

UTA

The University
of Texas
at Arlington
Magazine
WINTER 2023



Fanning the Flames

*With the Blaze Forward
program, the future
is looking even brighter
for students like
Kelly Phan. PAGE 28*



**BUMP, SET,
SPLAT!**

This year, more than 400 students and hundreds of spectators gathered on the west side of campus for Oozeball, one of UTA's most popular campus traditions.

DEPARTMENTS

2
From the President

3
Excellence at a Glance

4
Mav Roundup

- 7 Scholarship
- 8 Chat
- 10 Scene
- 13 Crash Course
- 14 Faculty Focus
- 17 Postcard
- 18 Talk
- 20 Gallery
- 23 Giving
- 24 Well Read
- 25 Sporting Mavs

56
Class Notes

64
The Explainer

Contents

FEATURES

28

Futures Burn Bright

UTA's Blaze Forward program ensures many UTA students won't have to worry about tuition.

34

Capstones for the Community

Senior capstone projects wrap up advanced study in the Honors College and help students make an impact.

40

Maverick Connections

In a unique and supportive community like UTA's, the connections made here last a lifetime.

46

Of Sound Mind

Alumnus Dallas Taylor invites you to open your ears to the beauty of sound all around you.

52

Dreaming Big Together

On Sept. 30, UTA celebrated the formal investiture of the University's 10th president, Jennifer Cowley. Read a recap and check out all the highlights.



From the President

President Cowley and student body President Teresa Nguyen, a linguistics and psychology major.



I AM NOW MORE than six months into my term as president of UTA, and in that time, I have learned so much about our University and the Maverick community. I have seen firsthand our focus, our dedication, and our hard work. I have seen how big we all dream and what happens when we work together to reach those dreams. It's nothing short of amazing—when we stand together and when we collaborate, there's truly no limit to what we can accomplish.

Ultimately, I think that's what being a Maverick is all about: connection. The bonds we forge here on campus are the kind that last, the kind that create an impact that travels far and wide. The stories in this issue of *UTA Magazine* highlight these connections, from researchers and community organizations collaborating to effect change to lifelong friends supporting each other through college and well beyond. In particular, I was so moved by the story of Lolín Martins-Crane and Margaret Monostory Crowley, who met at a UTA function on campus when they were just 4 years old. Both of their fathers were professors here, and now the lifelong friends are both working at UTA, impacting current and future generations of Mavericks.

While Lolín and Margaret's story is exceptional, I know that each and every Maverick reading this has their own story of a Maverick connection to share—of a bond that started on campus and remains strong today. I want to encour-

MAKING STRONG CONNECTIONS

age you all to foster those bonds and keep them strong.

Reading this magazine is one way to do so; staying connected on social media is another. But if it's been awhile since you've visited campus, I want to remind you that the door is always open, and that there are many ways to keep connected and make new connections, too. Come cheer on the Mavericks at a basketball game. Attend a Maverick Speakers Series event or a gallery opening. Drop by to take a walk around our beautiful campus. Engaged alumni are vital to the strength of our community, and UTA wouldn't have nearly the impact it does without you.

And, as always, I am here if you want to connect with me. Find me on Twitter (@UTAPrezCowley) or visit my website at uta.edu/president, where you can also share feedback with me.

We're going to do great things together!

Go Mavs!!

—Jennifer Cowley
President



Jennifer Cowley is the first female president of UTA and the 10th overall. She is also a professor of public affairs and planning in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs.

UTA

The University
of Texas
at Arlington
Magazine

VOL. 1
WINTER 2023

EDITOR
Amber Scott

ART DIRECTOR
Brody Price

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS
Herb Booth
Jessica Bridges
Jenny Gumbert
Teresa Newton
Mark Permenter
Neph Rivera

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Randy Gentry
Erika Nina Suárez

ART CONTRIBUTORS
Lee Coburn
Melissa George
Samantha Morales

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND
MEDIA RELATIONS**
Jeff Carlton

**SENIOR ASSOCIATE
VICE PRESIDENT FOR
MARKETING, MESSAGING
AND ENGAGEMENT**
Joe Carpenter

**VICE PRESIDENT FOR
MARKETING, MESSAGING,
AND ENGAGEMENT**
Yolanda Bevill

PRESIDENT
Jennifer Cowley

UTA Magazine is published two times a year by University Advancement for all alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of the University. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. The comments and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily represent those of The University of Texas at Arlington or the staff of *UTA Magazine*. Copyright © 2023, The University of Texas at Arlington. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Excellence

AT A GLANCE



For the sixth year in a row, UTA enrolled the **most first-time-in-college students** in University history, an increase of 7% over fall 2021

No. 7 in the nation for enrolling the most transfer students (*U.S. News & World Report, 2022*)

University Crossroads program received the **North Texas Commission's Social Impact Award** for its lasting impact in shaping the region



One of just six institutions nationwide in 2022 to earn the **Seal of Excelencia** certification, a prestigious honor granted to colleges and universities for their commitment to accelerating Latino student success



5-star rating in the **Campus Pride Index**, an overall indicator of institutional commitment to LGBTQ-inclusive policies, programs, and practices

SPIRIT FLEW HIGH at College Park Center for fall 2022 MavsMeet Convocation, as a sea of blue-and-orange-clad students filled the arena, ready to celebrate the beginning of a new school year. MavsMeet is part of Maverick Stampede, a series of events that kicks off every new academic year in Maverick Country.





Mav Roundup

Stories about the Mavericks who shape the UTA community near and far



TRAINED TO INFORM

NBC partnership enhances student success

Paola Yañez, a junior broadcast journalism major, visited a television news studio while in high school and fell in love with the profession.

“I realized how important it is for citizens to be informed and, more importantly, how necessary it is to have a trustworthy person to inform them,” Yañez says. “I take it upon myself to be just that—someone the people trust to inform them on their day-to-day lives.”

Originally from Fort Worth, Yañez’s goal after graduating from UTA is to become a news producer. Now, thanks to a partnership with NBCUniversal News Group’s NBCU Academy, that goal is well within reach.

NBCU Academy offers on-campus training and education as well as internships and job opportunities to students in the UTA Department of Communication as part of its nationwide journalism training and development program. The resources are aimed at providing more equitable access for diverse and marginalized communities who have been historically underrepresented in the news industry.

“Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are central to our broadcasting program,” says Charla Markham Shaw, Department of Communication chair and principal investigator for the grant. “This transformational project with NBCU Academy will support our students’ ongoing efforts to excel, and this will make a meaningful difference in the lives of our students.”

PHONE HOMES

Skyscraper scholar explores city telephone buildings

A once-revolutionary piece of technology incidentally came to play a role in the landscape of nearly every city in the United States. When the telephone was invented, telephone central offices—now known as telephone buildings—quickly followed. As the need for telecommunications grew, so too did the construction of these telephone buildings.

“There is a telephone building in the heart of every major American city,” says Kathryn Holliday, an architecture historian and professor in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs (CAPPA) at UTA. “Some celebrate the presence of technology in our lives, and others are windowless boxes that hide the telecommunications network in plain sight.”

In her in-progress book manuscript, which she is completing as a Mellon

Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks, a Harvard University research institute located in Washington, D.C., Dr. Holliday is exploring the architecture and design of these buildings as expressions of a corporate monopoly that came to shape many American cities. Titled *Telephone City: Architecture, Urbanism, and the Bell Monopoly*, the book also reveals the hidden connections among architecture, technology, and the urban landscape.

“This type of scholarly research helps us better understand the impact of corporate growth and telecommunications infrastructure on the urban and suburban landscape,” says Professor Maria Martinez-Cosio, interim dean of CAPPA. “Work like this better informs future design and community development both within and outside of the North Texas region.”



The Mountain States Telephone Building, located in Denver, Colorado.

Scholarship

Providing motivated Mavericks every chance to make a difference

Alexis Jauregui's dreams are within reach thanks to the Dean's Leadership Circle scholarship.



FROM A YOUNG AGE, Alexis Jauregui has refused to let roadblocks derail his dreams of earning a college degree and starting his own business.

He was 11 and spoke no English when his family moved from Mexico to the United States in search of better opportunities. Undaunted by the language barrier, Jauregui excelled academically but lacked the financial resources to continue his education beyond high school.

The aspiring first-generation college student quickly realized he'd need significant scholarship support to fulfill his goals. As he researched potential universities, UTA surged to the top of the list.

"UTA was one of the few schools with the degree option I wanted, and it also offered the financial aid I needed," says Jauregui, a junior international business major and a student in the Honors College. "After weighing my options, I decided UTA was the best fit."

As a freshman, he received a College of Business Dean's Leadership Circle (DLC) scholarship, which is renewable for four years. Established in 2019, the DLC has awarded scholarships to 27 high-performing business students, including nine new recipients in fall 2022.

"Students like Alexis represent the next generation of Maverick business leaders," says Harry Dombroski, dean of the

College of Business. "The DLC is helping transform the lives of these diverse and talented scholars as they prepare for rewarding careers in the corporate sector."

Gifts and pledges to the DLC's scholarship initiative are approaching \$500,000. The DLC also offers valuable resources for its members, including leadership and professional networking opportunities, while serving as an alumni engagement program for the College of Business.

Jauregui received additional scholarship support through the college's Goolsby Leadership Academy and BNSF Early Leader Program. He also earned UTA's Maverick Academic Scholarship. The combined support will enable him to graduate debt-free in 2024.

Passionate about helping others, he plans to start his own management consultant business to aid small companies in impoverished areas around the world. Thanks to the generosity of UTA donors, he's well on his way.

"The DLC scholarship is not only allowing me to go to college but also to have a positive outlook and keep pushing to obtain my goals," Jauregui says. "I offer my utmost gratitude to those who made this award possible."

Learn more at go.uta.edu/deans-leadership-circle.

Chat

Debra Wawro Weidanz
(’99 MS, ’97 BS, Electrical
Engineering)
CEO and Chief Scientist,
Resonant Sensors Inc.

ALMOST SEVEN YEARS into a promising telecommunications career, alumna Debra Wawro Weidanz faced a professional crossroads: Stick with her secure corporate job or dive headfirst into the choppy waters of high-tech startups?

She chose to take the plunge, hoping the technology that she and Ph.D. candidate Sorin Tibuleac had developed as graduate students would find a market.

“I made the decision to jump from a nice, stable industry position to leading a new business venture,” Weidanz says, “and I have never looked back.”

The startup, Resonant Sensors Inc. (RSI), has become a global leader in rapid biosensor screening systems that help biotech companies develop drugs more quickly with minimal chemical processing. Born from a novel sensor system created by Weidanz, Tibuleac, and UTA electrical engineering Professor Robert Magnusson, RSI is also designing various rapid diagnostic tests, including one for COVID-19.

The Texas Instruments Distinguished University Chair in Nanoelectronics, Dr. Magnusson was Weidanz’s faculty adviser and has played a major role in

RSI’s ascent, serving as chief technology officer since they founded the company.

“Debra personifies UTA’s thriving entrepreneurial spirit,” he says. “She gained valuable research experience as both an undergraduate and graduate student and has built upon those skills to make a significant impact in the biotech industry.”

In addition to starting RSI, Weidanz co-founded Abexxa Biologics with her husband, Jon, a UTA professor and associate vice president for research. Abexxa, which devised breakthrough treatments in cancer immunotherapy, was acquired by pharmaceutical giant Boehringer Ingelheim in 2021.

She says partnering with UTA was crucial to the success of both Abexxa and RSI. In addition to licensing intellectual property from the University, the companies benefited from leased lab space, fee-for-service equipment, and opportunities to collaborate with faculty researchers.

Weidanz credits UTA’s hands-on approach to learning and its flourishing entrepreneurial ecosystem for accelerating her career. To give back, the couple recently made generous gifts supporting the Electrical Engineering Department and the Office of Research.

“Both Jon and I feel that we can contribute, in our small way, to foster excellence in research and education and to help brand UTA as a leader in innovation,” she says. “We want UTA to be part of the growing biotech/life science North Texas landscape in entrepreneurship.”





COMFORT AND CARE

Bioethics students learn what textbooks can't teach

What is a "good death?"

It's one of the questions that students must consider in their biomedical ethics class taught by Eli Shupe, assistant professor of philosophy and humanities and program coordinator for the Medical Humanities and Bioethics program. The course includes a service-learning component in which UTA students volunteer with Hospice Plus, a hospice provider that delivers home health, palliative, and hospice care services to sick and dying patients in Arlington.

"Students are learning so much more by having direct interaction with patients in hospice—things you can't teach through a textbook," says Dr. Shupe. "They can also see firsthand how the readings and theories that we're talking about actually shape patient care and patient experiences in real life."

In this partnership, students do not administer medication or offer medical advice but instead provide friendly company at a patient's bedside.

Manar Naser Babaa, a senior studying biology, says that before taking Shupe's class, it never occurred to her to volunteer with hospice patients.

"I was nervous about how the experience would unfold," Babaa says. "Now, I am grateful I got to see this side of health care. I learned how meaningful it is to simply be there for patients and offer them companionship and relief."



BRIDGING THE GAP

New center bolsters rural health care

Nearly one in four Texans lives in a rural community. They face barriers to health care that urban residents may not, such as distance to services, shortages of providers, and limited funding. On top of that, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies projects the state will face a shortage of nurses through 2030. Enter UTA.

Made possible by \$4 million in state funding, UTA's new Center for Rural Health and Nursing aims to develop and foster a model for providing nursing education to rural residents aiming to become registered nurses or nurse practitioners while keeping them in their home communities.

"Thanks to generous funding by the state of Texas, we will be able to form sustainable partnerships with rural communities that improve the qual-

ity of life for underserved populations in those areas," says Elizabeth Merwin, dean of the College of Nursing and Health Innovation.

In its first year, the center will develop partnerships in rural communities to zero in on specific nursing education needs. Once the needs have been identified, the center will provide training to support the communities' current health care providers and educate the next generation.

"We want to make sure students who are in rural high schools and community colleges have paths into our programs," says Aspen Drude, the center's manager. "We hope that our continuing education programs will meet the needs of current nurses and increase opportunities for rural residents, while meeting the workforce needs of the rural community."

Scene

Dark Lab Geoscience Building

Nathan Brown, assistant professor of earth and environmental sciences, is a storyteller. A quaternary geochronologist—“It’s a mouthful,” Dr. Brown acknowledges—he studies grains of sediment to establish the ages of significant events in a landscape’s history. In doing so, he puts together a story of things that happened in the past and how they might happen again in the future.

While Brown spends time in the field collecting samples—around hydrothermal-explosion craters at Yellowstone, for example—the precise work of dating sediment samples takes place in his Dark Lab, where he and his students determine the age of those samples based on when they were last exposed to light, a process known as luminescence dating.

As a geochronologist, Brown’s goal is to ensure that the story we tell about the landscape is correct.

“You know there can only be one story behind what happened, but you’re left with fragmentary clues,” he says. “You do your best to sort out what happened to produce the landscape we see today.”

The results of his work serve not only to give us a glimpse into the past, but also to provide insight into events that could happen in the future. In his work at Yellowstone, he’s helping to uncover when and where hydrothermal explosions could occur.

“The picture is always evolving as scientists learn how to take new measurements or gain additional insight into these processes,” he says. “Then the story changes slightly or you get a little bit more clarity, so we’re always working toward this one story together.”



PERFECT HUE

This low-pressure sodium lamp is monochromatic, emitting a warm yellow hue that doesn’t empty a geological luminescence signal before it can be measured.

HARD ROCK

Luminescence signals measured on dark interiors of rocks like this tell geologists how quickly the rock was tectonically uplifted to Earth’s surface.



DRILL PRESS

Researchers use a slow-speed drill press equipped with a water-cooled diamond bit to extract 1 cm-diameter cylinders of rock from samples.



SLICING SAW

This slow-speed water-ing saw is used to slice fragile rock cylinders extracted from the drill press to produce rock "cookies" that are just over 1 mm thick.



LIGHT READER

In this automated luminescence reader, intense blue laser diodes shine on rock samples to produce a much fainter emission of ultraviolet light that accumulated during geologic burial. It effectively mimics 2,000 years of natural radiation exposure in about a minute.



FLOOD FIGHTERS

CAPPA team works to protect historic district in Dallas

Nestled near the banks of the Trinity River is The Bottom District, a historic predominantly African American community that lives under constant threat of flooding. A group of landscape architecture graduate students, under the guidance of Joowon Im, assistant professor in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs, is working to solve the problem.

Using a North Central Texas Council of Governments grant and other revenue sources, Dr. Im and her team have created initial designs with comprehensive green infrastructure networks. The plans include building a community plaza and pocket parks, preserving and enhancing existing single-family housing, introducing diverse housing choices, creating gateway features, establishing mixed-use development, creating cultural walkways, installing green streets and bike lanes leading around the neighborhood, and implementing a community garden.

The Golden SEEDS Foundation, a community development corporation that helps economic development in The Bottom, and Golden Gate Missionary Baptist Church are also helping.

"We're focused on being supportive of the community's needs and desires, so our next step is to take these design plans to the community in a series of workshops that will help solidify implementation," Im says. "We must protect this historic neighborhood."

PRESIDENTIAL RECOGNITION

Professor honored for STEM mentoring

Minerva Cordero, professor of mathematics, was one of only 12 to be honored with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring in 2022.

The national award recognizes the critical roles mentors play outside the traditional classroom in the academic and professional development of the future science and engineering workforce. For Dr. Cordero, the award honors the mentors and students in her own life.

"This award would not be possible without the mentors who generously gave their time to my professional development, guiding me on the path to many successes," Cordero said. "I am privileged to pay their investment forward and

mentor many bright, talented students at UTA and within the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington communities."

Cordero has led national and local programs that increase access to science and mathematics curricula. From 2018-19, Cordero served as director for two programs at the National Science Foundation: one to support organizational change to achieve gender equity in STEM and the other to help improve undergraduate STEM education within Hispanic-Serving Institutions such as UTA. Throughout her tenure in the Department of Mathematics, she has spearheaded the development of inclusive mathematics organizations.

"Dr. Cordero is an outstanding teacher and scholar whose contributions to the next generation of STEM professionals are significant," says Jianzhong Su, professor and chair of mathematics. "This award is an immense honor and a testament to the quality of faculty in the Department of Mathematics and at the University."



Entrepreneurship

MANA 4345 & 5345 Social Entrepreneurship

LAST SPRING, ADJUNCT professor Suzanne Smith and a group of students from her “Social Entrepreneurship” class met for dinner at Café Momentum, a social enterprise restaurant in Dallas. In many ways, Café Momentum, which doubles as a culinary training facility that provides at-risk youth with life skills, education, and employment opportunities, embodies the spirit of every lesson Smith seeks to provide her students.

“Social entrepreneurship is rooted in the broader field of entrepreneurship, but social entrepreneurs have a primary goal of creating social value rather than personal or shareholder wealth,” she says. “Social entrepreneurs are relentless in fashioning bold and creative solutions to create social change.”

Her course combines interactive lectures, classroom discussions, and hands-on activities that expose students to concepts of social innovation and enterprise. Throughout, students are challenged with new ways of thinking to increase their self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship

skills, and responsible decision-making, all serving to make them better leaders and managers in their pursuit of making a positive impact in their communities.

Julie Cook ('19 MPA; '13 BA, Communication) took the course in spring 2019. She says it gave her a practical understanding of how theoretical concepts could work in the real world.

“This course gave me the tools and confidence to apply these social-change concepts to work I was already doing,” says Cook. “Now, I’m more creative in my pitches to partners because I’m a better researcher and can synthesize strategy and goals.”

Smith, who is also founder and CEO of Social Impact Architects, says that the work of social entrepreneurs is essential to creating a society in which everyone prospers.

“I hope for the day when social entrepreneurship is no longer discussed separately from other forms of business or entrepreneurship, because every business impacts and determines outcomes for people in our communities,” she says. “We just want that impact to lead to positive societal return. I love giving my students the tools and knowledge to take their ideas and business to scale—with a positive outcome for all.”



Faculty Focus

Gabriela Wilson

Professor, College of Nursing and Health Innovation; Co-Director, Multi-Interprofessional Center for Health Informatics; Director, Division of Health Informatics and Public Health Informatics

“I ALWAYS WANTED TO work in a field where I could help people live healthier lives,” says Professor Gabriela Wilson. But she figured out early on that a traditional route to that goal—like becoming a nurse or a doctor—wouldn’t work for her. After a long journey to find her ideal career path, she finally landed in the field of computational biochemistry and academic work as a pharmaco-informatics specialist. “I am always inspired by the unknown,” Dr. Wilson says. “It is about taking on large and complex challenges that only multidisciplinary teams can solve. I draw my energy from working with others, and this is what keeps me passionate about anything I do.”

What past success makes you proudest?

I measure success by how I inspire and help others. My proudest achievement is when I see my students succeed despite challenges because they took one of my courses or worked on a research project with me.

What are you most excited about right now?

Recent advances in technology and digitalization across all industries accelerated change and benefited many, but not necessarily equitably. I am excited about our opportunities to understand better how social deter-

minants of health, health literacy, health information exchange, artificial intelligence, and mobile technologies can improve quality of care and positively impact our communities.

What are you most looking forward to?

Educating my students about emerging health care trends and contributing to larger-scale community partnerships that will help identify areas that experience health inequities and racism. Now is the time to take these bold steps, as only by working together can we promote health equity and social justice.





DAWN OF A DYNASTY

Esports team wins national title

UTA's esports team was crowned grand champion at the Electronic Gaming Federation (EGF) National Championships.

Players from UTA's varsity-level esports program competed in three different games at the national level in spring 2022. The Mavericks won the EFG's *Super Smash Bros. Ultimate* (SSBU) tournament and season.

Over the past academic year, players competed in the EGF in *Rocket League*, *Overwatch*, and *SSBU*. All three teams qualified for the national tournaments, eventually tying for third place in *Overwatch* and *Rocket League*.

"This is not going to be last time we win big," says David "Davy" Tran, a sophomore studying chemistry. "This is 100% the start of a dynasty, so don't expect anything less than success from us."

EGF is the national governing body for organized high school-level and collegiate D-I esports leagues. The tournament was held both online and in person at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. UTA participated online while other schools opted to play in person.

Vi Tran, assistant coach of UTA Esports, says victories like this are great for showing people that esports is a full-fledged industry.

"It was no surprise that they performed this well—this was the fruition of all the effort they put in throughout the season," Tran says.



LEGALLY CONNECTED

Course trains social workers for legal environment

A positive relationship between a social worker and their client can make all the difference. But that's not the only relationship a social worker should value. They also need to be comfortable with the law they are practicing under.

"Often, social work students don't recognize that connection—that intimate relationship that our profession has with the law," says Sherece Shavel, assistant professor of practice in the School of Social Work. "The presence of the authority of law is woven all throughout what we do as practitioners."

It's an intimate relationship that Dr. Shavel hopes more social work students immerse themselves in, so she developed a new course, "Social Work and Law," in

collaboration with UTA's Pre-Law Center. Students develop an understanding of the legal environment as it pertains to the social work profession and learn how they should act in certain legal settings, such as during a testimony.

The hallmark of the course is a courtroom simulation where social work students are questioned by mock trial students acting as defense and prosecution. UTA junior social work student Sophia Gyles considers the course a blessing.

"The class gives you a sense of what it would be like in court, to speak on behalf of clients and be a representative for them," Gyles says. "I think that anyone who is going to be a social worker needs to take this class."



DATA-DRIVEN HEALTH CARE

New certificate trains students to gather and employ health care data

“As educators, we need to be intentional and start training our students early on,” says Gabriela Wilson, professor of kinesiology and co-director of UTA’s Multi-Interprofessional Center for Health Informatics.

For Dr. Wilson, these words are a call to action for anyone working in today’s health care industry, which has become increasingly reliant on telehealth and data. In her eyes, gathering health care data is a skill that can improve patient outcomes. The problem is that the health care workforce has had trouble keeping up with this ever-evolving field.

That’s the driving force behind the new postbaccalaureate graduate

certificate in health care informatics in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation (CONHI). Designed for bachelor’s-prepared students, the four-course plan trains students in the principles of health informatics, data management, and analytics.

The certificate joins UTA’s undergraduate telehealth and health informatics certificate, both of which set students up for success in any career they choose.

“There is a broad spectrum of what students can do,” says Mari Tietze, the Myrna R. Pickard Endowed Professor at CONHI. “But the bottom line is patient safety and quality of care. That has to be at the core of what they want to do.”



SUPPORTING EACH OTHER

Virtual clinic perseveres past COVID closures

During COVID-19-related closures, the School of Social Work had a two-pronged challenge. Students who were close to graduation needed to earn their required clinical hours. At the same time, other students needed an outlet for the sudden stress the pandemic was causing. To address these dual needs, social work faculty and students worked together to create the Social Work Virtual Clinic. The initiative was so helpful that it is operating still today.

“In the social work profession, we are always looking at areas where we can help people,” says Marie Salimbeni, assistant professor of practice and a Virtual Clinic supervisor. “In this situation, it was seeing how we could help students.”

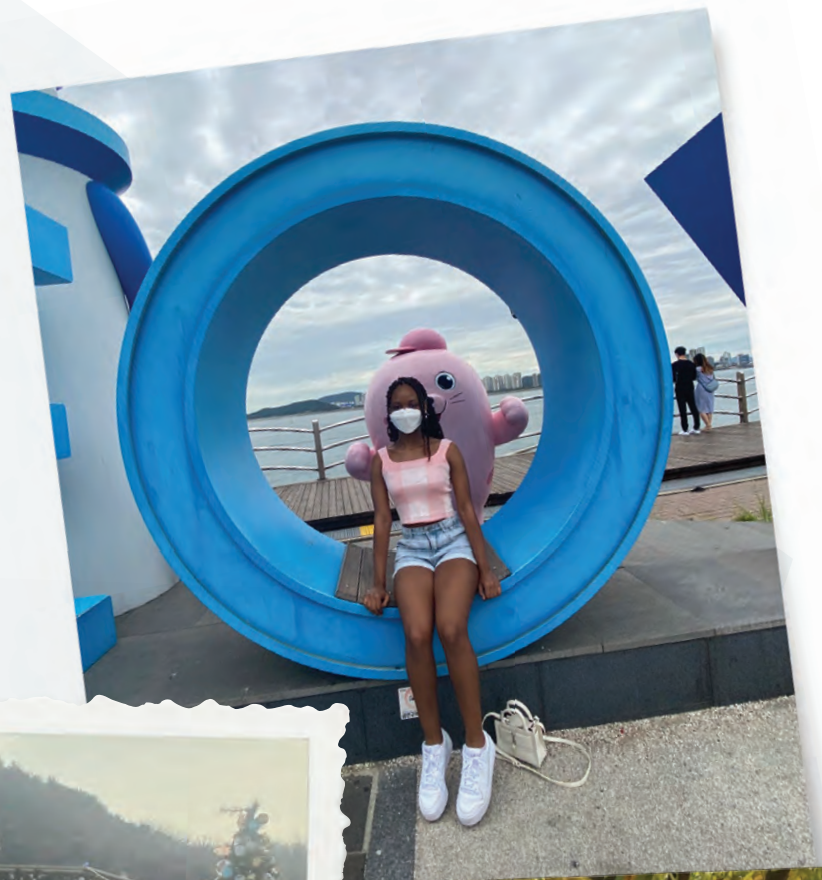
The virtual sessions, run by advanced master’s-level students, cover several topics in mental health care, including dealing with conflict, parenting during a pandemic, and maintaining sobriety. The sessions also provide master’s social work students the real-world experience of putting together and executing therapy sessions with real clients.

The Virtual Clinic aims to help any UTA student who needs support, including online students who may not be able to travel to campus. The clinic also takes referrals, both from students themselves and faculty members.

“We’re here to provide support, techniques, and ways that students can succeed in class, in their profession, and in life,” Dr. Salimbeni says.

Postcard

Following Mavericks as they travel the world



South Korea

WHO: Essence Wesley, international business major

HOW YOU GOT THERE: I've always been passionate about visiting countries. Through the International Education Fee Scholarship and my own determination, I was able to make that dream a reality.

WHY YOU WANTED TO GO: I started learning Korean at 14, so it was only natural for me to visit the country someday. I knew that going to Korea would make it a full circle moment.

LESSONS YOU TOOK BACK HOME: The world is such a large place—don't confine yourself to one area. Go out and meet new people and travel the world; it will broaden your horizons. I also learned that I have the capability to do whatever I dream of.

Talk

**Karen Black, Student,
Spanish Translation
and Interpreting**

Why did you choose your major?

When my family moved to the U.S. from Mexico when I was 11, there was no formal teaching for us to learn English. I didn't know how to speak for myself when I was so young in a new country. I saw it in my parents, too, when our teachers tried to tell them how my brother and I were doing in school. Their faces were just blank, and it was like we were shadow people. You can't get anywhere without communication.

Why does communication continue to be an area of passion for you?

The main thing that good communication does is work on equity instead of just equality. Good communication helps everyone know what their rights are, and that's what everyone here deserves.

What motivated you to return to college 20 years after you first attended?

I was a secretary, and my son didn't understand why I was still doing that kind of work. I told him it was the best I could do since I didn't have a degree. But then I realized that since most universities were doing virtual school during the pandemic,

maybe it was a good time to finally get that degree.

You've gotten involved in research, both in the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Equity Lab and the Physical Activity and Wearable Sensors (PAWS) Lab. What has that been like?

Through MCH, I've had the opportunity to connect with people from Colombia and talk about midwifery and how important it is for maternal and child health. In the PAWS Lab, I'm helping to expand their work with cancer survivors to the Hispanic community. Both times, it's been because a professor asked if I'd be interested in helping. I'll never say no to someone who needs help with communication, because back when I was a kid, I needed someone to say yes to me.

What's next for you after graduation?

I'd love to help introduce Spanish translation and interpreting as a dual credit option for high school students. That's my ultimate goal—to bring the education I'm getting now to kids, because that's where we need it.



HACKING THE HIRING PROCESS

Hint: It's in the algorithm

When several of Shirin Nilizadeh's friends had lackluster outcomes in job searches, she knew something was up.

"I started asking why, as my friends are all qualified," says Dr. Nilizadeh, assistant professor of computer science and engineering. So she, along with doctoral student and project lead Anahita Samadi, decided to take a closer look. "What we discovered is that many times, resumes that contained certain keywords were being rewarded."

Specifically, job recruiters use text-embedding to match words and sentences in resumes to the job description to obtain similarity scores and rank resumes accordingly. The study showed that job applicants can improve their position by at least 16 spots on average in a pool of 100 applicants by employing an algorithm that uses job-specific

keywords. Few studies until now have shown that ranking algorithms that use text embeddings are vulnerable to adversarial attacks.

"We thought recruitment algorithms were the best example of such ranking algorithms," Nilizadeh says. "Our goal was to identify the keywords from the job description that can improve the ranking of the resume."

As expected, adding more keywords improves the ranking. The research also showed, however, that adding too many similar words or phrases might not improve the ranking of a resume.

"Therefore, we rank words based on their importance for a specific resume and then choose among the most important ones and add them to the resume," she says. "In a way, it somewhat hacks the job application process."



MAVERICK TRAILBLAZER

Alumnus earns historic appointment

This summer, Lt. Gen. Michael E. Langley ('85 BBA, Systems Analysis) became the first Black four-star general in the history of the U.S. Marines. In the position, he commands all U.S. military forces in Africa as head of U.S. Africa Command.

Langley received his commission in 1985 and has commanded at every level from platoon to regiment. Since November 2021, he served as commanding general of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, where he oversaw all Marine forces on the Atlantic coast. He also served in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Japan; led U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa; and held top jobs at the Pentagon.

"I am enthusiastic to engage across the whole government to faithfully execute the policies and orders of the president and the secretary of defense," Langley said during his Senate testimony on July 21.

At UTA, Langley was a four-year letterman in track and field. His former track teammates said they weren't surprised he received the honor.

"It makes perfect sense," said one of those teammates, Robert Howard ('85 BA, Physical Education), a recipient of the UTA Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2000 and president of Don Davis Auto Group. "He was committed to being as good as he could possibly be."



ART

Ari Brielle, MFA Student, Painter

TO TELL THE story of Marsha Jackson, the subject of one of Ari Brielle's recent paintings, it would be remiss not to include Shingle Mountain. Jackson fought for years to have a towering mass of toxic shingles removed from the land next to her house after the 70,000-ton pile was dumped and left there by a recycling company. But in *Poisoned by Zip Code*, her recent exhibit at the Dallas Museum of Art, Brielle wanted people to know there is more to Jackson's story.



"The shingles are important, of course, but I wanted to center Marsha first and foremost," she says. "The shingles are a symbol of the environmental racism she and her community experienced, but Marsha is more than that. I wanted to talk about her horses and her interest in the rodeo, her love of the community and her children."

This focus on storytelling, of looking beyond what you can easily see on the

surface, is what drives Brielle to create art in the first place.

"A lot of my work is about Black women and our experiences, so my art is a way for me to talk about that and the myriad and complex ways our different experiences intersect," she says. "I would like to invite people to not just think of our strength and power for overcoming oppression when they think of Black people, because when we think that nar-



"I would like to invite people to not just think of our strength and power for overcoming oppression when they think of Black people, because when we think that narrowly, we lose sense of the fact that we're all people with our own stories and our own experiences."

rowly, we lose sense of the fact that we're all people with our own stories and our own experiences."

Most recently, Brielle participated in the 2021 Texas Biennial, and her site-specific installation *Ari Brielle: 27* opened at Presa House in San Antonio, Texas.

Brielle joined UTA as a Master of Fine Arts student after being introduced to the program by Associate Professor Sedrick Huckaby. At UTA, she says she's

found the guidance to help hone her perspective as an artist.

"One of the biggest things that has been really beneficial is just being challenged and being introduced to different ways of thinking or working with different materials," she says. "My professors have been great at offering resources or questioning why I'm doing something in a way that makes me think more deeply about my work."

TOP LEFT:

Me and Mama, 2021, gouache and acrylic on panel, 12h x 18w in

CENTER:

Altar (self), 2020, gouache on panel, 40h x 34w in

ABOVE:

Bigmama study, 2020, gouache and acrylic on panel, 40h x 30w in



GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Fellowship brings women's rights activist to UTA

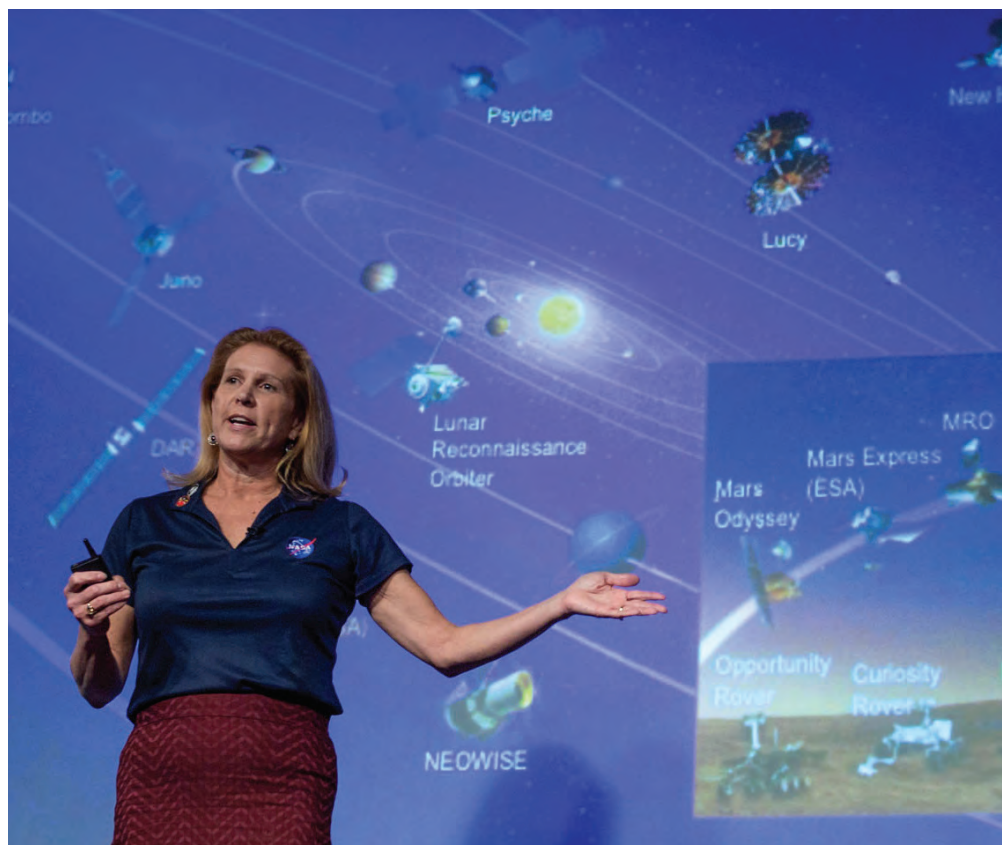
When Roshan Mashal and her family evacuated from Afghanistan during the fall of Kabul in 2021, she knew she would never return.

"I cannot forget that day," she says. "I was scared for my children, for my colleagues, for our families. At first, I told my friends that I felt I had to stay to continue the struggle. And my friends told me, 'But you have to be alive to continue the struggle.'"

For over a decade, Mashal has advocated for women's and gender issues, access to education, and participation in elections in Afghanistan. Now, she will serve for one year as a fellow within the Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies program in the College of Liberal Arts. In the role, she will focus on journalism, women's rights, and advocacy.

Mashal's fellowship is thanks in large part to a collaboration with the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC). The TIEC Fellowship for Afghan Evacuees was created during the mass evacuations from Afghanistan in 2021.

"This represents UTA's commitment to providing our students with access to world-class experts who can bring their unique experiences to bear on the educational process, connecting what we do in the classroom with some of the most impactful events in our world," says Dan Cavanagh, interim dean for UTA's College of Liberal Arts.



CELEBRATING SCIENCE

Science Week honors faculty, student achievements

Science is a year-round passion for the College of Science, and for one week each spring, that passion is on full display for UTA and the community.

Throughout Science Week, science enthusiasts attended a variety of events, including live podcast recordings, panel discussions, workshops, and shows. One highlight was a reception with six of the North Texas-based If/Then Ambassadors, including UTA's own Minerva Cordero, professor of mathematics and associate dean for research and graduate studies in the college. Science comedian Kasha Patel also performed two stand-up sets.

Lori Glaze ('89 MS, '85 BA, Physics) the director of NASA's Division of Planetary Science, presented as part of the college's Distinguished Women in Science speaker series. Dr. Glaze oversees NASA's space flight missions and scientific research that addresses

fundamental questions of solar system formation and evolution.

"I know just how important it is to be able to see someone who looks like you in leadership roles," she says. "I am so happy that I have the opportunity to be that for others, and I hope that we can continue to increase diversity in science leadership to provide role models for all."

The campuswide event coincided with Discover, a student-research symposium that culminated in an award ceremony. Winners presented original research and gave behind-the-scenes views of their process of discovery.

"The UTA community and the public were invited to immerse themselves in fascinating conversations on topics ranging from particle physics to mental health," says Morteza Khaledi, dean of the College of Science. "The entire week was a celebration of the pursuit of scientific knowledge."

Guest speaker and alumna Lori Glaze, director of NASA's Division of Planetary Science, discusses NASA's space missions.

Supporting the Maverick community

KROGER IS SUPPORTING UTA students with a five-year, \$250,000 commitment to the UTA Maverick Pantry presented by Kroger. The gift will help with ongoing operational costs, such as expenses for products, staffing, programming, and outreach. The donation is part of the grocery chain's Zero Hunger Zero Waste commitment, an initiative that seeks to create communities free from hunger and waste by 2025.

The pantry opened with a soft launch in fall 2021. After additional renovations and furnishings, the UTA Maverick Pantry presented by Kroger is now fully operational. It includes services aimed at food insecurity; provisions such as baby food, formula, and diapers for

Supporting the Maverick community

student parents; discounted cap and gown rental for commencement; and a professional development closet with work-appropriate attire for students going to interviews.

"Kroger is proud to support The University of Texas at Arlington through our five-year commitment to the Maverick Pantry. Ending food insecurity in the communities we serve is the cornerstone of Kroger's Zero Hunger Zero Waste initiative and through long-term partnerships like this, we know we can make a significant impact," says Keith Shoemaker, Kroger Dallas Division president. "At Kroger, we aim to 'Feed the Human Spirit,' and through this donation, we hope UTA students will never have to worry about their next meal—and can continue to focus on their studies and excel as our future leaders."

"When Mavericks walk through the doors of UTA's pantry, we want them to feel heard, seen, and recognized," says Jessica Sanchez, director of UTA's Student Advocacy Services. "Our goal

UTA has received a helping hand from The Kroger Co. to aid students facing food insecurity.



is to feed student success by operating an inclusive pantry that offers holistic support services."

Students experiencing food insecurity can utilize the Maverick Pantry presented by Kroger from Monday to Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Food and essentials are free of cost with a MAV ID and open to all UTA students, faculty, and staff who are experiencing need.



Must Read

Dive into fascinating books by Maverick authors.



THE COMIC BOOK WESTERN

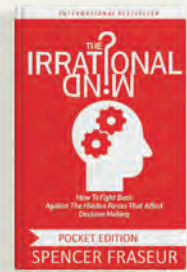
New Perspectives on a Global Genre

EDITED BY Christopher Conway AND Antoinette Sol

The Comic Book Western: New Perspectives on a Global Genre

EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER CONWAY, PROFESSOR OF SPANISH, AND ANTOINETTE SOL, PROFESSOR OF FRENCH

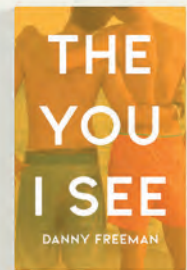
A compilation of essays that highlights the unexpected cross-pollinations that allowed the Western to emerge from and speak to a wide range of cultural and historical contexts, including Spanish, Italian, Polish, Japanese, British, Canadian, Mexican, French, and more. This exploration of comic book Westerns from these far-flung countries reveals that they are “complex and aesthetically powerful statements about identity, culture, and politics.”



The Irrational Mind: How to Fight Back Against the Hidden Forces That Affect Decision Making

SPENCER FRASEUR, BUSINESS PHD STUDENT

What drives our decision making? Spencer Fraseur takes readers through an exploration of the often-flawed cognitive processes that influence the decisions we make in business and in life so that we can learn how to overcome them.



The You I See

DANIEL FREEMAN, (12 MED, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION)

Set in the changing cultural landscape of Houston, Texas, in the early 1990s, *The You I See* is a coming-of-age novel about two gay teens. This debut novel explores faith, politics, shifting social norms, self-acceptance, and the importance of LGBTQ+ allies.



Unsettled Land: From Revolution to Republic, the Struggle for Texas

SAM HAYNES, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

In his new novel, Sam Haynes explores the chaotic reality behind Texas' longstanding creation myth. Since its release, *Unsettled Land* has been praised by Booklist, Publishers Weekly, and Kirkus.



“THE EXCELLENCE KEEPS BUILDING ON ITSELF.”

UTA's new director of athletics on joining the WAC, the value of athletics, and what's next for UTA Athletics

Jon Fagg, UTA's new director of athletics, leaves his first leadership meeting carrying a small statue of Sisyphus, the Greek figure cursed by the gods to push a boulder up a hill for eternity. As we walk into his office, he explains what the story of Sisyphus means to him: doing the work and making the best of it while you're at it, no matter the circumstance.

“At the very least, Sisyphus was probably in great shape,” he says, laughing, as he places the statue on a shelf near his desk.

It's a thought-provoking symbol for Fagg to share with his team just before a new academic year kicks off in Maverick Country. It's a significant start for many reasons: Not only is it his first year as director, it's also UTA's first semester back in the Western Athletic Conference (WAC), and many new head coaches are on board to lead teams to victory.

Thankfully, Fagg notes, all the ingredients are there for Mavericks to reign supreme in the WAC.

“You know when you move into a new

house, and you start noticing the tiny cracks you need to repair or the areas you want to upgrade? That hasn't happened here at all,” he says. “Since I've been here, the excellence keeps building on itself. The upside is really the upside at UTA.”

A seasoned leader in college athletics, Fagg most recently served as deputy athletics director at the University of Arkansas, where he assisted the vice chancellor and director of athletics in a variety of duties. During his tenure there, he was an instrumental member of the university's capital campaign, which raised approximately \$220 million for the department. In 2021-22 alone, the Razorbacks claimed 18 Southeastern Conference championships.

Having spent much of his career at Power Five—or what would come to be considered Power Five—schools, Fagg says he brings with him the spirit and competitiveness those schools foster.

“It's the competitiveness, and it's that sense of commitment, that belief that athletics has a rightful place in educa-

tion,” he adds. “Our athletes are the kinds of students you want at a university—diligent and hardworking, choosing to take on the extra responsibility that comes when you dedicate yourself to a sport. Athletics is also great for a university because it's a shared point of connection for every member of the community.”

Going forward, Fagg has a big to-do list in front of him. Primary on that list? Making sure the conditions are right to ensure that everyone—his athletes, the student body, faculty, staff, and alumni—is ready to make lasting memories with UTA Athletics.

“We need to boost the relationship between athletics and campus. From there, we need to ensure the athletics experience is memorable for everyone,” he says. “After all, that's why we do this—it's about forming those connections with each other and making memories that will stay with us.

“And it's about winning,” he acknowledges with a laugh. “Of course, a big piece of that's going to be winning.”

MEET THE LEADERSHIP

The head coaches who are leading UTA's teams into the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) share their thoughts on what's ahead.



Diego Benitez, 18th Season at UTA, Men's and Women's Tennis

"We are looking forward to matching up against tough competition in the WAC after a fair share of success in the Sun Belt Conference. Our women's team brings back all eight players from last year's championship team, and the men's side is adding three new players to support an already deep team."



Casey Devoll, 8th Season at UTA, 4th as Head Coach, Men's Golf

"I'm excited for this year with an experienced, older team joining a new conference, which will be fun. Our schedule this year is really good and puts us in position to do something special."



Kara Dill, 1st Season at UTA, Softball

"Our team is full of strong, empowered women who love the game and playing for each other. There's a special energy around our program—a fresh start for everyone with a new coaching staff and joining a new conference. I can't wait to get on the field and compete."



Catherine Matranaga, 7th Season at UTA, 5th as Head Coach, Women's Golf

"I am really looking forward to our schedule this year, and being in a new conference is exciting. We are a relatively young team, but we have some great upper-class leadership, and I'm excited to see what this team will achieve."



John Sauerhage, 32nd Season at UTA, 26th as Head Coach, Men's and Women's Track and Field and Cross Country

"A mix of old rivals and new teams from out west will make the WAC challenging, but we are looking forward to lining up and competing for championships!"



Clay Van Hook, 1st Season at UTA, Baseball

"We are excited to embark on a new year as a new team with a new vision. There is a great group of players who are excited to start forging relationships and building camaraderie with each other. Our staff can't wait to see what this team will look like in the spring."



J.T. Wenger, 6th Season at UTA Volleyball

"I'm really eager to work with the depth and veteran nature of this year's team. Our program has developed in many ways over the past few seasons, and our student-athletes are in position to really compete at the peak of their game."



Shereka Wright, 3rd Season at UTA, Women's Basketball

"It's truly an honor to join the WAC this year. We look forward to starting and renewing rivalries. From top to bottom, the conference will be very competitive with outstanding coaches who I have respected from afar."



Sprinter Iyana Gray is breaking records.

A SPRINT TO THE TOP

Iyana Gray is one to watch—but don't blink

To understand how fast Iyana Gray is, imagine she is standing at one end of a football field. In 11 seconds, she would have already run the length of it. Give her about 11 more seconds, and she would have completed about half the length of the Empire State Building. (Give her another 30 seconds, and she would have the rest of that covered, too.)

Those times—100 meters in 11.22 seconds; 200 meters in 22.78—are the fifth-fastest times in the world among athletes under the age of 20. Those impressive showings also demolished previous school records. Her time of 7.41 seconds in the 60-meter indoor event ranks as third best in program history.

"I like running because it really teaches you who you are, what you're about," Gray says. "I've always been athletic, but through running I've learned I'm focused and self-determined. I'm very determined in everything that I do."

That determination has earned her some impressive accolades in her first year at UTA. Now a sophomore, the nursing major was the Sun Belt Conference

Indoor Freshman of the Year in 2022, making her the second woman ever to receive the honor in UTA history and the third track and field athlete overall.

Over the summer, Gray was selected to run with Team USA at the 2022 U20 Track and Field World Championships in Cali, Colombia. Running the 4x100 relay, she and her teammates took home silver in the event, coming in just one second behind the first-place finishers, Team Jamaica.

"I don't want to put too much pressure on myself, but it's hard not to after doing all that in my first year," she says. "I don't want people to be like, 'That's all she has.' I can still do more!"

Gray says her plan to keep improving in her sport is to do what she has always done: Focus on practice, be persistent, and work hard no matter what.

"Any time I have a minor setback, I know it's going to be a major comeback," she says. "I just need to get out there and run—every day, every day, every day. Success doesn't just happen to you. You have to find it in yourself."

QUICK HITS

Freshman Madison Le led the women's golf team in her first-ever collegiate event, tying for 27th place out of 75 players. The Mavericks finished 12th overall.

Senior Joel Bengtsson claimed the national championship in the 110 meter hurdles for his home nation of Sweden.

The softball team landed 14 student-athletes from last season's roster on the All-America Scholar-Athlete List by Easton/National Fastpitch Coaches Association during the 2021-22 academic year.

Junior pitcher Cade Winquest was selected in the 8th round of the Major League Baseball Draft by the St. Louis Cardinals.

Roy Rudewick, longtime Athletics staff member and current senior associate athletics director for sports medicine, was inducted into the Southwest Athletic Trainers' Association Hall of Fame.

The men's outdoor track and field program claimed the NCAA Division I-AAA Athletics Directors Association's top honor, making them the best in the nation in 2021-22 at a DI institution that does not sponsor football.

Adeyemi Talabi was selected for Team Ireland in the 4x100m relay at the Track and Field World Championships after she and her team finished third at the Bauhaus-Galan, an annual athletics meeting, in Sweden.



FU



utures Burn Bright

With UTA's new Blaze Forward program, Mavericks can pursue their higher education goals without worrying about cost.

By Devynn Case

AS PART OF a close-knit family, Jennifer Esmeralda Sandoval was always encouraged to get a college education. Not only would it help ensure a more successful future for her, it would also be one way she could help fulfill the vision her grandmother had when she came to the U.S. at 16 hoping to build a better life for her family.

“The most important thing to me is to make my family proud,” says Sandoval, now a sophomore studying business management. “To my parents, attending college means gaining more knowledge and taking an important step toward a better future. To me, going to college means having the opportunity to pursue many of my long-held ambitions.”

A middle child, Sandoval is the first person in her family to attend college. It was a decades-long, multigenerational dream made possible in part thanks to UTA’s new Blaze Forward program. Blaze Forward makes a college education more accessible for all students by covering 100% of tuition and mandatory fees

for all semesters in which they meet eligibility requirements. Transfer students who have completed their associate’s degree will be covered for two years; new students will be covered for up to four. Current students will receive the aid for the number of semesters they have remaining for an on-time graduation.

When Sandoval first found out she qualified for Blaze Forward, she says she was “beyond happy.”

“I feel like now I can really give school my all without worrying,” says Sandoval. “UTA really does the most to provide for their students. It’s such a great opportunity to help so many students further their education.”

With Blaze Forward, Jennifer Esmeralda Sandoval says she can focus on studying with much less stress.



“

“I feel like now I can really give school my all without worrying. UTA really does the most to provide for their students. It’s such a great opportunity to help so many students further their education.”

- Jennifer Esmeralda Sandoval

”



Sparking Hope

Launched in spring 2022, Blaze Forward is a free-tuition initiative that only requires a few simple conditions for students to qualify. Students must live in Texas, enroll at UT Arlington full time, be eligible to receive awards through Federal Pell Grant and TEXAS Grant programs, and come from a household with an adjusted gross income of up to \$85,000.

“UTA serves as a beacon for thousands of Texans working to improve their lives through academic excellence,” says Troy Johnson, vice president for enrollment management. “Blaze Forward means even more students will have the opportunity to experience the transformational power of a UTA education.”

Eligible students are automatically notified they are recipients just by completing the typical admissions processes: submitting a UTA application with any required documents and filling out a FASFA or TASFA application. No additional application is needed.

Funding for the program comes from a variety of sources, including federal and state grants and a new allocation from the University of Texas System. As the program grows, more than 4,600 students a year are expected to enjoy the benefits of Blaze Forward.

The name of the program is a nod to the University’s beloved mascot Blaze and suggests a future for UTA students that will glow fiercely and brightly—transforming students’ lives and the lives of their families.

“There’s a social responsibility to make sure that universities are accessible,” Dr. Johnson says. “People who are going to become great engineers, doctors, nurses, lawyers, historians, and economists come from all walks of life and all income levels. Making sure that lower-income families aren’t left out as we move forward is a positive step.”



Kelly Phan says Blaze Forward is helping her focus on her studies.

“It’s amazing how Blaze Forward is going to help me and other students like me focus more on studying and the academic aspect of college.”
- Kelly Phan

Securing Futures

The cost of attending college has increased dramatically over the last several decades. Between 1980 and 2020, the average price of tuition, fees, and room and board for an undergraduate degree increased 169%, according to a recent report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Yet students and parents continue to find ways to pay because they believe that a four-year degree is a worthy investment for career success and future earning potential. And it’s true: According to recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, bachelor’s degree holders are half as likely to be unemployed as their peers who only have a high school degree, and their median earnings are 84% higher.

Kelly Phan, who grew up in a family of five, wondered how she would get through the rest of her time at UTA without going into major debt—and then the financial aid from Blaze Forward became available.

“I had applied to probably hundreds of scholarships,” says the sophomore philosophy major. “I would get discouraged a lot because I literally could not afford to pay.”

The peace of mind that Blaze Forward offers her, she says, is invaluable.

“It’s amazing how Blaze Forward is going to help me and other students like me focus more on studying and the academic aspect of college,” says Phan.

Dreams Achieved

For Paola Sanchez and her family, an education at UT Arlington means opportunity and the fulfillment of what they thought was an “unattainable dream.”

“My mother used to wish for the possibility of even just stepping inside a college classroom,” says Sanchez, a junior who transferred from Dallas College and is now double majoring in business administration and marketing. “She has been neglected from so many opportunities due to not having an education.”

When Sanchez first toured UT Arlington with her mom, she says her mother “would not stop taking pictures of me because I had this huge smile on my face.”

“I just knew UTA was the right place for me,” she says.

When Sanchez found out she would be a Blaze Forward recipient via email, she cried.

“After a deep breath of relief, I felt a huge amount of stress taken off of my shoulders,” says Sanchez, who had been planning on getting two jobs to pay for her courses. She also says she felt “extremely proud” of herself due to her perseverance.

“There were plenty of times I wanted to give up. But college demonstrates everything about a person, like how much perseverance and commitment a person has,” Sanchez says. “All of the hardships we college students go through, obtaining a degree means that we are very dedicated individuals who choose to confront challenges and become better versions of ourselves.”

“At UTA, I have been able to pursue subjects that really interest me. College is a place of exploration, and as a student, you should be allowed to explore without worrying about paying for things like books and how to fund your education.”

- Yvonne Gyimah

Yvonne Gyimah is ready to take on her future.

Blazing Bright

At a launch event for Blaze Forward on UT Arlington's campus, UT System Chancellor James B. Milliken said that college costs “present a barrier for far too many talented, young people.

“Now, building on the great work of our elected officials, the UT Arlington administration, the UT System Board of Regents, and colleagues across the UT System, we are able to make a major, permanent step to make UTA an even more affordable institution for generations to come.”

The feeling of accomplishment from earning a college degree and the grit Mavericks display in doing so can be seen in the many stories of Blaze Forward recipients, like Yvonne Gyimah. Even as a senior who is finishing her degree in public health while staying active in student government, receiving this aid in her last semester was still “such a blessing” for her family.

“At UTA, I have been able to pursue subjects that really interest me,” Gyimah says. “College is a place of exploration, and as a student, you should be allowed to explore without worrying about paying for things like books and how to fund your education.”

Gyimah was born in Arlington and grew up in Kumasi, Ghana, in West Africa. She came back to Texas in high school and graduated from Juan Seguin High School, where she said she worked hard on her GPA in order to gain scholarships for college.

“I knew I needed scholarships to fund my goals because I knew my family would not be able to afford the financial aspects of my higher education,” says Gyimah.

Completing her degree at UTA will be “a milestone” for her and her family. She says the Blaze Forward program is “not just a free money opportunity, but the opportunity of a lifetime.”

“When you have money on your mind and you're trying to work 24/7, it really affects you,” she says. “The Blaze Forward program takes away the burden of that worry. When students can focus solely on education and focus on what they are passionate about, that means that they are truly preparing for excellence and on what they can contribute to the world.” **UTA**







Capstones

for the

Community

In the Honors College, UTA students have the opportunity to engage in research that has a real-world impact.

BY LINSEY RETCOFSKY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DANTE TERZIGNI

Game-changing research often results when strong personal motivation meets an urgent problem in need of a solution. In the Honors College at UT Arlington, undergraduate researchers spend their semesters digging deep into their chosen disciplines, often conducting research alongside faculty mentors. At the end of their UTA journeys, Honors students embark on a Capstone project, a creative work or research investigation demonstrating the culmination of their undergraduate education.

“It’s so rewarding to witness students’ transformation from the discovery of research to the application of research methods to real-world problems.”

A prized academic milestone in an Honors student’s journey, the Honors Capstone project completes the Honors degree. Signifying a great amount of research and organization of thought, the Honors Capstone demonstrates to graduate school admissions committees, scholarship review boards, and prospective employers that students have the intellectual maturity to pursue independent academic endeavors. All Honors students produce a deliverable and showcase their Capstone project at the Honors Research Symposium in either an oral and/or poster presentation.

“It’s so rewarding to witness students’ transformation from the discovery of research to the application of research methods to real-world problems,” says Bobbi Brown, assistant director of undergraduate research for the Honors College. “By the time they reach their capstone projects, the students have transitioned into tackling hard questions that have the potential to change lives.”

ADDRESSING CHILDHOOD HEALTH

Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that childhood obesity affects approximately 14.7 million children and adolescents in the United States. Across income groups and household education levels, the risk of obesity varies. In addition to unbalanced diets and lack of physical activity, the community where a child grows up



plays a major role in determining their weight, says Alexis Jones (’22 BS, Exercise Science).

“For example, lower-income families may not feel safe in their communities, and they won’t let their children play outside,” Jones says. “Inside play is usually limited due to lack of space, and outdoor play isn’t an option. The child’s opportunities for physical activity are extremely limited.”

In her capstone study of children ages 2 to 5 who were recruited from two childcare centers and one gymnasium in the North Texas area, Jones explored how social demographics such as ethnicity, race, and socioeconomic status correlate to physical activity and childhood obesity.

Under the supervision of Xiangli Gu, assistant professor of kinesiology, Jones measured the participants’ height, weight, and body mass index (BMI). Then, surveys completed by the children’s parents assessed their child’s home environment, built environment, and levels of physical activity and sedentary behavior.

In the first survey, parents responded to questions that assessed how their parenting style influenced their child’s level of physical activity and measured methods of transportation, safety concerns, and the availability of motor toys. Additional surveys asked the parents to describe their neighborhood infrastructure and how much time their child spent doing activities like watching TV, playing video games, riding a bicycle, or exercising outdoors.

Results illustrated that children whose families were of higher socioeconomic status engaged in more physical activity and less sedentary behavior per week than the children from lower-socioeconomic status families. Jones correlated that family income can affect a child’s physical activity, which can further impact their BMI.

“The evidence of environmental influence on childhood obesity can help child care professionals identify populations that are at risk and decrease the likelihood of future health complications,” she says. “Early intervention will be key to curbing the national obesity crisis.”

COOLING HEAT ISLANDS

While bustling cities are often epicenters of jobs, housing, health care, and other life-supporting resources, large urban landscapes can also produce harmful effects on their environments. Materials used for buildings, roadways, and other infrastructure absorb the sun’s heat and slowly release it, causing metropolitan temperatures to be warmer than surrounding rural areas. Concentrated cities become islands of heat, leading to increased energy consumption, pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Higher temperatures also contribute to human illnesses such as respiratory difficulties, heat exhaustion, and stroke, while heat trapped in pavement and rooftops increases the temperature of stormwater runoff, which affects the metabolism and reproduction of aquatic life in streams, rivers, ponds, and nearby lakes.

Research conducted by Raul-Andres Hassenteuffel Morales (’22 BA, Architecture) considers how green roof



garden systems could mitigate the harmful effects of these heat islands.

“Buildings and infrastructure contribute to many harmful processes that accelerate climate change,” Morales says. “It is important for architects to approach building design in a manner that respects and responds to nature, rather than one that works against it.”

In a review of green roof literature, he found numerous benefits, including lower heat transfer, decreases in surface temperatures by up to 80 degrees, additional building insulation resulting in lower energy consumption, and significant rainwater absorption.

To combat heat intensity, Morales proposed the retrofitting of city rooftops to host green spaces. Citing a study of the buildings in downtown Toronto, he argued that widespread rooftop renovations could reduce citywide temperatures. If governments work together to achieve this goal, it

For his capstone, Raul-Andres Hassenteuffel Morales focused on the fight against climate change.



“It is important for architects to approach building design in a manner that respects and responds to nature, rather than one that works against it.”

could even impact global temperatures, Morales says.

In a case study supervised by Kathryn Holliday, professor of architecture, Morales provided an evidence-based approach to a rooftop garden design for the main building of UTA's College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs. His design recommended a mixed-use layout, including a garden and hard-surface area for potential classroom activities. He advised planners to incorporate native plants into garden design, acknowledging their benefits to insect life and visitor enjoyment.

Although the cost of adding green roof garden systems is more expensive than conventional roofing, the perks of green spaces greatly outweigh the costs, Morales says.

“Small changes such as the addition of rooftop gardens can provide invaluable long-term benefits to residents and the environment,” he says. “One small step at a time, we can solve the climate crisis.”

DECREASING STIGMA

When Christine Abasi ('22 BA, Communication; BS, Psychology) developed a stutter at the age of 10, her classmates' mockery discouraged her from lessons with her speech therapist. It wasn't until two years later that she had gained enough confidence to fully commit to the therapeutic techniques that eventually helped her manage the disorder. Years later, as an undergraduate researcher at UTA, she was determined to use her experience to help others.

Prompted by a class assignment, Abasi conducted a literature review of published research on the topic of stuttering. She didn't find as much information as she had hoped.

Crediting support from her faculty advisor



CAPSTONES ACROSS DISCIPLINES



CARLEY ANDREW ('22 BA, Psychology)

Gender Bias and Creative Idea Evaluation

Faculty Mentor: Logan Watts, Assistant Professor, Psychology



MELISSA MACIAS ('22 BA, Philosophy)

Just Like Us: Identifying the Moral Relevance that Animals Have to Humans

Faculty Mentor: Keith Burgess-Jackson, Associate Professor, Philosophy and Humanities



DHRUVA MALIK ('22 BS, Computer Science)

Building an Application to Monitor Back Posture in Real Time and Provide Live Support from Health Professionals

Faculty Mentor: Shawn Norman Gieser, Senior Lecturer, Computer Science and Engineering



MIKAELA NEUBAUER ('22 BS, Public Health)

Social Media as a Tool for Education and Awareness of Mental Health

Faculty Mentor: Brandie Green, Clinical Assistant Professor of Kinesiology



RAKESH YADAV ('22 BS, Mechanical Engineering)

Mars Rover - Proof of Life Module

Faculty Mentor: Raul Fernandez, Professor of Practice, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering

Molly Cummins, lecturer of communication, Abasi decided to lend her voice to the body of research addressing the deeply personal topic. Her investigation earned her an invitation to Texas Undergraduate Research Day, where she educated an audience of Texas legislators and members of the public about possible causes and treatments of persistent stuttering disorder.

Although stuttering has been a medically recognized speech disorder since the 1960s, people who stutter are often subjected to negative public perceptions, Abasi says.

“The stigma around stuttering is perpetrated in many ways, including mass media, cultural beliefs, and misinformation,” she says. “There has been and continues to be a

strong connection between stuttering in mainstream media and negative characteristics such as lack of intelligence, nervousness, or lack of social skills.”

Those negative perceptions can have adverse effects on mental and physical health. Research shows that internalization of negative attitudes by people who stutter is linked to higher anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem, and even gastrointestinal issues.

To address the problem, Abasi investigated the source of negative social stigma and possible methods to reduce it. In a survey of males and females aged 19 to 60, she quizzed participants on their perceptions of stuttering before and after an interpersonal and educational intervention.

Participants watched a 10-minute video produced by CBS in 2011 titled *Finding Their Voices—Understanding Stuttering*, which explains what stuttering is and addresses some of the most common stuttering misconceptions.

The study found that the intervention significantly improved social attitudes on the topic. After watching the

video, participants reported higher levels of empathy with people who stutter and that they would be less likely to fill in words or make jokes during a conversation when someone stutters.

In graduate school for speech pathology, Abasi plans to examine how public education and interpersonal communication between those who stutter and the people in their lives can influence how communities respond to those with speech disorders. As a speech pathologist, she hopes to identify effective ways to increase the quality of life for people who stutter by decreasing adverse emotional effects that result from the disorder.

“The combination of my personal history and the knowledge I have gained at UTA, especially through my work in the Honors College, gives me a unique view of how both the public and researchers approach the stigma surrounding stuttering,” Abasi says. “I’ve seen both sides of the coin. Now I can apply that knowledge to help others overcome the social challenges that accompany stuttering.” [UTA](#)

Christine Abasi's capstone project had a personal motivation.

“The combination of my personal history and the knowledge I have gained at UTA gives me a unique view of how both the public and researchers approach the stigma surrounding stuttering.”



A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a teal off-the-shoulder gown, stands on a concrete pier. She is smiling and looking towards the right. Behind her is a large industrial facility with several tall smokestacks and a body of water. The scene is framed by a red bar at the top and a teal bar at the bottom. A white banner with a dashed border contains the word 'Maverick' in a large, bold, black serif font. Another white banner with a dashed border at the bottom right contains the word 'Conne' in the same font. A thin gold chain is draped around the woman and the banners.

Maverick

Conne



Currently professional opera singers in New York City, Raehann Bryce-Davis (left) and Tesia Kwarteng first met at UTA.

At UTA, the bonds developed between Mavericks last a lifetime.
BY DANA JENNINGS

When Raehann Bryce-Davis saw Tesia Kwarteng walking into the Fine Arts Building, she was relieved to know she wouldn't be alone. In each other, the two Black female opera singers would find not only companionship, but also shared dreams and the same strong work ethic. That first meeting marked more than a decade of friendship that saw them cheering each other on across states and oceans as they pursued their careers as professional opera singers on some of the world's most prominent stages.

ctions



Connections like these are forged every day at UTA, where students form enduring relationships and engage in mentorships and professional networking. Connections like these are built to last, as our students graduate into a community of over 250,000 alumni. Their journeys are diverse, but they are always bonded by the shared experience of learning and growing in Maverick Country.

A Dynamic Duo

“I was on my own when it came to figuring out what this career looks like after graduation,” says Bryce-Davis, who graduated in 2010 with Bachelor of Music in vocal performance. “I did the research, found the programs and resources available, and excitedly shared what I’d learned when I found somebody with the same goals. I shared with several people, but not everyone listened. Tesia, though, was really intentional about the career she wanted to have.”

Kwarteng, who graduated with her Bachelor of Music in vocal performance a year after Bryce-Davis, says she was happy to absorb her friend’s knowledge.

“I knew I wanted to perform, and I knew I wanted to be in New York, but I had no idea what that actually looked like,” she says. “Raehann put in the work to make that happen.”

When Bryce-Davis finished her degree at UTA, she enrolled in graduate studies at the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) in New York and invited Kwarteng to visit and tour the school. The visit resulted in Kwarteng making the move to New York after her own graduation, and the two friends found themselves as students together again at MSM. There, Kwarteng says, Bryce-Davis continued to show her the ropes and help her find her way.

After graduating from MSM, Kwarteng and Bryce-Davis followed different paths to stages around the world, but they have followed each other’s accomplishments along the way. Their shared perspective as Black women in opera gave them a deeper appreciation for what they each have faced on their way to acclaim.

“We’ve all had the experience of being the only or one of a few Black performers on a project,” Kwarteng says. “There is a sense of relief when you know that somebody else in the room knows your experience and is there to support you and keep you uplifted within a field that can make you feel as if you don’t belong.”

“When you feel like no one understands, you can feel very, very alone, and that’s a difficult thing,” Bryce-Davis adds.

“That’s one of the reasons representation is so important; we need to feel a connection to be able to feel whole.”

Bryce-Davis and Kwarteng made separate debuts at New York City’s prestigious Metropolitan Opera in early 2022. As they watched each other shine, they joyfully reflected on how far they have come since first meeting in front of UTA’s Fine Arts Building.

“It’s really exciting to see how this has unfolded, and it hasn’t been without sacrifice or struggle,” Kwarteng says. “To know the work someone has put in and the steps they’ve taken to get to these moments—it’s just great. We’re out here doing this thing.”

When reflecting on the impact of having a fellow Black female opera singer on her team from an early stage, Kwarteng called it “incredible.”

“For Raehann to be so open and gracious with information she got along the way and pass it down, that’s the kind of thing we need,” Kwarteng says. “Now I can reach back and help the generation coming up behind us.”

Expanding Perspectives

Gerardo Alvarez (’22 BS, Architecture) arrived at UTA fresh from his decision to pivot from studying aerospace engineering to architecture. Though he was excited to tackle the discipline, he felt like he was behind as he listened to fellow students talk about programs they were doing and how they had been studying architecture since high school.

As a first-generation student, Alvarez received support from his family, but they didn’t know how to help him—so when he came across UTA’s MavMentors program in a campus email, he saw it as an opportunity to start garnering the



“I needed help across the board, especially when it came to setting up resumes and portfolios, entering an interview, and engaging with architecture firms and their higher-ups.”



Through the MavMentors program, interior designer Veronica Sanders helped architecture student Gerardo Alvarez advance his professional skills.

knowledge he would need to succeed in the real world.

MavMentors fosters meaningful partnerships between alumni and student mentees that will help mentees better navigate their career path. In the program, mentees are encouraged to choose a mentor who best matches their current and future professional goals, but Alvarez saw it as a chance to connect with someone who could broaden his understanding of the field.

“It was a purposeful, strategic move to pick a mentor who was outside of my discipline,” Alvarez says. “I didn’t really just want to hear more about architecture; I wanted to have an opportunity to hear from other portions of the field, like interior design.”

The mentor who MavMentors connected him with was Veronica Sanders (’18 BS, Interior Design), CEO and principal interior designer at Design with Veronica Sanders LLC. Sanders laughs as she reflects on how, despite their different professional focuses, her journey mirrors Alvarez’s.

“One of the reasons I wanted to join MavMentors as a mentor is because I’m also a first-generation graduate,” she says. “I know what it was like to not have mentorship

or someone to guide me through the admissions process, classes, or filling out scholarship forms. I knew that somewhere out there was another first-generation student who’s struggling, and I can offer them support.”

Sanders and Alvarez agree that interior design and architecture are closely aligned but not often intersecting in ways that could maximize the benefits of collaboration.

“With Gerardo, I could give him the interior designer’s perspective on architecture and share how we lean on architects and how we hope architects will lean on us,” she says.

Given their intentionality about expanding their professional perspectives, it is no surprise that Sanders and Alvarez hit it off within just a few minutes of meeting. Alvarez said Sanders’ friendly and open nature helped the relationship feel organic from the start, while Sanders attributes the success of their mentor-mentee relationship to Alvarez’s inherent curiosity and preparedness.

“I needed help across the board, especially when it came to setting up resumes and portfolios, entering an interview, and engaging with architecture firms and their higher-ups,” Alvarez says. “As I got closer to graduation, questions flooded

in, and I'd jot them down to ask Veronica about.

"What I really appreciate about Veronica is how she calmed that panic by reminding me that I'm capable," Alvarez adds. "It's easy to get caught up in the business of architecture, but she reminded me I'm still an artist and that I should keep my mind open and be creative to avoid falling in a groove of this just being a job."

After graduating, Alvarez went to work at Von Perry LLC, a startup that develops 3D-printed houses with the goal of developing affordable housing.

Inspired by her experience mentoring Alvarez, Sanders decided to embark on a new career journey as an adjunct professor at Dallas College's El Centro Campus. She said meeting Alvarez through MavMentors sparked a love of teaching and a desire to continue mentoring students.

At the start, Sanders and Alvarez thought their time would be focused on a former student passing knowledge to a current student. Instead, they landed in a mutually inspiring relationship filled with shared admiration.

As Sanders notes, "As professionals, we can do so much better if we work together."

Growing Through Life

Maverick friendships are long-lasting, but Lolín Martins-Crane ('88 BA, Psychology) and Margaret Monostory Crowley ('88 BFA, Theatrical Production) likely have them all beat. The pair met on the UTA campus when they were just 4 years old, both attending a party for Martins-Crane's father, who was a new professor in what was then known as the Department of Foreign Languages. Monostory's father was a professor in the department as well.

While the girls were each excited to see someone their own age at this grown-up party, their first evening of playing together unfortunately ended with a bit of thievery.

"I had this stuffed elephant my grandmother had made specially for me," Monostory recalls. "Lolín and I played with it at this party, then, all of a sudden, I didn't have my elephant. I wandered the party looking for it, only to find Lolín curled in her mother's lap with it tucked under her arm."

Monostory fought the urge to wake the sleeping Martins-Crane, and her grandmother made Martins-Crane her very own stuffed elephant so she would not have to steal Monostory's anymore.

With that, their budding friendship was back on track. Good thing, too, because they would spend the nearly two decades that followed together, going to all the same schools and ultimately deciding to attend UTA after high school.

At UTA, their paths started to deviate from one another as Martins-Crane studied psychology and Monostory pursued theatre arts. Their first real separation came when they

elected to go to different graduate schools before putting down roots in different cities.

In spite of the distance, Martins-Crane and Monostory continued to see each other through life's biggest milestones. When Martins-Crane had children, Monostory made them their own stuffed elephants.

Martins-Crane and Monostory are both only children, and their families, because they were small, shared every holiday and big event growing up. For Martins-Crane, this is why it was imperative they stayed a part of each other's lives through the years apart.

"It goes beyond friendship. This togetherness, this sisterhood, and the memories that come with it have gotten me through a whole lot."



Margaret Monostory Crowley and Lotin Martins-Crane have been best friends since they met on the UTA campus at just 4 years old. They are both UTA alumni and current University employees.

“Now that our parents are deceased, this is the only person I share these memories with,” Martins-Crane says as Monostory nods. “It goes beyond friendship. This togetherness, this sisterhood, and the memories that come with it have gotten me through a whole lot.”

In 2016, Martins-Crane returned to UTA as director of the Career Development Center and describes the opportunity like it was “coming home.” In 2018, she happened to run into the chair of the Theatre Arts Department. Seizing the opportunity to bring her friend home, Martins-Crane asked the chair if there were any openings on the faculty and pitched

Monostory, who was working as an adjunct professor at the University of Houston.

Martins-Crane’s boldness paid off, and Monostory returned to UTA in spring 2018 as an assistant professor of theatre arts. “I had been trying to get back to UTA for a long time because of the impact it had on me,” she says.

At long last, these lifelong friends are living in the same city again and have picked up right where they left off.

“I just think our dads would both be so proud of us,” Martins-Crane says, beaming. “I think they’re looking down saying, ‘That’s it. That’s where you’re supposed to be.’” **UTA**







OF

Students,
alumni,
faculty—lend
Dallas Taylor
your ears.

SOUND

MIND

The professional
sound designer
and host of the
podcast *Twenty
Thousand Hertz*
wants to open them
to the majestic
soundscape
around you.

BY KRISTIN BAIRD RATTINI

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JON McCORMACK



MEET DALLAS TAYLOR, sound evangelist. A professional sound designer and host of the award-winning podcast *Twenty Thousand Hertz*, Taylor ('03 BA, Music Media), is on a mission to bring sound out of the shadow of its showier sensory sibling—visuals—and put it squarely in the spotlight, so that it can reap the respect and wonder it's due.

"I want to do for sound what (celebrity chef) Anthony Bourdain did for food," Taylor says. "I want to make sound visceral, romantic, and connect it to human emotion."

With more than 4.5 million listens in 2021, *Twenty Thousand Hertz* has definitely struck a chord. As the podcast explores the stories behind the world's most recognizable and interesting sounds—from birdsong to *Star Wars* sound effects to "deepfake" voices—Taylor is inspiring people to stop and listen twice to the amazing auditory soundscape that surrounds us all.

FINE-TUNING HIS CAREER PATH

Taylor's initial appreciation of sound came through music. He was a prodigy trumpet player whose exceptional talent forged a path for him out of his tiny rural Arkansas hometown.

"Playing the trumpet is where I found my love of sound," he says. "To this day, I think the greatest human sound experience ever made is hearing a great symphony performed in a great hall—and even better, playing in that orchestra."

In his junior year as a music performance major at

a university in Arkansas, Taylor suddenly developed crippling performance anxiety. As he chronicles in the podcast's milestone 150th episode, "Breathe," he could no longer play trumpet without breaking into a sweat, with pressure in his chest and his breath becoming fast and shallow.

"It shook me to my core," he says.

Taylor transferred to UTA for its flexible music media program, which provided options beyond the traditional music performance or music education major.

"It was more broad and open; there were more opportunities," he says. "I took some music technology classes, which exposed me more to different directions I was already leaning into. I felt, 'OK, I can do something in this space.'"

The summer after graduating from UTA, he took a course at what's now the Mediatech Institute in Dallas and found his niche: sound design, which is the creation of audio for film, TV, advertising, and other productions.

"Sound design is a scientific art in itself," he explains. "It is very creative, but you don't feel like you have to be Mr. Cool Guy in the room, as you do in music production. You can just be as nerdy as you want."

He honed his skills in Los Angeles mixing audio for live newscasts for NBC and Fox. A friend got him in the door at G4, a videogaming TV network, by touting his (nonexistent) skills using the Pro Tools digital audio workstation.

"I faked it until I made it," he says. "I did what felt like an eight-week intense crash course in sound design for television in one week. I found my groove, and that's what really set me on my career path."

He moved to the East Coast to work as a full-time senior sound designer for the Discovery Channel and its affiliated networks on such high-profile programs as *MythBusters* and the *Planet Earth* documentary series.

"I was working on these amazing projects in what I consider the 'golden era' of sound design at the Discovery Channel," he says.

However, he noticed at Discovery that "a lot of the best work was going outside" to independent contractors and that colleagues at other channels had fascinating projects for hire as well. So in 2009, he struck out on his own and opened his own sound design studio, Defacto Sound.

INGREDIENTS OF SOUND DESIGN

Defacto Sound has since developed a reputation for high-quality short-form content, particularly sound design and mixing for advertising, trailers, and promos. Auto brands from McLaren to Maserati to Corvette trust Defacto Sound to make their cars rev to life in ads, a complex and technically challenging feat.

"The vehicle itself is the voice," Taylor says. "A Porsche or Maserati or Hummer sounds very distinct, and users expect the car in the ad to sound not just a certain way, but sound the way it makes them feel."

He sources sound from high-end recordists, who place microphones in every possible nook and cranny of the cars. As for electric vehicles, "they don't make any sound, but car spots still need the visceral voice of the car," he says. "So we're focusing on cerebral, emotional sound design."

Entertainment is another major niche for the studio. In 2021, Defacto worked on more than 800 Netflix trailers (including for the megahits *Squid Game* and



FIVE FAVORITE SOUNDS

We asked Dallas Taylor to select five favorites from the wide spectrum of sounds featured over the seven seasons of *Twenty Thousand Hertz*. Here are his picks.



1 SOUND FIRSTS (EPISODE 21)

We shared some of the earliest recorded sounds that we could find, including a recording of someone who had been enslaved. It was visceral and powerful to hear. It's also fascinating to hear how much has changed over the past 100 years, before mass communication. The sounds and accents are much more rooted in location. You could really take a peek into a very specific region and this person's specific life because they didn't have a context outside of that.



2 THE BOOJ (EPISODE 62)

The "booj" and the "bwaa" are over-used sound effects that are so ubiquitous in movie trailers. They became really popular with Hans Zimmer's *Inception* soundtrack, and we're now in an era where all trailers are just so epic and over the top. It's hilarious when you pull back and listen to the sound effects themselves and realize just how absurd they are.



3 VOYAGER GOLDEN RECORD (EPISODE 65)

I realize this is a cop-out to pick a whole episode, but for this episode we played every single track on the Voyager Golden Record (created to serve as an introduction to Earth for any aliens that encountered the Voyager I and Voyager II spacecraft launched in 1977). We explained who picked each sound and why. It's an important episode because it was the first time that any piece of content on the Golden Record has been that in-depth.



4 MOTHER OF DRAGON SOUNDS (EPISODE 67)

I interviewed Paula Fairfield, the sound designer on *Game of Thrones*. She had so much personal loss while working on the show. At the end of season six, the character Arya meets up with her old direwolf from season one. She's petting it, everything is quiet, and it's this really emotional moment. Paula told us that, for that moment, she used the sound of her own dog that she'd just lost, memorializing her dog in the show. It was so special and incredibly powerful.



5 MINECRAFT (EPISODE 119)

This was the first time I was able to get all three of my daughters' voices in an episode. I did it selfishly to preserve them. Anytime I have the ability to do that, I want to because their voices change so quickly. When people ask me what my favorite sound in the world is, it's the sound of my girls saying "Daddy" or laughing and being silly with me.

Ozark) and more than 100 HBO trailers for such programs as *Game of Thrones* and *Harry Potter: Return to Hogwarts*.

Such promos are a six-layer salad of complementary auditory components. First, Taylor receives the raw recording from set microphones. "We remove all the noise and make every microsecond of dialogue sound as perfect and clean as possible," he says. He does the same for any music that runs behind the dialogue. He adds Foley sound effects, which simulate such every-

day sounds as fabric rustling or footsteps. Taylor then sources "hard" effects, such as explosions, from digital sound libraries, and adds in environmental sounds, such as wind and rain. And last but not least is emotional sound design.

"It's a gray area between music, story, and sound design that nudges people emotionally and gets them to react to a scene without even thinking about it," he explains. "We mix up all these elements, put a bow on it, and send everything over."

TELLING SOUND STORIES

Over the years, Taylor heard stories from the sound design world that he felt deserved to be shared with a broader audience. He learned about the iconic “Wilhelm scream” used in countless movies and the history of the NBC chimes, among other tales.

“I felt no one was capturing these stories for perpetuity,” he says. “These stories needed to be documented before we lost the heroes of sound design, these people who worked on *Star Wars* and other big projects in the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s.” He also wanted to pay tribute to the passion that sound designers bring to their work in service to the “second fiddle” of the senses.

In 2016, inspired by such podcasts as *This American Life*, *Radiolab*, and *99% Invisible*, Taylor decided to use his studio downtime to create his own podcast. He had the perfect name: *Twenty Thousand Hertz*, the upper limit of the range of human hearing. He’d already reserved a domain name, too: 20k.org.

While the first two episodes took an entire year to complete, the podcast team now spends between 200 to 300 hours per episode, which ideally runs between 22 and 24 minutes. They draw from a list of several hundred ideas and have roughly 15 episodes in various stages of production at any given time. Listeners offer suggestions, too, and have inspired upcoming episodes on insurance company jingles and extended vocal range.

Taylor prides himself on surprising listeners with the diversity of content. For example, in 2018, episodes ranged from the emergency alert system to the sound crew behind the musical *Hamilton* to sound in space. The following year, subjects included Stradivarius violins, the 808 drum machine, the detrimental physical effects of alarm sounds, to “Speak Easy,” in which Taylor shared how he took lessons from National Public Radio’s vocal coach to refine his performance for the podcast.

Afterward, he re-recorded the audio for the first 10 or so episodes because he felt he sounded unpolished and monotonous. “You really have to overdo it and overact with your voice if you want someone to register even half of the emotion you’re trying to convey,” he says.

When the pandemic emerged in early 2020, Taylor issued a decree to his team: “I said, ‘There will only be joy. We will be an escape. Nothing else is happening in the world when you’re listening to *Twenty Thousand Hertz*.’”

Listeners were treated to a two-part tribute to Mel Blanc (the voice behind *Looney Tunes*), an interview with Ben Burtt, the legendary sound designer of *Star Wars*, and even a breakdown of the Whoopee cushion’s design. The milestone 100th episode went viral with its exclusive look at how the Netflix “Ta-dum” sound was made—one of several examples of cross-pollination between the podcast and Defacto’s commercial work.

Beyond the Netflix episode, *Twenty Thousand Hertz* has garnered widespread acclaim and a loyal fan base. The podcast won Best Production & Sound Design at the 2022 Ambie Awards (the Oscars of podcasting), and it



was the People’s Voice winner for Science and Education Podcast at the 2020 Webby Awards, which honor excellence on the internet.

“RESET OUR EARS”

The pandemic changed the world’s soundscape, as the usual din of street noise disappeared and birdsong and quiet reemerged. Taylor had previously reflected on silence in a couple of episodes of *Twenty Thousand Hertz*, including one in January 2020 that focused on composer John Cage’s controversial piece *4’33*, in which not one note is played. Taylor was invited to adapt that episode into a TED Talk on-stage in Vancouver.

“My first reaction was terror, because of my severe performance anxiety,” he says. “A TED Talk was always a bucket-list item. I knew if I was ever offered, I would have to say ‘yes’ before my brain kicked in.” He admits relief when the talk went virtual instead, and he was able to record his talk in his own Defacto Sound studio.

In the resulting presentation, titled “What Silence Can Teach You About Sound,” Taylor encourages listeners to “seize a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reset our ears. If we become more conscious of what we hear, we’ll inherently make our world sound better. Quietness is not when we turn off our minds to sound, but when we can really start to listen and hear the world in all of its sonic beauty.” **UTA**

“To this day, I think the greatest human sound experience ever made is hearing a great symphony performed in a great hall—and even better, playing in that orchestra.”





DREAMING

Big
TOGETHER

PRESIDENT JENNIFER COWLEY'S INVESTITURE

“Today, of course, is about so much more than me,” said Jennifer Cowley to a jubilant crowd of Mavericks during her investiture ceremony at College Park Center on Sept. 30. The investiture, akin to an inauguration, is a formal ceremony conferring the official power of office upon a new university president. It’s a significant milestone for any university, and it’s one that Dr. Cowley—UTA’s 10th president and the first woman to ever hold the office—saw as an opportunity to celebrate the University’s past, present, and future.

Big things are ahead for UTA, she noted, because the University is filled with people who not only dream big, but also want what's best for each other in our Maverick communities and far beyond.

"We are gathered to celebrate our past and present, but also to imagine our future," she said. "This is about our dreams, our plans, and how we can meet the expectations of our current and future students, our communities, and our state."

Before Cowley took the stage, UTA and community representatives shared their hopes and dreams for UTA's future. All together, it amounted to a shared call to action—to dream big and work together to make the University, the state, and the world a better place.

"It is my sincerest hope that you leave today inspired and invigorated about the role each of us plays in building the future of UTA," said Tamara Brown, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "With where we've been, there's no limit to where we can go."

Promise Robinson—a College of Nursing and Health Innovation student, McNair Scholar, and a research assistant in the Developmental Motor Cognition Lab—shared how UTA helped her determine what her dreams were.

"I quickly learned that UTA is the perfect place to discover my passions," she said, describing her journey as an undergraduate researcher, her advocacy for kinesiology students on the Health Innovation Constituency Council, and how donor scholarship support helped her reach her full potential. "I can honestly say that attending UTA is one of the best decisions I've ever made. UTA is truly a land of opportunity, a place where all things are possible, a university where dreams come true."

After Robinson, Arlington Mayor Jim

Ross took the podium to highlight the collaborative partnership between the University and Arlington. He also presented Cowley with the key to the city.

"She has hit the ground running, ready and able to lead The University of Texas at Arlington to the next level," Ross said.

Finally, UT System Chancellor James B. Milliken formally conferred the duties and authority of the office to Cowley.

Before the ceremonial declaration and presentation of the mace—a tradition that dates to the European Middle Ages—Milliken detailed how Cowley will take UTA to an even brighter future.

"In just a few short months on campus, we've witnessed Jennifer's tireless energy and passion while immersing herself

in the University's community," he said. "When it comes to leadership, Dr. Cowley knows how to translate ideas into reality and how to transform vision into action."

At the ceremony's conclusion, Cowley called on everyone in the Maverick community to ensure UTA continues to be one of the nation's most inclusive and impactful research universities.

"We are all here because we each harbor big dreams for this university," she said. "We must remember this: A dream without a plan is just a wish. Now is the time to work to weave these dreams together, to turn them into a plan for action."

To raucous cheers, she concluded: "I can feel our momentum, and I think you can, too. Thank you for listening. Thank you for being here. Thank you for all you do and will do on behalf of our great University. And GO MAVS!" **UTA**

*We are all here
because we
each harbor
big dreams for
this university.*





Clockwise, from top left: (L-R) UT System Chancellor James B. Milliken, President Jennifer Cowley, Provost Tamara Brown, and Arlington Mayor Jim Ross • Chancellor Milliken addresses the crowd • Dr. Cowley visits with Maverick community members during the Street Festival that followed the investiture • Students pause for a photo break outside of College Park Center during the Street Festival • Dr. Cowley with her husband, Jon, and Gabriela Wilson, co-director of UTA's Multi-Interprofessional Center for Health Informatics, during a special dinner honoring donors the night before the investiture • The Cowleys pose with Blaze during the donor dinner.



SYMBOLS OF THE INVESTITURE



ACADEMIC MACE

The mace, a symbolic staff of high office, is often a traditional element in academic processions and represents peaceful leadership bestowed upon University presidents at their investiture. UTA's distinctly non-traditional mace was designed and created in 2007 by Texas State Artist and UTA Professor David Keens with the assistance of Fred Miller, adjunct professor of metal art.

REGALIA

The attire worn by participants in university investitures dates to the 12th and 13th centuries in early European universities. Academic dress today consists of a cap, gown, and hood, with different styles for each degree level. The three bars of velvet on the president's full-sleeved gown, her velvet tam, and the four-foot-long hood signify that she has earned a doctoral degree.



CLASSIFIED

All the latest professional updates from our talented alumni all over the world.

1969

Morris Narunsky (BS, Aerospace Engineering) was named Man of the Year for Congregation Brith Shalom Men's Club in Houston. He was born in a German Nazi concentration camp in occupied southern Poland shortly after it was liberated. Semi-retired, he worked with offshore oil and gas equipment manufacturers.

1972

Betsy Price (BS, Biology) received the Great Women of Texas Lifetime Achievement Award from the *Fort Worth Business Press*. Price was elected the 44th mayor of Fort Worth in 2011 and was the city's longest-serving mayor when she retired in 2021. She also served as Tarrant County tax assessor-collector from 2000-11.

1974

Carroll Pruitt (BS, Architecture) was appointed to the Texas Industrialized Building Code Council by Gov. Greg Abbott. He is the president and CEO of Pruitt Consulting Inc. The Texas

Industrialized Building Code Council oversees the regulation of industrialized housing and buildings by state programs.

1975

Ignacio T. Nuñez (BS, Biology) has retired from practicing medicine and serving as an Arlington City Council member. He continues to serve as a planning and zoning commissioner. He also serves on the board of trustees for Texas Health Resources and its strategy/quality and performance committees and on the UTA College of Science Advisory Council.

1977

Joe Cravens (BA, Physical Education) was inducted into the Utah Sports Hall of Fame as a Coach of Merit. Cravens is vice president of student and public affairs at St. Joseph Catholic High School, and he coached the girls' basketball team in back-to-back Utah State Championships. He served as head coach at Weber State University from 1999-2006 and was the 2003 Big Sky Conference Coach of the Year and the National Mid-Majors Coach of the Year.



“UTA is a catalyst to making Arlington the best community it can be. Education is the way lives get better and that makes the community and our country better. Supporting UTA is being a good neighbor.”

– Al and Shalyn Clark, Donors and Legacy Leaders

Through an estate gift, you can establish your legacy at The University of Texas at Arlington and make a difference at UTA and beyond.

Visit uta.giftlegacy.com

UTA  THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
AT ARLINGTON

CLASS NOTES

1978

Chris Barnes

(BS, Architecture) was a finalist for *D CEO's* 2022 Commercial Real Estate Awards for Excellence in Architecture and Design. He is principal-in-charge and owner of BOKA Powell.

1979

Thomas B. Tucker

(BA, English) has retired after 38 years of practicing medicine, including 32 years in oncology in Texas and Washington. He now lives in San Antonio.

1981

Kandy Kaye Horn

(MBA) ran for Texas governor in the Republican Party primary. The Terrell, Texas, resident is chair of the Horn Family Foundation and CEO of the Baroness Kandy Kaye Horn Foundation.

1983

Brian Happel

(BBA) has joined Regions Bank to lead as executive vice president of the commercial banking team and CEO of the Fort Worth market. Previously, he worked for BBVA and JP Morgan Chase. Happel is also a member of UTA's College of Business Advisory Board.

1988

Tony Lenamon

(BBA, Real Estate) was named to the *Dallas Business Journal's* Texas 100 list. He is Americas CEO of Valuation and Advisory Services for JLL, a global commercial real estate services company.

1997

Theron Bowman

(PhD, Urban and Public Administration; '91 MPA; '83 BS, Biology)

was honored with the naming of the city of Arlington's South Police Service Center. He became Arlington's first African American police chief in 1999. Dr. Bowman serves as the CEO of Theron L. Bowman Inc., a police practice consulting firm. He was an adjunct professor of criminology and criminal justice from 1993-2020.

1998

Cristi Landrum

(BA, Architecture) joined Perkins Eastman as a principal and regional residential practice area leader in its Dallas office.

2003

Heather Elise Zrubek

(MCRP) is stewardship manager at Texas 2036, a nonpartisan public policy think tank with offices in Austin and Dallas. Previously, she was member services and

“UTA offered me a place to learn and thrive as a new international student in the U.S., and I am grateful for the phenomenal people I met there and the experience all around.”

— EZINNE UDEZUE
(’99 BS, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING)
*Chief Product Officer,
WP Engine*

events coordinator for the National Association of Episcopal Schools.

2004

Samuel Digby

(MPA) has been elected class president of the Institute for Law Enforcement Administration's 59th School of Executive Leadership. He is a sergeant with the Dallas Police Department.

Aaronda Smith

(BA, English) was named Teacher of the Year in the Choices/Magnet category for Dallas Independent School District. She is an honors reading/language arts eighth grade instructor at George Bannerman Dealey Montessori and Vanguard Academy. A 16-year Dallas ISD veteran teacher, Smith started Dealey Montessori's Debate Program in 2015. Throughout her career, she has served in various leadership roles.

2006

Carrie Cunningham

(MArch) is the design manager at Southern Land Company.

2008

Robert A. Calkins

(BA, History), a major in the United States Army, is the committee chief for the Military Intelligence Captains Career

Texas State Sen. Royce West

(’79 MA, ’74 BA, Sociology) was recently inducted into the Fred David Gray Hall of Fame of the National



Bar Association. The hall of fame honors lawyers who have practiced for at least 40 years and have made significant contributions to the cause of justice. West, UTA's first African American student body president, was named a Distinguished Alumnus in 2001.

Course, 304th Military Intelligence Battalion, at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

2010

Michael Joseph Jackson

('10 MEd, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies) was named Principal of the Year in the Choices/Magnet category for the Dallas Independent School District. He is a 22-year veteran educator, having served as a teacher, teacher mentor, basketball coach, grade-level chair, campus instructional coach, AVID coordinator, assistant principal, and principal, all in Dallas ISD.

2011

Michaela Dollar

(MA, Communication) was named an assistant city manager of Richardson. Previously, she was economic development director for Georgetown, Texas.

Bobby J. Lackey

(BBA, Finance) is senior vice president at Grandview Bank in Burleson, Texas, and president of the Burleson Rotary Club.

Belinda Kathryn Smith

(MS, Industrial and Organizational Psychology) and her husband, Ryan Huffer, were featured in the *New York Times*' Feb. 18, 2022, edition.

The Love section feature told of their meeting after joining the cheerleading team Cheer Dallas in 2010. The Dallas couple wed on Feb. 2. Smith is the director of human resources and marketing at Neighborhood Medical Center in Dallas.

2012

Jessica Winter Lunce

(BA, History) is associate director for full-time MBA admissions for the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University. She was coordinator for marketing and communications for the UTA College of Education and Health Professions in 2012-14.

C.P. Mitchell

(BSN) has made her literary debut with a children's book, *Nurses Are Superheroes Too: Heroes Wear Scrubs and Stethoscopes*. The book highlights nurses and the instrumental role that they play in the health care system

Jennifer Mitchell

(MSN, Nursing Administration; '04 BSN) is a UTA adjunct clinical faculty member at Texas Health Denton.

2014

Houston Hardaway

(BA, Film/Video) and his bride Roseanne Blair were featured in the *New York*



Cortney Gumbleton ('13 MSW) has joined TechFW as the assistant director for marketing and operations. She was founder, co-owner, and managing partner of Locavore, a commercial kitchen and event center, and executive director of The Jordan Elizabeth

Harris Foundation. Gumbleton was a UTA MAVS 100 Top Business honoree in 2020 and 2021 and a 2019 *Fort Worth Business Press* 40-Under-40. She won the 2018 Fort Worth Business Plan Competition.

Times' Dec. 10, 2021, edition. The Love section feature told the story of their relationship, from meeting as actors playing a married couple onstage while performing improv at Dallas Comedy House to their wedding Nov. 20, 2021, in Oak Cliff. He is a content creator for his wife, a social media influencer.

Fabrice Kabona

(MPA) is the city manager of Madisonville, Texas. He previously worked as an assistant city manager and deputy city manager for Lancaster, Texas.

Derick Miller

(MS, '93 BS, Criminology and Criminal Justice) is chief for the Irving Police Department and an adjunct professor of criminology at UTA. Miller also serves as president of the DFW Major City Police Chiefs Association.

"I think more students and parents are seeing the positive impact an education from UTA and across the UT System can have on graduates' careers. Proud to be a Maverick alum!"

— JOHN WHEELER
JR. ('19 EMBA)
Digital Customer Success Manager, Alteryx

2015

Syed Ahmed

(MS, Engineering Management) is the manager of eCommerce Transportation for Walmart. He lives in Brampton, Toronto, Canada.

Christopher D. Rainsberger

(BA, Political Science), a captain in the U.S. Army, is the company commander of B Company, 304th Military Intelligence Battalion at Fort Huachuca, Arizona.

2016

Jonathan Arguello

(BBA, Marketing) operates a food truck, Gustos Burgers + Stuff, at Hotel Dryce in the Fort Worth museum district. He is also the founder and CEO of Nameless LLC.

Mayrena Hernandez

(BS, Athletic Training) is a tenure-track assistant professor in athletic training at Sam Houston State University. She conducts research on how low socioeconomic status and/or minority/ethnic families of young athletes are impacted by the negative consequences of sport specialization and the current youth sport culture in the United States.

Karlie O'Reilly

(MS, Athletic Training) is an athletic trainer at Princeton University with the men's ice hockey, women's rugby, and women's golf teams. She is a member of the National Athletic Trainers Association (NATA) Research and Education Foundation Scholarship Committee and the NATA District 2 Value Committee.

2017

Ryan Dublin

(BSN) was named to the Permian Basin Great 25 Nurses list. She is a registered nurse in the critical care unit at Midland Memorial Hospital.

Leonard "Leo" A. Mantey

(MPA, Public Policy Analysis; '13 MCRP) is the senior deputy director for the city of Richmond, Virginia. He previously was the strategic operations manager with the city of Fort Worth.

Erin Malone Turner

(BA, English) is the playwright of *The Secret Keepers*, which was presented at the Bishop Arts Theatre Center. The play was part of the 2022 First Move Playwrights Festival.

2018

Porscha Natasha Brown

(MPA) won the Democratic Party primary for judge for Harris County Criminal Court No. 3 in 2022. She has served as

assistant public defender in the felony trial division of the Harris County public defender's office.

Eric Hess

(MFA, Art/Glass) had his glass art piece "Father" added to the permanent collection of the Museum

of Glass in Tacoma, Washington. Previously exhibited at the National Liberty Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the piece is composed of white glass, steel, and an antique faucet. He is CEO and president at Sanctuary Arts School in Dallas.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH UTA

UNIVERSITY NEWS AND UPDATES

uta.edu

UTA Magazine online
uta.edu/mag

Inquiry online
uta.edu/inquiry

Find us on social
[@utarlington](https://twitter.com/utarlington)



ALUMNI NEWS AND UPDATES

uta.edu/alumni

Alumni Newsletter Archive
uta.edu/alumni/connect

Find us on social
[@utaalumni](https://twitter.com/utaalumni)



Leaving a Legacy

Mavericks support dreams of future generations

Peggy Brandt Brown dedicated her UTA career to student success and is now continuing her support financially through a planned estate gift of nearly \$100,000 for scholarships.

Brown's gift will support the Kathryn Head Scholarship Endowment, a fund that provides financial assistance to students involved in the McNair Scholars Program and TRIO Student Support Services. The endowment was established

in 2009 upon Head's retirement after 31 years of service to the University.

Head and Brown worked together in TRIO from 1979 to 1984, leading programs that mentored underrepresented students. Both shared a passion for supporting low-in-

come, first-generation, and underserved students.

"As colleagues and friends, Kathryn and I shared a desire to help disadvantaged students achieve their academic and career goals," Brown says. "I firmly believe in the missions of both programs, and I'm delighted to support the education of their students."

When Head passed away in 2017, she left a legacy of service and academic excellence. For Brown, the decision to plan a gift to the endowment honoring her friend was an easy one.

"Kathryn was a mentor to me, not only professionally, but in my personal life as well," Brown says. "This gift is an easy decision that will allow me to honor my friend and support a cause that I am passionate about."

To learn more about planned giving options, visit uta.giftlegacy.com or contact (817) 272-2344 or giftandestateplanning@exchange.uta.edu.



BS, Exercise Science) is a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology at UTA.

2021

Brandon Blakeslee

(PhD, '14 MA, History) has joined Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas, as a tenure-track faculty.

Kapreta Johnson

(PhD, Public and Urban Administration) was named to the board of directors for the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition. She serves as the director of alumni strategy and relations for Dallas College.

Rachel Balthrop Mendoza

(MPA) is the development manager for the town of Little Elm. She previously was assistant to the city manager for Denton, Texas.

2022

Joe Carpenter

(MA, History) is the assistant archivist/oral historian for the Vietnam Center in the Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University.

William Hansard

(PhD, '15 BA, History) has accepted a position at the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University in Dickinson, North Dakota.

2019

Francis Basebang

(DNP; '17 MSN, Family Nurse Practitioner; '13 BSN) is an adjunct faculty member in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation's graduate family nurse practitioner

program at UTA. He also is an adjunct faculty member for Trinity Valley Community College.

Mandee Tucker

(MSN) has been promoted to associate dean of nursing and program director of the registered nursing and medical assisting

programs at Lamar State College Orange, where she has taught since 2008.

2020

Tyler Garner

(PhD, Kinesiology; '11 MS, Exercise Physiology; '09

IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

1950s

Charles Ahearn Hamilton

('51 BA, Broadcasting) 90, Nov. 22, 2021, Vero Beach, Florida.

Charles Melvin Brown

('52 AA, Engineering) 92, Jan. 23, 2022, North Richland Hills, Texas.

Eddie Lee Wells

('53 AA, Electrical Engineering) 88, Jan. 21, 2022, Burleson, Texas.

William Theodore Masters

('54 AS, Engineering), 87, March 30, 2022, Grandview, Texas.

Frances Albritton Long

('57 AA, Business) 84, Dec. 2, 2021, Hurst, Texas.

1960s

Charles Leonard McMillon

('60 AA, Engineering) 86, Dec. 22, 2021, Blackwell, Oklahoma.

Henry "Hank" Marshall

('62 BS, Electrical Engineering) 84, March 19, 2022, Fort Worth.

James Leroy Hatley

('63 BBA) 84, March 4, 2022, Stilwell, Oklahoma.

John Thomas Lewandowsky

('63 BS, Electrical Engineering) 81, January 29, 2022, Lewisville, Texas.

James Dewayne McClure

('63 BS, Mechanical Engineering) 81, May 3, 2022, Tyler, Texas.

Nolan Brockway

('64 BS, Chemistry) 79, May 1, 2022, New Braunfels, Texas.

John David Garland

('64 BS, Civil Engineering) 80, Feb. 23, 2022, Mesquite, Texas.

Roger Martin Weed

('64 BS, Biology) 79, April 29, 2022, San Antonio, Texas.

Richard Morgan Bowers

('65, BS, Physics) 78, May 28, 2022, Weatherford, Texas.

Thomas J. Clayton

('65 BS, Biology) 86, Jan. 1, 2022, Granbury, Texas.

George Huff

('65 BA, Economics) 65, May 12, 2022, Alvin, Texas.

Joseph "Joe" Howard Lamb

('66 BA, History) 78, April 1, 2022, Edgewood, Texas.

James Edward Stracener

('66 BS, Civil Engineering) 79, April 1, 2022, Waxahachie, Texas.

Doris Nichols Ahokas

('67 BA, English) 89, Feb. 3, 2022, San Antonio, Texas.

Molly Kathleen Poteet McCreight

('67 BS, Biology) 77, May 13, 2022, Fort Worth.

Joe Valera Milliorn

('67 BS, Civil Engineering) 78, Jan. 25, 2022, Arlington, Texas.

Charles Thomas Powers

('67 BBA) 82, Jan. 27, 2022, Midlothian, Texas.

James Joseph White

('67 BA, Political Science) 80, Jan. 28, 2022, Dallas.

Robert Gene "Rusty" Russell

('68 BA, Political Science) 79, Jan. 17, 2022, Arlington.

1970s

Howard Don Richardson

('70 BS, Civil Engineering) 82, March 13, 2022, Carrollton, Texas.

Gloria Dossey Phillips

('71 BS, Education) 72, Dec. 14, 2021, Odessa, Texas.

Eldred "El" Pruitt

('73 BBA) 83, Jan. 25, 2022, Arlington.

Carol Waldman

('75 BBA) 68, Dec. 16, 2021, Kilgore, Texas.

William Ward Warren

('75 MS, Urban Affairs) 73, Jan. 1, 2022, Dallas.

Paul Edwin Acker

('76 BBA) 67, Nov. 10, 2021, Kaufman, Texas.

Cathy Jo Nash

('76 BS, Biology) 71, Jan. 24, 2022, Clarksville, Tennessee.

Jo Ellen "Jodie" Brown Powell

('76 BA, Physical Education) 74, Jan. 12, 2022, Haltom City, Texas.

Peggy Vogler Sutphin

('76 BFA, Art) 81, Dec. 24, 2021, Glen Rose, Texas.

Ernest Michael "Mike" Smith

('78 BS, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering) 71, Feb. 14, 2022, West Columbia, South Carolina.

Geraldine McMillan Trostel

('78 MA, Humanities; '67 BA, English) 97, March 17, 2022, Arlington.

1980s

David Ray Harvey
(’80 BS, Electrical Engineering) 78, March 9, 2022, Joshua, Texas.

Tom Schneider
(’80 BS, Criminal Justice) 74, June 1, 2022, Tyler, Texas.

Mark A. Pope
(’81 BS, Economics) 62, February 25, 2022, Fort Worth.

Judy Lynn Bush Stroud
(’81 BSN) 70, Nov. 30, 2022, Granbury, Texas.

Michael Glen Cagle
(’82 BA, Chemistry) 64, Jan. 12, 2022, Fort Worth.

Frances “Kaye” Miller Gomez-Hight
(’82 BSW) 62, April 15, 2022, Fort Worth.

Juanita Allen Diamond
(’83 BSN) 62, Dec. 31, 2021, Vancouver, Washington.

Charles Dale McEowen
(’83 MSW) 70, Feb. 20, 2022, Dallas.

Ken Rasure
(’83 BBA) 71, Feb. 16, Morrilton, Arkansas.

Suzanne Marie Strowig
(’84 MSN) 68, Dec. 26, 2021, North Richland Hills, Texas.

Jerald Don Allen
(’85 BA, Physical Education) 61, Dec. 5, 2021, Fort Worth.

Eric Anthony Purcell
(’86, BBA, Accounting) 58, Dec. 6, 2021, Mansfield, Texas.

Jessie Lee Allen
(’89 MBA; ’86 BSN) 62, April 19, 2022, Kingsville, Texas.

Elizabeth “Betty” Pryputniewicz
(’92 MSW) 66, May 5, 2022, Utica, New York.

Paul Lee Rice
(’95 BBA, Marketing) 52, March 20, 2022, Ferris, Texas.

Thanh Phuong Buxkemper
(’97 BSN) 56, Jan. 21, 2022, Waco, Texas

Judy Leah McCarty Burgess
(’98 MSW) 71, April 4, 2022, Graham, Texas.

Jennifer Dawn Hestand
(’98 MSN) 44, Jan. 16, 2022, Odessa, Texas.

Kathie Marie Thorpe Powers
(’98 BSN) 73, Dec. 3, 2021, Georgetown, Texas.

Frances “Kaye” Gomez-Hight
(’99 BSW) 62, April 15, 2022, Fort Worth.

2000s

Howard Barrett Marshall
(’00 MPA) 77, February 25, 2022, Lakeland, Florida.

Gerald Stewart McCorkle
(’06 MA, History) Feb. 13, 2022, Keller, Texas.

Steven Dallas McClain
(’07 BS, Interdisciplinary Studies) 66, May 26, 2022, Midland, Texas.

2010s

Stephan DeWayne Simmons
(’11 MEd, Educational Leadership and Administration) 40, Feb. 6, 2022, Houston.

Larry Fulton Holman Jr.
(’12 BSN) 48, May 12, 2022, Longview, Texas.

Sonia Renee Lee Jordan
(’17 MSW) 66, Dec. 20, 2021, Cedar Hill, Texas.

STUDENT

Angel Armando Navarro-Johnson
24, May 15, 2022, Hutto, Texas. He was pursuing a computer science degree.

FACULTY/ STAFF

Howard Joseph Arnott
93, Feb. 2, 2022, Denton, Texas.

Kathy Beeler
(’83 BA, Communication) 68, Feb. 27, 2022, Kanab, Utah.

Richard M. Mayfield Jr.
87, April 4, 2022, Weatherford, Texas.

William “Bill” John Seeger
65, Nov. 20, 2021, Murphy, Texas.

Margaret Anne Harris Simmons
91, Dec. 30, 2021, Denton, Texas.

Philip Eugene Vinson
81, May 16, 2022, Fort Worth.

The Explainer



The Right to Tell Your Story:

Why I Collect Oral Histories of Unhoused Metroplex Residents

**BY HANNAH
LEBOVITS,
ASSISTANT
PROFESSOR**
*of public affairs
in the College
of Architecture,
Planning, and
Public Affairs*

ON SEPT. 11, 2021, Lonnie Lewis was remembered by his family and friends at a small ceremony. His online tribute wall, a page on a local funeral home's website, revealed a man who was deeply loved and missed even before he died on the streets.

"I'm sorry we weren't in touch after Dot's passing all those years ago," one relative wrote. "I assumed you were continuing on with life just as we all were. I had no idea the things you were going through." Another recalled, "In my early years this man taught me everything. I wanted to do everything he did." Friends posted their own messages, sharing his light with the world. "We are missing him BAD!!" one exclaimed.

On the streets of Dallas, Lonnie's life was shaped by his publicness. As an unhoused resident, he was constantly monitored by public safety personnel, nonprofit workers, and individuals in the Deep Ellum area. But his death illustrates the fact that unhoused individuals are both constantly watched and often ignored.

According to witnesses and a Dallas Police Department report, Lonnie's death began at around 2:45 a.m., when he was hit by a bullet that ricocheted off of a bridge after being shot into the air. He needed immediate medical attention, but no one responded to the shooting for six hours. When police arrived at 8:45 a.m., Lonnie was found dead.

Local Dallas news outlets reported on the shooting with a short description of "murder at a homeless encampment" and the contact information for the Dallas Police Department. There was no mention of the eyewitness accounts or the timing of the shooting. To be murdered on the streets and reduced to "a death at an encampment" is an injustice, and oral histories can challenge and resolve this harm.

This is what drives my work to collect personal life histories of those who have experienced homelessness in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Firsthand accounts of life before, during, and after homelessness can significantly impact our understanding of the condition.

Every unhoused person is someone's child. Many still have living family members, children, and close friends. Their lives include employment histories, historical knowledge of the places they've lived in, exciting adventures, insights into why homelessness occurs, and moments of joy, even in the most depressing places. Though it might appear that my research is about homelessness, it's really about testimonial justice—understanding who controls narratives, which words are believed, and how we can rectify historic and contemporary marginalization through personal storytelling.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hannah Lebovits is in her second year as an assistant professor of public affairs in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Public Affairs. Dr. Lebovits has experience in the public and nonprofit sectors, and immediately before coming to UTA, she worked as an independent journalist and writer for various media outlets while completing her PhD at Cleveland State University. She was born and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and currently lives in Dallas with her husband and two children.



Thank you

You made a difference in the lives of
Mavericks during MavsDay 2022!

**RECORD-BREAKING
\$883,882 RAISED**

Watch for MavsDay 2023, coming this spring!



OFFICE OF MARKETING,
MESSAGING, AND ENGAGEMENT
Box 19116
Arlington, TX 76019-0116

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Arlington, Texas
Permit No. 81



KEEP BACK LOOK NOT

Fun in the Sun 1980

Students attempt to melt 10-pound blocks of ice during the Non-Invitational Belly Flop and George Hamilton Tan Competition, held on campus in June 1980. Anything to beat the summer heat!