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DT

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Type 9 introvert finds home in basement rat colony

By Jason Lihuang
@parrotspotates

I knew that I wanted to join The Daily Texan from the moment I got to UT. Although I chose to be a computer science major, I couldn't quite cut off my ties to journalism. It was a part of me, like a limb. Or a parasite. Probably the latter.

So I found the DT interest form and checked some boxes. A few of you may know that I tried out for the opinion department first — and got handily rejected. If you're reading this and think, "Geez, this guy's not a very good writer," you're probably right.

Luckily, I made it in as a copy editor. As they say, the rest of history.

All right, let's get straight to the thank-yous.

Kirsten, you are the best, most caring mentor and friend anyone could ask for. I've learned so much from watching you lead

at the paper, and you've supported me each step of the way. Thank you for everything.

Brittany, we go all the way back to day one. Thank you for being my partner-in-crime and someone I could send giant brick texts to when I spiral after a bad day. You've kept me and the paper afloat.

Jimena, the hot, smart and funny Queen of England. It's never not a good time with you. I'll miss you loads, luv. Lawson, thank you for introducing me to gummy peet rat. You're amazing, and I'm grateful to have been able to work with you so much.

Irissa, I'll miss our chaotic page edits. I hope our friendship "lives on." Phoebe, I've seen you grow leaps and bounds as an editor, and I'm glad my Thursday stress didn't deter you from staying. Megan Shankle, you're honestly the most powerful editor out of all of us. Also, I'm now a Sufjan

Stevens fan because of your (admittedly worrying) obsession with his music.

Connor, Adriana and Alicja, that semester will always mean a lot to me. Monday Copy Forever.

And thank you to all copy issue staffers, past, present and future. The department would be nothing without you guys. If you happen to be a potential staffer thinking about joining the Texan, consider copy. I might be biased, but I think it's the best department.

Big shoutout to copy's sister, design. Thank you to Jeff, Nila, Christiana and Christina for dealing with my shenanigans. Special thanks to Maria. I still feel bad about that time I made you reupload the flipbook at 1 a.m.

Myah and Stephen, I'll watch a UT football game one day. Maybe. No promises.

Fellow management people, it's been great being on the team with y'all.

Trinady, you're so talented and on top of your game. I know you'll kill it at the Texan and beyond. Michael, you're the kindest person I know and a true digital king. Angelica, thank you for taking on such an important and difficult cause at this paper.

Last but definitely not least, thank you to the one and only Megan Menchaca, who is truly the Greatest Of All Time. It's also nice to have someone reassure me that I'm not a f--k-up at my job — even if I am. Thank you for believing in me. I may have spouted hyperbole about how much I hated being an AME once or twice, but I wouldn't trade these past few months for anything.

And to everyone else at DT who's made this place feel like home — thank you. You guys have made these semesters more than worth it.

For the last time, let's go make a paper!



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AUSTIN WEATHER

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By Michael Hernandez
@mixaelii

My last semester working for The Daily Texan was unpredictable, but then again every semester at UT is. Kicking off senior year with a pandemic wouldn't have been my first guess, but I wouldn't have wanted to spend the semester anywhere else.

Applying to the social media department my freshman year was the best decision of my college career. I still remember walking into the basement for the first time asking for Alex. If she hadn't hired me, I wouldn't have had the chance to work for the coolest department at the Texan or meet some of my best friends. I owe my years of tweets, endless livestreams and sleepless nights to her for giving me the opportunity.

As classes moved online this fall, it was clear that this semester was going to be a brand-new experience. Even before classes began, our managing editor was

dedicated to ensuring that it would be a good one. Megan carefully selected a stacked leadership team that was devoted to the Texan's primary mission of keeping the UT-Austin community informed. I consider myself lucky that Megan let me be a part of it; working under her direction was the greatest reward. I don't know a better coach, mentor or friend than Megan (The) Menchaca.

Leading digital operations this semester broadened my entire view of the Texan. When I first started as a social media staffer, I didn't expect to find myself helping manage an entire newspaper. Before heading the department over the summer, Rebeccah selected me as her associate editor. It was her leadership example, which I could only hope to match, that prepared me for my role at the Texan.

It wasn't until I became digital director that I realized why I committed so many semesters to this organization and what I'll miss the most — aside

from playing ping-pong in the basement.

The best part of the gig has to be the people I got to meet and listening to the stories they had to tell.

People like Hal, Katya, Ben, Nuzha and the entire digital staff managed to produce incredible content during such an unprecedented semester. Our side of the Texan operates a little differently, but I couldn't have asked for a more creative and committed staff.

Hal, your leadership far supersedes mine, and I can't wait to see what you accomplish. Since UT can't beat OU in football, at least we can make up for it in Twitter followers. Thanks to your dedication, we can humbly say we beat Alabama in something.

This semester was nothing like I expected when I first set foot on the Forty Acres, but I wouldn't have traded the endless Zoom meetings for anything else. When they say there's a place for you @thedailytexan, they mean it.

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EDITORIAL

These issues are nothing new

UT must implement concrete changes and listen to student voices next semester.

By The Daily Texan Editorial Board

Last semester, the world flipped upside down. This semester, the pandemic upended everything we thought we knew — or expected to know — about life in college. Almost 2,000 members of our community have contracted COVID-19, and that number continues to grow.

However, despite these “unprecedented times,” some things remain the same: the lack of transparency UT administration affords its students and its continual failure to listen to student voices. Whether it be regarding COVID-19 policy, online learning, sexual misconduct or Black students’ demands, our University’s disregard for student advocacy has persisted even through a pandemic.

While we applaud the hard-working campus staff who keep our campus a clean and safe environment, students have mostly had to fight for themselves this semester.

UT has largely kept students in the dark about how and why it makes critical

decisions, despite students offering input through virtual town hall meetings, Student Government, The Daily Texan or even online.

Over a year and a half ago, the editorial board called for increased transparency from University Communications. The board cited several practices, including asking for questions in advance and an insistence on conducting interviews via email, that reinforce the various roadblocks student journalists face on campus.

We and other journalists at the Texan are still dealing with the same problems. Our columnists are repeatedly frustrated, and so are we.

Frustrated that we can’t get the interviews we need. Frustrated we can’t publish our pieces on deadline because a communications liaison has refused to respond to our emails and phone calls. Frustrated that we can’t do our jobs because someone else isn’t doing theirs.

All of this together is indicative of a larger trend, one that student journalists on campus have been dealing with for years. We’ve come to realize that these institutionalized problems will likely persist past this semester, and we’re worried that no amount of pressure will convince our University to fix them.

This semester, we’ve largely focused on ways to make campus as safe as possible, but the pandemic isn’t the only thing that threatens student safety. We haven’t forgotten UT administration’s failure to meet student demands for transparency and action regarding

sexual misconduct.

Despite a town hall last spring, student protests, the creation of a sexual misconduct working group and the hiring of outside expertise, Sahotra Sarkar and Coleman Hutchison remain on the course schedule, along with others.

It’s unacceptable, but given UT’s track record on the topic, not surprising.

The editorial board has covered the ongoing issue of sexual misconduct again and again. But we have yet to see any significant policy changes. The pandemic is not an excuse to do the bare minimum on this matter, and we cannot allow this issue to be sidelined any longer.

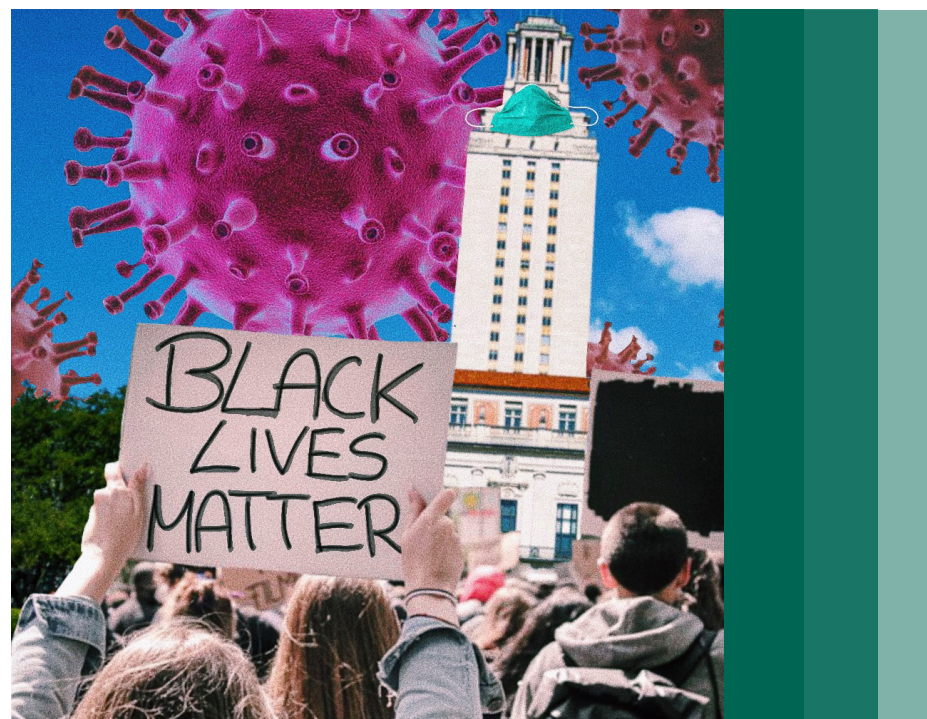
Release an updated list of staff and faculty found guilty of sexual misconduct. Create actionable steps for change. Give students the restorative justice program they were promised. We shouldn’t have to wait any longer.

Administrators have also disregarded students’ demands for UT to eliminate traditions that honor UT’s racist history.

Over the summer, a number of Black student groups released a petition calling for UT to move UT’s culture away from its racist roots. Some of those demands were met, either wholly or with compromise.

Others were not. One such demand concerned “The Eyes of Texas.”

Instead of ending “The Eyes of Texas” tradition, our administrators decided a better course of action would be to invite the UT community to own



ABRIELLA CORKER / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

and acknowledge all aspects of the origins of our school song.

We understand this song’s vile history. We know how uncomfortable it makes our fellow students. We know Black students have been speaking into the void for years about the disrespect they feel when they hear “The Eyes of Texas.”

Students know and have been talking about these issues for years. And for years, UT administration has pretended to hear but never actually listened. But that’s nothing unprecedented, is it?

The editorial board is composed of associate editors Abhirupa Dasgupta, Hannah Lopez, Sanika Nayak, Julia Zakesek, and editor-in-chief Emily Caldwell.

GALLERY



CHARLIE HYMAN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

The Daily Texan's future remains strong even amid pandemic

By Megan Menchaca
@meganmmenchaca

There has never been another semester like fall 2020 for The Daily Texan.

For the first time in its 120-year history, the staff had to create a print paper virtually. We temporarily stopped printing daily and shortened the iconic broadsheet to a tabloid. There were so many more challenges caused by the coronavirus than could possibly fit in a single article.

Still, we never — not once — missed a single deadline. We had our most successful recruitment season in recent history. On all platforms, we fought to hold the University accountable and inform the UT community when the stakes were higher than ever, and we built a paper virtually twice a week with staffers from five different time zones.

Whether people look back

at the work from the Texan in the next few days or decades from now, I hope they look beyond the stories and multimedia and see the resiliency of the staff of more than 230 hardworking, dedicated student journalists.

Despite working remotely, reporters produced hard-hitting new stories, in-depth features and coverage of sports games under the unique circumstances, while columnists advocated for the University to make changes to help the student body in a global pandemic.

Social media staffers and newsletter writers delivered the news to people when we were more spread apart than ever. Photographers, videographers, audio producers and comics illustrators brought life and color to the stories of the campus, and designers and copy editors made sure our pages shined with beautiful art and clean copy.

Emily H, Emily C, Myah,

Ariana, Sami, Neelam, Areeba, Hal, Maia, Presley, Jackson, Harper, Barb, Sierra, Jimena, Lawson and so many more editors worked so hard to hold this paper together and provide a space for dozens of journalists to grow and learn. And the Texan's talented management team — Trinady, Jason, Michael and Angelica — rose above and beyond to lead the paper through these unprecedented and unusual circumstances.

While this semester was certainly not without its many difficulties or blunders, I could not be prouder of a group of people for persisting through everything they faced and producing some incredible journalism. I've learned this year to never be sure of anything, but I do know one thing for certain: The future of student journalism at The University of Texas at Austin is stronger than ever.



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D+I director leaves after being charged with attempted arson of basement office

By Angelica Arinze
@angelicaarin_

A little over a year ago, I was a fresh face on campus, in Moody — and in The Daily Texan basement.

I had always imagined that I would spend the entirety of my time at UT working at The Daily Texan, but after four insightful semesters, I think my time at the paper has come to an end.

I remember first walking into the basement for tryouts and reluctantly heading to the news desk, a small, slightly hidden corner in the basement office on Whitis.

From there, I would end up spending my first semester at UT as a general news reporter. I thank Megan, Savana and

Gracie — the news editors at the time — and everyone on the fall 2019 news team for helping me learn and adjust to the newness of UT life through the lens of reporting on my community.

As a student reporter, I learned a lot about reporting, pitching and writing — just as much as I learned about the systemic problems our newsroom has and how much needs to be changed.

Thank you to Tiana, Faith and Lisa for being there for me, lending an ear and encouraging me to not only join the Diversity and Inclusion Board but also stick up for myself and envision a student newsroom that can better treat our staff and serve our community. More importantly, thank y'all for empowering me to burn

down systems that don't serve us or our community. (I still have the matches and lighter fluid, so hmu!)

Thank you to Lauren, Areeba, Neelam, Lisa, Tiana and Emily, who put Texas Student Media's feet to the fire and helped draft the letter of demands, as well as everyone who signed in solidarity to demand better for our community and the future of student journalism. Standing up to a powerful system is hard, and I couldn't have done it without y'all's help. Community is power.

Thank you to the fall 2020 Board for ensuring that D+I is here to stay and has a place in this newsroom. I hope I made y'all feel empowered, and I am indebted to y'all's hard work, passion and dedication.

Additionally, I want to thank our readers and the UT community who use their voice to hold this paper accountable. The effort you make — big or small — in ensuring the Texan reports on and represents your stories in the way they deserve to be told is inspiring.

There's so many more people to thank that I can't fit in the inch count, but just know that I appreciate you for inspiring and empowering me to be a better journalist along the way.

There's no doubt that this paper still has a lot to reckon with. It needs major restructuring and amending that won't and shouldn't be solved in just a semester or two.

It's also important to recognize that change can't materialize by shouldering the work

on a few BIPOC staffers in the newsroom. It's going to take critical effort and awareness from the majority demographic of the newsroom — white, cisnet women from privileged backgrounds — to recognize how they benefit from a system that pushes so many talented, marginalized individuals out of the newsroom and build a more equitable system so all can thrive and prevail at this paper.

As I leave this newsroom behind, my biggest advice to those coming after me (especially those from marginalized backgrounds interested in D+I work): If you find yourself in a system, institution or environment that is fundamentally underserving you and your community, burn it down.


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KIRSTEN HAHN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

We're not done yet: What The Daily Texan Diversity and Inclusion Board, management did to improve inclusivity in newsroom

By The Diversity and Inclusion Board
@texaninclusion

In August, the Diversity and Inclusion Board members from both the summer and previous semesters published a letter addressed to The Daily Texan management and Texas Student Media. The letter said, "The Daily Texan newsroom has not always been as welcoming and inclusive as it should and can be," and listed ways the Texan should improve.

At the time, members of the summer management team and the fall 2020 managing editor released a statement, as did Texas Student Media, which oversees the Texan.

Since then, the original writers of the letter along with the fall 2020 D+I Board and Texan management have worked to address the demands and improve the newsroom. A Texas Student Media D+I Working Group was formed, and we have met numerous times throughout the semester to work through the letter demands.

Here is the progress we've made so far:

Within the newsroom:

We have created a hiring guide that requires all paid staff to be interviewed and requires those hiring to submit written explanations explaining why each paid staff member will be hired prior to hiring.

To further ensure fairness in hiring, the diversity and inclusion director will take on the role of hiring director at the beginning of the semester to help the managing editor in overseeing hiring and recruitment.

We have created a Diversity and Inclusion Handbook that includes the implementation of permanent fixtures, such as the staffwide demographic survey, objectivity training for all staff members and coverage tracking of all stories and sources.

We will be publishing an end-of-semester report by the end of this academic year that will include coverage tracking of the diversity of our reporting and the results of the demographic survey from fall 2020.

We have created an application process and earmarked annual funding to sponsor newsroom

staff for membership in minority journalism organizations, such as the National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Asian American Journalists Association, NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists and more.

We have earmarked future funding for community outreach and conferences by the D+I Board.

Within Texas Student Media:

Texas Student Media created a portal for all members of staff to submit their thoughts on candidates for managing editor prior to their appointment.

We have revised the governing documents of TSM to include a clause making the D+I director a permanent fixture at the Texan, pending approval from the TSM Board.

The TSM director will audit and ensure that the D+I director is paid a stipend every semester that is equitable to similar roles in the newsroom.

Within the Moody College of Communication:

The School of Journalism created a class for spring 2021 titled J349T Diversity in News

Organizations. Students will gain a specific understanding of situations faced by those student media managers, analyze and evaluate case studies and problem-solve management issues faced by newsrooms, from student media to major networks and media outlets.

We have made progress. However, the newsroom is by no means perfect, and there is still work to be done to create a diverse and inclusive space for all at The Daily Texan. We are planning on and are committed to continuing our diversity and inclusion efforts for the betterment of the newsroom.

Signed:

Emily Caldwell | 2020-2021 editor-in-chief

Megan Menchaca | fall 2020 managing editor

Trinady Joslin | fall 2020 associate managing editor

Jason Lihuang | fall 2020 associate managing editor

Michael Hernandez | fall 2020 director of digital strategy

Angelica Arinze | fall 2020 diversity + inclusion director

Ariana Arredondo | fall 2020 co-internal relations director and Life&Arts editor

Areeba Amer | fall 2020 co-internal relations director and news desk editor

Neelam Bohra | fall 2020 collaborations director and associate news editor

Emily Hernandez | fall 2020 news editor

Lauren Girgis | fall 2020 associate news editor

Gerald Johnson | director for Texas Student Media

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Former copy desk chief finally learns to accept mistakes

By Brittany Miller
@thedailytexan

It's hard to find a nice, neat story to sum up my experiences at the Texan. But one not-so-nice moment at the beginning of fall 2018 taught me a lesson I still carry with me.

You see, my first shift as a p-staffer was the night the infamous "Welcome back freshman" headline was produced. And I was the brand-new ACDC who wrote it.

Obviously, my stomach sank when I realized we welcomed back one single freshman instead of the entire class of 2022.

I showed up the next day and saw my new boss "getting roasted" by everyone for the mistake. I realized a) I needed to befriend her and b) I wanted to be a part of an organization where we have room to mess up, can laugh about it and become better for it. I have become a better mistake-maker, editor, co-worker, leader and friend because of the people at the Texan.

Lisa, Kirsten, Megan and Tiana — I don't know how I would have survived March if I wasn't surrounded by such empathetic, thoughtful and smart women who weren't afraid to lead with vulnerability and open hearts.

Marcus and Sami — I will always have a bottle of wine ready to share with y'all.

Donnie, Myah, Stephen and the rest of sports — Thank you for answering all of my sports questions (I still don't understand golf). I never thought I would miss sitting in the office next to sports, but I do. Although, I don't miss the bets



JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

on how late sports content would come in.

Myah and Stephen, we still have one more pun to write.

Sierra, Christina, Maria and Megan — Y'all handled the move to virtual designing and page edits virtually this summer so gracefully. Thank you for making page edits fun and typing in ridiculous headlines for us.

Amna, Presley and Jack — Y'all have been a blast to work with. Thank you for making me excited to come to work.

To my copy family — My time with y'all has been filled with support, laughs, love and funny memes. Thank you for helping me enjoy nights in the basement.

Irissa, the personality test guru, you probably know me better than I know myself. You are one of the most intentional and thoughtful people I know. Phoebe, I miss our Sunday night conversations! You are authentically you, and I admire that. Megan, you have such a warm and welcoming presence,

and you're a fantastic editor. Lawson, your positivity and joy bring a needed light-heartedness to the team. Jimena, thank you for being a good friend and always having my back. I know I can count you to rip anyone's ass up for me.

Jason — Our pact stuck! I am so honored to begin and finish our Texan journey together. Thank you for making me laugh and listening to my vents for the last three years. You make me a better editor. I will send

you my papers for edits forever.

Kirsten — Thank you for having my back, whether it was taking the fall for the "freshman" incident or encouraging me to do the things that scare me. I miss stifling laughs at maestro with you. I hope we keep this long on up.

To everyone still on their Texan journeys or considering starting, take the chance. Do the thing that scares you. And practice being OK when things don't go the way you planned.

LOOKING BACK

UT gets a new president, special pass/fail and Q-drop policies approved and Biden-Harris campaign wins.

By The Daily Texan Staff
@thedailytexan

UNIVERSITY

The UT System Board of Regents unanimously approved Jay Hartzell as permanent president of the University on Sept. 21 after he served as interim president since June 1.



EDDIE GASPAR / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

CAMPUS

Due to COVID-19, about two-thirds of fall classes were online, while the remaining in-person classes included capacity limits and mask and social distancing requirements.

In September, the University reported three COVID-19 clusters in West Campus, and at least two staff members died from COVID-19 complications since the summer.

SPORTS

Big Ticket holders were required to either test negative for COVID-19 through UT's Proactive Community Testing

program before football games or provide proof of COVID-19 immunity, but other ticket holders were not required to.

ACADEMICS

Two weeks before finals, UT announced students could pass/fail three classes across the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters and still count them toward degrees. Q-drops will also not count toward the

six-drop limit. Some students were disappointed the policy deviated from a faculty plan and supported student legislation, while advisers were frustrated their inputs were not included in the changes.

CAMPUS

In July, UT denied a 2016 request by the Miakan-Garza Band to return Indigenous remains being stored at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory. In September, after the tribe hosted

a teach-in and ceremony and Indigenous students presented to UT President Jay Hartzell, Hartzell said UT will seek guidance from the National Park Service to offer the remains for reburial.



PRESLEY GLOTFELTY / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

Members of the Maikan-Garza Band gather for an Indigenous cultural teach-in in front of the J. J. Pickle Research Center on Sept. 7, 2020. They protested the University's decision not to return the remains of three Miakan-Garza Band members.

CITY

After a summer of protests calling to defund the police, the Austin City Council voted in August to cut \$150 million from the Austin Police Department's budget to fund alternative forms of public safety. The

Liberation Coalition, a student communist group, organized a November protest calling for the dissolution of the UT and Austin Police Departments and Texas Department of Public Safety presence near campus.

STATE

Democrat Texas House Member Gina As' 49th District representing the dis-

trict for the last four years, defeating Republican Charles Allan Meyer and Libertarian Kenneth Moore.

VOTING

Early voting for the 2020 general election lasted through Oct. 30, six days longer than early voting in 2016.

Around 125,000 more ballots were cast in Travis County for the 2020 general election than the 2016 election.



AMNA IJAZ / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Former Vice President Joe Biden won the presidential election against standing President Donald Trump in November.

NATION

Former Vice President Joe Biden was elected the 46th president of the United States on Nov. 7. President Donald Trump is contesting the results, incorrectly claiming there was widespread voter fraud among multiple battleground states.

Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., will be the first woman, first Indian American and first African American to hold the office of the vice president. According to the team's website, their priority will be combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

LOOKING FORWARD

Graduation may be in person, UT faces more lawsuits and a COVID-19 vaccine is in the works.

By The Daily Texan Staff
@thedailytexan

CAMPUS

UT will offer almost 60% of spring classes online with a similar number of courses having online, hybrid and in-person modality as in the fall semester. Students living in residence halls may be required to

undergo COVID-19 testing when returning in the spring as the pandemic accelerates nationwide. University Health Services will continue to administer COVID-19 tests for students, faculty and staff.



PRESLEY GLOTFELTY / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

GRADUATION

Graduates will possibly attend an in-person graduation in the spring semester. The 2020 spring and fall graduations were and will be vir-

tual. This would be the University's first in-person graduation during the pandemic, with mask requirements and an attendance cap.



AMNA IJAZ / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

A screenshot from the livestream of the Spring 2020 Graduation Commencement.

VACCINE

COVID-19 vaccinations, several of which use research from UT scientists, are in the final stages of approval by the federal government. UT is preparing for distribution, following the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines to distribute vaccines in phases. There are no current plans to make the vaccine mandatory to return to campus in the spring.

'THE EYES OF TEXAS'

"The Eyes of Texas" University committee will analyze the song's origins and present their findings in January. UT President Jay Hartzell created the committee after the Longhorn

Band was unable to play the alma mater because too many players, pointing to the song's racist origins, refused to participate, and students called to "Rewrite Not Reclaim" the song.



EDDIE GASPAR / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

The Longhorn Band plays during the football game against Baylor on Nov. 23, 2019.

OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

Students are worried about whether to secure housing for the spring as COVID-19 addendums are added to some off-campus residences and UT increases rent for its

off-campus apartments. APD reported 450 COVID-19 policy violations for large gatherings and noise complaints in West Campus since classes began Aug. 26 through Nov. 11. Amid gathering limits, city officials shut down at least one party in West Campus.

LAWSUITS

One of the lawsuits the University will be facing next semester is from a former photographer who sued Bevo XV's owners and handlers after the longhorn injured him. The 5th United States Circuit Court of Appeals revived a 2018 lawsuit students filed saying the University's free speech policies violate the First and 14th amendments. A history professor filed a lawsuit claiming he faced retaliation for distributing a report highlighting race-related pay disparities.

TEXAS LEGISLATION

The 87th Texas Legislative Session will begin Jan. 12 with nearly 900 bills filed so far. More than 100 bills are education-related. Bills filed include

designating polling places on college campuses, providing suicide prevention information on student identification cards and regulating the carrying of handguns at higher education institutions.

Design editor goes against Capricorn tendencies by choosing to work less

By Sierra Wiggers
@sierrawiggers

I am more than aware of how ironic it is that I have worked at one of the best student newspapers for almost three years, yet I remain a subpar writer.

I'll try to keep it short since this will probably be rough.

I really did not know what I was getting myself into the fall of freshman year. I was an ex-"yerd" just looking to replace the die-hard love of slaving over something people barely read. So of course I stumbled across the Texan. And I'm really glad I did.

First, I'd like to thank the members of the design department before me who inspired me to get where I am

today. Andrea, thank you for taking a chance on me when I was a quiet little freshman and for promoting me to keep working until I got this far. Christiana and Reneé, thank you for making such positive changes to the department while I was a senior designer. It made the transition so much easier.

To those currently in the design department who had to deal with my antics ... I'm sorry. There were times in the summer that I had next to no idea what I was doing, but Christiana, Megan and Maria managed to keep a straight face while I struggled to make meetings fun. Maria, I especially could not have stayed sane without you by my side. Thanks for

always being a helping hand. I'm looking forward to continuing our chaos in TXC. Additionally, the designers who survived an entire semester of remote production, many gold stars to y'all.

The times when we worked in a physical office almost seem like a lifetime ago, but I probably had some of my favorite college experiences (so far) in that shithole. I could not have stayed this long if the people who work here weren't so damn awesome. Without the many heated debates, music talks and award-show viewings to come back to, y'all would not have seen me after that all-nighter for the OU paper last fall. Kirsten, Donnie, Alex, y'all helped make that dingy

basement a place I looked forward to going to. Most of all though, thank you, Jimena. You are the closest friend I've made in my time here, and without a doubt, I would have had a minimum of three mental breakdowns if we hadn't had those quarantined production nights this semester. I'm currently making virtual grilled cheeses for all four of you.

An additional thanks to those outside of the office. To my roommates, who have heard endless rants or put up with me coming home after working until 2 a.m., and my friends who pick up a copy just to make me feel better. And of course, to Kennedy, who has patiently watched me emulate that picture of Coraline's dad every Monday night this

semester or sat and waited for me to do "this one last thing" when I check Slack and see I missed an important message.

I know it probably sounds like I hated this job, but I'm not THAT much of a masochist. It's been a rough last semester (but who hasn't had a rough semester?), and still I wouldn't take back any of my time spent here.

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JAMIE HWANG / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

Associate design editor writes this column as InDesign crashes yet again

By Maria Perez
@pariamerez

After an emotionally traumatic stint as a reporter and editor-in-chief of my high school newspaper, I told myself I would never work for another newspaper.

I kept my word for a total of one semester in college.

One day during winter break of 2018, I impulsively decided I wanted to become a graphic designer. I then began applying for every design opportunity on campus despite not having any experience.

The Daily Texan was the only place that didn't give me an immediate rejection.

I walked into my design tryout with my only Adobe InDesign experience being from the intro video I watched the night before.

I thank you, Mireya, for watching me hopelessly fumble around on the software and still giving me a chance.

Kirsten and Mireya became my first friends at this paper. I felt like I could really make it here thanks to your kindness and support.

I also thank the infamous Design-Sports-Copy

trifecta for keeping me sane in the basement and providing me with endless laughs as I sweat through deadlines. I cannot name you all, but know I appreciate you.

Christiana assigned me to double coverage in fall 2019. I may have been two hours late for deadline during my first week, and I may not have had a social life that entire semester, but I truly believe it was double coverage that gave me the experience and discipline to launch my career. And it's all because Christiana saw my willingness to learn.

I also thank Christina, Megan and Eunice for being such stellar senior designers/dogs/demons and for being willing to try new things with us. I am excited to see where y'all take this department.

To every issue staffer who has worked under me: Although I was your boss on production nights, it was really me who learned from you. Thanks for being the best on-the-job teachers I could ask for.

And to Sierra. My partner-in-crime. We became friends while finessing our way into

Texas Creative and into the top positions of this department together. Thank you for letting my introverted self cling on to you at Texan parties and for sharing your love of Tyler, the Creator with me. I long to be half the designer you are, and I would've left this place a long time ago if it weren't for our friendship. Here's to Virgo/Capricorn solidarity.

I am thankful for what this paper brought me, but to be honest, life at the Texan hasn't been the same for me since the release of the D+I letter this summer.

After reading through the letter and reading about how other BIPOC have been treated by peers and supervisors who are supposed to look out for us, I couldn't help but feel somewhat guilty.

As a first-generation, Afro-Latinx college student

succeeding in a University and a newspaper that has historically failed to serve my people, the guilt has never left me and has only gotten worse.

I am a proud member of my respective communities before I am an underpaid designer at a college newspaper.

I've had so much success and growth at this paper while my BIPOC peers have to live with both the trauma of existing in this world and the trauma instilled on them by their peers and supervisors at this paper. How do I even begin to live with that truth?

The answer is that I can't. So I must leave.

To the higher-ups at The Daily Texan and TSM: You are not doing enough. The goals haven't been met. Do better.



ROCKY HIGINE / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF



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Self-proclaimed social chair leaves without throwing one last rager

By Nicole Stuessy
@nicolestuessy

One perk about leaving the Texan during a pandemic semester is that I didn't have to throw the orientation party, the Last Night of Print Party or any of the random ones in between. My roommates and neighbors are thankful.

I haven't missed the countless Swiffer pads and trash

bags used in the process of returning my West Campus apartment to a normal state after a Texan party, but I've missed the people. Something about sitting around the ping-pong-turned-conference-table somewhat delirious at 10 p.m. on a week-night giving weekly highs and lows with the news staff just hit in a way a Zoom meeting could never.

As self-proclaimed social chair, I led The Daily Flexins, our co-ed intramural basketball team, to one semi-final appearance and many more games resulting in low sportsmanship ratings. To any RecSports employee who worked one of our games: I'm sorry.

Since fall 2017, I've worked in the news and projects departments in various reporting and editing roles. After three unpaid semesters as a general reporter — which I'm pretty sure is the record — and a thrilling semester covering construction on campus, I'm glad I stuck around to remotely lead an extremely talented staff of news reporters and editors this summer.

I learned a lot during my time in the news department. Most of that was how to confidently approach strangers on Speedway for an interview or how to pitch stories when there seemed to be nothing happening at UT, but I'm without a doubt a better writer and journalist for it.

In my time in the basement, I've been lucky enough to meet some of the most talented writers, designers, photographers, artists and editors serving the UT community. Even working completely remotely, the Texan continues to raise the bar for collegiate newsrooms across the country.

Working at the Texan wasn't always easy, but these people made it fun:



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Sami, you've been a great editor, and you've been an even better friend. Here's to keeping the Hot Girl Summer legacy alive.

Meara and Chad, y'all are absolute legends. Journalism classes would have been much less interesting without y'all.

Kirsten, I don't know how we survived some of those IM games. Thanks for always being down to talk about basketball strategy and "The Bachelor."

Stephen, thanks for being the best sports documentary partner and giving me a

reason to hang out in the sports department on occasion. It would get lonely over in the news department.

Neelam and Emily, I couldn't have asked for better associate news editors this summer. I can't wait to see what y'all do next for this paper and the UT community.

Peter, so sad we could never arrange that sand volleyball game.

To anyone I've ever approached on campus looking for a quote, thanks for not running away. You saved me from missing deadline more

times than I can count.

To my roommates, thanks for putting up with the parties, giving me rides and bringing me dinner when needed.

To my mom and her Facebook friends, thanks for being my biggest fans over the years. When I thought no one would read my articles, y'all would.

And finally to the Texan, thanks for giving me a place to belong on campus. As graduation approaches next semester, I know I will take my experience from here into my career.

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After 5 semesters at Texan, projects reporter says goodbye

By Meara Isenberg
@mearaannee

It feels strange to be writing this column now, when I feel so disconnected from campus. I'm taking remote classes this semester — and have been since the spring 2020 semester, when students were asked not to return to campus in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I haven't walked around campus, or visited The Daily Texan basement, in months.

But The Daily Texan has continued to connect me with the Forty Acres during this time. I'm feeling grateful for all that the paper has offered me over the years, especially now. Not only has it allowed me to edit and write stories about things that interest me, but it's also connected me to great people who are passionate about what they do and have helped me through the often challenging but rewarding experience of working for the paper.

Sami and Raga, I feel lucky to have joined you guys on the City/State beat freshman year. You're fantastic journalists and friends, and I'm really excited to see what lies ahead for you.

London, Catherine, Chase, Lisa N, Maria and many others — thank you for leaving an impact on me as a less experienced staffer. I appreciate all your guidance

and support.

Nicole, thanks for being the first friend I made at the Texan. You've always been supportive of me, and I'm really grateful for that. You've definitely helped make my experience at the Texan fun.

Chad, Megan, Savana, Gracie, Neelam and everyone else I met while working as a reporter for the Texan: You all made my time there memorable. Same to Anna, Lisa D, Brittany and the other news desk editors that I spent long evening hours in the basement with editing stories.

Peter, thank you for reading all of my stories over the years and providing helpful feedback. I keep those suggestions in mind as I work on new stories.

I joined the Texan as a general reporter in the fall of 2017 and became a senior reporter covering the West Campus area in 2018. From summer 2018 to summer 2019, I worked as a news desk editor and, briefly, an associate news editor.

After spending a year away, I've been lucky to be welcomed back for a summer and semester before I graduate, working on longer stories. I've been energized by fellow staffers at the Texan who have worked tirelessly during the COVID-19 pandemic. They've continued to make the Texan a publication that I'm proud to be a part of.



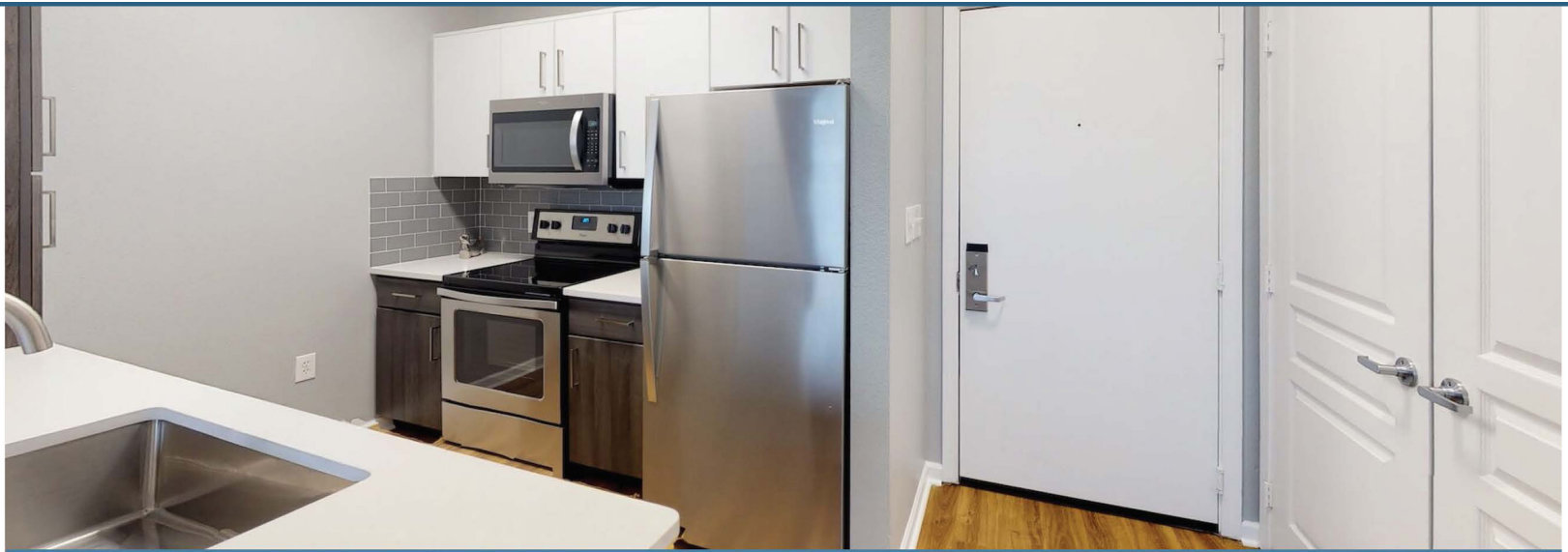
COURTESY OF MEARA ISENBERG

I'll miss the ping-pong table, the corkboard in the news department decorated with funny photos of staffers, the random times there would be Domino's pizza in the basement, or even better, Tiff's Treats. I'll also

miss the reliable basement vending machine, which came in handy during a long news desk editing shift. I'll miss the feeling of working with other students and friends in the basement — though I've missed that for a while.

For those of you trying to decide what to get involved with during your time at UT, I can tell you honestly that working at the Texan will be one of the most rewarding experiences you

could have as a college journalist. You will learn great skills and connect with hardworking and passionate students at UT. I'm grateful for all of the lessons and memories it's given me.



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Projects reporter gets overly pensive for final time

By Marcus Krum
@marcuskrum

I've found that oftentimes, sports are more poetic than not.

OK, I know what you're thinking — that statement is melodramatic, borderline outlandishly so. And you'd probably be right. Come to think of it, there are plenty of times when sports fall into dull, lifeless monotony.

But I'll choose to believe that sports are like poetry because when they are, those are the moments that you remember. Those moments when time loops back into itself, when the perfect symmetry or asymmetry of an event captures you — that's when the real magic of sports reveals itself.

I'll give an example, since I'm speaking in complete gibberish. The first Texas football game I attended was my freshman year when the Longhorns took a crushing blow at the hands of the mighty Maryland Terrapins (the first of two). The last Texas football game I attended as a student was the absolutely gut-wrenching loss to Iowa State last Saturday.

Beautiful, right?

I've found that everyday life frequently gives way to moments like these if you're paying close enough attention (which I often am not). Over the last four years, The Daily Texan has given me countless moments in time that I cherish dearly.

Alex and Ross, you guys gave me a chance at this paper, for which I'm forever grateful. More than that, y'all were the first ones to make me feel welcome down in the basement, for which I'm even more grateful. You guys are all right.

Donnavan, I'm thankful

for the time that we spent together in the office. I'll miss the conspiracy theories and the random arguments about how the mecca of basketball is in Brooklyn (it's true).

Daniela, you were a joy to work with and be around, and you always pushed me to be better. Stephen, you're one of the hardest workers I've ever met. I'm going to miss you guys dearly, but I know we'll always be able to bond over roasting Donnie for being a Knicks fan.

Myah, you've been an absolute joy to work with, and watching you grow as a reporter (and as a good friend of mine) has been one of the true joys of working here. Sami and Brittany, never forget summer 2020. It wouldn't have been the same without you guys. Leading a remote newsroom was a hell of a challenge, but I learned a lot because of y'all.

To so many others in the sports department and otherwise, there's too many of y'all to mention, and I don't have space because I've overwritten everything I've ever written. But I'm thankful for each person I met in the basement.

Mom, thanks for actually reading my stories (and telling me when I made a mistake). Dad, thanks for being an outlet for my rants about Texas football. Thanks to both of y'all for pushing me to pursue my dreams.

The end here seems anything but poetic. I'm sitting at my desk, alone, in my house a couple miles away from the basement and all the people I've worked with. But maybe the poetry in all this is that being away makes me cherish those times in the office even more.

Nah, you're right. I'm just being dramatic.



Photo editor won't miss file requests, but she'll miss everything else



COURTESY OF PRESLEY GLOTFELTY

By Presley Glotfelty
@presleyjg

I was a transfer student that worked on a small newspaper at my last university and never imagined I would make it into The Daily Texan. I always thought I was a small fish in a big pond.

Now, after a year and a half in the photo department, I've learned so much about what it means to be a photojournalist and how to teach new photographers the meaning of our job and how to do it well. I didn't realize how much I loved teaching photojournalism until becoming

photo editor. It's something that's made me consider becoming a teacher to educate the next generation on photojournalism.

The ride was not an easy feat. Some photo requests drove me insane. I lost my patience with limited access due to coronavirus and went crazy over the ridiculously slow server access from my personal laptop, but I don't regret a single moment of it. I found a place where I belonged and that made sense to me — my brain loved shifting through the chaos that is a college newspaper.

But doing full-time school, working a part-time job and being a full-time editor during a pandemic, I decided it was time to go in a new direction.

I've come to realize that college photojournalists are my favorite people. We are all a bunch of weirdos with cameras trying to make a difference. I am forever grateful for my permanent staff who put up with my late work hours and still made our department look phenomenal. Jamie, Jack, Kirsten and Nick ... y'all are the most talented photographers I know

and will go so far in this life with your skills, hard work and kindness. Each of you masters a skill, and it was a privilege to learn them from you this semester.

To Amna, who put me under her wing my sophomore year as associate photo editor, thank you for teaching me what it means to be a good leader. To not get run over, but also show kindness and understanding. You will always be my inspiration and good friend.

Eddie, there's not enough thank-you's in the world

to express how grateful I am that you accepted me onto the team when I first transferred to UT. You taught me everything about the photo department and how to be a photojournalist, and you were careful to critique my work and push me to be more than I ever thought I could.

To my photographers — you were my guinea pigs, but I think y'all turned out all right. I hope I gave you valuable skills you can take into your career and life itself, because you definitely taught me some. It was a pleasure watching

y'all grow into *amazing* photographers, and I'd like to think I had some part in that, but I know it was always inside of each of you.

To everyone at The Daily Texan, you have been a great addition to my family. This is not goodbye, but a pleasant reminder to always stay in touch. Who knows, maybe we'll meet in another newsroom someday, and I'll take pictures for your stories again.

The only thing I have left to say is that, UT football, I'm comin' for ya. One way or another, I will finally shoot pictures on that field.

Daily Texan Comics

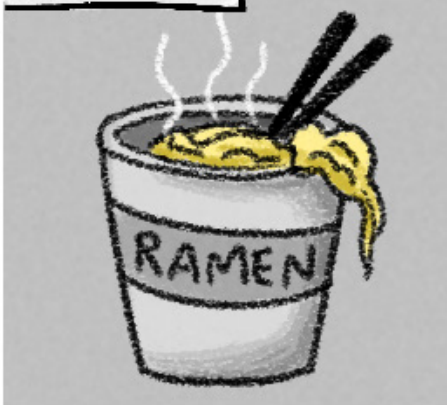


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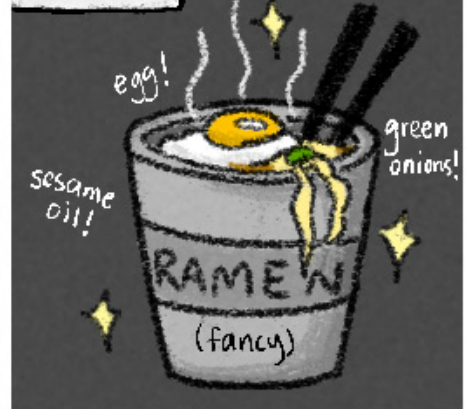
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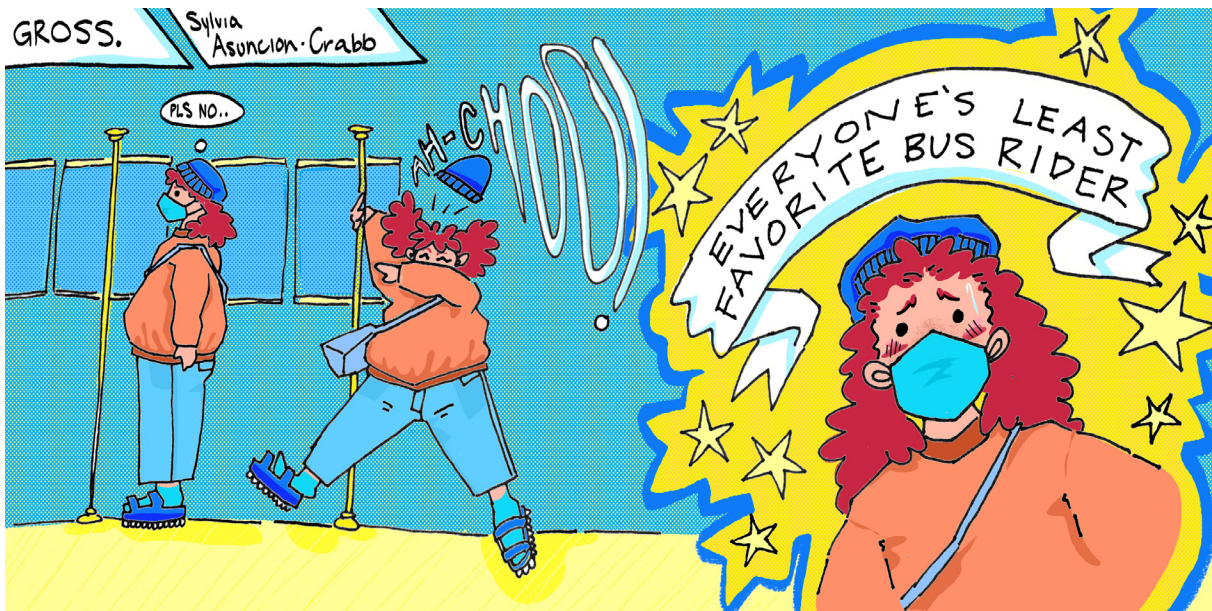
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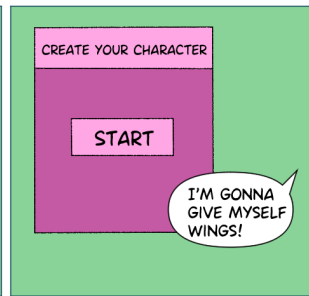
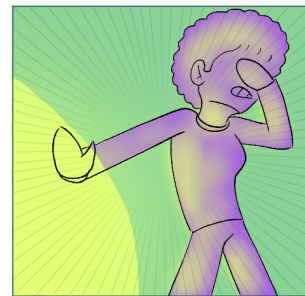
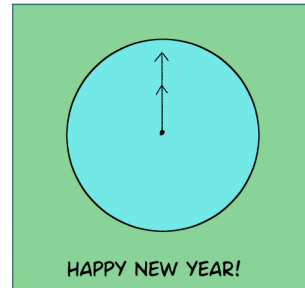


MARISSA XIONG
 @superanonymouscarrots



NEW YEAR, NEW ME

BY CATE LOWRY



@CATE_SKETCHES

Copy desk chief writes last headline, finally gets a byline

By Jimena Pinzon
@jimenapinzonm

From the day I was admitted to UT, I knew I wanted to work at the Texan. Like all the annoying high school yearbook kids, I made my way to the basement with confidence a bit too high and a truckload of freshman naïveté.

Quickly, the copy department became home. There's something really special about late nights in that poorly lit, cricket-infested basement. I never thought a little desk all the way in the back of the office would lead me to so many amazing people, and I never thought I would lead a department, but I would never trade it for the world.

The Texan is not without its faults. There is still so much to be done to make this a safe, inclusive environment for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ staff. Promises of change have been made, but not many have been met. Accountability is essential, and I will continue to support and encourage progressive decisions so our newsroom no longer pushes talented individuals away. New leaders have a lot of work to do.

This isolated semester would not have been successful without the team of wonderful women by my side. Lawson, thank you for putting up with my scattered brain since our Monday work nights. You keep me sane, or at least as sane as I can be. Irissa, you've taught me how to be a better friend to myself and to others. My heart is bigger because of you. Phoebe, thank you for always being there and for your amazing little earrings. Megan, queen of iced mochas, I



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will forever cherish the cursed Super Tuesday. If you know, you know.

I would never have lasted in this high-stress environment if it weren't for my longtime support system. Brittany, thank you for making me feel heard and loved every day. Picnics and coffee dates with you are my favorite. Jason, I never knew anyone more chaotic than me could exist, until I met you. I love you for that.

I wasn't sure soulmates

were real until I met Kirsten. Thank you for being my workout buddy, therapist, playlist maker, Yellow Tail aficionado, hangover sister and so much more. My life is beautiful because you are in it. By the way, I still haven't told anyone about Whataburger.

Sierra — I would not have survived the last three semesters without you. Thank you for always trying new coffee places, introducing me to the best vegan eats in Austin, and

for always laughing at my not-so-funny jokes. And for still talking to me after I stepped on Gremlin. Alex, I guess you're not like other boys. Donnie, I hate to break it to you, but Stevie Wonder really is blind.

Mom and Dad, thank you for staying up for so many semesters of 1 a.m. "I'm home" texts after working. I will now have a normal bedtime, I promise. To my lovely roommates, thank you for listening to my endless rants and always supporting my

hectic schedule.

Megan, our fearless managing editor, thank you for not firing me. I know I would have. Trinady, I admire your tenacity and work ethic. I'll see your byline in the big pages someday.

Last but certainly not least: To all the sports writers, thank you for replying to my editing texts and always taking the time to explain the most basic sports concepts. I hope you feel relieved you will never receive another one.