

Spring break destroys environment



Opinion Pg.5

UTSA Underground



Arts & Life Pg.6

Student profile: Roel Gonzalez

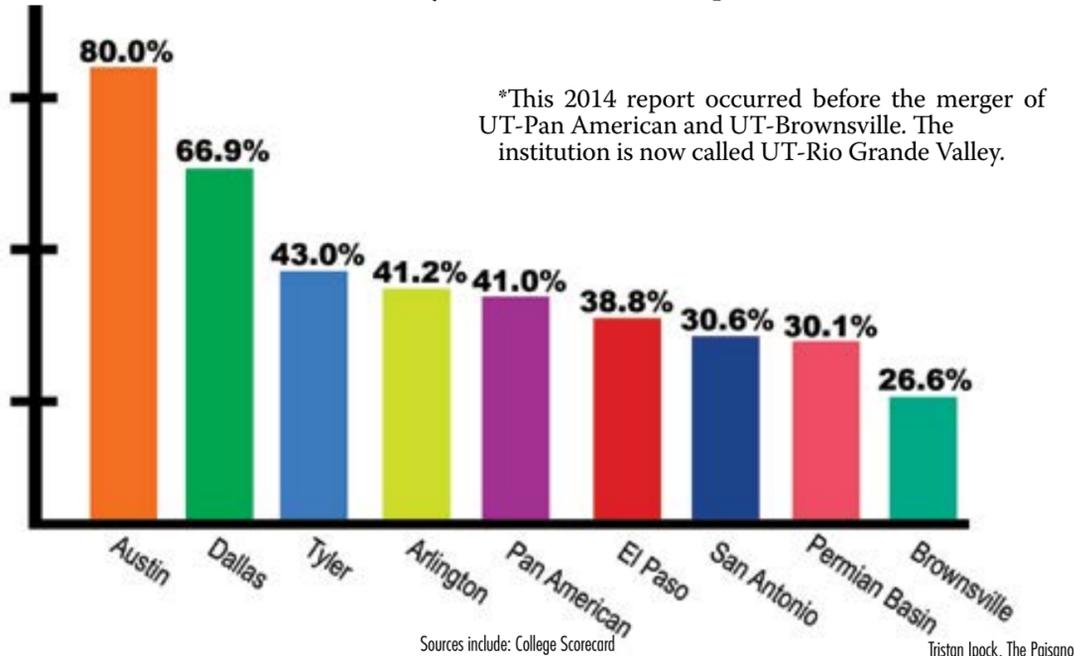


Sports Pg.9

“GRADUATION RATES ARE UNACCEPTABLE”

UTSA graduation rate among lowest in UT System

Graduation rates of UT System schools as reported in 2014



*This 2014 report occurred before the merger of UT-Pan American and UT-Brownsville. The institution is now called UT-Rio Grande Valley.

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The recent shift in leadership following former UTSA President Ricardo Romo's exit opened the floor to the question: "what is next for the University of Texas at San Antonio?"

Acting President Dr. Pedro Reyes has transitioned into his role quickly and has no reservations voicing the challenges UTSA faces today. The two most critical priorities on Reyes' agenda are student success and budget.

"We lose 25 percent of our students in the first year and another 25 percent in the second year, leaving us with only 50 percent of the students and then after that, we lose some more students." Reyes said at his first, 'Coffee with the President,' March 23 at the UTSA Ski Lodge.

UTSA reported a 30.6 percent six-year graduation rate, the third lowest of the UT System as of 2014, surpassing UT-Permian Basin at 30.1 percent and UT-Brownsville at 26.6 percent. This 2014 report occurred before the merger of UT Pan American and UT Brownsville. The institution is now called UT-Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).

A graduation rate is the percentage of a school's first-time, first-year undergraduate students who complete their program within six years.

Graduation rates do not include incoming and outgoing transfer students because federal data counts only students who graduate from the school where they first enrolled.

An additional 23 percent of former UTSA students graduated within six years at other higher education institutions and, overall, eight percent of the Texans who graduated last year

"Without students we wouldn't be here. Period."

-Dr. Pedro Reyes, Interim President

earned degrees after transferring schools. "I don't want to hear excuses," Reyes said. "UTRGV is along the border with a higher poverty level and they have higher graduation rates and retention rates than we do. So there is something along the way that's not clicking; somehow we have to find this out and solve it as soon as we can."

UTSA enacted a Graduation Rate Improvement Plan (GRIP) in 2012 to address the issue.

"The GRIP is the most comprehensive, the most collaborative initiative we have ever produced," Former President Ricardo Romo said upon its initiation. "It touches every facet of the university. It

addresses every stage of a student's career."

UTSA has seen a modest rise from its 27 percent graduation rate in 2013 to the current 31 percent. Reyes pointed to the 60.9 percent graduation rate at the University of Texas at Austin as an example of possible improvement UTSA can make.

UT Austin's four year graduation rate increased 3.1 percentage points compared in one year, and 10.3 percentage points since 2011 when the university launched a detailed plan to raise graduation rates. The university's goal is to raise the four year graduation rate to 70 percent by 2017. The UT Austin six year graduation rate is 80 percent.

Reyes advocated a goal-based approach to raising graduation rates but also voiced a focus on how incoming students get engaged and socialized at the university to better their sense of belonging.

"We really have to improve in this area," Reyes said. "I have not seen an institution (with) that kind of issue and it's the only way we can improve (student success)."

According to Reyes, students are the heart of the institution.

"Without students we wouldn't be here. Period," Reyes said.

During his tenure as an educator, Reyes researched organization and investing strategies for students in both K-12 as well as

in higher education. He believes student success correlates with UTSA's goals, including reaching Tier One status.

The UTSA budget is Reyes' second critical priority.

For UTSA to reach Tier One status, according to Reyes the main concern is money. Reyes identified communication with the Texas Legislature and San Antonio elected officials as a key strategy.

"I think having a single message really helps," Reyes said. "We need to begin to draft talking points so we are all in sync with the same sheet. Otherwise, the State Legislature sees dissonance."

The 85th State Legislature began Jan. 10 and remains in session. During the session, Texas lawmakers address the state's many needs including higher education. UTSA leaders have spent time in Austin to help legislators understand UTSA's needs and advance its funding priorities and await to hear the legislature's final decision.

Reyes plans to hold the 'Coffee with the President' series every few weeks. Schedule updates will be posted on Reyes' Facebook page.

"I want to know what you're thinking, what are your concerns and how we can do better at this institution," Reyes said. "My mission is not to miss a step on what has been built so far"

MEET THE PRESIDENT

SEE PAGE 2 FOR EXCLUSIVE PAISANO INTERVIEW



Photo Courtesy of the UT System

"Yesterday, I said we lose students here; I want to understand what are the critical pieces from both the students' side as well as the organizational side so we can bring those two together and create solutions to improve retention and graduation rates."

-Dr. Pedro Reyes, Interim President

UTSA student steals golf carts



Triston Ippock, The Paisano

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On March 21, UTSA student Royce Peters was arrested for stealing two golf carts from UTSA late last year.

"We were able to gather enough evidence or probable cause to charge him with two felonies (theft)," said UTSA Police Department Lieutenant Thomas Calucci.

According to Calucci, Peters was selling the golf

carts online. "We were able to see that this individual was using a website to sell golf carts, so when we contacted him regarding that, he stated basically yeah he does, and that

"We were able to see that this individual was using a website to sell golf carts."

-Lt. Thomas Calucci, UTSA Police Department

is kind of his side business. He buys himself golf carts. We just took it further than that." Each golf cart on campus cost the university about \$5,000.

See student, page 2

UTSA

UTSA professor David Akopian and his team have created "chat-bots," or a series of automated messaging systems that mimic human conversation. The project is designed to encourage healthier living through dialogue that combats smoking cessation, obesity and diabetes. Akopian and team's "chat-bot" is bilingual English and Spanish and able to message via text, instant messaging, Facebook and other similar social media channels.

Texas

In Frisco, Texas, Liberty High School received the attention of Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton for maintaining a prayer room for all faiths. The Texas attorney general raised constitutional concerns. The high school has been running the prayer room for several years in order to accommodate students and their religions. According to Joy Baskin, director of legal services with the Texas association of school boards, schools cannot compel prayer, but they can accommodate it.

U.S.

According to Quest Diagnostics, which performed over ten million employment drug screenings last year, the number of American workers testing positive for drug screenings has risen steadily in the past three years. Nine percent of employees tested positive for drugs in 2015. CNN reports that as a result, Syrian refugees already in the country before Trump's ban have replaced these American workers in their job positions.

World

Moscow, Russia saw the arrest of Alexei Navalny after he and thousands of people rallied for the resignation of Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. Navalny has sought to expose corruption by officials close to the Kremlin; this particular protest concerned Medvedev's corruption allegations. Navalny has been barred from running for president opposite Vladimir Putin in 2018.

Science

Research in the journal Nature suggests dinosaurs may have originated 15 million years sooner than previously thought in the land region presently called Britain. This research also argued that carnivorous dinosaurs should be classified as bird-limbed rather than lizard-limbed, as they recently have been for the past 130 years.

Q&A: DR. PEDRO REYES



Isaac Serna, The Paisano

THE PAISANO SAT WITH INTERIM PRESIDENT DR. PEDRO REYES TO GET HIS TAKE ON UTSA, ITS FUTURE AND HIS ROLE AT THE UNIVERSITY.

Q: How would you describe your first day as interim president at UTSA?

It was a pleasant day for me. Meeting all the colleagues that I've been working with for a long time and thinking about how can we move forward and position the university to accomplish its goals.

Q: Are you a candidate for UTSA president?

I am not. It's not that I don't want to do it, but I just need to take a little break to rethink, re-energize and come back with new ideas. I think it's really important for any administrator. In fact, my rule is that we ought to just do five years, six years and get somebody else to re-energize the place. That's why I would want to re-energize and get to my work a little bit and then, if I have an opportunity to come back I will definitely do it. I love this city, I love this institution. This would've been my dream job if I had been already a little bit away from administration.

Q: What qualities would you like to see in the next president of the university?

UTSA needs a person of high integrity who is willing to work with the community, who understands human relationships and can make decisions for the good of the institution. Also, it's important that UTSA has somebody who helps cultivate the next generation of leaders.

Q: Did you say you had a past relationship with UTSA?

Yes, during my 14 years at the UT System and academic affairs I, in many ways, helped the former president bring in new proposals to grow UTSA in terms of enrollment, buildings, facilities, laboratories and faculty, so I feel like I'm really part of this institution.

Q: You've raised over \$22 million in research and development funds. What's your secret to the fundraising?

I had the pleasure of working with some really good people at UT Austin and other places. As a grad student I was trained to specialize in research and development, so I learned the formula to get funding from federal sources, from private sources and from state sources so that I could fund the research programs that we had underway.

Q: How has your experience as a professor influenced your leadership style as a president or an administrator?

In the professorship I was mostly concerned about my students. I care deeply about what happens to my students. I want to make sure that when students come here they get the attention, advice, training and guidance they need. It's not only just caring for the student, but holding them to a high standard, so they know how to work with people and have a caring attitude about the work that they do.

Q: You mentioned you wanted to start writing again at the luncheon. Do you have a book in the works?

I do, I do. I want to summarize 20 years of leadership experience that I had at different levels at UT Austin as one of the graduate deans, as executive vice chancellor and my work with the Board of Regents. I think there are some lessons we can learn from there. It's going to be an analytical book; it's not going to be just a story telling. Its focus is on leadership skills that are necessary to improve what we do as entities and organizations of higher education.

Q: Have you visited our downtown campus?

I have, and it's an incredible facility. I think we have plans to fully utilize the facility. They have architecture, criminal justice, public policy and social work, but I think we can do a lot more within the community so it's responsive to the needs of the area. I learned through the councilwoman of that district that in her area, only three percent of the population has a bachelor's degree. That is really sad for me as an educator and as somebody who's a leader who wants to make sure we get education shared throughout the community. Lack of education has to do with the lack of advancement on the economic side as well as on the social side. We ought to be there, and we ought to be helping to improve that area.

Q: Do you live in San Antonio?

I do, and I love it. I live fairly close (to campus). It's a great community. I have a lot of relatives here, and I spent three or four years here when I was a small child. I enjoyed being here during those years, and I enjoy it now. San Antonio is a beautiful city and has an incredible history and culture, unlike many other cities.

Q: Is there any opportunity for a student-led board to speak on the behalf of students?

Absolutely, and I will talk to the provost because he is the leader on this specific piece and there is no question in my mind that student voices are really important to us. In fact, I met with a group of students yesterday called The Student Leadership Council, and they brought really great ideas to the table. We want to act on those ideas; we not only listen, but we act on those ideas.

Interview conducted by Isaac Serna & Samuel DeLeon

Results are in for record breaking SGA election

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The students of UTSA have elected their next student body president and vice president along with several other key positions in the Student Government Association. Voting began on March 6 and continued through March 7. For the first time in UTSA history, seven students ran for the office of SGA president. The seven-way race led to a runoff election because no candidate received more than 50 percent of the vote. On March 21 and March 22, students voted for their future president and vice president in the run-off election.



The newly elected SGA executive team. Photo courtesy of Mikel Moore

The runoff election results were given out on March 23. Roadrunners cast 994 votes in the runoff election via RowdyLink. In the election for president, Marcus Thomas received 58.7 percent of the vote, a total of 579 votes, finishing ahead of Terralyn Willburn who had 41.2 percent of the vote. In the vice presidential election, Brittany Garcia, junior pre-med, public health major won with 60.3 percent of the vote, beating Marcos Mullin who earned 39.7 percent of the vote.

Student Government Association President-Elect Marcus Thomas stated, "First off I would like to thank everyone for voting in the student government elections. Turn out exceeded nine percent. I would also like to thank all of those who ran for senatorial and executive board positions. Every single one of them believed in something bigger than themselves, and that is a core value of what it means to be a Roadrunner. My vice-president-elect and I look forward to committing ourselves to not only SGA but the UTSA community as a whole. Go "Runners!"

President-Elect Thomas is a junior economics major and sits as business chair for SGA. Thomas has been involved with the organization since his freshman year.

"Marcus has a work ethic that's second to none, and our accomplishments reflect his commitment to SGA. His vision truly represents the core values of our organization," said sophomore political science major, SGA member and one of the three candidates for the office of vice president Mikel Moore. "I believe our members share an ambitious outlook that reaffirms our commitment to shaping a university students can take pride in."

"His tenure started under President Zack Dunn, and he has seen three administrations, making this the fourth. He brings experience and a steady hand to our campus. I truly believe that he will do great things with his team and his VP Elect, Brittany Garcia," current SGA President Andrew Hubbard stated. Hubbard will continue as acting president until April 9.

The UTSA student body president serves as chief executive officer for SGA; advocates for the student body outside of UTSA at meetings with legislature, councilmen and the mayor; and speaks at public events on behalf of the university. The vice president serves as support to the president

and student body. Prior to the runoff election, the results for the treasurer and secretary races were announced. Montana Meeker, a sophomore finance major, was elected as secretary by the UTSA student body. Students also elected Mariah Crippen, a sophomore communication major, for the treasurer position.

President-Elect Thomas and the newly elected officers will participate in a transition retreat on April 1. On Thursday, April 13, the new administration will have their first SGA meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the UC Harris Room.

UTSA community responds to ICE raids

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The Trump administration implemented new immigration rules that have drastically impacted communities across the country.

"The ICE rounding up and deporting people, splitting up families and detaining children is sickening," Dr. Marco Cervantes, associate professor of Mexican-American studies said. "It is dehumanizing and criminal what is going on. UTSA has a history of standing in solidarity with undocumented students, families and community members, so a foundation for this kind of work is already there. Given that many of our students at

UTSA and their families are currently being affected by policy that is hostile to Mexican immigrants, UTSA should naturally be a sanctuary campus. The fact that we are not has called for stronger solidarity among students and faculty in the program and the university as a whole."

In previous years low-profile cases were not a priority for deportation, but under the new administration all undocumented people are at risk. Josue Romero, a 19-year-old student at the Southwest School of Art in San Antonio, an undocumented immigrant brought to the U.S. as a child protected under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), was detained in San Antonio in February.

Emma Contreras, a

student double majoring in Spanish and Mexican-American studies at UTSA, grew up in a border town heavily occupied by ICE agents.

Contreras stated ICE had always roamed her hometown, but now with Trump as president, the agents have been more aggressive with their tactics.

In closing, Dr. Cervantes stated, "I honestly don't know what to expect next, but I do know we have to be active in protesting, calling legislators, writing articles, creating art, running for office and staying vocal about these injustices. None of this profiling, detaining and deporting should be normalized."

Salazar talks sanctuary status



Sam Antonio will cooperate with ICE in detaining undocumented immigrants. Photo Courtesy of Robin Cresswell, Bexar County Sheriff's Office

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On Tuesday March 21, Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar informed students and faculty about current issues in the Sheriff's Department, including the sanctuary city status. Salazar said that San Antonio is choosing to cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the detaining of unlawful immigrants in the U.S.

On Feb. 28 of this year, the Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES) submitted a petition directly to Salazar's office demanding the sheriff's office no longer voluntarily cooperate with ICE. Salazar's office made no comment about this petition or the policy platform RAICES delivered and did not respond to the invitation of a town hall meeting.

"By refusing our invitation to a community town hall without even a public statement, Sheriff Salazar is playing politics with people's lives. Enough is enough," RAICES representatives stated in a recent media release.

UTSA professor Henry

Meade and students of the criminal justice honors fraternity Alpha Phi Sigma booked the sheriff to speak in their conversation series titled Straight Talk. At this event students were encouraged to ask questions regarding Salazar's career and vision for San Antonio.

When asked about his reasoning for cooperating with ICE, Salazar made it clear he was elected to protect and serve, not lead based on personal opinion. Using the example of Travis County, with Austin being a well known sanctuary city, Salazar spoke passionately about what San Antonio had to lose if they did not cooperate.

Austin lost approximately \$1.5 million in grants after Governor Greg Abbott's announcement to cut funding to cities that did not cooperate with ICE investigations concerning legal status of a person under lawful detention of arrest. Salazar said he was initially for the idea and asked his cabinet to look into the matter of maintaining sanctuary city status.

San Antonio stands to lose approximately \$9 million dollars in state funding if it does not cooperate with ICE detention requests. This

substantial amount would take away from programs such as rehabilitation for juvenile delinquents, rehabilitation services for victims of rape and rehabilitation of domestic violence victims.

Salazar told the audience that the victims of these heinous crimes need to be attended to and San Antonio could not afford to lose these programs. The sheriff view said he would much rather cooperate with ICE, who does not always deport detainees, than abandon those who need serious help.

Salazar recognized the need to help refugees who have nowhere else to go, but his view on the community put San Antonians as a priority. "It was a battle we could not afford to fight," said Salazar.

Salazar closed the evening thanking the community for their continued support and offering students the opportunity to create an open dialogue with the Bexar County Sheriff's Department.

How to Freeze ICE

Every human has rights whether they're an undocumented citizen or not. Here are five things to know if approached on campus, or at home by ICE

1. DO NOT OPEN DOORS

ICE cannot come in without a signed warrant by a criminal court judge.

2. REMAIN SILENT

ICE can use anything you say against you in your immigration case, so claim your right to remain silent. Say, "I plead the fifth and choose to remain silent."

3. DO NOT SIGN

Don't sign anything ICE gives you without talking to an attorney.

4. REPORT AND RECORD

Take pictures and video unless you're on federal government property. Take notes of badge numbers, number of agents, time, type of car and exactly what happened.

5. FIGHT BACK

Get a trustworthy attorney and explore all options to fight your case. If detained, you may be able to post bail. Join your local immigrant activist team to defend yourself from law enforcement.



Tristan Lopez, The Paisano

Student charged with theft over golf carts

continued from page 1

Each department at UTSA (housing, student life, etc.) have their own methods of authorizing who can use the carts they are provided with. Most of these golf carts are battery-powered and self-sustainable. They are an easy way to get around campus. They are used to transport disabled people and equipment, to give tours around campus and to make deliveries.

Brianna Niblett, a junior math major and a student assistant at Laurel Village (one of the dorms on campus) uses the golf carts

at Laurel for mail runs.

"I really think it makes no sense to steal a golf cart. Whoever did it, should have realized that we have those on campus for a reason and now they have to be replaced," Niblett said.

Peters did not offer any information as to why he stole the golf carts, but Calucci believes Peters and others who steal items such as electronics on campus steal because of money and the opportunity to own something they want or don't have.

To prevent this kind of theft from happening again,

Lieutenant Calucci and the UTSA Police Department will be working with different departments concerning locking mechanisms for the carts. Also, he thinks parking the carts in areas that are under surveillance and removing the batteries from the carts at night will be helpful.

The UTSA Police Department not only deal with big theft issues, it also help students retrieve items that are stolen when left unattended. For more information on the UTSA Police Department and its services, visit utsa.edu/

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Rape culture: a cycle of fear

COMMENTARY



Jessica Salinas
@ylwbird_

As a 23-year-old woman of color and of small stature, I live in constant fear and paranoia. I never consciously place myself into situations where I can be taken advantage of by people, men especially.

Recently, I got into a heated argument with my mother and elder sister about the potential danger of going downtown by myself to an upcoming music festival. I emerged from the argument angrier than ever at the society I live in and at my mother and sister for being right about a woman of my stature potentially being physically overpowered and taken advantage of, walking in the heart of downtown San Antonio by myself (i.e. sexually assaulted and raped).

I rarely go out at night. I never go for walks after sunset. If I go out for the occasional drink, I do so sparingly; I never get drunk. To publicly lose

my inhibitions is to lose control of myself. To lose control is to potentially be taken advantage of by a person who cannot recognize proper consent or who has misconstrued views on consent. There is the fear and paranoia that people, especially men, are not to be trusted. There is the paranoia that men are simply nice and courteous to me because they want something I have and will take this thing by force if necessary. I have witnessed and experienced rape culture throughout my life.

A simple Google search defines rape culture as a society or environment whose prevailing social attitudes have the effect of normalizing or trivializing sexual assault and abuse.

It is not necessarily a society or a group of people that outwardly promotes rape. Rape culture is more implicit. It is cultural practices that excuse or otherwise tolerate sexual violence. It is a social conditioning that we experience together as a culture.

Sexual violence is normalized and excused in the media and popular culture. Sexual assault, rape and general violence is ignored, trivialized, normalized or made into jokes.

Rape culture is perpetuated through the use of

misogynistic language, the objectification of women's bodies and the glamorization of sexual violence; therefore — it creates a society that disregards women's rights and safety.

So what are some examples of rape culture?

To name a few: blaming the victim; trivializing sexual assault; tolerance of sexual harassment; supporting athletes (i.e. Brock Turner, Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond) who are charged with rape and calling their victims career-destroyers; publicly defending celebrities (i.e. Woody Allen, Mel Gibson, Casey Affleck, Bill Cosby and President Donald Trump) accused of rape and sexual assault just because they are celebrities and ignoring or denouncing what the victim has to say; inflating false rape report statistics; publicly scrutinizing a victim's dress, mental state, motives and history; assuming only promiscuous women get raped; assuming men don't get raped or only "weak" men get raped; teaching women to avoid getting raped instead of teaching men not to rape, and refusing to take rape accusations seriously.

According to the National Center for the Prosecution of Violence Against Women, the rate of false reporting for sexual



assault is in the range of two to eight percent.

According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN), out of every 1,000 rapes, 994 perpetrators will walk free. Perpetrators of sexual violence are less likely to go to jail or prison than other criminals.

Most women and girls limit their behavior because of the possibility of rape. Most women and girls live in fear of rape. Rape functions as a powerful means by which the female population is held in a subordinate position to the male population. This speaks to the examples of defining 'manhood' as dominant and sexually aggressive and defining 'womanhood' as submissive and sexually passive. There is pressure on men to 'score' and pressure on women to not appear 'cold.'

A cycle of fear is rape culture's legacy.

Rape culture is women feeling less safe walking down the streets at night and instructing their daughters not to walk the streets at night. Rape culture is women being afraid to say "no" to unwanted advances because they could be hurt, but the same women are criticized for not being clear or showing mixed signals.

It is victim blaming. It is empowering rapists rather than survivors. It is a society that teaches, "Don't get raped," to women and girls (among trans people, gender nonconforming people and cis men) rather than, "don't rape."

So what are some ways to combat rape culture?

Avoid using language that objectifies or degrades people; avoid phrases that

reinforce rape culture (i.e. "being a tease," "get it in" and "win her over"); think critically about the media messages about women, men, relationships and violence; be respectful of others' physical space even in casual situations; always communicate with sexual partners and do not assume consent; if a friend says he or she has been raped, take him or her seriously and be supportive; get involved, join a student or community group working to end violence against women and other marginalized groups.

It is important to remember sexual violence and rape culture affect trans and gender nonconforming people as well as cis men. Rape culture is everyone's issue regardless of gender.

Tristan Ipock, The Paisano

Improving Access to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Ensuring Access is Simple and Secure

OP-ED



Congressman Lloyd Doggett
@RepLloydDoggett

Washington, D.C. — Following his recent efforts to restore full access to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Tax Policy Subcommittee, is introducing the Equitable Student Aid Access Act, which would simplify the not-so-simple FAFSA. College Forward, a Texas-based nonprofit that coaches underserved students to collegiate success, recommended some elements of the

legislation. Rep. Doggett said:

"Too many students find the FAFSA too complicated to complete, so they lose access to available financial aid, causing many to abandon college education. Students who failed to complete the FAFSA could have received millions in federal assistance. My bill, like my prior successful FAFSA legislation, is designed to take the next step in removing unnecessary obstacles to ease access to student financial aid. All students who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or food assistance through SNAP, for example, would be able to complete a shorter form FAFSA to access the full Pell Grant amount. The bill also codifies that the FAFSA is available earlier, in October, and broadens access by restoring the eligibility cap for the full Pell Grant to all of those with the qualifying family

income level that applied through 2011."

A key element of making FAFSA work now is the Data Retrieval Tool (DRT), which allows students to auto-populate required IRS tax information into their application. On March 3, the DRT was taken down with no warning less than two weeks before the FAFSA was due for aid in Texas. Rep. Doggett immediately urged the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Department of Education (ED) to resolve the problem, after which the IRS and ED released a joint statement explaining the shutdown. Rep. Doggett has now personally met with IRS Commissioner John Koskinen to ensure the DRT is fully and securely restored:

"Families depend on the DRT to obtain accurate tax information from prior years. Without it, students are more likely to err on their FAFSA, which

could delay or deny aid. Commissioner Koskinen assured me that the DRT will be restored very soon. As I work on this new legislation, I will continue to actively monitor effective use of the existing system to ensure both data security and student accessibility."

Background:

In addition to making statutory the DRT, the bill would also do the following:

It codifies two decisions: to make the form available earlier (in October, instead of January), which gives filers more time to complete the form. Second, to permit filers to use tax data from

the "prior, prior year" — that is, the year before the previous one—giving filers and their families increased confidence in filling out the form correctly and quickly, because they can use tax information that was accepted by the IRS in the previous year.

Expand eligibility for the automatic full Pell Grant by including those whose families make less than \$30,000, and allowing those who are enrolled in a federal means-tested benefit program, these include: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental

Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) or Supplementary Security Income (SSI), to skip the complicated questions about additional financial assets that often causes students and families to stop seeking aid altogether. Filers would be assured that upon completion of the form and enrollment in school, they will receive the maximum Federal Pell Grant, just \$5,815 for the 2016-2017 year.

This Wall Street Journal article further describes the DRT's outage, its impact, and Rep. Doggett's efforts to restore it.

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EDITORIAL

Nationally, black girls make up a staggeringly disproportionate number of missing children cases. According to the Black and Missing Foundation, 36.7 percent of missing people under 17 are black. Considering that African Americans make up about 13 percent of the population in the United States, this number is shameful and eerie. Over the weekend outrage erupted on social media over a perceived increase in missing black and brown girls in

the nation's capitol. On Twitter, #FindOurGirls and #missingdgirls were trending as folks remarked incredulously on the lack of media attention on the case. Many pointed out the disparity in news coverage when white women go missing versus when black and brown women do. D.C. officials say that there aren't more girls suddenly going missing but that there is simply more awareness as police increasingly use social media to find missing persons. Still, according to a report by ABC News, 12 black girls went missing

in the course of three days. Until the public outcry was sparked on Twitter, there was no media attention dedicated to or Amber Alerts issued for these missing girls of color. Under current guidelines, an Amber Alert can only be issued if it's believed that a child has been abducted or is in imminent danger. When law enforcement classifies these girls as "runaways" rather than "missing," then there is no Amber Alert, media attention or sense of urgency to find them. This mislabeling makes girls more susceptible to

sex trafficking. Rather than labeling and writing off these vulnerable girls, we need to consider what was happening to them at home that made them believe running away was their best option. Recent events prompted Rep. Cedric Richmond, D-La., Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., to call on Attorney General Jeff Sessions and FBI Director James Comey to "devote the resources necessary to determine whether these developments are an anomaly or whether they are indicative of an underlying trend that must

be addressed" Surely if the FBI can dedicate its time and resources to recover Tom Brady's missing Super Bowl jersey, they can make a vigorous effort to get these girls home safe. In 1962, Malcolm X said "The most disrespected woman in America is the black woman. The most un-protected person in America is the black woman. The most neglected person in America is the black woman." In 2017, as we try to #FindOurGirls, his words still ring true.

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Breakin' the beach

COMMENTARY



Sam Ceballos @sambina95

Spring break has zoomed past us. We now inch closer to the end of the semester as we excitedly plan our next wild party or plan our next crazy vacation. Rarely does a college student think about the destruction and hazards they left behind in their spring break vacation spot. South Padre Island (SPI), the college student's dream Spring Break spot, is a small town located about four hours from San Antonio. SPI has become one of the most visited spots for spring breakers and for good reason. SPI has nice tropical weather, clean sandy beaches and is conveniently located in Texas. Now imagine red Solo cups, beer and liquor bottles and other trash scattered all over the beach. Not so nice looking now, right? Every year, spring break brings in revenue to the small island, but it comes with the price of trashed

beaches and chaos. Spring breakers cause harm to the environment when they dump wrappers and drinks anywhere. Without fail, the island ends up changing from a beautiful tropical paradise to a disaster zone. Not only do they trash the environment, but animals have been abused by drunk college students. An Instagram page called totalratmove asked its followers to post their craziest spring break videos. Some of these videos included a couple of students holding a shark's mouth open so that they could shot gun a beer can on the shark's teeth and another video showed a student holding a struggling seagull so that his friends could take a picture of him. Events like this are unacceptable. Wildlife is innocent and should not be messed with by drunk students that are not thinking about the harm they are causing. Spring break is meant to be a fun time to relax from school, but it should not be a time to stress out the environment and the people that live in the surrounding areas that have become prime spring break spots. Many cities that have been visited during spring break create action plans for cleaning up their cities before and after

the vacation time is over. SPI has several events to clean up the beach after everyone has left. One event took place Mar. 26 and encompassed the help of organizations from surrounding cities that were affected by spring breakers. Spring breakers need to be more aware of the damage that they are causing to the beautiful environments they have chosen to visit. The spring fun has passed, and future trips are on the horizon for college students. The environment does not have to suffer while you have fun. There can be a compromise. People need to be conscious of the damage they are causing. Trash floats into the ocean, and sea creatures mistake it for food or end up getting stuck in the trash. Take the time to clean up around you, even if the trash is not yours. Have fun on vacation and party because you have survived another semester of college, but how would you like it if someone came and trashed your dorm room? Take a moment and think about what your partying is doing. The environment and the people that live there will thank you if you do.



America First

COMMENTARY



Justice Lovin @ThePaisano

With the publication of his America First budget proposal, President Trump has revealed the policy implications of his brand of nationalism. The budget serves as an addition to the growing body of evidence for the flaws of this sort or his of militant nationalism; including, importantly, its complete lack of benefits for the people who comprise the nation. The proposal cuts funding for the EPA by 31.4 percent, the Labor Department by 20.7 percent, the Department of Housing and Urban Development by 13.2 percent and the Department of Education by 13.5 percent, not to mention cutting the Department of Health and Human Services by 16.2 percent. In doing this, the budget puts an end to many government programs, including community service and development block grants, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowments for Arts and Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The only increases are in the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security and Veteran's Affairs. This shows quite clearly which America Trump puts first. Not geographic America, which will suffer as a result of climate change, or the American people, many, if not all, of whom benefitted from programs that are being cut. Nor is it American culture that is being put first.

Rather, it is the executive branch of the American government, which is to say President Trump himself. Interestingly, this megalomania did not begin with Trump; he just isn't very subtle about it. Exactly how far back the phenomenon goes is difficult to say, and perhaps unimportant beyond acknowledging that it is quite far. It is well documented, and we can turn to what others have said of their times in order to understand our own. Specifically, George Orwell's "Notes on Nationalism" captures the ideology of a nationalism sans nation, a state of mind that leaves one "capable of the most flagrant dishonesty" and "unshakably certain of being in the right." Orwell's essay describes exactly the sort of political dishonesty of which Trump is a living caricature, but it just as easily describes many of the people who are committed to "Conservative" or "Liberal" political identities. The politically motivated news and willful ignorance Orwell criticizes are alive and well and have been since well before Orwell was alive to write about them. To believe otherwise is to engage in the same sort of false nostalgia that produced "Make America Great Again." There is no idyllic 1950's or bucolic paradise to return to. This is why funding social services and the humanities is important. The one thing we know for certain about the conditions of the past is that they lead to the present, and it doesn't seem unreasonable to assume they would do so again. The answers to contemporary problems then lie in the ability of people to imagine new ways of being. But while people are forced to struggle to exist on a daily basis, they have no time to imagine and enact new ideas.



Events this week in San Antonio

Tuesday 28th	Wednesday 29th	Thursday 30th	Friday 31st
Free Yoga! Time: 7 p.m. Place: Bursleson Yard Beer Garden Price: Free	Jimmy Eat Wednesday Time: 10 p.m. Place: Brass Monkey Price: Free	Brick Party Time: 6 p.m. Place: Brick at Blue Star Price: Free	Into the Woods Time: 6 p.m. Place: Arts Recital Hall Price: Free
Women's Talking Circle Time: 6 p.m. Place: Movement Gallery Price: Free	Breaking the Borders Time: 6 p.m. Place: Our Lady of the Lake University Price: Free	(Non) Commercial: Share Alike Time: 6 p.m. Place: Trebla Art Gallery Price: Free	True Indigo Album Release Time: 9 p.m. Place: K23 Gallery Price: \$6
Saturday 1st	Sunday 2nd	Monday 3rd	
Bubbles! Time: 11 a.m. Place: Hemisfair Park Price: Free	Into the Woods Time: 6 p.m. Place: Arts Recital Hall Price: Free	Big Blue Blocks: Imagination Playground Time: 10 a.m. Place: Hemisfair Park Price: Free	
Natural Abstractions Time: 6 p.m. Place: Mantle Art Space Price: Free	Pearl Farmer's Market Time: 10 a.m. Place: The Pearl Price: Free		

'Taking Flight' showcases UTSA dance students' work

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On March 25, UTSA dance students performed a showcase at the Buena Vista Theater located at the Downtown Campus. The showcase included the pom squad as well as students pursuing a minor in dance studies.

The dance department was established in fall 2010. The department focuses on a few specific types of dance.

"We do three levels of ballet and three levels of modern," said dance director Megan J. W. Rulewics. "Then we have jazz and musical theatre, and we have contemporary

dance." Rulewics has taught dance for 15 years and is a Brigham Young University and University of Utah alumna.

The performance consisted of seven different pieces that explored hip-hop, ballet and modern dance. The first performance was a hip-hop dance by the pom squad titled "Work it Girl!" and featured music by Dev, Fergie and Future. The girls wore camouflage and posed fiercely as the curtains opened. As soon as the lights came up, the girls used facial expressions to engage the audience as they popped their way through the music. The pom squad displayed high energy and had the house clapping loudly at the end of the dance.



UTSA Pom Squad and dance students pose after show. Raquel E. Alonzo, The Paisano

Things slowed down for the ballet II classes "By The Numbers" piece. The dancers wore beautiful blue lyrical dresses that flowed perfectly as they danced across the floor. The dancers showed off their lovely grand jetés and leg extensions.

Students from the intro-

duction to modern dance class performed "Reaching." This number captivated the audience as the students danced their way on and off stage. The dancers showed great isolation movements, which paired tastefully with the whimsical musical score by Philip Glass.

"Divas in Dresses," performed by the pom squad, showcased the dancers' skillset the best. Fouttes into attitude jetés held the audience in awe. The dancers rotated trio groups to show off their best attributes, such as Russians and turns.

Rulewics performed a solo piece titled "The Light in Me." The music by Alexandre Desplat started off slow and gradually began to build up as Rulewics danced faster. Emotion is conveyed throughout the piece as she tries to grasp someone/something invisible that is not in her reach. She ended the intricately choreographed piece with a jeté off stage.

The intermediate modern class performed "Wants To..." which includ-

ed the song "Everybody Wants To Rule The World" by the 80's band Tears For Fears. There was never a dull moment because the dancers moved quickly and had different choreographies going on with the upbeat music.

Finally, "Engulfed" was performed by the modern III class. This piece was the most expressive and included intricate arm movements, jumps, isolations and use of slow and fast choreography. The dancers displayed strength when they lifted other dancers into the air.

Overall, the dancers were graceful and poised. If you would like to help support the UTSA College of Liberal and Fine Arts, you may donate at giving.utsa.edu/givetocola.

Musicians of Business prepare for UTSA Underground

Enrique Bonilla
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The third UTSA Underground festival is less than two weeks away! This

annual festival, curated by student organization Musicians of Business, takes place within the service tunnels of UTSA. These

dimly lit corridors provide an intimate and unique experience for both the audience and the artists.

President of the organization Dylan Ilseng is the head of this year's event. "UTSA Underground is a unique way to showcase the creative talents of people connected to the school to an audience that might otherwise be unaware of the breadth of talent present here," said Ilseng. A night of underground music in an underground venue: UTSA Underground.

UTSA Underground gives students the opportunity to manage the various aspects of producing and marketing a live music event. Events of this size typically involve a high amount of logistics, teamwork and com-

munication. These behind the scene activities - sound engineering, booking, marketing and coordinating - are often overlooked aspects of live music.

This year's UTSA Underground will be the largest effort thus far, hosting 12 musical artists as well as 14 visual artists spread across four different stages. The audience will be free to shuffle back and forth between stages throughout the evening.

Headlining the event is South Texas based indie Latin project, Volcán. Volcán boasts a lineup of 12 members, according to their Facebook. The large lineup includes a full rhythm section, which gives the band an extremely large and complex soundscape. The amount of energy this band shares on stage is enormous and highly contagious.

Also joining the evening's lineup is notable local act, 16 Psyche. This

five-piece indie band is one of San Antonio's stand-out indie acts right now. Reminiscent of early '90s lo fi indie rock with jazz influenced drumming, 16 Psyche are a must watch during UTSA Underground this year.

Other acts include Farewell Summer, San Antonio's Freestyle Friday's members, Down for the Count, Sonora Correcaminos, Wryane, Remants, Jinetes and Andria Rose. Visual acts include various groups and individuals: Clay Fusion, Jillian Piepenburg, B.A.T. Printmaking Club, Eros, Selika De Los Santos, Jahnae Williams, Aaron Pozos, Robert Wilson, Rachel Long, Luis Nunez, Misti Rainwater, Lites, Rebekah Hurst, Darrian Thomas and Marco Rios.

On April 1, come support and enjoy the sights and sounds of UTSA Underground at the UC Lawn and UTSA Tunnels.



UTSA UNDERGROUND

MUSICAL ARTISTS

VOLCÁN
 FAREWELL SUMMER
 FREESTYLE FRIDAY'S
 DOWN FOR THE COUNT
 SONORA CORRECAMINOS
 16 PSYCHE - PEACEMAKER
 WRAYANE - COSMIC BEHEMOTH
 REMNANTS - JINETES - ANDRIA ROSE

VISUAL ARTISTS

CLAY FUSION
 JILLIAN PIEPENBURG
 B.A.T. PRINTMAKING CLUB
 EROS - SELIKA DE LOS SANTOS
 JAHNAE WILLIAMS - AARON POZOS
 ROBERT WILSON - RACHEL LONG
 LUIS NUÑEZ - MISTI RAINWATER-LITES
 REBEKAH HURST - DARRIAN THOMAS - MARCO RIOS

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For The Kids organizes dance marathon for cancer

Samantha Ceballos
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For The Kids raises \$70,025.94 at marathon. Photo courtesy of FTK

UTSA is home to wonderful organizations that help both the campus and the San Antonio community. One organization has taken on the task of help-

ing alleviate the financial and emotional burdens of families with children suffering from pediatric cancer.

For The Kids (FTK) is a non-profit organization that began in 2009 as the result of a project assigned in a leadership skills course.

Since then, the organization has continued to grow and provide help to those that need it most. Many of the original executives and board members continue to participate and help guide the new members

with FTK events.

"Our goal is to let the children and their families know that they are not alone as they face this harrowing disease," said public affairs chair Samantha Holub.

FTK spends all year planning different events to help children and their families. Throughout the year, FTK holds family game nights, hospital parties and a fashion show to help children have fun. During the fashion show, the children are escorted down the runway by student leaders.

The main event for FTK is the Dance Marathon. This event is planned year-round and focuses on 10 to 15 children and their

families.

"The theme of the year is picked during the summer and Dance Marathon starts being planned in the fall," said Holub. "We fundraise the entire year, but we begin making decorations and contacting organizations beginning in the first few weeks of the spring semester."

The dance marathon is a no sitting, no sleeping, twelve-hours of high energy pledge made to local families that are battling the emotional and financial burden of pediatric cancer. The significance behind the twelve-hour dance pledge lies in the idea that if the families cannot rest from this battle with pediatric cancer, then neither will

the pledge dancers. But fear not, the event is not only about dancing. There are also live entertainment, music, games, performances by athletes, family speeches and more.

"For every event, we invite every student organization on campus," said Holub. Events and causes such as FTK's dance marathon demonstrate how organizations can unite and help fight to make a difference in the lives of others. To help families escape the hospital environments they are accustomed to while also allowing sick children to have fun is a noble cause that brings the San Antonio community together.

FTK works to make the lives of children and their

families a little easier. FTK hopes, for just a little while, children will forget they are sick and families forget the great responsibilities they have. This fight against childhood cancer is trying to make life a little more enjoyable for those involved.

This year's FTK dance marathon will take over the Convocation Center on April 8 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Students and campus organization are encouraged to help with this great event. To register as a dancer, students can check out danceforthekids.org/register. The \$30 registration fee covers the cost of a t-shirt and three meals.

Alternative pop rock band Bad Suns rocks Paper Tiger

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On March 18, fans camped outside of the Paper Tiger music venue hours before the show in anticipation of the sold out concert. Even though it was the first time the band had ever played in San Antonio, screaming fans came out in droves. The alternative pop rock band has experienced a quick rise to stardom with their hit first album "Language & Perspective" in 2014 and their recently released "Disappear Here."

Both albums have been critically and audience acclaimed, leading to sold out shows across the country. The band's Heartbreaker tour has sold out almost every single tour date. Their upcoming summer tour, starting in May, is already selling out.

Bad Suns' frontman and vocalist Christo Bowman discussed their new album, "Disappear Here." Bowman said the members of the band knew each other from a young age because they had mostly went to the same high school.

"It felt natural very quickly once the four of us had come together in this band," said Bowman. Since they had this experi-



The band sold out San Antonio show. Photo courtesy of Bad Suns

ence with each other, the members had similar ideas of what they wanted to do. "The first album came from a really genuine place, and that's how we've always approached the music," said Bowman.

A band's second album usually falls into the curse of the sophomore

slump, but Bowman believes Bad Suns avoided it by evolving the sound they already had. "We tried not to overthink it, we just made the music that felt natural to us because we had a desire to go somewhere forward from making our first album," said Bowman. Their fans adore the new music, and the live shows perfectly exemplify this adoration.

At their sold-out Paper Tiger performance, the

crowd roared with every song. The audience almost immediately erupted into screams of excitement as the band played their first notes of the night. With every song Bad Suns' played, the crowd escalated their elation. Audience members held up homemade signs to try to catch the band's attention. Some of the audience had even climbed on the venue's counters to dance. When the band played songs like "Heartbreaker," "Disappear Here" and "Swimming in the Moonlight," the audience couldn't help themselves from singing and dancing along.

Bad Suns' own showman-

ship only helped to raise the crowd's feelings of ecstasy. Several times Bowman would jump into the audience and crowd surf—even being able to stand and dance atop the crowd. Hanging from the rafters of the club, he and the audience would sing and dance their hearts out.

The next time Bad Suns' tour in San Antonio, make sure to buy a ticket early. At the rate this band is going, the show will sell out almost as quickly as it's announced. For more information about the band's tour and their new album "Disappear Here," visit badsuns.tumblr.com.

Professor Benjamin McVey displays work in Artpace

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Artpace—located within the Downtown San Antonio area—is one of many destinations within the city where contemporary art is currently flourishing. Artpace is a contemporary art gallery and non-profit organization founded by Linda Pace in 1995. Pace has since passed away, but her vision for the surrounding San Antonio community to focus on artists' artistic process is still alive today.

The organization is devoted to the communal art experience. One method Artpace has implemented to support this devotion to the process of creating contemporary art is by way of artist residencies. When an artist is chosen to become a resident, he or she will be provided an area within the Artpace building to set up their temporary studio.

Resident artists accomplish the aspect of a communal art experience by inviting audiences to view their unfinished and finished artworks within the space they are being created in. The most audience friendly creative space is

located within Main Space (formerly Window Works); this studio space is comprised of three walls and one wall length window, so audiences may view the artist and his/her artworks from the sidewalk of Main Avenue. Artpace's Main Space is currently housing the studio of local artist Benjamin McVey.

McVey is a UTSA alumna and current professor within the department of art and art history. Before attending graduate school at UTSA, McVey focused solely on painting, but he slowly transitioned into sculpture and multimedia art. After graduating, McVey prioritized his ideas concerning art and realized he was most interested in physical/personal space, architecture and composition.

The artworks hanging within McVey's Main Space studio are pieces he has created during his stay in Artpace and they display his evolving artistic style since finishing graduate school in 2012.

"Some people do not go to museums and galleries because they just do not understand," said McVey when asked why he wanted his art to be a communal experience. "They do not understand artists and what

happens within a studio. They do not understand contemporary art, and they feel excluded from the whole process."

Moving his studio into Artpace's Main Space has allowed McVey to show the community his art and also his artistic process. "I want to tear down that fourth wall and introduce people to what goes on in a studio," said McVey.

Since working at Artpace, McVey has seen how this experience has positively affected his teaching. Before McVey's Artpace experience, he was regimented and strict within the UTSA classroom. But after working within his semi-open studio, McVey has become more relaxed and accepting of unforeseen changes within his own artworks and also the artworks of his students.

McVey also hosts live weekly artist talks within his studio every Wednesday at 2 p.m. The purpose of the talks is to introduce the artists that surround the San Antonio art community as well as artists from other areas; these videos can be found on his Facebook page. More of McVey's artworks can be viewed on his website at benjaminmcvey.com.



McVey has experience with painting, sculpting and multimedia art.

Leah Feneley, The Paisano

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Spring 2017 BFA exhibitions showcase UTSA's artists

Leah Feneley
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Marcela Ornelas-Mondragón.



"Seventy-six": At the 33rd Annual Juried Student Exhibition.



"Untitled Growth": Mixed Media.

Marcela Ornelas-Mondragón focuses her paintings and sculptures on different aspects of the human body.

"My work focuses on the involuntary and voluntary changes that a body is able to withstand and go through, as well as the appreciation and celebration of the body," said Ornelas-Mondragón. "The appreciation of whatever is deemed as negative or positive for our health but that still signals we're alive."

Ornelas-Mondragón is inspired by her father who is a plastic surgeon. With the photographs her father sends her, she is able to create artwork which artfully depicts those images.

For the final BFA show, Ornelas-Mondragón will incorporate her Mexican culture into her artwork. Piñatas are used as a sign of celebration, and she will juxtapose that symbol of celebration with the negative emotions surrounding a deformity. The artist will use a piñata in place of a deformity to show the bright side of the condition.

"I want to pour my culture into my artwork and include the need of celebrating every occasion into these situations – people with 'undesirable' features/surgical patients," said Ornelas-Mondragón.

More of her work can be viewed on her website mmondragon.com.



Vianney Lopez.



"What Is ...": Lithograph.



Film still of "Meat."

Vianney Lopez is a fine arts major whose focus is in film, printmaking and performance.

"Growing up with technology, I knew I wanted to use that

as my medium," said Lopez. "I have always been interested in film, and when I did more experimental films, I just fell in love with it."

Lopez desires a communal and interactive art experience; she believes art is meant to be shared and appreciated by anyone, no matter the person's location.

The artist is also inspired by philosophical ideas. Bill Viola, a contemporary video artist, creates pieces about the human experience, and Lopez was directly inspired by Viola's work when creating her piece "What Is ...".

Within her lithograph "What Is ...," Lopez visually represents the idea that the perception of personal memories creates an individual's own reality. "I use art as my little journal of how I express my view of the world and perception of reality."

Lopez's short film "Meat" is currently showcased at the 33rd Annual Juried Student

Exhibition located within the Main Art Gallery on UTSA's Main Campus.

More of Lopez's work can be viewed on her website at vianney-lopez.com.



Ron Palos.



"Slap Happy": Video.



Film still of "Time Is Still."

Ron Palos' focus within the art department at UTSA is in new media. "I went in with the initial thought that it would be very digitally based," said Palos. "But it tends to concentrate on the more contemporary and weird side of art: performance, installations and interventionists pieces."

The artist credits new media professor Mark McCoin for providing him with a greater confidence in his work and also for pushing him into public performances, which is meant to help the artist gain greater exposure.

Palos' main interest

within the new media genre lies in film making/recording and auditory work; his work is very interdisciplinary. "I like juggling those different disciplines and finding a careful balance

between them," said Palos.

Within his piece "Time Is Still," Palos found that how he viewed the nature of time was changing, and expressed his feelings the best way he knew how—film-making.

Palos is currently showcasing his short film "Time Is Still" in the Collegiate Exhibition at the San Antonio Art League Museum located within the King William's district. This will be Palos' second time as a representative for the new media department of UTSA for this exhibition.

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Gonzalez runs across the rocky Enchanted Rock terrain.

Photo Courtesy of Jeff Ball

Roel Gonzalez: Veteran Turned Extreme Endurance Athlete

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"The body is a marvelous machine, and you can have it do just about anything," said Roel Gonzalez, a UTSA student who is pushing his body and mind beyond the brink of what many consider humanly possible.

Gonzalez is an ultra-runner, which means he belongs to an exclusive group of individuals that have completed a run of over 26.2 miles. But the word "ultra" may not do justice in describing the extraordinary runs that Gonzalez has successfully completed over the past four years.

In Oct. 2015, Gonzalez attempted an absurd 223 mile trek from Austin to Corpus Christi in under 66 hours with only six hours rest. The incredible feat required careful planning. Gonzalez had his parents accompany him by car to provide both physical and emotional support. "My mom and dad were my crew," said Gonzalez.

"They would wait for me two to five miles down the road. I'd get there, refill my bottles and snack on something."

To replenish the calories burned during his run, Gonzales needed to consume 200 to 400 calories every hour. In order to do this, he had to get creative — eating everything from gas station breakfast tacos to sandwiches along the way. Imagine Gonzalez running down the side of the road with a breakfast taco in hand in full workout attire.

The breakfast tacos he ate during his run were not an anomaly. Due to the enormous number of calories burned during ultra races, aid stations that line the path every few miles have a variety of snacks many of us consider junk food along with water and Gatorade.

"It's confusing," said Gonzalez, "because you see the regular races and they have the bananas, the healthy stuff, the [protein] bars. You get to some of these ultra runs — they have Oreos, M&Ms and quesadillas." When you burn calories like these runners do, anything with sugar (contain-

ing super-high amounts of calories) is crucial.

Despite Gonzalez's impressive training regimen (on average running 12 miles per day) leading up his Austin-to-Corpus run, he faced some setbacks.

Around mile 66, Gonzalez felt some grumbling in his stomach — a result of dehydration, something a person just standing in the staunch Texas heat might experience. But he persisted, grinding through stomach pain and fatigue while his body began to shut down on him. He began to think to himself, "why am I doing this?" In order to understand what kept him going that day, you need understand where Gonzalez comes from.

Gonzalez is no stranger to tough situations. He enlisted in the Army at the age of 17. He served as an infantryman on the front lines for 12 years.

He began his running career while in the Army, seeking the health benefits, clarity and peace of mind that came from it. Gonzalez did most of his running on treadmills in workout facilities while stationed in various bases across the Middle East. Content with staying in the military and finishing out his tenure, Gonzalez had to change his plans.

He was diagnosed with cancer in 2012. After his body rejected chemotherapy, he was forced into the intensive care unit. "I knew it was serious when my parents came to visit me," he explained. Thankfully, after six months and multiple rounds of chemo, Gonzalez recovered.

At the age of 28, dealing with a myriad of personal problems extending beyond his health, Gonzalez left the Army.



Gonzalez running with his daughter by his side last year.

Photo Courtesy of Clarissa Strong

"I was spiraling down a dark path," Gonzalez stated, "I drank quite a bit. I got divorced. I wasn't around my kids much." Beginning his new post-military life was difficult, but instead of running away from his problems, Gonzalez decided to use running to work through his issues. "I went for a run," he said, "that's what grounded me." And still keeps him grounded to this day.

With his family at his side and a desire to bring awareness to the thousands of men and women that have passed away, Gonzalez trudged through the final mile of his 223 mile excursion on a humid day in Oct.

"The main purpose behind that run was veteran suicide awareness," he stated.

While describing the physical toll that comes with carrying out ultra-marathons, Gonzalez said, "I've lost two toenails, I've fallen down a lot." The constant pounding of foot against earth is astounding to withstand for multiple days.

The road is Gonzalez's sanctuary and the world an untapped trail for him to explore. But it's not for the accolades or the shiny belt buckles they award ultra-marathon runners. Gonzalez runs for his life. "I use it

as my medicine," he said. Gonzalez has completed seven races of 100 miles or more and two 100 kilometer runs in the past four years; Yet his modesty prevails — "I'm just an average Joe," he said.

It's apparent that this not-so-average Joe has no plans of slowing down anytime soon. He hopes to grow awareness for the sport and inspire others to follow in his footsteps.



Photo taken after The Habanero 100-miler.

Photo Courtesy of Roy Orazco

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Track and field hosts Roadrunner Invitational

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Across the nation, the indoor track and field season has now come to a close. It's now time for athletes to start braving the hot sun and various elements as the season transitions from indoor to outdoor. The outdoor season officially kicked off this past weekend right here in San Antonio at Park West Athletics Complex. The UTSA men's

track & field team looked to defend their home track this past weekend as they hosted the annual Roadrunner Invitational.

Schools such as Baylor, Texas A&M and even Virginia Commonwealth University flocked to San Antonio to compete for the first team title of the outdoor season. The UTSA men's track and field team would have their work cut out for them as the invitational featured a slate of tough colleges, but right from the start it was apparent the Roadrunners were

ready to compete at a high level.

After day one, UTSA led the seven-team field by a very wide margin of 22 points. The shot-put podium featured a trio of Roadrunners. UTSA, led by Tyler Finke, swept the shot-put event. Finke registered the best throw of his career with a distance of 17.44 meters. Despite the throw being the best of his career, Finke stated that "there's room for improvement" and went on to say "I'm very excited for the rest of the outdoor

season." Aside from the shot-put event, UTSA junior and Jamaican native Adrian Riley dominated the decathlon event on Friday. Riley set personal records in the hurdles, long-jump, 100m and 1500m events en route to a whopping 7,318 point total. Not only was his point total to earn him top spot at the Roadrunner Invitational, it was good enough to earn him the top spot in the country among all D1 decathlon athletes.

Riley's enormous point total is the best in the nation, and it certainly helped

UTSA have a successful day one at the invitational.

On Sat., Riley continued to dominate, winning the discus throw, javelin throw and the pole vault. Also, senior Victor Perez placed second in the hammer throw event with a throw of 57.74 meters. Despite Montgomery Bertschy taking first place in the 1500m race for the Roadrunners, Texas A&M was able to close the gap on UTSA.

Texas A&M seemed like a completely different team once Saturday rolled around, and it was evident they came ready to dominate. The Aggies took first place in the 100m, 400m, 3,000m, 4x400m relay and the 4x100m relay. A&M also placed second-fifth in the 800m race while William Maraggia from their sister school of A&M Corpus Christi took home first place in that event. UTSA's Patrick Prince was able to do some damage control by winning his 110m hurdles

event, but by the end of the day it was clear that UTSA and A&M were the top two schools in the field.

Unfortunately, A&M was able to pull away from the 'Runners on the final day of competition and they took the Roadrunner Invitational gold medal back to College Station with a team total of 231 points. However, UTSA walked away from the invitational with a silver medal and a second place title. Their second place finish is not bad for the first outdoor track meet of the season.

After a solid team performance, the expectations are high for the rest of the season. "We are off to a great start this season," said Head Coach Aaron Fox. "I thought we competed very well and am looking forward to the rest of the season." UTSA men's track and field will be back in action March 29 at the Littlefield Texas Relays.



Adrian Riley takes flight in the long jump event.

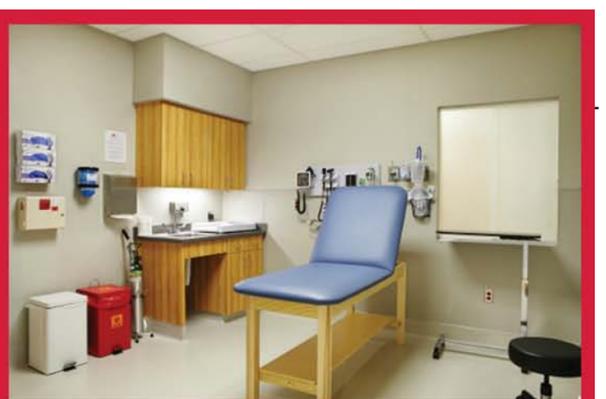
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