

News

# Mixed Martial Arts taps out Cameron



Speech, debate team continues to bring home the gold.

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Photos courtesy of San Da Fight Club

**Good connection:** (Above) Justin "Manny" Mansel, Multimedia freshman, throws a punch during MMA training. Mansel is a member of the San Da Fight Club which is taught by Gerald Thomason.

**Good form:** (Right) Jeff Wozencraft, Communications senior, demonstrates a triangle choke with the help of Gerald Thomason. Wozencraft is also a member of the San Da Fight Club.

**By Bennett Dewan and Henry Evans**  
*Newswriting Students*

Mixed Martial Arts is the fastest growing sport worldwide according to ESPN.com and its parent network.

The sport had remained relatively undiscovered by the Cameron University population until early this summer when

the San Da Fight Club opened directly across the street from the Cameron House.

Run by CU graduate Gerald Thomason, who instructs along with submission wrestler and fellow alum Paul Cuzzort, the San Da Fight Club emphasizes mixed martial arts for conditioning, practical fighting skills and competition fighting. The sport of mixed martial

arts, or MMA, is on a meteoric rise that has coincided with the popularity of the Ultimate Fighting Championship. The sport involves all kinds of fighting techniques, ranging from Thai Kickboxing to Judo, to Jiu-Jitsu and wrestling.

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## Wildlife Refuge presents unique learning opportunities

**By Chris Allison**  
*Newswriting Student*

Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge offers Cameron students and others a variety of activities.

Located 20 miles northwest of Lawton off the Medicine Park exit, the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is steeped in the history of our community. First set aside as a forest and game preserve by Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt in 1901 and 1905, the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge has become an iconic symbol of the prairies of the "old west."

According to the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Web site, it is the oldest managed wildlife preserve in the United States.

After traveling all over the Western United States, Former Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge Nature Interpreter Ulrike Stradtman was impressed by the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge's beauty when she first saw it in 1982.

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## Nepal students face new life in new country

**By Elizabeth Yocham**  
*Collegian Staff*

Being thousands of miles away from home and all alone were their fears. Little did they know that they would come halfway around the world to exchange their fear of loneliness for family, friends and seven room-mates. Seven girls-Biology

majors, Sadikshya Bhandari, Miki Katuwal, Sweta Shrestha and Alisha Chitrakar, Anita Bhagat, a mathematics major, Samata Prawah, a physics major, and Samikshya Sharma, majoring in accounting- who are all freshman from Nepal ventured to CU in search of a quality education. In the end, they have found much more than that: They found each other.

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## Student government tackles academic forgiveness

**By Bira Vidal**  
*Collegian Staff*

The Student Government Association has been reading and examining new legislation for the past weeks that concern improvements in Cameron's current academic forgiveness policy.

SGA Vice President Tobias Kuhn created Resolution 306010, which is aimed at changing the definition of academic forgiveness for students who have failed a class or are trying to increase their grade point averages by retaking a course.

The present policy gives students the opportunity to retake a class and remove a bad grade from their GPAs, but not from the retention/graduation GPA. After the completion of a class for the second time, students are still required to have the previous undesired grade in their overall GPAs.

Vice President Kuhn based his arguments for the legislation on the importance of a good overall GPA for students when applying for jobs and internships, seeking tuition assistance, and furthering education after college.

Also, Cameron University only excludes from a student's Cameron GPA the letter grades "D" and "F." Students with a "C" are able to retake a class, but not increase their overall GPAs.

According to Vice President Kuhn, if his resolution passes, it would be possible to have "the reprieved grade removed from retention/graduation GPA and overall GPA."

However, Dean of Students Jennifer Holland, explained to students that the academic forgiveness policy is not regulated by CU, but by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and any change in the policy would have to be changed at the state level.

Vice President Kuhn's solution was to bring up the resolution during the Oklahoma Student Government Association (OSGA) conference and then to move it to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and CU Student Affairs Office.

Through the resolution, students would have limited chances to improve their GPAs. But the resolution stated the first grade received in a certain class would still be removed from the student's Cameron GPA and overall GPA.

In the case of a student receiving a lower grade than the previous one, the student would have that grade added to the retention/graduation GPA and another chance to retake the class. But the number of changes would not exceed a total of 18 hours. The second and subsequent grades would be permanently in the student's overall

GPA.

Concerning enrollment schedule, the resolution determined students who desire to retake a class and drop the previous grade would have to wait a week after freshmen enrollment.

The resolution went to the legislation committee for further analysis. After a second reading, the SGA body decided to move the voting of the legislation for this week. If approved by the students, the legislation will make its way to the CU Administration and possibly to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

By the end of the meeting, President Jeff Wozencraft encouraged students to brainstorm about possible future legislations. He divided senators and representatives into four groups and each groups was in charge of coming up with legislation ideas for the next meetings.





Photos courtesy of San Da Fight Club

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Cuzzort, who has been an active practitioner of Jiu-Jitsu since early 1995, has first hand seen MMA rise to the mainstream.

"The recent rise in popularity of mixed martial arts really came about with the T.V. show The Ultimate Fighter," he said.

The Ultimate Fighting Championship, or UFC as it is more widely known, began as a competition between martial arts styles to prove which form was most dominant.

Ever since UFC 1 the championships have been broadcast to more and more people across the globe through pay-per-view and the Spike television network.

Thomason attributes the recent popularity of MMA to television. "People want to do it because they see it on T.V.," he said.

Seeing MMA on television made Justin "Manny" Mansel, a Cameron Multimedia and Design freshman, want to go to the San Da Fight Club.

"Mostly mainstream UFC made me want to start doing it," he said.

Manny said he first went to the San Da Fight Club to learn how to become a more well-rounded fighter.

The first day, Manny walked in and was impressed by the comfortable atmosphere of the school. He said he liked that it was a small school and that he could get one-on-one training with both instructors.

"I wrestle, kickbox, box and do Jiu-Jitsu," Manny said. "I run a couple of miles everyday that I don't train."

Thomason said that Manny is a really quiet guy who does everything that he is told to do as far as his training.

It was this attitude that allowed Manny to go from no experience to winning his first amateur fight in less than one year.

Manny fought Daniel Pruitt in Skiatook on Sept. 22. The fight was sponsored by the Freestyle Kombat League.

Thomason said that Manny was very calm and reserved before the fight.

"My biggest worry was never being able to train in a cage," Manny said. "I really wasn't nervous; I just wanted to get in there."

Manny was able to use the vast array of skills that he learned at San Da to turn the tide of the fight to his advantage.

Thomason, who coached Manny in the fight, told him that he had lost the first round and that he needed to throw his high kick.

"He went out and hit the guy with a hellacious head kick, wham," he said, "and the guy stumbled. Then he caught him in a guillotine."

Manny practiced the guillotine, a headlock style choke that can be applied on either the ground or standing, over and over again before the fight.

Manny won when the other fighter tapped out due to the severity of the chokehold.

Even though Manny won the fight, his version of the story remains, like his character, humble.

"I kicked him in the head and got him in a guillotine," he said.

Now that he has a 1-0 record, Manny wants to give up his amateur status to become a professional fighter.

"Eventually," he said, "before 2009."

The San Da Fight Club, now that they have won their first competition, has more mixed martial artists waiting in the wings until it is their turn to climb in the cage.

Faculty and students from Cameron who attend classes at the club include Dr. Christopher Keller of the Communication Department and Jeff Wozencraft, the current CU Student Government President. Both go on a weekly basis for the conditioning and competition.

Wozencraft said he heard of the classes from Dr. Keller last semester in Introduction to Journalism, and decided to check it out.

The San Da Fight Club meets from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4401 N.W. Gore Blvd. The contact phone number is (580) 678-2665. Information can also be obtained on their website at www.lawtonmma.com. Thomason said that the first lesson is free and the price for classes is \$45 dollars a month after that.

"This is the cheapest place in town," Thomason said. "If we get 20 or more people we'll get a bigger place," he said. "There's no experience necessary. We're not trying to make money. We give people the opportunity to train."

