



# A history of medical malpractice

Past harm is affecting how students and their families view the COVID-19 vaccine today.

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## CAMPUS

## Class of 2020 has mixed feelings about their possible graduation ceremony

By Skye Seipp  
@seippetc

The class of 2020 now has a date set for the graduation ceremony they expected to have a year and a half ago, but some say they have moved on and don't plan to attend.

On Jan. 19, President Jay Hartzell announced the University is planning commencement ceremonies for the class of 2020 on Sept. 17 and the class of 2021 on May 22 at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium.

Kathleen Harrison, communications manager for the Office of the

Executive Vice President and Provost, said in an email the class of 2020 ceremony will be for students who would have graduated at any time in 2020 and fall 2019 graduates who were planning to attend the ceremony in May 2020.

Harrison said the class of 2020 is having its ceremony in September in hopes that more people will be vaccinated and the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic will have improved. She said the class of 2021 is having its ceremony planned for the original date because UT assumes the graduates are already on campus.

"Inviting 2020 graduates and their families from around the world back to the campus for a mass gathering is counter to the safety goal of minimizing density on campus," Harrison said. "As more people become vaccinated in the coming months, the hope is that conditions will allow the University to host a safe celebration for the class of 2020 in September," Harrison said.

Safiq Sindha, an alumnus who graduated in 2020, said as a first-generation college student, he's looking forward to coming back to Austin to see his friends and walk the stage.

"Among first-gen, (the graduation ceremony is) kind of that magical moment where it's like, 'Oh wow, I really did this. All of high school and college was worth it,'" Sindha said. "Also, I'm still a little salty that my last two months of college were ripped away by a virus."

Harrison said the University is taking a number of factors into consideration when deciding whether the ceremonies will take place, including the overall state of the COVID-19 pandemic on

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## CONTACT US

MAIN TELEPHONE  
(512) 471-4591

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Emily Caldwell  
(512) 232-2212  
editor@dailytexanonline.com

MANAGING EDITOR  
Trinady Joslin  
(512) 232-2217  
managingeditor@thedailytexan.com

NEWS OFFICE  
(512) 232-2207  
news@thedailytexan.com

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## CAMPUS

## Professors compare classroom connections virtually, in-person

By Samantha Greyson  
@GreysonSamantha

When accounting professor Steven Kachelmeier cracks a joke during his Zoom lectures these days, he's often met with silence.

"I use humor in my class. I try to keep it light, and that is so much harder to do online," Kachelmeier said. "If I tell a joke (or) just a lighthearted comment, and then I hear dead silence ... because everyone is muted, it's hard."

Since last spring, Kachelmeier said he has learned how to keep online students engaged and get to know them personally — even just by asking informal questions over Zoom. Kachelmeier said he misses the small interactions with students, the "Good afternoon" greetings as students walked into a classroom and the laughter after he makes a funny comment.

As online learning continues, Kachelmeier and other professors have adapted to remote teaching by developing new ways to engage their students online, but they miss the feedback and student relationships of the in-person classroom. With students logging into Zoom from different locations, professors say personal connections are more difficult, especially if students mute their audio or turn off their video.

"(Before the COVID-19 pandemic) I could get to a point, a culture in my class, that I'd say something corny and some student would say something back to me," Kachelmeier said. "I miss the informality. I even find myself looking at their faces when I say something that I hope is light to see if I see anyone smile."

English professor Elizabeth Cullingford

said gauging whether students are paying attention or understanding the material is more difficult on Zoom.

"In face-to-face situations, you can see if a particular student is unhappy or struggling and contact them afterwards or in office hours," Cullingford said. "But online, students often don't take care with their lighting, so it is sometimes hard to see their faces, let alone take their emotional temperature."

Cullingford said she has tried to maintain positive energy on Zoom through mini-lectures and exaggerated responses to student comments.

"Oddly, there have been some students with whom I have become closer than usual: those who are particularly comfortable with the written word or who have mastered the art of being human on Zoom," Cullingford said. "Usually these are the confident students ... it is harder to reach the shy or to round up the disengaged."

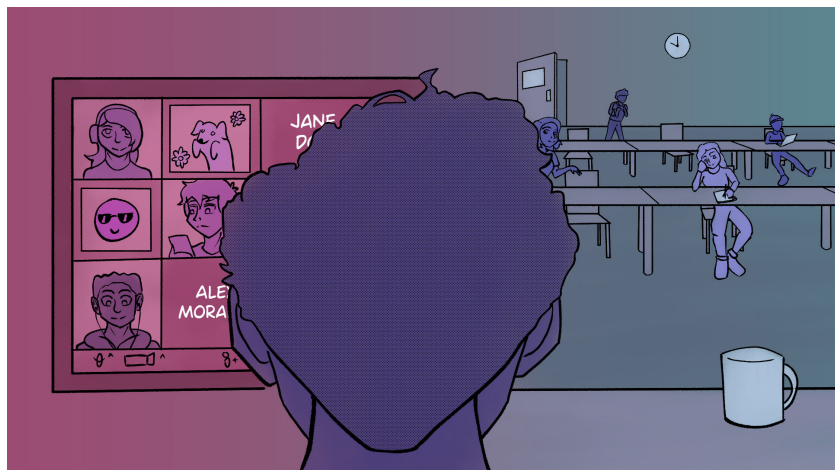
Management lecturer Michael Peterson said he has used breakout rooms to invite richer classroom discussions on Zoom and encourage the students to get to know one another.

Peterson said there are certain advantages to the Zoom classroom, such as inviting in guest lecturers.

"You're able to have guest lectures from anywhere in the world," Peterson said. "I had a guest lecturer join my class from England, live, a few months ago."

But while Zoom may have some benefits, Peterson said he misses being on campus.

"I just miss seeing my students' smiling faces and seeing them all at the same time," Peterson said. "I love my students, and I love UT and I really miss seeing everyone at once."



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## EDITORIAL

# Over the past decade, problems with tuition have persisted

The editorial board traces past coverage of issues with tuition and relates it to issues students face today.

By The Daily Texan Editorial Board

The Daily Texan's opinion department has covered tuition at UT extensively. When we started thinking about how we wanted to write this editorial, we realized we had a wealth of older content to pull from that's still relevant today. The following are

quotes from editorials and columns the department has published over the past decade.

#### Lack of transparency when tuition rates are raised

"For students to feel heard, they must be informed early and often on the funding challenges that both UT-Austin and the UT System face."

— *The Daily Texan Editorial Board, 2017*

"Students are left adrift in nightmares of their own as they begin registering for classes on Monday without knowing what their tuition bills will be."

— *The Daily Texan Editorial Board, 2012*

"Throughout the budget-cutting process, decisions have been made behind closed doors — first with (the Tuition Policy Advisory Committee's) militant insistence that students and reporters be shut out of meetings ... While these entities are not under a legal obligation to open their meetings to the public or post an agenda or minutes, the lack of transparency is troubling."

— *Lauren Winchester, Editorial Board member, 2010*

#### No itemized bill

"By pooling funds, UT blurs the lines regarding the flow of tuition dollars throughout the University. This system, in

absence of itemized bills, reduces transparency and creates mistrust within the student body."

— *Richard Lee, opinion columnist, 2020*

"It's unreasonable to expect students to sift through complicated financial documents in order to understand where their tuition dollars go. And it's unreasonable for the University to place further burdens on its students without providing more clarity."

— *The Daily Texan Editorial Board, 2017*

#### Overloaded Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid

"I have been required to sell shares of my retirement funds to cover costs that were supposed to be paid by federal and state programs ... If UT is committed to serving student veterans' needs, they need to hire more personnel and streamline the certification process."

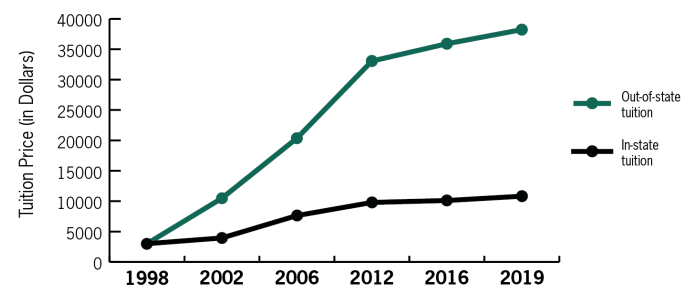
— *Stephen Ollar, opinion contributor, 2012*

"If students do not receive their answers in a timely manner, they're in danger of missing out on crucial financial aid opportunities. However, UT's Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid can take several hours to answer questions via email and phone."

— *Jesus Vidales, opinion columnist, 2020*

UT is already working to mitigate several of the issues we've highlighted here. We spoke with Larry Singell, senior vice provost for resource management,

## Rise in undergraduate tuition at UT over time



SOURCE: THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

JULEANNA CULILAP / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

and Joey Williams, director of communications for the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, who informed us there are several groups on campus working to increase the transparency of student tuition bills before the fall 2021 tuition bills are generated.

We just wish this would've been made a priority sooner.

Williams said when tuition is raised, the president sends out two emails to the whole campus: one when the process starts and another when a decision has been made. Williams said the Office of the President engages with Student Government leaders during the process as well.

We're told when discussions are starting and when a decision has been made, but we'd like it to be a more dynamic exchange between the institution and

students. When the University does collect our feedback, we'd like UT to take it all seriously — not just the feedback from Student Government.

The Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid also took on extra work when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Singell and Williams said this extra work is the reason for the "slowdown in the processing" of students' inquiries and questions, despite hiring additional staff.

We commend the hardworking members of the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid. We would simply like to see the office receive more support from the University. If we can afford to pay our president's \$1.25 million annual salary, we should be able to ensure the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid is as supported as possible.

### GALLERY



CHARLIE HYMAN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

STATE

# Texas legislators aim to revise marijuana policies, decriminalize low-level possession

By Lauren Abel  
@laurena0324

With more than 30 cannabis-related bills filed for the ongoing Texas legislative session, legislators from both parties aim to change marijuana policy in Texas to reduce the consequences for low-level possession charges.

During the 86th legislative session, Joe Moody, representative of Texas House District 78, proposed House Bill 63, which aimed to decriminalize marijuana possession. The bill received a supermajority in the Texas House, but was declared dead in the Senate by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick. This year, legislators in the 87th session are attempting to pass similar legislation in hopes of making it through the Senate.

Although the Austin Police Department no longer makes arrests for low-level possession, the UT Police Department does not follow the same regulations and continues to issue citations.

Erin Zwiener, representative of Texas House District 45, filed House Bill 441, which aims to reduce the charges for possession of four ounces or less of cannabis to a misdemeanor, prohibit arrest for low-level possession, provide for automatic expungement and prevent penalties towards having a driver's license.

Zwiener worked with Moody to create the bill, which closely mirrors HB 63. Zwiener said she hopes the bill will reduce the long-lasting ramifications of possession charges that, under current conditions, can influence access to housing and employment.

"We have so many young folks who end up with this black mark on their record who are at a disadvantage of getting a job and finding housing for the rest of their lives," Zwiener said. "This disproportionately impacts Texans of color."

Younger populations are also vulnerable to criminal records for possession, said Heather Fazio, director of Texans for Responsible Marijuana Policy. A majority of those arrested on possession charges are high school and college-aged youth, and two-thirds receive a conviction.

Fazio said current legislation in Texas yields multiple penalties for marijuana

possession including jail time and a criminal record, which can hinder access to education, employment and housing. Fazio said Texas arrests 60,000 to 70,000 people annually for possession of marijuana.

"We, like most Texans, agree that marijuana prohibition has been a failure by every measure," Fazio said. "We do think that sensible regulation — reasonable regulation — would be a better alternative to prohibition."

Zwiener said another concern with current legislation is the amount of law enforcement resources spent on cannabis crime.

"This legislation should save our law enforcement hundreds of millions of dollars that they're currently using to pursue this crime of possession of a small amount of cannabis," Zwiener said.

APD assistant chief Joseph Chacon said most of the proposed legislation will not have a significant impact on day-to-day operations as bills passed in the previous legislative session already altered APD's procedures for marijuana charges.

“

We do think that sensible regulation — reasonable regulation — would be a better alternative to prohibition.”

**HEATHER FAZIO**

DIRECTOR OF TEXANS FOR RESPONSIBLE MARIJUANA POLICY

"When things really changed for us was when last session they passed House Bill 1325, and that one is not related to marijuana, it's actually related to hemp," Chacon said. "It has significantly changed the landscape for us because it would, at that point, hamper our ability to quickly be able to identify what is marijuana."

House Bill 1325 legalized the production of hemp by Texas farmers as long as it contains no more than 0.3% THC, which is substantiated through a pre-harvest test.



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## TECHNOLOGY

# UT teams picked for NASA's University Leadership Initiative

By Kevin Vu  
@Kevin\_Vu\_

UT-Austin students and faculty will lead two out of five teams participating in NASA's University Leadership Initiative, which provides funding for university research teams to work on projects for three to four years.

The first project, led by researchers at UT's Oden Institute for Computational Engineering and Sciences and engineers in the Cockrell School of Engineering, will focus on establishing an algorithm foundation to develop advanced air mobility systems for autonomous cargo, said Ufuk Topcu, the lead investigator for the project, in an email.

"Autonomous means that they make their own decisions, and it's not remote-controlled," said Karen Willcox, the director of the Oden Institute who is also working on the project. "Imagine a future when you (open) your Amazon app and you order whatever it is you need ... and an autonomous aerial vehicle plays some role in the delivery from the warehouse ... to your front door."

Topcu and Willcox both said the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the demand for deliveries. Topcu said the pandemic has highlighted the need for supply chains that are resilient against systemic disruptions and major shifts in demand.

"Autonomous, aerial cargo operations have the unique potential to enable the

necessary agility," Topcu said in an email.

Willcox said if this project is successful, it could potentially create more jobs requiring different skill sets.

"That means we've got to go all the way back to our K-12 education ... that we'll be working with and thinking about the skills in robotics, unmanned vehicles and the computing skills that we need to equip students with so that they are prepared for these new jobs," Willcox said.

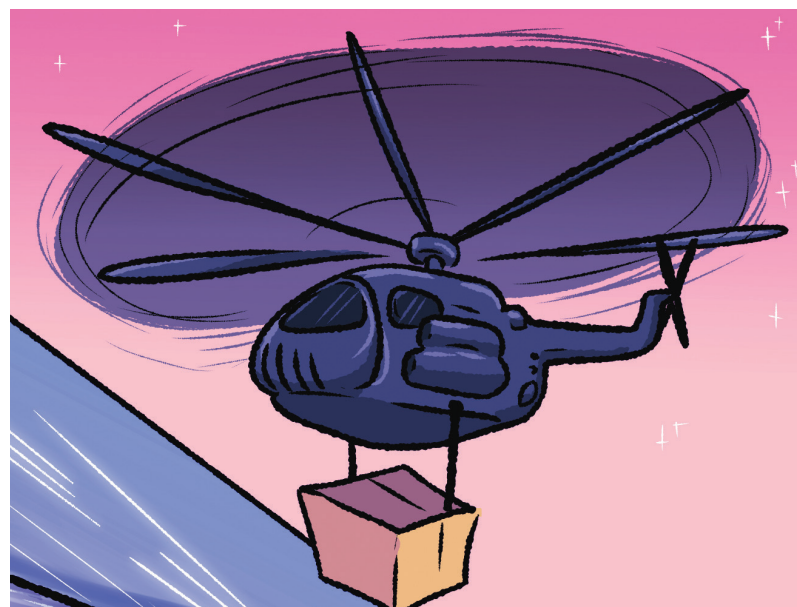
The second project, Full Airframe Sensing Technology, will focus on putting various sensors on the inside of hypersonic vehicles. Hypersonic vehicles are vehicles that can travel five times faster than the speed of sound, such as jets, spacecraft and missiles.

The sensors will analyze the vehicle's aerodynamic changes, the forces acting upon the vehicle and its deformations, such as when an aircraft's wings bend, aerospace engineering professor Jayant Sirohi said. Using the data the sensors collect, the researchers will create a more robust flight control algorithm, which will better protect and control the vehicle, Sirohi said.

Sirohi said that it felt good knowing that their project was selected for the NASA program.

"(NASA said) they really liked it because it's (a) completely out-of-the-box approach (to) a new idea," Sirohi said. "So that made us feel even better that we are really advancing the state of the art."

The other three teams are made up of students and faculty from



ROCKY HIGINE / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

Pennsylvania State University, the University of California-San Diego and Purdue University, NASA announced on Jan. 8.

Sirohi said the team will start the first set of experiments soon and will use machine learning to analyze the relationship between the deformation of the vehicle and the force applied onto it using a 40% scale model of a hypersonic vehicle.

Marc Eitner, an aerospace engineering graduate student, said this project could potentially be utilized with other high-speed vehicles in the future.

"It is not even clear whether or not this is mathematically possible to get to the outcome that we hope," Eitner said. "Because of this novelty, many people are excited about how this turns out."



JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

President Jay Hartzell announced the University is planning commencement ceremonies for the class of 2020 on Sept. 17 and the class of 2021 on May 22 at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium.

## GRADS

CONTINUES FROM PAGE 2

campus, in Austin and around the state.

Harrison said the normal individual college ceremonies will not be held in May because of limitations on venue capacities. She said each school will have a moment of "recognition" for graduates with their names called to "cross the stage" virtually or in person. Harrison said the recognitions will be spread out over multiple days to avoid large gatherings and will be live-streamed.

Ben Montero, an alumnus who graduated in 2020, said he

probably won't come back to Austin for the ceremony.

Montero, now a special education teacher in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, said figuring out the logistics of coming back for a ceremony doesn't seem worth it.

"I felt like I got my closure post-graduation, even though it was virtual, but I kind of came to terms that it was virtual as well," Montero said. "I really wish I could have had the privilege of having that commencement and being in front of (the UT Tower), but I think 2020, and a little bit of 2021, has shown us that nothing in life is guaranteed."

## STUDENT LIFE

# Students question COVID-19 vaccine, still plan to receive dose

*Different communities may be skeptical over COVID-19 vaccine due to past medical malpractices. Experts are confident in the vaccine's safety as it rolls out in the US.*

By Jenny Errico  
@errico\_jenny

**P**J Chukwurah couldn't look away from his phone screen, and his eyes were glued to his results: he was positive for COVID-19.

"I was dying. I had chest pain, coughing and (I) continuously sweat. I couldn't sleep," business management junior Chukwurah said. "It's definitely a bad experience, and I wouldn't wish it upon anyone."

Chukwurah felt hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccine until he contracted the virus and experienced its symptoms.

The speedy approval of the COVID-19 vaccine by the Food and Drug Administration made Chukwurah and his friends skeptical of its safety. Vaccines usually follow a 10-15 year timeline of development and approval, but because of existing research and international collaboration, the COVID-19 vaccine was approved in only a year.

Citing the Tuskegee experiment, beginning in 1932, where 600 Black participants were unknowingly injected with syphilis, Chukwurah said past medical malpractice toward Black people made him hesitant to get the vaccine.

"(My friends and I) want to see people of a higher (social) status (get the vaccine) first so we can see it's safe," Chukwurah said. "My roommate said he wants to see Obama take it before he does."

Dr. Steve Abrams, a pediatrics professor at Dell Medical School, said Chukwurah isn't alone in his concern, and certain

demographics are wary of the COVID-19 vaccine due to medical research conducted improperly in the past.

But Abrams and his colleagues said the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for all groups, including those disproportionately affected by the virus.

Computer science sophomore Arianna Shriftman is Jewish, and although she is not personally concerned about the vaccine, she said she understands why some in the Jewish community may have doubts.

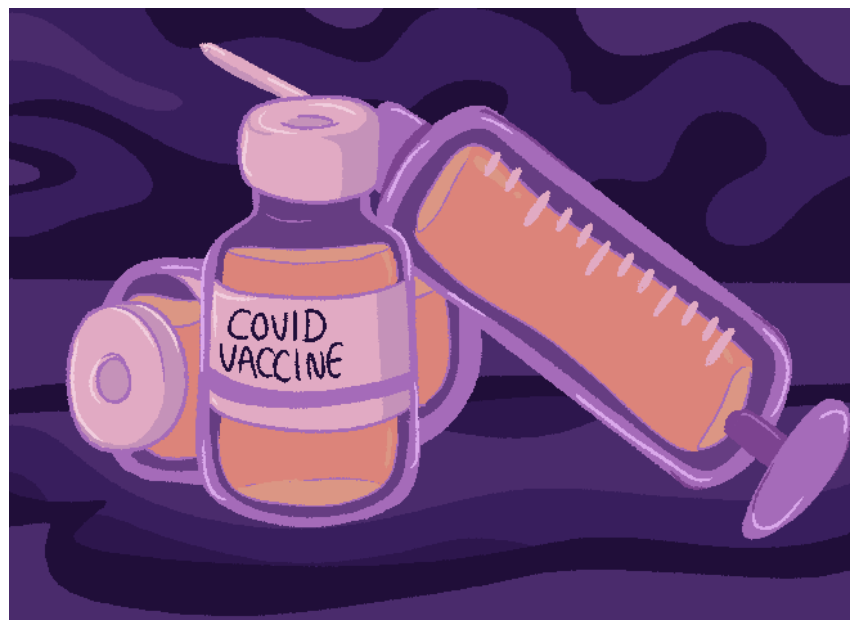
When measles broke out across the U.S. in 2019, a magazine called "The Vaccine Safety Handbook" was passed around Orthodox Jewish communities in New York by rabbis. The guide included statements about how the measles vaccine contained "monkey, rat and pig DNA," which isn't conducive to the kosher diet, according to The New York Times.

"When people in power reject science, I understand why the average person may be skeptical," Shriftman said. "If a rabbi isn't going to approve a vaccine or promote it, why would the community line up to get it? We put our faith in our leaders."

Shriftman said her grandmother was originally skeptical of the COVID-19 vaccine due to experiments conducted on Jewish prisoners during the Holocaust. In German concentration camps, inmates were tested for antibodies against contagious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. A minimum of 15,754 documented victims between 1942-1945 were subjected to these experiments.

Shriftman said her grandmother expressed these apprehensions in December but has since received the first dose of the vaccine.

"I plan on getting vaccinated," Shriftman said. "I'm glad more and more people are open to receiving it, because I



ROCKY HIGINE / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

think it's the only shred of hope we have to stop the spread of COVID-19."

Olga Briceño, an international relations and global studies sophomore, said she also plans on receiving the COVID-19 vaccine despite her parents' beliefs.

Briceño said her mother grew up in a rural town in Venezuela where people were used to treating themselves when sick. Doctors and hospitals were obsolete and vaccines were unheard of.

"Any time a family member is sick, soup is the medicine," Briceño said. "No hospitals, no prescriptions, no doctor — just soup and rest."

Briceño said her mother didn't believe vaccines were effective, and Briceño hadn't been vaccinated until she attended UT in 2019.

"She questions every vaccine, even ones that have been around for a while," Briceño said. "(My mother) says, 'We don't know the effects,' or 'Who knows what they put in it.' She's very superstitious."

Although Chukwurah, Shriftman and Briceño understand vaccine concerns, they said they are not against vaccines and plan on receiving the COVID-19 vaccine when they are eligible.

"I understand there are a lot of unknowns with the vaccine," Chukwurah said. "But this pandemic is not a joke. We have roles in our community to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, and as we do our role in receiving the vaccine, we need to have faith the government is doing their role in protecting us."

## FEATURE

# Kerbey Lane cafe waitress spreads joy through personal caricatures drawn on receipts

By Morgan-Taylor Thomas  
@mtthomas\_

With a stack of pancakes and design sketches sitting on the restaurant table, Harri Horsley was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of their receipt. On the back, their waitress had drawn a smiling caricature of them. The resemblance was uncanny.

"She drew my big locs in my hair and the beret my mom gave me," said Horsley, a theatrical design graduate student. "It was nice for a person to see me. So often we're caught up in ourselves ... so it was nice to do, especially in times like this."

What started out as a way to pass time during her slow shifts serving tables at various restaurants across Austin quickly turned into a way for Wanwisa "Aye" Sanguanrueang to show her personality and connect with customers.

"(Drawing caricatures) really changed my serving life from being more quiet to getting to laugh at the table," Sanguanrueang said. "It's like my theme to make my guests laugh and (be) happy before they go home."

After moving away from Thailand in 2007, Sanguanrueang finally landed in Austin in 2015 and applied to work at Kerbey Lane Cafe on Guadalupe Street that December.

Samuel Garcia has been Sanguanrueang's coworker at Kerbey Lane Cafe since 2017, and he said he knows when Sanguanrueang is doing her thing when he hears echoes of joy booming through the dining room.

"She has this very distinctive laugh you can hear from the other side of the restaurant," Garcia said.

"Whenever you hear it, you just want to be near her to see what the joke is."

Garcia said he asked Sanguanrueang to draw caricatures of his mom and aunt for Christmas. He said she took the time to fill in any empty white space with sketches of their favorite interests and hobbies.

After spending time with her long-distance boyfriend in Austin every month, psychology junior Sarah Jarrett said the couple goes to Kerbey Lane Cafe for a breakfast of pancakes and queso before saying their goodbyes. When Jarrett saw the caricatures on the back of

their receipt one Sunday morning, she said she was overwhelmed with gratitude.

"At the time, I didn't have any physical pictures of (us) ... because I was waiting until I got paid so I could develop more pictures for my bulletin board," Jarrett said. "It's the first picture I ever put on my bulletin of us."

Kerbey Lane Cafe managing partner Jon Haben said the unique bond between the UT community and the restaurant's location on Guadalupe Street began over 20 years ago when the cafe opened. He said Sanguan-

rueang's caricatures and caring demeanor only strengthen that bond.

"If you were to come into (Kerbey Lane Cafe), you could see she has (drawn) pictures of the whole team on the chalkboard," Haben said. "She's the visible heart and soul of the team."

Haben said the staff gets a kick out of watching Sanguanrueang regularly glance around the corner to get a mental picture of the customers at her table before returning with receipts. Because she does so much behind the scenes, he said no one minds covering for her for

a few minutes while she makes the magic happen.

Without the support of her coworkers, Sanguanrueang said she wouldn't have had the courage to start drawing personalized caricatures on the back of customer receipts. She said she hopes to continue to brighten people's days and learn new drawing skills.

"Right now, I can do the face but (not) the body and the fingers," Sanguanrueang said. "I want my guests to have the fingers, but nobody has fingers!"



KRISTEN HAHN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

Aye Sanguanrueang posing with a personalized caricature at Kerbey Lane Cafe on Jan. 27, 2021. Sanguanrueang often draws portraits of her guests while she is waiting tables at the Kerbey Lane Cafe on Guadalupe Street.





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### STUDENT LIFE

# MatchUT reunites old friends, fosters new connections

By Zoe Tzanis  
@ztzanis

When the email from MatchUT arrived in her inbox, Abigail Castro felt hesitant.

The name inside could be anyone, she said. This could end up being incredibly embarrassing or it could change her life.

"I was really nervous," Castro said. "I didn't know if it was gonna be someone I previously talked to. And what if they matched me with someone I ghosted?"

Castro, a kinesiology senior, said she initially had reservations about MatchUT. When she finally connected with her match, she realized it was a previous kinesiology classmate whom she remembered but had been too anxious to talk to.

"Initially, I was so surprised because I had a huge crush on him while we had that class together," Castro said. "I thought, wow, there's no way."

This past December, alumnus Leo Tomescu and friends launched MatchUT to foster community and connection throughout the UT community. Almost 7,680 students participated, gathering around 20% of the undergraduate student body.

The group of friends originally created the matching project at the University of Southern California for fun, but after the success of the first project, they decided to continue the project at other universities. The program used a complex algorithm to match participants to either prospective platonic or romantic partners based on survey results.

To participants, the

survey resembled a BuzzFeed quiz. Below the surface, Tomescu said the system used psychology to sort users into personality groups similar to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

When participants submitted social media handles, he said the program created social graphs to understand UT's social network. This allowed the system to create more accurate profiles and matches.

After reaching out to her match on Twitter, Castro said they hit it off immediately. She said he introduced her to new movies, helped her choose classes for the next semester and even helped her work on an application for graduate school. It's been a month since their initial matching, and they still talk every day.

Because Castro's match lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, she said romance isn't currently an option, but she is glad to have found a friend.

When communication and leadership junior Briana Kallenbach filled out the MatchUT platonic survey, she said "there were absolutely no expectations."

Then MatchUT matched her with one of her first

friends at UT whom she hadn't spoken to in over a year.

"We clicked really well when we first became friends," Kallenbach said. "It makes a lot of sense that we ended up getting paired together."

Now the two communicate regularly on Twitter and TikTok, sending each other endless memes and videos. They have tentative plans to meet up sometime during the semester.

For Tomescu, bringing this program to UT was extremely rewarding.

"I've always enjoyed being able to take a more active role in whatever community I'm a part of, which, for the past four years, has been UT," Tomescu said. "I still want to find ways to have an impact and give back in any way that I can."

Tomescu said MatchUT fosters better connections than other online relationship platforms such as Tinder or Bumble because the participants share the experience of being UT students.

"No matter how different UT students are, where we come from, what beliefs we hold, we all have this thing in common — that we go to UT," Tomescu said.



SYLVIA-ASUNCION-CRABB / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

# Dynamic guard duo propels Longhorns to No. 5 ranking

Senior guard Matt Coleman and junior guard Courtney Ramey lead Longhorns in backcourt

By Matthew Boncosky  
@mboncosky

**I**n basketball, confident guard play is essential to the success of the team. Serving as the primary ball handlers tasked with directing the offense and executing the game plan, it's crucial for the point and shooting guard to be on the same page at all times.

Texas never has to worry about two of its guards, junior Courtney Ramey and senior Matt Coleman, being on the same page.

The Longhorns have sprinted out to an 11-3 record and a top-five national ranking thanks in part to the strong bond that has developed between Coleman and Ramey over their three years playing together. Despite originating from different parts of the country, Coleman from Virginia and Ramey from Missouri, the two have built a strong rapport with one another that shines through in their seamless play on the court.

"He's a great player," Coleman said about Ramey. "He's come a long way, his attitude is great and he's a competitor."

When it came time for Ramey to decide where to play college ball, conversations with then-freshman Coleman were the deciding factor in his choice to commit to Texas, Ramey said.

"He was the reason I came to Texas," Ramey said. "I talked to him, and he allowed me to be his backcourt mate. He could have been like, 'No, I want to run the show by myself,' but he allowed me to play alongside him, so I appreciate him for that."

Both Coleman and Ramey were thrust into starting roles in their freshman seasons. Since they joined forces on the Forty Acres, the pair has led the Longhorns to 51 wins, but it's the low points in their careers that have brought the two closer together.

On Jan. 13, with 45 seconds left in the game against No. 15 Texas Tech and a two-point lead in hand, Ramey tried inbounding the ball. But the pass was intercepted and led to an easy, game-tying score. The Red Raiders went on to hand Texas its first conference loss of the season in a gut-wrenching fashion.

Ramey was visibly frustrated after the play and took responsibility for the mistake after the game.

"Let's start with me," Ramey said in the postgame presser. "I'll take the blame for tonight."

When Coleman's media availability was over, he decided to stick around for Ramey's chat with the media rather than move on with the rest of his night. As Ramey faced the music for his performance in the tough loss, Coleman stood on guard



JACK MEYER / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

Senior guard Matt Coleman and junior guard Courtney Ramey both focus on the opponent during a game on Nov. 12, 2019 against California Baptist. The dynamic guard duo has stuck together through the multiple high points and the select low points of the No. 5-ranked Longhorns' season.

just over his shoulder in support of the younger protégé.

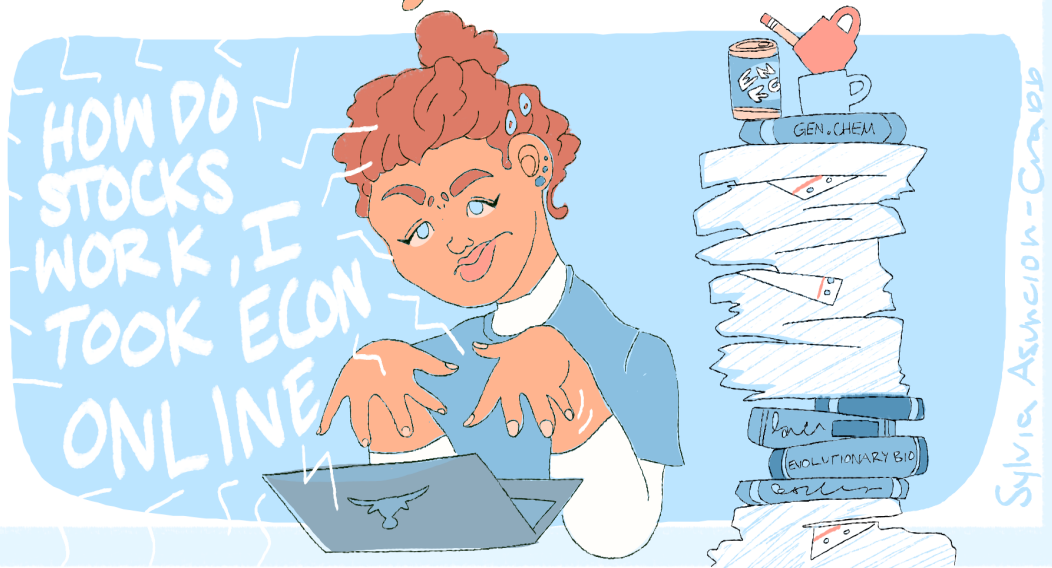
"I'll do the same for him," Ramey said in reference to his teammate's support. "It just shows that we're connected and we're close."

Head coach Shaka Smart acknowledged what's clear to any outside observer about how close his two players are. They put a lot of effort into connecting with the team and with each other, Smart said.

"You put the ball in those guys' hands because those guys have made so many good plays," Smart said. "I wouldn't trade those guys for anyone."

# TEXAN COMICS

When the semester's in swing but it's Historical Wednesday no. 4 o' the month



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## Breakthrough



Destiny A.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

# Texas women's basketball battles injuries, Covid-19

By Taylor Hawthorne  
@taylorhawth

Vic Schaefer took over the Texas women's basketball program on April 5 in the midst of a global pandemic. At the halfway point of his inaugural season, the combination of an entirely new coaching staff with limited preseason practice is rearing its ugly head.

The Longhorns breezed through the opening portion of their schedule, starting on an 8-1 run and scoring over 100 points in two games. Despite the fiery start, an eye-opening 92-58 loss to West Virginia and other close losses exposed the disconnect between Schaefer and his young team. Sophomore guard Celeste Taylor said in a Jan. 14 teleconference the team is still getting familiar with Schaefer's style of play.

"It's a new system for all of us, although we've been working on it for a long time, we gotta get it to click," Taylor said. "We got to work harder at the things we aren't good at ... just the little things that we need to do better as a team."

Two months into the season, the Longhorns have yet to practice with all 12 players at one time, be it from injuries or COVID-19.

"If y'all could come to my practices, it is somebody lit-

erally every day that is out of practice. It is like that every week," Schaefer said. "If a kid walks in and sneezes wrong, they immediately go and have COVID testing and they're out for the day. That is a miserable way to live, much less a miserable way for someone to coach."

Injuries have defined the first half of Texas's season. Taylor missed three-straight games in late December with a right ankle injury. Junior forward Audrey Warren has missed six of the past eight games due to concussion proto-

cols. Freshman forward DeYona Gaston was lost for the year with a season-ending shin surgery.

COVID-19 has also put a monkey wrench in this season countless times. The week of Jan. 10, Texas had two separate games postponed before finalizing Kansas as an opponent for Jan. 14. Postponed games and opponent changes have forced the team to stay on its toes, junior forward Charli Collier said.

"With COVID, you have to adjust on the fly," Collier said. "This whole year has been cra-

zy, but I feel like it's a learning experience for everybody, and it's teaching teams to just be ready for whatever happens."

Schaefer credits some of the instability on the court to an inexperienced team. Seven of the Longhorns' 12 players are new to Texas, and the majority are underclassmen. The youth at times is obvious, Schaefer said in a Jan. 22 teleconference.

"We have depth issues. We're a very young team," Schaefer said. "Our depth is freshman, and it will be that way the rest

of the season. We've got to be smart."

Despite the problems infecting this season, the progression of the team sparks optimism in the coaching staff, Schaefer said.

"I think this is the evolution and the process of getting a new team," Schaefer said. "By no means do I think we are over the hump now, but they've proven to themselves that if they'll do what we're asking them to do, they're good enough."



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Texas head coach Vic Schaefer walks to the Longhorns' bench before a game against Iowa State on Jan. 23. Schaefer has his Texas team sitting at an 11-4 record despite dealing with numerous injuries and COVID-19 postponements.