing protocols undertaken to stem the spread of COVID-19. All COJO Department thesis defenses during the spring 2020 semester were virtual.

As state and local governments debate team launched a pilot program during the Fall 2019



"I think especially knowing what it feels like to have their own season end early, many of them were happy to create an opportunity to stop that from happening to their younger counterparts, Liu said.

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Look for the COJO Department's Winter 2020 newsletter, which will include more information about the review and its findings.