Exclusive Interview with President Kyle Marrero

Masquers Presents “The Great American Trailer Park Musical”

Senior Art Students Showcase Their Work in “The Art of Feeling” Exhibition

Dr. Marrero raising awareness for gendered violence as part of the Walk A Mile In Her Shoes event. Photo from @GeorgiaSouthernTwitter.
Sit Down with Dr. Kyle Marrero

By: Ethan Smith

Dr. Kyle Marrero began his tenure as the 14th President of Georgia Southern and the first official President of the university since the consolidation on April 1.

Marrero garnered much praise, a lot of it coming from the University of West Georgia, by his actions in leading the university towards breaking records in enrollment, graduation rates, degrees earned and annual economic impact.

I got the chance to sit down with Dr. Marrero and learn more about his plans for integrating the extranged campuses under Georgia Southern University, about his thoughts on the enrollment decrease and about many other topics derived from pressing concerns of the student body.

Can you give us an introduction about who you are and what you are all about?

“I have been with the University System of Georgia since 2013 as President of UWG,” said Marrero. “Before that, I was with the University of West Florida. I thought I would do the whole west thing since I also worked with West Hawaii. I wouldn’t consider myself a likely presidential candidate since my entire background is the arts… the entire background is the arts… the arts bring the community together. Connection to community is key. Elevating the arts, especially here on the Armstrong campus, will be instrumental to bringing not only the students together, but the entire Savannah community.”

How do you plan on fixing the decreasing enrollment issue?

“That is the first time enrollment causes financial issues which hinders us from improving things at the university,” he began. “We need to be open about the enrollment issue and realize that it is a problem. Having a budget deficit of $15 million on July 1 is striking, but we are going to make decisions and a promise to our students to process how we can increase enrollment. To make sure this doesn’t happen again, putting strategic plans in place will prevent that from happening,” he concluded.

What would you say to students who wanted to graduate as an Armstrong Pirate and not a Georgia Southern Eagle?

“I have empathy and sympathy. I was not directly here so that is what I can provide,” he started. “It is not fair to me or anyone not directly involved to criticize the consolidation decision. What GSU is trying to achieve through the consolidation is a unified vision. Most major colleges have college-based graduations and a big ceremony and that is what we are doing in the Spring,” he continued. “Change and new traditions are hard. Now that I am here, I promise the students that we will look at the graduation formula and assess it in the summer. My guess is that some of the graduation will be really cool and some of it can be improved,” he concluded.

How much time do you plan on spending at the Armstrong campus on a regular basis?

“My goal is that I hope students think I have the superpower of transporting,” he began. “I want to feel like I am in two places at once. I want the students to know that I am present as much as humanly possible. My family and I are actually looking for a place in the Historic District of Savannah because I want to be here,” he continued. “I want to be back-and-forth as much as possible. I am going to be in Savannah as much as I am in Statesboro and Hinesville. An Eagle can fly 220 miles in one day without stopping and all three GSU campuses are about 220 miles away from each other in a full circle, fancy that,” he concluded.

Greek Life has hit a considerable detour since the consolidation. What is your standpoint on Greek Life being on both campuses?

“That is the first time someone has asked me about that problem. Greek Life is critically important,” he started. “It helps build friendships for life. The university’s biggest donors usually come from Greek Life. It is important that Greek Life has a positive impact on students and the families they are a part of. It is an interesting time for Greek Life because it has been at most of an attack it has ever been. We want to ensure Greek Life on both campuses is feeding positivity into the university,” he concluded.

Athletics were basically stripped away from the Armstrong Campus a few years ago, is there anyway athletics can play more of a part in student life here in Savannah?

“The baseball game at Grayson Stadium is an amazing example of how we can get athletics more involved in Savannah. Making that connection means having events in Savannah, streaming for games away from Savannah and locations to watch games,” he continued. “Intramurals can be a huge part of that on the Armstrong campus. I do not want to see the athletic fields and courts begin to fade away. They need to be used. We have an incredible opportunity to involve local schools with camps and get them on this campus at a young age. Competitive collegiate athletics can’t be duplicated but we can try to come as close as possible to it as we can,” he concluded.

Anything else you would like to add or say to the student body?

“I am excited to be here and be a part of the Eagle Nation and one Georgia Southern,” he started. “I want to know the stories and experiences of every student and see and feel the value of being a part of an amazing institution. I want to hear the heartbeat of the student and allow them to know its real. I need to be present for the students and be accessible. I don’t just want to sit in my office. I want the students to know that I am their president and that I am here for them,” he concluded.

President Marrero is already becoming a prominent and engaged member of Eagle Nation and has made his presence felt in such a short amount of time. The successes from his past endeavors are what qualifies him to lead this institution through this unification process, and his tenure as president will is likely to be long and fortuitous for the university.
Pick of the Week

Thursday, April 11
UPB Movie Series: Aquaman
7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Ogeechee Theater

Are you interested in DC Comics? Or do you need a great way to start your weekend? Either way come out and join UPB to watch Aquaman!

Students please bring your Eagle IDs. Should you need assistance related to access or participation, please email upba@georgiasouthern.edu at least two weeks prior to the event.

Meme Of The Week

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Get Ready To See What Goes On “This Side of the Tracks”

By: Madison Watkins

It’s the week of opening night and the cast and crew of “The Great American Trailer Park Musical” are ready to show you what goes on “This Side of the Tracks.”

The synopsis reads—“There’s a new tenant at Armadillo Acres—and she’s wreaking havoc all over Florida’s most exclusive trailer park. When Pippi, a stripper on the run, comes between the Dr. Phil–loving, agoraphobic Jeannie and her tall boyfriend collector husband—the storms begin to brew.”

The show will be put on by the Masquers theatre production organization on campus.

Auditions for the show were held before finals last semester and the cast has had three-hour rehearsals four nights a week since the beginning of this semester.

The show’s director, Professor Pam Sears calls the show “a campy, loving satire of rural Southern life.”

Sears has been familiar with the show for almost 10 years. “I thought this show would be a great addition to our season. We had enough of the right people with the interest and skill set,” she said.

Junior theatre major, Jordan Soto, who plays the show’s protagonist Duke, has been in other Masquers productions previously.

“Compared to other shows I’ve done, this one is more energized. The music is catchy, and it’s been a blast being a part of it,” Soto elaborated.

Sears has put her own spin on the show by adding songs and dances in the show’s antagonist Duke, has been energized. The music is catchy, and it’s been a blast being a part of it,” Soto elaborated.

Sears has put her own spin on the show by adding an ensemble to the principal characters. “The ensemble is a group of tourists stranded on their way to vacation. There’s also a trio of women that act like a Greek chorus who guide the audience through the story. They address the audience and break the fourth wall. When they first do that, they’re talking to the ensemble,” she explained.

We are first introduced to these three women, Betty, Linoleum and Pickles, during the show’s opening number “This Side of the Tracks.”

When developing his character Duke during rehearsals, Soto said “it’s been challenging for me to sound threatening and intimidating. I tend to be a kind person so to act like a jerk has been difficult.”

Soto said he drew inspiration from his older “wild child” brother, as well as a character he played in the production “Red, White and Tuna”, “another Southern boy who was not too bright” to aid him in his performance.

Soto hopes the audience has a great time. This show is a lot of fun and I just want people to laugh and enjoy themselves.”

Sears wants the audience to realize and identify the themes of “resiliency and commitment” in the show. The show also contains “the idea that it’s possible to forgive people that have made mistakes.”

Songs and dances in the show are from various genres including disco, rock, country and gospel, so there’s something every audience member can enjoy.

Sears also mentioned the show is “delightfully raunchy and offensive” and suggests that only ages 16 and up attend.

The show will be performed April 11–13 & 18–19 at 7:30 p.m. and April 14 at 3 p.m. in the Jenkins Hall Mainstage Theatre.

Tickets are free for students, $15 for general admission and $12 for seniors & military. They can be purchased at the Fine Arts Box Office or online at cah.georgiasouthern.edu/armstrong-box-office.

The campus ministry Chi Alpha’s mission is to reconcile students with Christ.

Club president Sidney Jankowski said, “we want to equip college-age students through spirit-filled communities of prayer, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and mission. We desire to create a community of students who desire to follow Jesus and walk as His disciples.”

Their goal is to “build a community of people on campus who love God and love people.”

The club officers want students to know that the club is not exclusive to just Christians.

“They want an environment for people to come and explore their beliefs. Whether you do not believe in God, or believe in God with all of your heart, we invite you to come and just see what we are about,” Jankowski said.

They meet every Monday at 12:30 pm in the Ogeechee Theater. On Tuesdays at 3:45 p.m., the ladies of Chi Alpha meet for a small group Bible study in Learning Commons Room 113.

The guys of Chi Alpha also have a small group Bible study every Tuesday at 5 p.m. in Learning Commons Room 112.

They also host off-campus events occasionally. Those include worship events, a beginning of the year party, girl and guy small group outings, and an end of the year party.

Jankowski said they currently do not have any events planned this month, but an end of the year party will be happening soon.

If students are interested in joining or want to know more about Chi Alpha, they can visit Chi Alpha Armstrong on Facebook, @chialphaarmstrong on Instagram, Chi Alpha on MyInvolvement, or they can contact chialpha.armstrong.state@gmail.com.

Students are also encouraged to stop by on Mondays at 12:30 pm in the Ogeechee Theater or Tuesdays for Bible study.

Sidney Jankowski, Abigail Reyes, Karla Sanchez, Britney Reeves, Delaia Reyes, Abel Martin, Landon Friday, Griffin Page, and Jacob Ivestr of Chi Alpha. Courtesy of Sidney Jankowski.

Actors Heather Byler, Pandora Crumpton and Hannah Davis as their characters Linoleum, Betty and Pickles. Photo by Lauren Schwan.
Art: Because you can’t Google how to feel

By: Rachel Hammond

Are you looking for inspiration or are you perhaps interested in seeing artwork by senior art students here on campus?

Well, you and others interested have the opportunity to enjoy the work of Fine Arts students’ Chance Everette, Brione Daniels, Blair Perry, Christine Freeman and Jacqueline Claros that will be on display in the Fine Arts Gallery for the “The Art of Feeling” exhibit now until April 12.

The exhibit will feature a variety of different art forms including photography and ceramic work. Each artist will display several pieces from their collections, each of which has its own unique description and explanation of inspiration.

“My body of work is a series of sculptural pottery that is inspired by different types of fungi found throughout Georgia. I find myself intrigued by the ability of those organisms to turn something like a decaying log into its own beautiful growing habitat,” Perry wrote.

Her pieces are reminiscent of a fairy hollow with each piece of dishware sculpted to look like wood coated in fungi.

Another artist, Claros, explained that she intends her work to be not only looked at but also interacted with. She was inspired to create her work when imagining how visually-impaired people experience art. It is for this reason she includes texture and Braille labels in her work.

Freeman’s work will also be on display. Her series involves digital prints on different fabrics that represent her memories of different seasons: “I define seasons through my association of color, emotion and nature itself,” she explained.

Freeman’s collection includes “Daisy Days in Summer” as well as other textiles.

Everette displays what he defines as “autonomous crafting”, in which there are “no thought-out patterns, no traditional plans; just some fiber, some scissors, a sewing machine, and [his] mind.”

In one piece, Everette’s scruffy gang of bandits, “The Undercoats”, explore space while plundering the outer reaches of the galaxy.

The final artist, Daniels, will be displaying several photographs. Daniels said her vision is to “convey a sense of calm or quiet” because “life is stressful enough as it is.” Her photographs feature models with a black background and cropped face in order to “keep attention on the form.”

The gallery will be in the Fine Arts building, and will be open for viewing until Friday, April 12, concluding with a reception at 5:30 p.m.
Op-Ed: “The Only Bern We’re Going to Be Feeling is 4 More Years of Trump”

By: Nicholas Stanley

The morning of Feb. 19, I woke up to my phone screen covered in notifications from various news apps. I reached for the phone in my drowsy-eyed state, blissfully unaware of the big news that had developed that day. As I unlocked my phone, my eyes widened reading the headline I had dreaded for months.

Bernie Sanders enters presidential race: “Complete the revolution.”

Now let’s get one thing straight. In 2016, I was an avid Bernie Sanders supporter. His “radical” ideas of Medicare for all, raising the minimum wage to $15 an hour and free college tuition were only a few of the campaign points that would make any liberal-minded person salivate. Sanders’ entire political career had been built off being the unlikely hero. Sanders is no longer the underdog he once was.

In the 2016 presidential election, Sanders was the underdog. A wacky, crazy-eyed old man with a liberal agenda that seemed so extreme that none of his opponents even occupied the idea of him being a serious threat. This mindset proved beneficial - Sanders’ entire political career had been built off being the unlikely hero.

Sanders had been built off being the unlikely hero. A wacky, crazy-eyed old man with a liberal agenda that seemed so extreme that none of his opponents even occupied the idea of him being a serious threat. This mindset proved beneficial - Sanders’ entire political career had been built off being the unlikely hero. Sanders is no longer the underdog he once was.

If poll data is anything to consider, he is not only one of the frontrunners but he’s actually in second place behind none other than former vice-president Joe Biden, who is yet to announce his campaign.

How will Sanders handle being in the top from the beginning is yet to be seen. However, I can make a guess as to how his presidential bid will affect 2020 overall.

There are a number of political analyses that suggest Sanders and his passionate supporters had a direct link to Donald Trump winning the presidential election. According to the 2016 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey, fewer than 80% of those who voted for Sanders in the Democratic primary did the same for Clinton in the presidential election.

What’s more, 12% of those who backed Sanders actually cast a vote for Trump.

Why would many of Sanders’ supporters switch their vote to the likes of Trump?

Trump and Sanders may be on two different ends of the political and ideological spectrum, but they have more in common than either might like to admit. They both appeal to Americans who are tired of the established norm of our government.

Supporters of both Trump and Sanders were hungry for this idea of a political revolutions and some of those that were disheartened enough by Sanders’ loss were desperate to put their faith in Trump. Unfortunately, in many states, this gave Trump the extra push he needed.

History seemsly has a way of repeating itself. The fear here is Sanders making out to be a troublesome competitor for the other presidential hopefuls. Some of which have the same agenda plans as Sanders did in 2016.

Three years ago, Sanders was arguably a “radical” or some might even say revolutionary. The beliefs and promises he ran his campaign on were considered to be farfetched and hardly plausible.

However, now Sanders’ notions that were previously hard to fathom are now the very base that many of his competitors are launching from. Just because Sanders was the first, does that mean he deserves to be president? I would argue no.

Many of his competitors this time around are younger, quicker and more ethnically diverse. The reality is democrats are not looking for another old white man to be the candidate for the party.

If Sanders is able to fight his way to the top and become the democratic nominee this time around- he did fail to do this in 2016, then can he be a formidable competitor for Trump and his supporters?

No, no he can’t. This time around is less about policies and beliefs, and more about getting rid of President Trump. The 2020 election is operation “Remove Donald Trump from the White House.”

Now let’s say Sanders doesn’t get the democratic nomination. He is still going to hand the election over to the Republicans. By doing exactly what he did in the last election, causing enough of an uproar and discourse amongst the democratic party that he weakens the momentum of any of his competition. Leading to the American people having doubts all the way to the ballot boxes and splitting the vote.
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SOLVE AND WIN!

Put your housing knowledge to the test. Complete the word scramble below, and bring your answers to the University Housing office in Compass Point (Building 7000), between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday on the Armstrong Campus to claim your prize. One person will win a grand prize each week!

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