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VOLUME 121, ISSUE 28  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2020

SPRING  
2021

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# STUDENTS PLAN SPRING SEMESTER



ROCKY HIGINE / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF



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## AUSTIN WEATHER

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 HI 82°  
 LO 52°

TOMORROW Oct. 24  
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 LO 59°

daily texan sus

## RESEARCH

# City council approves \$7.5M research partnership with UT

By Athena Hawkins  
 @athenafhawkins

The city of Austin approved a five-year interlocal agreement with UT in an effort to streamline their research partnership and make the approval process for joint projects more efficient.

The agreement was unanimously approved in August by Austin City Council and sets aside \$7.5 million in funding. The agreement aims to remove administrative barriers to joint research efforts and allow the city to work more efficiently with UT researchers without having to approve each individual project, according to the city council minutes.

Kathie Tovo, District 9 council member, whose district includes West Campus, said the projects and analyses of UT researchers help city legislators make informed decisions. Tovo said the interlocal agreement and earmark should support this process.

“This contract provides an umbrella for all of those analyses to come underneath in the future,” Tovo said. “When staff identify a need for which they might be able to research and expertise at the University of Texas, they won’t have to come back and ask for city council approval each time.”

Jennifer Lyon Gardner, deputy vice president for research, said the joint projects encompass a variety of fields and nearly every college and school.

“The Center for Transportation Research and TACC (Texas Advanced Computing Center) regularly work with Austin Transportation to analyze traffic patterns and



ROCKY HIGINE / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

bottlenecks,” Gardner said in an email. “For COVID-19 response, engineering researchers have been working with Austin Water Utility to detect COVID-19 in wastewater. These are just a few examples.”

Gardner said both graduate and undergraduate students at UT participate in joint initiatives with the city. The new agreement will give students the opportunity to engage in those projects more quickly, she said.

Elizabeth Mueller, associate professor and director of UT’s Graduate Program in Community and Regional Planning, led a joint research

initiative with the city of Austin in 2018 called Uprooted. The project aimed to “support more equitable and inclusive development in Texas cities by increasing awareness of what’s gentrification,” according to the Uprooted project website.

Mueller said in an email she thinks the interlocal agreement will make it easier to get started on collaborative projects like these in a timely manner.

“With The Uprooted Project, it took a frustratingly long amount of time to get the project approved by both bureaucracies,” Mueller said. “We still had a deadline to meet for completing the work, but it delayed our start.”

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## UNIVERSITY

# Most spring classes remain online

Students weigh spring 2021 plans as class format offerings mirror fall semester.

By Andrew Zhang  
@andrewczhang

Jay Hartzell.

"Based on our experiences thus far, our plan is to structure the spring 2021 semester in much the same way as we have the current semester," Hartzell said in the message. "There will be robust online course offerings, hybrid learning options and some purely in-person classes."

Government freshmen Jose Serna started his UT experience taking classes at home this semester, which he hopes to continue in the spring to save money. Serna said he is concerned his later registration time may prevent him from registering for classes he needs that are being offered online.

"I'm just nervous I'm going to have to choose either classes that aren't going to help my degree, but at least I'm going to save money, or I'm going to have to spend money to stay in Austin to only take only one class," Serna said.

Approximately 70% of the College of Liberal Arts' classes will be online next semester, according to the analysis. Face-to-face and hybrid classes are evenly divided between the remaining 30%.

The McCombs School of Business will have approximately 50% of its classes online next semester, and 41% of the classes are hybrid, according to the analysis. The College of

Natural Sciences will offer 58% of its classes online, 29% hybrid and 13% face-to-face.

Before the schedule was released, computer science sophomore Brandon Song said he had already decided to take a gap semester in the spring because of stress caused by all-online school.

"I just felt like I was procrastinating a lot more," Song said. "My motivation levels are down. It didn't feel like I was going to UT ... but more like a chore. I wasn't even planning to take a gap semester anytime in my four years."

Song said he would not take time off if he could take in-person classes next semester.

The Moody College of Communication will offer 66% of its classes online, and the Cockrell School of Engineering has approximately 59% of its classes online, according to the analysis.

Biology freshman Andres Paredes is currently taking classes remotely but said he plans to move to Austin in the spring. Paredes said he hopes to take at least one or two in-person or hybrid classes so moving back feels more worthwhile.

"I have no experience taking an in-person college class," Paredes said. "So to me, this is my new normal — taking remote classes."

## UT-AUSTIN'S SPRING 2021 CLASS SCHEDULE



MARIA PEREZ / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

**N**early 60% of classes in the spring 2021 course schedule are remote, according to an analysis of the spring course schedule by The Daily Texan.

Of the more than 10,300 class sections UT lists on the course schedule, approximately 16% are face-to-face and 26% are hybrid or blended, according to the analysis.

This distribution is roughly similar to that of the fall semester, where classes were about 61% online, 24% hybrid, and 16% in person, according to an Aug. 11 news release. UT did not respond to multiple requests for comment about the course schedule.

Next semester, some students say they plan to continue with remote school, while others plan to move to Austin. Some students are taking a gap year in light of struggles caused by online classes. The spring semester will still contain the normal spring break and other calendar features, according to a Sept. 28 message from UT President

The University of Texas at Austin  
McCombs School of Business

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## COLUMN

# Start the conversation.

*UT must publish a Universitywide statement acknowledging the severity of climate change.*

By Isabelle Costello  
Columnist

A gold rating from the Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System. Leading climate scientists lecturing daily. The Planet Texas 2050 plan, bridging disciplines to fight for a more resilient environment for future generations.

There's no doubt UT is a leading university in terms of sustainability research and advocacy. So why can't it publicly admit the climate crisis exists?

Even though the pressing issue of climate change has been heavily discussed through op-eds, research publications and classroom curricula, the UT administration has yet to issue a formal, Universitywide statement acknowledging the existence and severity of climate change.

UT needs to publish an ad-

ministrativewide climate change statement that declares a public stance regarding the reality of the climate crisis.

"We're considered a state institute, and we operate under the rules of the state and the University of Texas System," UT spokesperson J.B. Bird said.

Bird said this neutral approach to the climate debate is common as far as university action goes. However, despite leading the country in climate science data collection and research, UT is behind in its public declaration of climate change. Similar universities in the United States, such as the University of California and The University of Chicago, have released statements and subsequent action plans.

Both administrations issued statements as universities, shouldering the controversy that comes with climate change acceptance and not leaving the burden to the specific schools of atmospheric and geological science, as UT has done.

Bird also explained that "under the rules that operate the University of Texas System, the University does not take stances on political issues."

The future of its students, however, is far from a simple issue of political disagreement. Though it's easier for an administration to write off the climate crisis as too political for public involvement, UT owes it to its students to prioritize



CARYLYSSA PHOON / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

their futures and see our current reality as more than a discussion in the political arena.

"We want it to be a conversation," said Kristine Januskaite, an international relations and global studies, sustainability studies and urban studies junior. "This is the most pressing issue of our time."

Januskaite serves as the director of the activism campaign for Students Fighting Climate Change, an organization on campus dedicated to facilitating a cultural shift surrounding the climate conversation at UT through education, activism, media and political outreach.

Januskaite said because of

the relationship UT has with oil through The University of Texas / Texas A&M Investment Management Company and its relevance in our culture, climate change has yet to be formally talked about by the administration, despite being taught about and researched every day by our professors.

"We trust you as our University to be our biggest ally in supporting our future, but at the end of the day, you really don't care about our futures," Januskaite said. "The relationship at UT is paradoxical."

Data science, sustainability initiatives and education are only

part of the path to solving the climate crisis. UT holds prominence in state and national media: If the administration can't publicly support the science its professors are supplying, why should UT's audience act any differently?

UT must publish an administrativewide statement acknowledging climate change.

You claim that what starts here changes the world, but if you can't start a conversation that's essential to the futures of your students, you might as well take credit for ending it.

*Costello is a neuroscience freshman from Boerne, Texas.*

## GALLERY



CHARLIE HYMAN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

## COVID-19

# UT report shows minority-owned businesses suffered disproportionately during COVID-19

By Santino Camacho  
@santinolcamacho

Business owners from underrepresented communities are struggling to recover during COVID-19, according to a report from a UT think-tank.

The “State of The State of Texas Report,” published by the IC<sup>2</sup> Institute, compiles COVID-19 research and economic recovery data from across the state. According to the report, while overall business ownership saw a 22% decrease since the pandemic began, Black-owned businesses decreased by 41% and Latinx business ownership decreased by 32%.

Senior research scientist James Jarrett said while historical inequities and disparities play a role on businesses owned by underrepresented communities, minority-owned businesses also tend to be smaller.

“Some of the disproportionate impact on Black and Latinx business, ... that’s because those businesses tend to be in industries that were particularly hard hit early on in the pandemic,” Jarrett said. “They have lower revenues, lower profits, and in terms of percentages, there aren’t as many that are incorporated.”

Shirin Metayer, communications and event manager for Bahadi’s Chicken and Lounge in Pflugerville, said in an email the COVID-19 pandemic wreaked havoc on their business after restaurants began to close in March.

“It was devastating to our bottom line, our customers and overall business since we had to scale back hours, shorten the menu and eventually close that location,” Metayer said.

Bahadi’s Chicken and Lounge is a southern-style food truck as their brick-and-mortar location is currently closed, according to their website. Metayer said that being a Black business owner comes with its own unique set of experiences.

“(It is a challenge) trying to ensure we continue to incorporate all races and be open-minded to our customer base,” Metayer said. “The opportunities are endless, I feel, and it’s just breaking those barriers down in order to achieve it.”

Metayer said while COVID-19 doesn’t discriminate, she is not immune to the everyday challenges of discrimination.

“I feel, though, that being a minority, we struggle with our audience or fellow minority customers who do not support Black-owned businesses as much as they do with other businesses,” Metayer said. “I feel minority-owned businesses are way over scrutinized than they should be, and that can cause impact on support from others.”

Jarrett said the IC<sup>2</sup> Institute used data from an June report from the University of California, Santa Cruz and drew their own conclusion. He said the institute is working statewide to use the data to generate solutions for aiding in economic recovery, such as a resource guide for the Austin metro area.

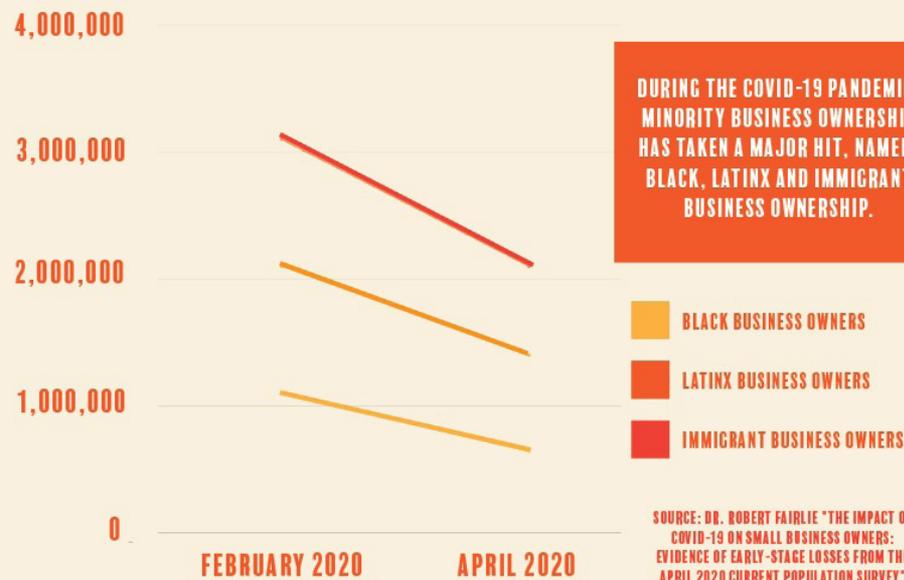
Business senior Stephenson Gokingco works in research at the Historically Underutilized Business program in Travis County and identified specific areas where businesses could be aided.

“Community banks or the community financial institutions were the most help when it came to the crisis,” Gokingco said. “They were the ones who said, ‘OK, here are the infographics that you need to navigate this COVID crisis.’”

Metayer said there is support from the community, but there is still work that needs to be done in supporting underrepresented business owners during this time.

“(We need) more grants, more funding and better resources for small businesses in order to keep his or her business afloat,” Metayer said. “COVID has really hit every industry in different ways.”

## SMALL BUSINESS OWNER FALLOUT



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## CAMPUS

# Beautification project to improve University Avenue

By Brooke Ontiveros  
@brookexpanic

Hundreds of flowers will bloom on the sides of University Avenue next year when UT breaks ground on a nearly \$2 million project, the Gardens of University Avenue.

The UT Beautification Council is a group of women with various ties to UT who plant flowers on campus. In partnership with UT, the council fundraised \$1.8 million to beautify University Avenue with flowers and two steel UT emblem structures filled with flowers.

A \$9 million endowment is also being fundraised to ensure the street will stay beautiful forever, said Eliza Stedman, UT Beautification Council chairwoman.

"It's going to be gorgeous. I love it because it's all about light and joy," Stedman said. "I don't know, if I failed a test one day and I walk down that street, it's going to feel a lot better. It's just something to make you smile, and I think nature for me heals everything."

So far, the council has raised \$6 million to support the gardens project, Stedman said. The rest is anticipated to be raised within the year from donations, Stedman said.

The project will likely break ground early next year and end within the year, said Matt Pene, UT media relations manager.

"We definitely believe that students, faculty, staff and alumni deserve a beautiful campus, and University Avenue is the front door, if you will," Pene said. "We want to create a lasting impression, and this is the way to do it."

Stedman said donors can buy flower beds on University Avenue that will have plaques to display their names. Eventually, Stedman said she would like to create programs to get the community involved with the planting of flowers.

Jonathan Williams, senior



MARISSA XIONG / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

landscape designer for the Gardens of University Avenue, said the project will provide a new experience for entering campus.

"It'll provide a much needed entrance into campus as you go into the Tower on University Avenue,"

Williams said. "It'll operate much better as a welcoming sequence to campus."

Williams said the garden project is just starting its design development stage, so details on precisely what flowers and how many are yet to

be determined.

"(The street) will totally change UT," Stedman said. "Other schools in Texas have amazing beautiful streets with flowers they do year round ... Well, we want to be able to keep up. We want to be pretty too, even prettier."

## STUDENT LIFE

# Students manage severe periods

Online classes provide more flexible options for students experiencing period pain.

By Sabrina LeBoeuf  
@\_sabinakaye

**E**mma Lea Wall's period pain makes her legs go numb.

During her first year at UT, Wall stayed in her dorm, missing classes and career events because of the pain.

When she described her pain to professors — sharp pinches in her abdomen, ripping sensations — she said some insinuated she was overreacting. Their attitudes only changed slightly when Wall had to visit the emergency room and later have surgery in June to test for endometriosis.

“People do seem to be a bit more understanding, but if I didn't have those concrete examples, I think people would be more prone to be disbelieving of my pain,” marketing sophomore Wall said.

With online classes, students with severe pain have more options for managing pain and attending lectures. When Wall has period pain, she said she can either sit



ROCKY HIGINE/ THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

with her heating pad and her laptop or watch recorded lectures later.

More than half of people who menstruate experience pain for one to two days per month, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Wall's period pain, however, stems from endometriosis, a condition that impacts one in 10 people who menstruate.

Endometriosis is when uterine lining appears outside of the uterus, said Barbara Blizzard, chief of Women's Health for University Health Services. The

condition, which can only be diagnosed through surgery, can bring anything from no symptoms to extreme menstrual cramps that interfere with daily life.

Blizzard said the two main treatment options for period pain are nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, such as ibuprofen and hormonal contraception. There is no cure.

“It's like a lot of other conditions where you try to work with the symptoms, find out what works the best,” Blizzard said. “But we can't suddenly say, ‘OK, that's it for you. Here's your treatment,

and you're done.”

Because it is difficult to get an endometriosis diagnosis, many begin treatment without one.

Emily Wright, an English education senior at the University of Arkansas, began taking a hormonal contraceptive pill, but it didn't remedy her period pain, which causes vomiting on a monthly basis. She eventually started using the pill to skip her periods in addition to taking painkillers.

In June, her doctor suggested combining an intrauterine device with a

hormonal contraceptive pill to cope with the pain and prevent bleeding between periods. Wright expected some discomfort, but when she arrived home from the doctor after receiving her IUD, she rushed to her bathroom and blacked out from intense pain.

She woke up crying, shaking and drenched in sweat. The IUD had to be removed less than 24 hours later.

Wright's doctor screened

her for endometriosis via ultrasound, but she tested negative. She said she felt relieved, knowing the complications the condition brings. However, Wright also felt defeated.

“I really wanted answers,” Wright said. “I was just hoping for some sort of explanation.”

Karla Nuñez, who graduated from Texas Woman's University in May, faints from her period pain. Her doctor suggested hormonal contraception, but there were potential side effects that could worsen her depression and anxiety. When choosing between treating mental illness or severe pain, Nuñez chose the latter.

During her period, Nuñez takes seven to eight painkillers daily and positions her body on all fours to relieve pressure from her uterus. With online classes, Nuñez could turn off her camera and contort her body while learning. Wright said she does the same.

“The fact that I can have my camera off and my microphone off, that allows me to lie in bed and be miserable or sit next to the toilet without my peers really realizing what's going on,” Wright said.

“ I really wanted answers. ... I was just hoping for some sort of explanation.”

EMILY WRIGHT

SENIOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

## STUDENT LIFE

# Opposing viewpoints create rifts in students' families amid social unrest, coronavirus pandemic

By Lauren Castro  
@laurncastro

Kathryn and Jasper Murphy cringe every time they receive another travel photo from their parents, who have visited at least 13 states since May despite COVID-19 restrictions.

After learning their parents planned to visit them in Austin and then head to Spring Branch, Texas, to see their 72-year-old grandmother, the siblings drew a line.

"(We) ended up telling them, 'We think this is a really bad idea,'" said Jasper, an arts and entertainment technologies sophomore. "They didn't take it very well, but they at least respected our decision. Then, they ended up testing positive for (COVID-19) right before they were planning on leaving for Texas."

In the midst of the presidential election season, social unrest and a pandemic, some students are struggling to find common ground with their parents.

"I wish that I could have these discussions with

them and have them be open-minded like, 'Oh, maybe my kid makes some good points,'" sustainability senior Kathryn said.

Kathryn and Jasper's father, John Murphy, said he and his wife just miss their kids.

"We want to travel, and they appear to want to discourage our travel," John said. "We missed them, and we'd like to see them."

The siblings grew up in Melissa, Texas, a town with more conservative leanings, and said their political stances have changed as they've grown older.

After coming to UT, Jasper said he became more politically aware and started forming his own opinions.

"Since I've come to Austin, it (has) opened my whole worldview up to all these different viewpoints and perspectives," Jasper said.

Kathryn said the notion that Austin has made her more left-leaning is closed-minded.

"The thought that I couldn't come to this (conclusion) by myself or that this is even

something that I wouldn't believe in even if no one else agreed with me really deeply hurts me," Kathryn said.

Jasper and Kathryn said their parents aren't changing their minds even as the siblings urge them to follow COVID-19 regulations and look at politics in a new light.

"I mean, it should be your parents lecturing you about being responsible, right? But it feels like it's the other way," Kathryn said. "We're the ones disappointed in them for going out and putting people at risk and themselves at risk."

Like Jasper and Kathryn, alumna Brooke McGuire Stage has also faced difficulties with relatives who have opposing political views. Stage has cut friends and family out of her life for political reasons and has had tough conversations with those willing to learn.

"My father-in-law told me that our Black Lives Matter sign was divisive, and I said I think it's divisive that the deed to our house that was built in the '40s says that it can't be sold to Black people,"

Stage said. "Putting a sign up saying that Black people actually matter too is the very least I can do."

Stage said she was social distancing long before the pandemic while receiving chemotherapy treatment for lupus. Now, she said she has created boundaries when it comes to COVID-19 and visiting her in-laws.

"(My father-in-law) was not willing to be quite as careful, so then we had to back off of hanging out with them," Stage said. "We had to explain, 'Look, we can't spend time in person with y'all if ... my father-in-law isn't being careful.'"

Kathryn, Jasper and Stage all said confronting their relatives' opposing political views has been both disappointing and stressful.

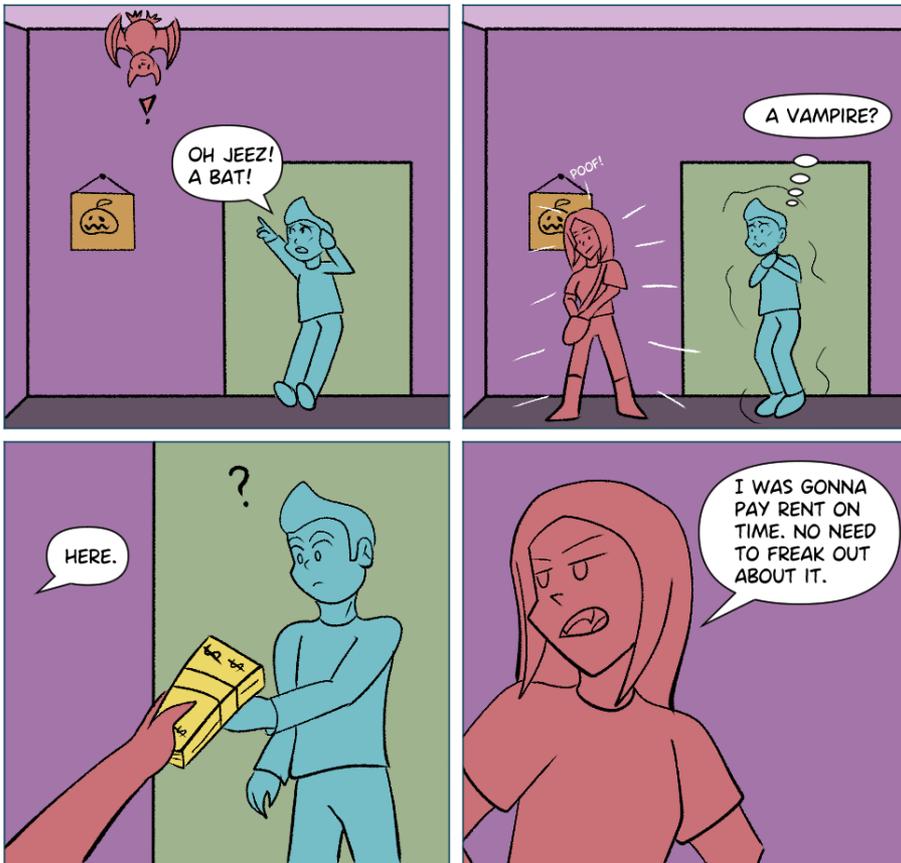
"My husband said that he was worried about spending time with his dad and learning something that would cause him to lose what respect he has left for his father," Stage said. "I hate uncertainty. I have to sit with it because the alternative is finding out something that I really can't unknow."



# DAILY TEXAN COMICS

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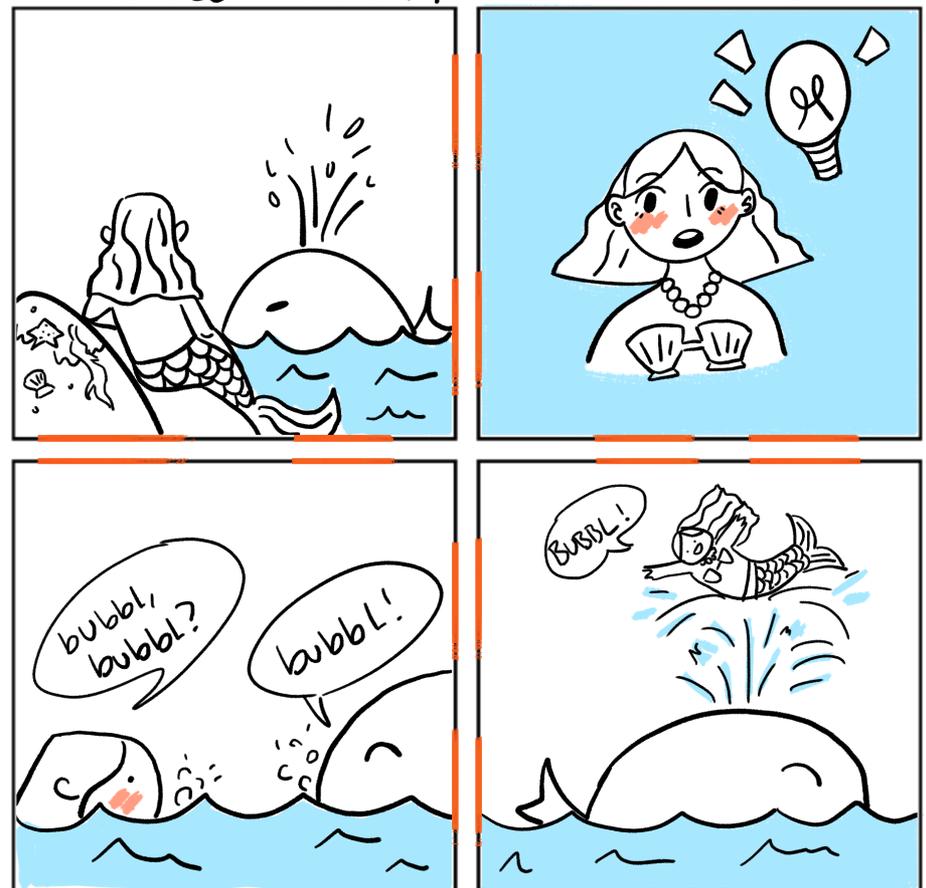
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## BUBBLE TALK

- STELL ★



ZOOM UNIVERSITY BY CYNTHIA TREVIÑO



**WOMEN'S TENNIS****Texas tennis senior duo talks leading team with friendship**

**Fernanda Labraña and Marta Perez Mur bond as double partners and Spanish speakers.**

By Vincente Montalvo  
@texansports

**F**ernanda Labraña and Marta Perez Mur can attribute their success on the tennis court to hard work, commitment

and the enduring friendship they've developed over the years.

Through two tournaments, the seniors have started the season strong. In singles play, Labraña is a perfect 6-0, while Perez Mur has conceded only one game, making her record 5-1.

Both individuals are winning in singles matches, and their high level of play carries over into doubles, where the dynamic duo holds an unblemished 4-0 record. One of the main reasons that their relationship is so strong is their shared language.

"Since we both speak Spanish, we're able to have more fun just because we can joke if something happens

during the doubles," Perez Mur said.

Speaking Spanish helps them enjoy competitions more and compete in their comfort zone, but their connection is deeper than just a language. Perez Mur said she and Labraña balance each other out on the court, and the pair said their strong friendship is what strengthens their tennis dynamic.

"We are great friends, and we trust each other," Labraña said. "We understand each other. Sometimes, I don't even have to talk to her — she understands what we're going to do."

The pair does not struggle with playing at such a high level and maintaining a strong

relationship because they are willing to motivate one another during tournaments and practice.

The teammates recognize how hard the other has worked to get to where they are today. When it comes down to it, these friends have a deeper bond that many do not fully understand.

"I admire her progress, just how she has developed over the years. You can actually see how she has matured," Perez Mur said. "She's always smiling and having fun with everyone while joking. That's something I really like about her."

Their friendship is profound off of the court where they lift each other up through

heartfelt conversations and support each other in their struggles as international students.

"She has helped me a lot, especially here because being a student-athlete isn't easy, so I feel like she has been one of my biggest supporters here at Texas," Labraña said. "I can always talk to her because I'm always being listened to, and that's big because it's not easy."

Both seniors also understand the role they can play for the team by helping the five new freshmen settle into collegiate athletics.

"We try to guide them and help them," Perez Mur said. "That kind of creates the environment of the team,

and at the end of the day, we're all in this together. We try to have fun because it's not easy."

Labraña and Perez Mur have no doubt in their minds that the team can compete for both a Big 12 and NCAA Championship during the spring calendar when the roster is complete.

Even during a pandemic, the pair is looking to leave their mark on the Texas tennis program while carrying a solid friendship into the future.

"If you look on paper, and even if you watch us play, we can definitely do it," Perez Mur said. "It's a team effort, so we all have to keep working together."



COURTESY OF TEXAS ATHLETICS

Seniors Fernanda Labraña and Marta Perez Mur discuss a point while playing as doubles partners. Perez Mur, who is from Spain, says she and Labraña, who is from Chile, often use Spanish while playing together.

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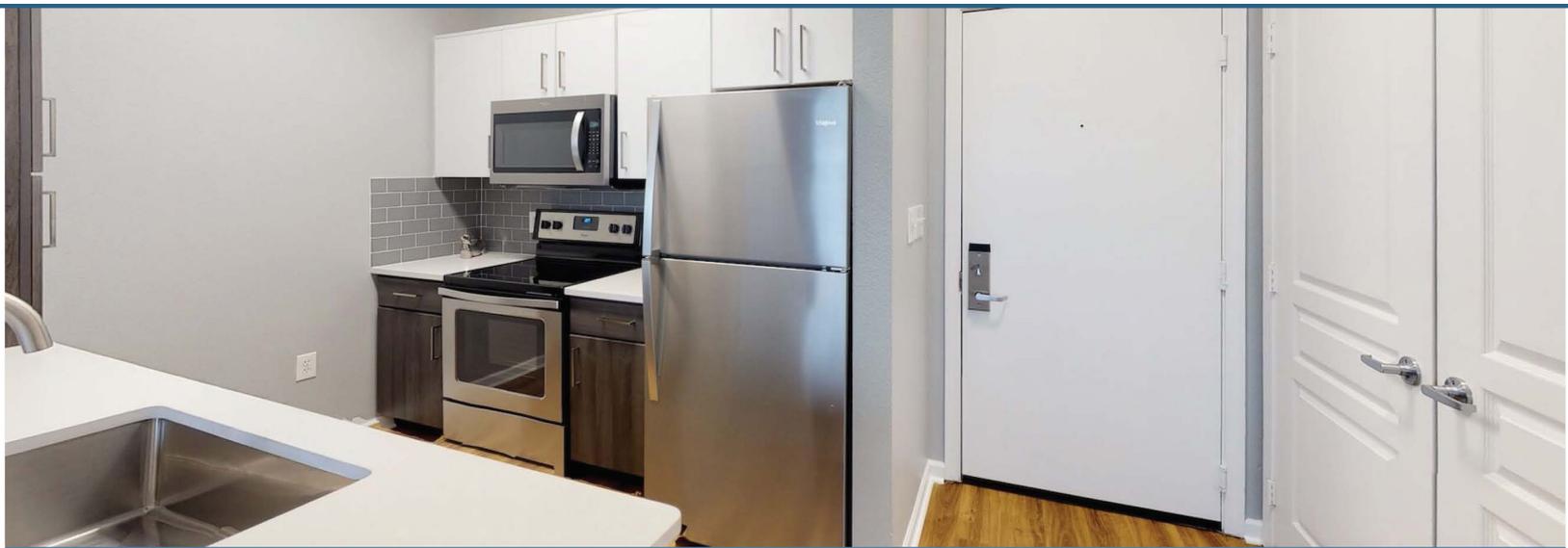
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## FOOTBALL

# Jordan Whittington can't catch a break as injuries keep him off the field

By Myah Taylor  
@t\_myah

Jordan Whittington can hang with the most gifted athletes, but injuries continue to plague the redshirt freshman receiver.

One month before Whittington enrolled early at Texas in January 2019, he capped off his high school football career with

a historic performance at the Texas 4A Division II state championship. Suited up for Cuero High School, he recorded 377 total yards and six touchdowns. He broke NFL Hall of Famer Eric Dickerson's Texas 4A state title game record and led his team to its first state championship in 30 years.

Whittington made 11 tackles in the game, too,

earning him Most Valuable Player of the game honors on both sides of the ball. With his sights set on Austin, he seemed unstoppable — until the sports hernia he sustained in high school came back to haunt him.

The injury sidelined then-running back Whittington for his freshman season and forced him to redshirt. He went under the

knife twice to repair his re-aggravated hernia.

This season was supposed to be Whittington's time to shine, to showcase the abilities that made him such a standout recruit. In January, one month after his second surgery, ESPN named him as one of its breakout college players to watch for in 2020. Whittington has said he wants to live up to that distinction.

"I'm coming different, I promise," Whittington tweeted in response to the list.

He was ready to come back, better than ever. Videos of Whittington running again, pulling weights and catching passes circulated on social media over the offseason. He looked strong, like the high school player who broke all the records a year and a half before. Whittington said he just

wanted to ball, and his wish was granted.

Texas' home opener against UT-El Paso on Sept. 12 was his long-awaited return from injury. Whittington caught two passes for 45 yards before he left the game at halftime. He'd hurt his knee diving for the football.

Head coach Tom Herman revealed the following Monday that the receiver would undergo knee surgery for a torn lateral meniscus. Whittington would miss more football — three to four weeks this time.

"Don't give up on me," he tweeted the day after his team escaped Texas Tech in Lubbock.

When Texas played Oklahoma in the Cotton Bowl almost a month after Whittington's knee injury, he made some of the plays to keep the Longhorns in the game late.

Losing to the Sooners was devastating, but Whittington said after the game that he was keeping his positivity up. His hernia injury was behind him and so was his knee.

Then Herman dropped a bombshell Monday. Whittington sprained his hip flexor and will sit for two weeks.

The receiver tweeted last Saturday that his heart is blue. Whittington could've been talking about anything, but football has caused him pain, emotionally and physically.

"He was down in the dumps when he got the news," Herman said. "For him, it is discouraging, and we feel for him, but my message to him is he's got a long career."

Whittington has the talent and the drive to be the great player he knows himself to be. He just can't catch a break.



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JOSHUA GUENTHER / THE DAILY TEXAN

Texas running back Jordan Whittington carries the ball against Louisiana Tech on Oct. 31, 2019. Whittington only played a few snaps his freshman year because of injury.