



LOTUS LINK

Your Monthly Measure of
Character, Compassion, and Community



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And more!

Contact us at
newsletter@uwest.edu

HAPPY CHINESE NEW YEAR! 2019 - YEAR OF THE PIG

From <https://chinesenewyear.net>:

"The Pig is the twelfth of all zodiac animals. According to one myth, the Jade Emperor said the order would be decided by the order in which they arrived to his party. Pig was late because he overslept. Another story says that a wolf destroyed his house. He had to rebuild his home before he could set off. When he arrived, he was the last one and could only take twelfth place. The Pig is associated with the Earthly Branch (地支—dì zhī) hài (亥), and the hours 9–11 in the night. In terms of yin and yang (阴阳—yīn yáng), the Pig is yin. In Chinese culture, pigs are the symbol of wealth. Their chubby faces and big ears are signs of fortune as well."





Catching Up with UWSG

Have questions about the school? Do you want to see something is changed? Then get involved with the **University of the West Student Government (UWSG)**. We are a group of student leaders who want to be the voice for our entire student body – but we are more than just a voice! We create amazing events, fight for student interests, and help individual students in need.

We want everyone to know we are here to serve the students; we encourage everyone to attend the **UWSG General Assembly (GA) meeting, held in AD 208 every Monday from 5:00pm – 6:00pm**. Our GA meetings are a safe place for students to discuss concerns and come up with action plans, as well as plan future events. Come meet our amazing 2018-2019 UWSG Officers, meet new people, and discuss common interests.

Did you get a chance to go to Club Day on Friday, February 1? If so, you were able to enjoy free food while talking with our current student club leaders about all the diverse interests on campus. From Anime Club to Chaplaincy Club to the Cat Club, there's a club out there for you. And if none of the current clubs strike your interest, it's so easy to start your very own club and get funding for events - all you need is three people and some enthusiasm.

Have any questions?

You can always contact us at UWSG@uwest.edu.

We look forward to serving our fellow students and a great spring semester!

- University of the West Student Government

2018-2019 UWSG OFFICERS:

Tiffany Martinez, President

Divya Peris, Vice-President

Wendi Pino, Secretary

Jesse Perez, Treasurer

Michael Baumann Rett, Activities

Mikey Mendoza, Student Issues

Gosiya Shaikh, Public Relations

Saroj Bhandari, Webmaster

Eduardo Espinosa, Alumni Advisor

HISTORY MAKERS - Did U Know?

University of the West was founded in 1990 as Hsi Lai University by Venerable Master Hsing Yun. The first semester of classes was offered in 1991 in a small classroom at Hsi Lai Temple; the student body of 30 consisted of mostly monks and nuns. The original purpose of this university was to integrate a liberal arts style education with Buddhist morals and teachings.

Over the next five years, the student body grew, and it was decided that a larger campus was needed. This decision led the university to move from its original location at Hsi Lai Temple to its current location in Rosemead. With this move, the university decided to broaden its horizons and expand the number of majors it provided for its students, adding undergraduate and advanced degrees in Business Administration, English, Psychology, Philosophy, Chinese Language, Buddhist Chaplaincy, and Religious Studies.

In 2006, the university officially changed its name from Hsi Lai University to the University of the West, affectionately called UWEST by its students, faculty, and staff. UWEST has grown since its creation, now housing nearly 400 undergraduate and graduate students, and remains one of the few Buddhist-founded schools in America.

[The information in this article came from the official UWest website: <http://www.uwest.edu>]

- Michael Baumann Rett

INNOVATORS & SCHOLARS

On Thursday, November 15, 2018, University of the West joined with Purdue University Fort Wayne (Indiana), Hebei Academy of Social Sciences (China), Chung Yuan University (Taiwan), East China Jiaotong University (China), and the Association for Chinese Management Educators (USA) to hold the first **International Forum on the US and China—What They Can Learn from Each Other**. The conference provided a forum for scholars from the US, China and other areas to exchange information and ideas on how the US and China can improve relations and learn from each other's perspective.

The conference kicked off on Monday, November 12 at Purdue University Fort Wayne, moving to University of the West on Thursday, November 15, where 11 papers were presented in the areas of economics, education, ethics, finance, innovations, law/regulation, trade, technologies, and government policies. The keynote speakers - Mr. Namoch Sokhom, Director of Corporate Finance for the Pacific Asian Consortium in Employment (PACE), and Dr. Lianlian Lin, Professor of Management at Cal Poly Pomona - presented on "The Small Businesses and Government Supports in the US" and "The Global Leadership," respectively.

During the conference, scholars exchanged their research ideas and explored the possibility for joint research in the future. The conference also provided the venue for the signing of a cooperative agreement for future joint research and scholarly collaboration between University of the West and Hebei Academy of Social Sciences.

- Dr. Bill Chen



On Friday, January 25, University of the West Psychology Department Chair Dr. Ashley Coleman and second-year MFT students Ben Fineman and Danielle Rowe presented at the eighth annual National University Center for Performance Psychology 2-Day Conference. Their presentation, "Drew League Foundation Summer Camp: A Program Review" drew upon research conducted as a joint faculty-student effort (with additional second-year MFT student Andrew Greminger). Congratulations to Dr. Coleman, Andrew, Ben, and Danielle!



PRESIDENTIAL POST: From the Office of Dr. Chang

This month, Dr. Chang would like to share one of his favorite quotes with the UWest community: **“Leben und leben lassen”** or **“live and let live.”**

When someone says “live and let live,” they are saying “be tolerant of differences – you choose the way you want to live and let other people do the same.”

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY: Service to Others

This spring, the UWest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program enters its 12th consecutive year of service to the community. During the 2018 tax season, the VITA program and volunteers assisted over 550 taxpayers and their families, helping them to receive more than \$555,000 in tax refunds. That is more than half a million dollars for low-income families in our community! The diverse individuals assisted by the VITA program have roots all over the world, including Brazil, China, Guatemala, Guinea, Japan, India, Myanmar, Mexico, Nepal, Thailand, South Korea, and Vietnam. Multilingual translation was provided in Cantonese, French, Japanese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Vietnamese.



This year, the VITA program's free tax preparation services to the community begin on Saturday, February 9 and continue every Tuesday and Saturday from 10am - 4pm, through April 13 (excluding the week of March 25-31, Spring Break week). VITA services can be found on the second floor of the ED building. For more information, contact Dr. Chi Sheh, chisheh@uwest.edu.



YOUR MONTHLY SERVICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

Get involved with a UWest tradition of service - volunteer with the VITA program this spring and help provide a valuable service to the community. Even if you don't know how to do taxes, you can help! The VITA program is currently seeking friendly, caring individuals to serve as greeters, translators - and yes, tax preparers too.

To volunteer, please visit <http://www.uwest.edu/community/programs/vita> or contact Dr. Chi Sheh at chisheh@uwest.edu or in his office at ED206.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CORNER



EVENTS & REMINDERS FROM ISS

- * The OPT application window opens on Feb. 18! Are you ready? Learn all you need to know about CPT and OPT applications and qualifications at the **Practical Training Workshop on Tuesday, February 12, from 12pm - 1pm in AD 208.**
- * F-1 Students who need to contact USCIS **can no longer email the California Service Center.** You will need to check your case status on the USCIS website, or submit an online request to the USCIS Contact Center. www.uscis.gov
- * International students are welcome to submit ideas and suggestions to our blue suggestion box in AD 107!

-Leslie Bazzano

MINDFUL EXPRESSION COMMUNITY CREATIVITY



Elephants knitted by Jessa Forsythe-Crane

Mindful Expression will feature the creativity of the UWest community every month and is seeking contributions! Submit artwork, paintings, drawings, stories, poems, essays, recipes, and anything else you'd like to showcase to newsletter@uwest.edu



SHELF LIFE UPDATES FROM THE UWEST LIBRARY

Did you know the library's not just about the books on the shelves? The Films on Demand video database has documentary, educational, and instructional films available 24/7 from the library website. Here's list of what UWest has been watching!

Top 10 Most Watched Films on Demand Videos in 2018

1. Confucianism
2. Moyers & Company: The War on Climate Scientists
3. The Firefighter
4. The New Supervisor
5. Buddha in the Land of the Kami (7th–12th Centuries)
6. Jainism: Ascetics and Warriors
7. A New Light: God in America—How Religious Liberty Shaped America
8. Journey of the Universe: An Epic Story of Cosmic, Earth and Human Transformation
9. The Ineffective School Counselor With a Lower-Risk Teen: Non-Motivational Interviewing Demonstration
10. Introducing Listening and Counseling Skills

Find more at

<https://lib.uwest.edu/weblinks/goto/140>

- Judy Chu



FEBRUARY 2019

WHAT'S UP AT UWEST?



| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Tues., Feb. 5 | Chinese New Year (campus closed) |
| Sat. Feb. 9 | VITA program starts! |
| Mon., Feb 11 | UWSG General Assembly, 5pm, AD 208 |
| Tues., Feb. 12 | OPT Workshop, 12pm, AD 208 |
| Thurs., Feb. 14 | Valentine's Day |
| Fri., Feb. 15-Sat. Feb. 16 | Council Level I Training |
| Mon. Feb. 18 | President's Day (campus closed) |
| | OPT application window opens |
| Mon. Feb. 25 | UWSG General Assembly, 5pm, AD 208 |



WHAT'S UP AROUND LA?

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Thurs. Feb 7- Mon. Feb. 18 | Pan African Film Festival (http://www.paff.org/) |
| Sat., Feb. 9 | Golden Dragon Parade (http://www.lagoldendragonparade.com/) |
| | Alhambra Lunar New Year Festival (http://www.alhambralunarnewyear.com/) |
| Thurs. Feb. 14-Fri. Feb. 15 | Cuco at the Fonda Theatre (https://www.axs.com/events/356906/cuco-tickets) |
| Sat. Feb. 16-Sun. Feb. 17 | LA Chinatown Firecracker Run (https://firecracker10k.org/) |
| Sun., Feb. 24 | The 91st Annual Academy Awards (https://oscar.go.com/) |



"All of us are social beings. We cannot live happily without the affection and respect of our fellow humans. When we give praise or encouragement to another we strengthen the social bond between us and we empower that person to reach out beyond himself to yet others who surely also need the solace of friendship and the knowledge that others need them."

BUDDHIST WISDOM & VALUES:
Teachings of the Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Faces of UWest

What do you do at UWest?

I am Director of the English Department, which includes teaching various courses in both English and General Education. I also help create undergraduate programs and activities to bridge together whole-person academic and student success.

How long have you worked at UWest?

4 and a half years

What was your first job in the field?

A writing tutor at California State University, Los Angeles' Writing Center.

What advice do you have for students this semester?

Ask questions, be inquisitive, engage in dialogue and be on a continuous quest to explore your interests and passions – the faculty and staff at UWest are here to support you on this journey.

What is one book everyone should read?

One book is so tough to answer, but randomly selected titles on my bookshelf that I highly recommend are:

Games and Sport in Everyday Life: Dialogues and Narratives of the Self - Robert Perinbanayagam

The Bell Jar - Sylvia Plath

Winesburg, Ohio - Sherwood Anderson

The Great Gatsby - F. Scott Fitzgerald

Goodbye, Columbus - Philip Roth

Invisible Man - Ralph Ellison *Frankenstein* - Mary Shelley *The House on Mango Street* - Sandra Cisneros

What are you studying at UWest?

BA Liberal Arts, with a concentration in business.

What should other people know about being a Liberal Arts major?

I just switched - it was pretty easy to do and I wanted to switch because I could make my own concentration.

What is most interesting to you about applying business to liberal arts?

Being in business or being a business owner, it lets you reach out to the community. I basically want to make people happy. I also really want to open an improv club – not a lot of people laugh these days. Laughing more would make people happier.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Making people happy hopefully by being a comedian!! [Zac is performing stand-up comedy at an open mic in Long Beach on February 22! Find him on campus for more information and details!]



What is your favorite thing about UWest?

I love all the friends I have here. That's not sappy, it's serious!

If you could have dinner with one famous person and someone who works at UWest, who would you pick?

Hmmm – for the people who work at UWest . . . Melody because she helps me out the most here – ooh, can I pick 2 people? Dr. Omura. Wait, can I pick 3 people? Berk! Jonathan Berk! And um, for the famous person, probably Adam Sandler.

What is your favorite way to relax?

I love to go in the Jacuzzi here!

What is something that always makes you happy?

My brother :-)

FACULTY | Jennifer Avila



What brought you to UWest?

I went to graduate school with a former adjunct who told me about UWest.

What should people know about studying English Lit at UWest?

They will embark on an education with a purpose connected to the UWest mission and meet other students and faculty members who are passionate about literature, art, and culture. Additionally, the English degree course pathway values diverse perspectives, approaches, and invaluable analytical and communicative skill-sets to prepare students for both career and advanced degrees in any related field.

How does an English major benefit from a whole-person education?

Whole-Person education offers English majors a whole-person curriculum, inclusive of East-West perspectives and subject matters, which is wide-ranging in scope, genre, and culture. Additionally, faculty, as well as students, are mindful of the value of experiences beyond the classroom walls; thus, it is not uncommon for classes/groups to engage in class excursions, and sometimes trips that offer students an opportunity to witness the real-world value of what they are learning.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Designing curriculum, courses, reading lists, and class activities in a way that empowers students to take charge of their own learning. Witnessing and supporting students' learning is the best part of my job.

STUDENT | Zac Folino

Faces of UWest will feature one faculty member, one current student, one alumni, and one staff member in each issue. Nominate someone to be featured by emailing newsletter@uwest.edu

STAFF | Jessa Forsythe-Crane



What do you do at UWest?

I'm the Institutional Effectiveness Manager, which means I'm responsible for helping the university ensure that it's delivering what it promises in an effective way. I do that by gathering all sorts of information about the university, the learning and teaching that happens here, and the people who

work and go to school here. Once we understand who we are and what we're doing as a university, we are better able to improve as a university.

How long have you worked at UWest?

A little over 8 months.

What would you name your autobiography?

Jessa Susan Forsythe-Crane: The Little Girl with the Great Big Name. (That's something my parents used to say to me when I was a little girl and I think it'd make a great book title!)

What is an experience you had that made you a stronger person?

It took me a very long time to earn my undergraduate degree – 13 years. I went to four different colleges in three different states. I had difficulty finding a balance between my schoolwork, my job, and my personal life, which made it hard for me to consistently succeed in all three areas. Many times, if I did well in one area, the other two areas suffered. Every time that happened, I felt bad about myself – but I always kept going, with a LOT of support from friends and family. Every time I had a setback, I felt discouraged and disappointed in myself, but I had to keep going. This taught me resiliency – the ability to recover from difficulties, which I think is one of the most important survival skills we can develop these days.

What is one movie everyone should see?

Hedwig and the Angry Inch! It is a musical about identity, self-realization, love, artistry, expression, pain, and growth. Look up the music video for "Origin of Love" on youtube to get a good idea: <https://youtu.be/vJUNH-Fs4EA>

What advice do you have for students this semester?

When you feel overwhelmed by all the stuff you have to do, recognize that you feel overwhelmed and ask someone to help you sort through all of your commitments, responsibilities, and obligations. Asking for help isn't weak, it's another kind of strength!

What is your favorite thing about working at UWest?

I feel very supported by my colleagues and co-workers, which is so important, no matter where you work!

When did you graduate from UWest and with what degree?

I technically graduated in Fall of 2017 but I walked in the Spring 2017 commencement ceremony. I graduated with a BA in Business Administration with a concentration in Computer Information Systems.

Why did you choose to come to UWest?

I started at ITT Tech and when I was there, someone referred me to this campus. As soon as I graduated from there with an Associate's Degree in computer network systems, I came over here and did the summer bridge program, because I liked the small community, small classes, and the one-on-one with professors.

How did you choose your major?

Computers have always been my life. Even when I was a kid, if someone gave me a computer, I would mess with it. And I like working with software. Basically, I like troubleshooting with computers and I like how it can overlap with other related areas, like video editing or whatever. Business just came to me naturally – I took the first course and it felt natural.

What are you doing now?

I'm currently working with an instructor here - Frederick Ho - doing IT specialist work and also working as an auditor.

How did your time at UWest help prepare you for life after UWest?

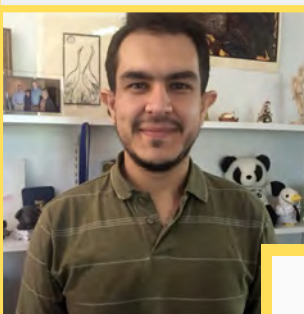
My work with student government helped me learn how to shift into new roles as needed and gave me the push I needed to keep learning new things and skills so I could fit into all those roles and do new projects. Before, I didn't care about making websites or videos, but because of the push I got I learned more – the environment here encouraged me to push myself past my limits. You still need to do that once you're got out school.

Out of all the classes you took at UWest, which was your favorite and why?

Philosophy As A Guide to Living with Garbis Bartanian. It was very open – you could express your thoughts on specific subjects. It was a non-judgmental atmosphere. Certain philosophers view situations differently than others – it's like looking at both sides of a coin, learning different perspectives and that other people can think differently about something, and that helps you out with everything, regardless of your degree. Good life skill to have.

What three words best describe UWest?

Unique, character, political



What advice do you have for current students?

Go for the degree you're passionate about and not just the one someone told you to get.

ALUMNI | Eduardo Espinosa

ONWARDS & UPWARDS

UPDATES ON THE ISSUES STUDENTS CARE ABOUT

Google "university cafeteria satisfaction," and it quickly becomes clear that improving student satisfaction with university dining services is an issue that college students care about all over the United States. Here at UWest, following a change of vendor in the summer of 2018, students have been advocating for changes in the cafeteria.

* In Fall 2018, a survey was conducted to gain insight into student opinion and to seek feedback. A cafeteria committee made up of staff, students, and UWSG officers began to meet regularly to discuss the issues and try to find reasonable solutions.

* By the start of the Spring 2019 semester, students were frustrated by the sense that although they had offered many thoughts and opinions, they were not able to see noticeable improvements. A Town Hall Meeting was held on Wednesday, January 30, 2019 to discuss the cafeteria service and to provide students with an opportunity to voice opinions, offer solutions, and ask questions. The meeting was very well attended and the honesty and willingness to engage demonstrated by those present was a real testament how we at UWest live our values of character, compassion, and community. At the meeting, President Chang expressed his commitment to increasing student satisfaction with the food on campus and encouraged any student with concerns or questions to contact him directly.

* Following the Town Hall Meeting, meeting minutes and the results of the Fall 2018 survey were sent to students.

* Starting on Monday, February 4, 2019, comment boxes and cards will be available in the cafeteria, so that students can make suggestions and leave feedback right away.

* Feedback and comments related to the cafeteria can be emailed to cafeteriabox@uwest.edu – this email is monitored by staff and student government officers to ensure prompt responses to questions and suggestions.



Fall 2018 Dining Hall Satisfaction Survey

Total respondents:

98 (about 26% of the UWest campus community)

respondents with a meal plan:

77 (about 70% of all meal plan holders)

Average level of satisfaction with:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Look of food - 2.41 | Taste of food - 2.13 |
| Variety of food - 1.93 | Nutritional content - 2.40 |
| Variety of beverages - 2.07 | Friendliness of staff - 2.99 |
| Time waiting in line - 2.46 | Overall cleanliness - 3.14 |
| Dining hall hours - 2.46 | Dining hall atmosphere - 2.97 |

Ratings are from 1 - 5 (1 = "very dissatisfied," 2="somewhat dissatisfied," 3="neutral," 4="somewhat satisfied," and 5="very satisfied")

OPEN-ENDED FEEDBACK

- * Respondents were very unhappy with the lack of menu variety, particularly regarding vegan/vegetarian options, grill menu options, and variety of vegetables, fruit, and type of meat served.
- * Respondents were very unhappy with the small portion sizes. Many noted that they did not feel full after a meal.
- * Respondents were very unhappy with the value of the meal plan. Many noted that they should be able to feel full after paying for one meal, but that they had pay for another meal if they want more food, which they do not feel is fair.
- * Respondents were unhappy with the quality and taste of the food. Some noted that foods are often fried, high in salt/carbohydrates, and taste bland.
- * Respondents would like to have milk at breakfast and ice cubes at all meals.
- * Some respondents noted that the rice is not cooked well (and is frequently undercooked).

The most frequently-requested additions/changes to the menu included: Milk, fish/seafood, more varieties of vegetables and fruit, sandwiches, soups, burritos, tacos, lighter-flavored meat and vegetables, healthy greens besides broccoli, ramen, curry, eggs, take-out options/prepared meals or sandwiches.

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER



Most university undergraduate programs are but a smorgasbord of unrelated offerings. Students develop a checklist mentality, as they chose among courses distributed across the disciplines, often without building a coherent world view, personal philosophy, or action plan for life. This choose-a-course-any-course approach leads them to see general education as something to endure and race through. The University of the West has rejected that piecemeal approach in favor of a coherent and comprehensive strategy required by today's complex and changing world.

In Fall 2018, the Office of Academic Affairs launched an undergraduate curriculum positioned at the cutting edge of higher education in terms of its learning community design, theme linked and inquiry-based first-year core seminars, high impact teaching techniques, faculty cohort model, block schedule, service learning component, and articulated pathways to major areas of study. Since all students take the core seminar courses, they have opportunities to study, inquire, and learn alongside peers who see the world differently and seek different academic majors. This opportunity for cross-major fertilization will allow for creative collaboration, perhaps even in the fourth year capstone project. In addition, every undergraduate will be provided with 1) a service or work experience; 2) an opportunity to participate in a campus scholarship conference; and 3) real-world learning via fieldtrips, internships, or other forms of experiential learning.

From the first semester to the last, the UWest undergraduate curriculum is a unified and meaningful course of study that links life-based issues to personal purpose, builds confidence, provides insights into the private and social self, and prepares students for a career. Each student will develop a self-development and understanding mission. Because knowledge of the self in a community is a prerequisite for all other forms of knowledge, the undergraduate curriculum is an integrated Big-Picture-approach to learning and personal growth that further enhances UWest's whole-person education mission. In the first two years, core seminars and an "Introduction to College" course guide students through an inward, intellectual process of interdisciplinary knowledge acquisition, skills development, and self-understanding, followed in the final two years by a more outward process of social engagement. Last fall, students enrolled in "Life & Culture I", an exploration of who

we are in our personal and cultural lives. The seminar has as its central inquiry the question, "What is a good life?" Through the lens of world religions, students consider the nature of a well-lived life, as it regards personal and

community goals, relationships, commitments, values, and lived experience. Students learn what various cultures and wisdom traditions like Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and indigenous religions have valued most.

This spring, students have entered "Life & Culture II" that examines at the Good Life through the window of global philosophy. They will learn to think philosophically about enduring existential questions that have defined the human adventure since ancient times. They will consider the relationships between thought and action and whether philosophical knowledge is real knowledge that can be practically applied. Students will develop the beginnings of a personal philosophy as a guide for ethical behavior, problem solving, meaning making, and creative expression. Through stimulating texts, group activities, creative assignments, and fieldtrips, students will draw the map of their own life path.

In the second year, the "Introduction to the Major" course will position students for success in a degree program with overviews of the fields and what success in each program requires. A two-semester "Big History" course will examine the story of the world from the Big Bang to postmodernism. Students will enroll in interdisciplinary courses tied to alternating socially relevant issues. Future themes may include "Women in the Workplace," "Aging and the Elderly," and "Buddhism's Role in the Social Benefit Economy." Second-year students will take courses in a declared major along with service learning opportunities in communities beyond UWest. Students in the third and fourth years will focus predominantly on their major areas of study, supported by service learning, and internships, as they prepare to exit academia and enter careers.

Additional innovative features of UWest's inquiry-rich and purpose-based interdisciplinary curriculum include a tight-knit faculty cohort and a block-plan course schedule. The undergraduate teaching faculty meets regularly as a team to discuss use of mindfulness activities, guest speakers, educational technology, and student needs. The block course schedule means that core seminar courses meet on the same days at the same times. This consistency of scheduling should allow students to more effectively manage their time and prudently plan their employment opportunities. Student responses will be gathered intermittently for assessment purposes.

Preliminary evaluation data have exceeded our early expectations and has inspired related programming in further support of students' purpose-driven learning and pursuit of wholeness.

- Dr. Peter M. Rojcewicz

"What is a
good life?"