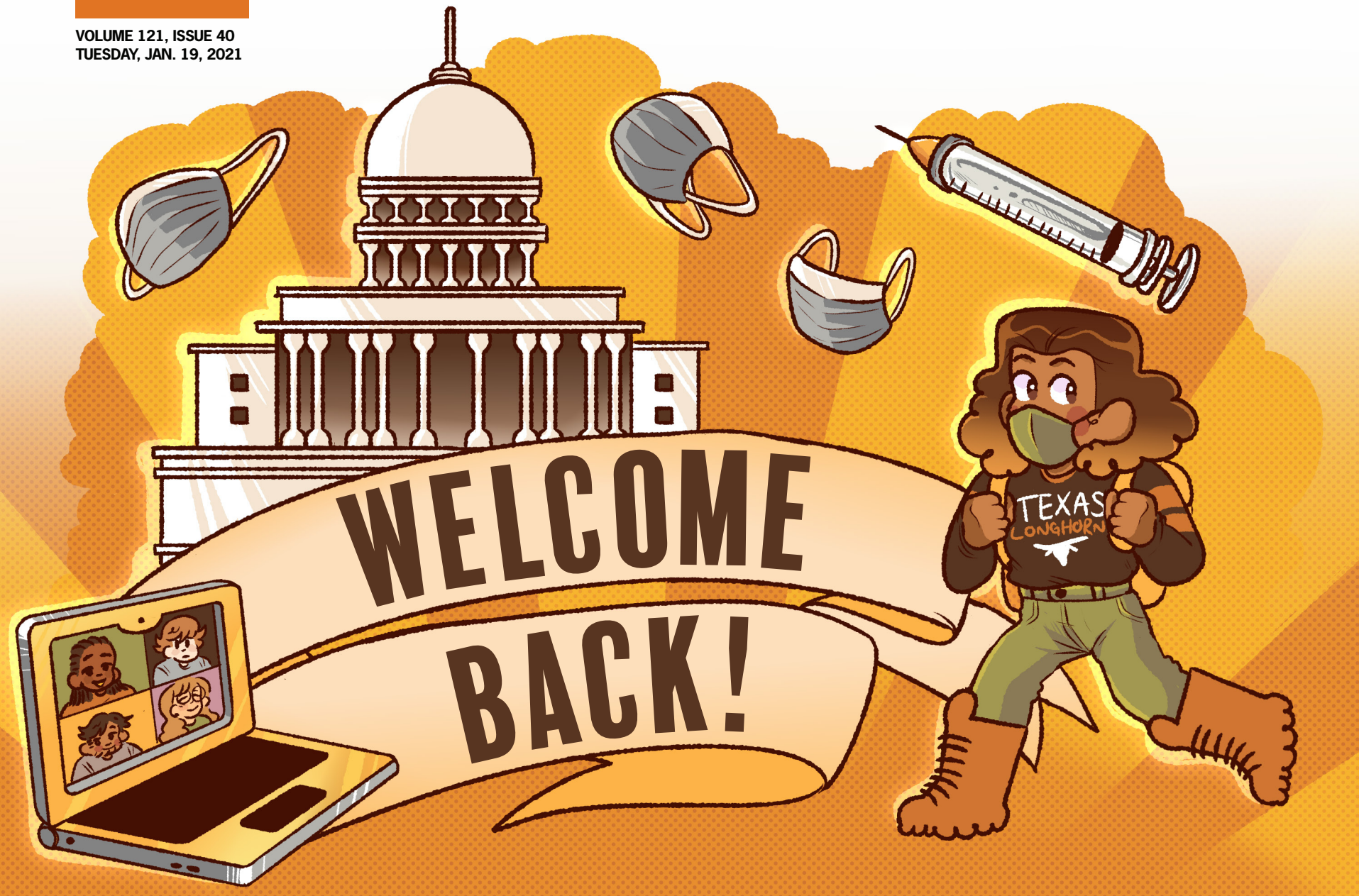


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Opinion

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CAMPUS

What's open on campus this spring?

By Laurie Grobe
@grobe_lauren

Resources including Student Emergency Services, Sure Walk and locations in the Texas Union will be available to students for the spring semester, following policies from the fall.

UT Outpost

UT Outpost reopened for students on Jan. 5 and will be available throughout the spring and into the summer. Sara Kennedy, director of strategic and executive

communications for the Office of the Dean of Students, said students can order food online and pick it up or work one-on-one with staff to get professional clothes.

"They are currently working on a contactless pickup method and really trying to make it as safe as possible for students as well as the student workers and staff who work at the Outpost itself," Kennedy said.

Kennedy said students can pick up 20 pounds of food twice a month as opposed to once a month in previous semesters.

Student Emergency Fund

The Student Emergency Fund is available to all students and can be used on necessities such as food, rent and utilities. Kennedy said the Student Emergency Services office is open and available for walk-ins if students are in need of private meetings regarding support resources.

Sure Walk

Blanca Gamez, Parking and Transportation Services associate director, said Sure Walk opened for service on Jan. 15. Gamez said both

walks and rides are socially distanced, and the service will be emphasizing walks over car rides.

Gamez said car rides have limited capacity due to social distancing guidelines and require face coverings. All vehicles are sanitized between rides.

UT Night Rides is also an option for UT Community members who need a safe ride home, Gamez said.

The Texas Union

The Union is currently closed due to maintenance and is scheduled to reopen at the end of January, said David Anthony, director of business services for University Unions. Once open, Anthony said the Union will return to its hours from the fall semester: 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturday and 12 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday.

Anthony said the Union Starbucks will reopen once maintenance is completed by the end of the month, and the Starbucks in the William C. Powers, Jr. Student Activity Center will open Jan. 19. Both locations will serve Starbucks coffee and an expanded grab-and-go food menu. Students will be able to use Dine In Dollars at both locations.

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Jan. 19

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CITY

School starts amid COVID-19 surge

As UT students return for the spring, COVID-19 cases are on the rise in Austin.

By Andrew Zhang
@andrewczhang

Cam p u s partially opened Tuesday for the start of a second semester during the COVID-19 pandemic as Austin faces a surge of cases and hospitalizations.

Austin has entered Stage 5 of coronavirus guidelines, the highest level of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines recommend citizens avoid non-essential dining and shopping as well as gatherings outside of the household. Austin officials are urging extreme caution citywide as Austin ICUs inch closer to reaching capacity.

The UT COVID-19 Consortium estimates 350 to 1,000 students could arrive on campus with COVID-19 this semester, assuming that 30,000 students will be in Austin and 21,000 come from out of town, said Christine Sinatra, communications director for the College of Natural Sciences.

In the fall, the consortium

estimated 82 to 183 students would arrive on campus with COVID-19. Sinatra said the fall estimate was done for 22,000 students, with 10,000 arriving from out of town.

The University moved hybrid classes online for all of January and is requiring students living in residence halls to be tested in an effort to prevent a spike of early cases, which could lead to campus closure.

“The higher projected rates make it even more important that students and all members of the UT community engage in safe behaviors at this critical time,” University spokesperson J.B. Bird said in an email.

The changes to campus operations were also done to minimize possible impact on campus and regional public health resources, Bird said.

“I think there’s a lot of concern about how things might go,” said Art

Markman, head of the academic working group for COVID-19 planning. “If things don’t improve, then I do think we will likely be in a more restricted state, primarily as a way to minimize the number of people who have to be in Austin.”

Markman said predicting if and when a closure of campus will occur is difficult because it is unclear how much of the current surge is a result

“

We’re in the midst of an uptick in cases around the state, so I think the situation is much more dynamic right now than it was in the fall.”

ART MARKMAN

HEAD OF ACADEMIC WORKING GROUP FOR COVID-19 PLANNING

of holiday gatherings. He said the disease curve could be clarified after the semester starts because hybrid classes were moved temporarily online.

“The state of the pandemic is really much different now than it was when we were opening in the fall,” Markman said. “We’re in the midst of an uptick in cases around the state, so I think the situation is much more dynamic right now than it was in the fall.”

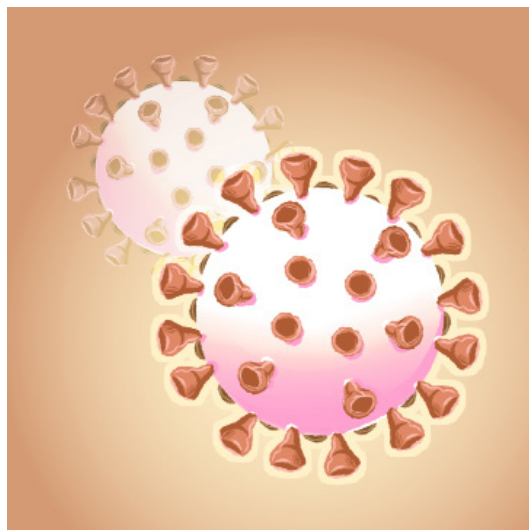
Despite the arrival of

a vaccine, the University generally plans to operate under the assumption that a sufficient level of UT’s population will not be vaccinated this semester, Markman said.

At the time of publication, the consortium has a median projection that Austin will reach 200 COVID-19 ICU patients — the maximum number of hospital beds Austin has for COVID-19 patients — on Feb. 1. The consortium previously estimated Austin would run out of

beds on Jan. 14 and Jan. 21, but the limit has not yet been reached.

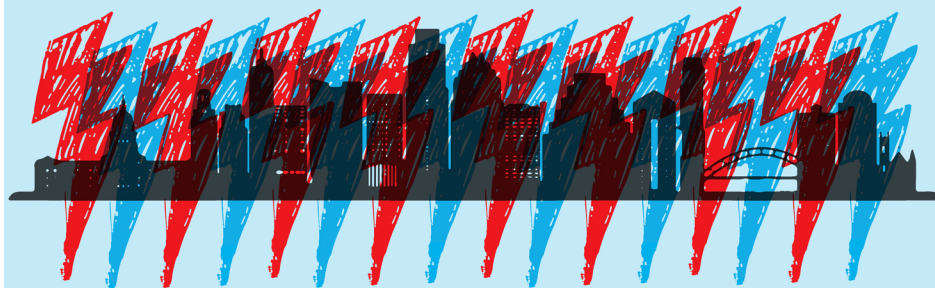
“As hospitals become more overcrowded and the ICU space dwindles to zero, that’s when we talk about things like crisis standards of care — having to triage who gets that treatment and who doesn’t ... who is survivable and who is not,” Mark Escott, interim medical director and health authority for Austin-Travis County, said in a media briefing Wednesday.



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COLUMN

Expand pass/fail options

UT administration must increase the number of classes students can pass/fail in the spring.

By Julia Zaksek
Columnist

As the second semester of online learning came to a close, student advocates pushed for more lenient grading policies amid the ever-rising unemployment rates, reports of student burnout and the ongoing — and worsening — COVID-19 pandemic.

The original legislation would allow students to pass/fail an unlimited number of classes, including classes that count toward degree requirements, and Q-drop classes without adding to their six Q-drop limit. The legislation was approved by the UT Student Government, the Senate of College Councils and the UT Faculty Council, the board that represents UT faculty interests.

However, UT President Jay Hartzell and Daniel Jaffe, interim

executive vice president and provost, did not approve the original legislation and instead passed an amended version of the policy, which only allows students to pass/fail three total classes from the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters.

Three pass/fail options is not sufficient for students trying to complete virtual classes during a pandemic with widespread consequences. UT administration needs to expand pass/fail options and make it a priority to listen to students.

Biology sophomore Caroline Seyer and government sophomore Leland Murphy, both of whom are Student Government college representatives, drafted the legislation.

“I think the University’s reasoning for not doing pass/fail in the fall was that we’d been through a semester of this before, but the reality is we haven’t figured it out,” Murphy said. “That safety net of pass/fail really will help students who are facing the worst of extenuating circumstances.”

SG and the Senate argued it was clear from the fall 2020 midsemester survey and student testimonies that adding more pass/fail options was essential not only for students’ academic success, but also their physical and mental health.

“Something is better than nothing, but I was pretty frustrated with President Hartzell and the other admin who went against the Faculty Council because when we asked Hartzell about pass/fail (during the Senate of College Councils’ COVID-19 town hall), he said it was a faculty-governance issue, and he would



HELEN BROWN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

follow the Faculty Council,” Murphy said.

Student advocates persuaded the Faculty Council that unlimited pass/fail would best serve students’ needs. Nonetheless, Hartzell only approved a three-option pass/fail policy, which does not fully support students.

“I don’t think that many of (the members of the Faculty Council) expected that they were going to easily vote to support the recommendation that students came up with,” said J.B. Bird, director of media relations and newsroom for University Communications. “But the explanations were very compelling.”

The president’s refusal to implement the proposed policy,

even after faculty approved it, is frustrating.

“It honestly felt kind of authoritarian,” Murphy said. “What’s the point of having this faculty body when you can just go against their decisions? Why make the policy more selective when so many students are still suffering?”

The administration did not adequately listen to students or faculty, despite the evidence students presented.

“We heard, ‘We’re going to hear the voice of the students,’ and they still made a different decision,” Seyer said.

However, the efforts made by student advocates and the professors who supported them did promote change.

“This experience showed

legislative student organizations that if you push really hard, something will happen,” said Isaac James, vice president of the Senate of College Councils and Plan II and government junior. “Obviously it wasn’t the change we wanted, but it’s so important to have student voices in those rooms.”

As we continue to deal with the fallout of COVID-19 and the inherent challenges of virtual learning, UT administration needs to listen to the voices of its students more than ever. Students need unlimited pass/fail options as we continue to adjust to a fully online university.

Zaksek is a Plan II and women’s and gender studies junior from Allen, Texas.

GALLERY



CHARLIE HYMAN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

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UNIVERSITY

Students, professors talk moving online until February

By Skye Seipp
@seippetc

Undergraduate hybrid classes — excluding pharmacy and nursing courses — were moved to an online-only format through January, Daniel Jaffe, UT interim executive vice president and provost, announced to students and faculty Jan. 8.

In-person classes are not required to go online, but Jaffe asked faculty members to consider doing the same, according to the announcement.

Architecture professor Lawrence Speck, who has a hybrid class this spring, said he was initially worried because he does not believe classes with an in-person component can be transferred to Zoom and be of

the same quality. However, he said because of the way his class is scheduled, the changes will only affect one day of his class.

“I understand the University administration is under a lot of pressing forces from a lot of different constituencies,” Speck said in an email. “It would have been nice to know of this change earlier, but it is not going to affect my classes negatively.”

Abimbola Adelakun, assistant professor of African and African diaspora studies, said the changes aren’t much of an issue since they will only last through January.

“For now, all we have to do is just survive January and see what unfolds in the next couple of months,” Adelakun said.

Business freshman Kirsten Richards said she is taking her

first on-campus college course this semester: a hybrid swimming class. Richards said while she was excited to interact with people in an in-person class, the news of her class going online for the first two weeks was not a surprise.

“Nothing really shocks me at this point,” Richards said. “I just don’t know what’s going to happen this semester. Are they just going to give up on it or what?”

Kathleen Harrison, communications manager for the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, said the University is continuously monitoring public health conditions, and the decision was made after discussions between campus leaders and public health experts.

“As the health care

resources and ICU availability became limited, the University began discussions and made the decision based on the latest information available in order to minimize additional strain,” Harrison said.

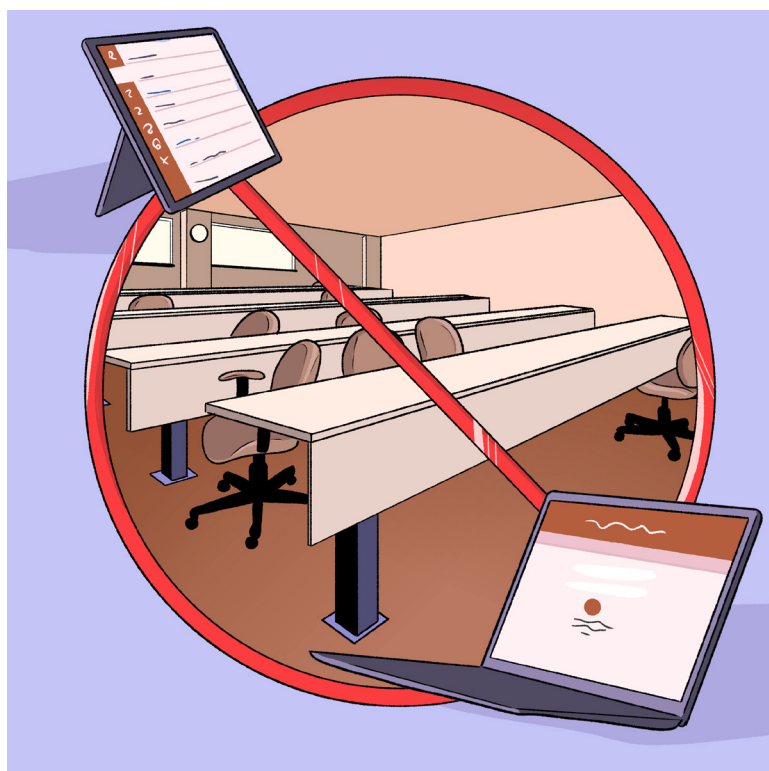
Harrison said pharmacy and nursing hybrid classes will remain partially in person because there is more “flexibility” required for labs.

“This approach will help allow for a delayed return of students to the Austin area as much as possible and ensure capacity for testing and contact tracing to occur without adding any additional strain to health care workers and resources,” Harrison said in an email.

Austin is currently in Stage 5 of its COVID-19 risk-based guidelines, and new cases have

pushed intensive care units to near capacity, leading to the opening of an alternate care site at the Austin Convention Center on Jan. 12, according to the Austin American-Statesman. There are 6,279 active COVID-19 cases and 591 people hospitalized in Travis County as of Jan. 18, according to the Austin-Travis County COVID-19 dashboard.

In response to the news, Capital Metro suspended its UT Shuttle service through Feb. 1, according to an announcement on its website. UT is also requiring returning dorm residents to be tested for COVID-19 within four days of arriving on campus, according to previous reporting by The Daily Texan.



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COVID-19

UT continues COVID-19 vaccine distribution

By Kevin Vu
@Kevin_Kek

UT released its first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to members of the UT community last month and will continue the effort to vaccinate the UT population as new groups become eligible.

Last month, the University received 2,925 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to distribute to front-line health care workers. The University distributed all first round doses in December and is now working to distribute the second round of doses to 1A healthcare workers, said Jonathan Robb, director of the UT Office of Emergency Preparedness.

The 1A group includes health care workers, long-term care staff and EMS providers, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services website. The 1B group, which includes people 65 and older or 16 and older with underlying health conditions, will be the next group to receive vaccines, Robb said.

"We developed a great plan in collaboration between everybody," Robb said. "Now we're getting close to the end of those second round doses,

and are in a position that as soon as we get more allocation we can effectively move to that 1B population."

Robb said the University must wait for the state to approve giving out doses to more populations. The University plans to build a sufficient supply of vaccines for those eligible in the 1B group next, Robb said.

“

I'm doing my part not only to protect myself, but to protect my community.”

TERRANCE HINES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF
MEDICAL OFFICER, UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SERVICES

Norman Nguyen, a pharmacy graduate student, said he received his first dose of the Pfizer vaccine on Dec. 17. Nguyen said he used the University Health Services online portal to schedule an appointment.

"There were a bunch of time slots available," Nguyen said. "It was actually a lot more

open than I was expecting."

Although Nguyen said he felt sore after receiving the vaccine, he said his soreness was better by the third day. Nguyen said when he received his second dose on Jan. 7, his symptoms included fatigue, a slight fever and chills.

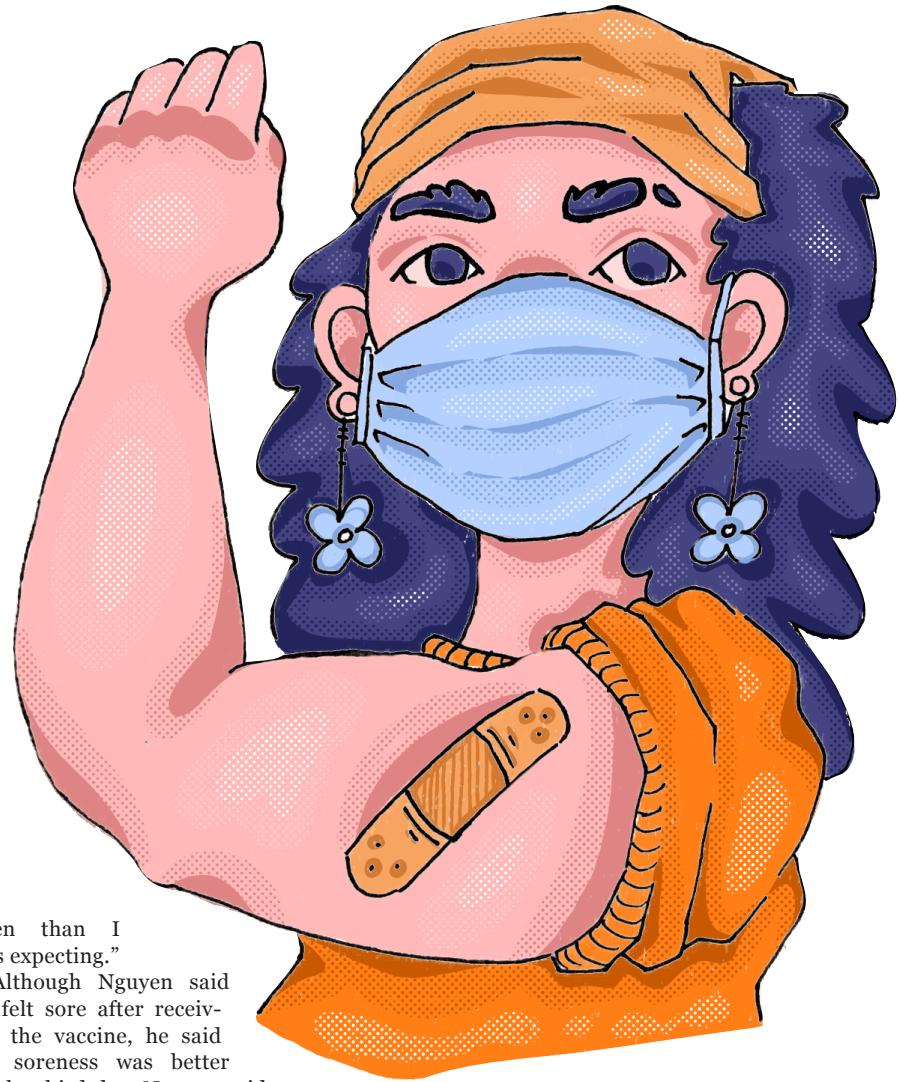
"Once I started getting those chills and really feeling the fatigue, I was like, 'Okay, I need to sleep this off,'" Nguyen said. "I went to bed, put on some cold clothes, slept it off for the next eight hours and woke up the next morning ... still just a slight fever because your body's reacting to the vaccine,

making those proteins and creating those antibodies."

Terrance Hines, the executive director and chief medical officer for University Health Services, who also received the vaccine, said side effects occur with all types of vaccines, whether COVID-19 or influenza.

"The way that vaccines work really is by stimulating the

immune system to create a response, in this case to create antibodies to the spikes," Hines said. "I continue to believe strongly in the vaccine. Being uncomfortable for several hours was well worth it knowing in the end that I'm doing my part not only to protect myself, but to protect my community."



SYLVIA ASCUNSION-CRABB / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

STUDENT LIFE

Cosplay on pause during COVID-19

Cosplayers seek creative outlet and community through social media after convention cancellations.

By Morgan-Taylor Thomas
@mtthomas_

As she ran through the crowd, taking pictures with life-size versions of her favorite fictional characters, wide-eyed, 12-year-old Dali Morales knew she had found a home within the cosplay community.

"It was something my older siblings introduced me to," advertising senior Morales said. "But the biggest reason I started doing it was that it was something I could bond over with other nerds and people in the fandom and community."

Since then, Morales said she has traveled all over Texas and visited over 30 conventions.

In light of COVID-19, many cosplay conventions have been canceled, postponed or moved to a virtual setting. These conventions typically last three days, and attract people from around the world. Still, avid fans are finding ways to keep the UT cosplay community alive.

Erik Ballesteros, an award-winning cosplayer and UT alumnus, said cosplay is a celebration of characters and media that is expressed by creating and wearing costumes.

"When you play a game or watch a show, you sit there and ponder, 'Man, it'd be really cool to see that in real life,'" Ballesteros said. "But

a lot of us cosplayers are dreamers. We like to see a lot of this stuff that's just very crazy and zany, and these films actually come out into reality."

Even though she's new to the cosplay community, chemistry sophomore Jazmin Canton said she has stayed connected by watching other cosplayers on TikTok and YouTube to keep her spirits high.

"Sometimes people will post tutorials and stuff on how they make their own (costumes) even though there's not really conventions still going on," Canton said. "People still do it because that's what they love to do."

Canton said cosplay has given her and others a space to be themselves. When it's safe, she said she hopes to go to more in-person conventions and add her own flare to her cosplays.

"People cosplay the same character, but sometimes they'll put their own twist on it," Canton said. "Sometimes they'll give them longer hair or even change the gender of the character completely, so it's just really cool to see what everyone does."

Unsure of when the next in-person convention will be, Ballesteros said the community is struggling because of a lack of motivation, time and money to create cosplay costumes.

"A lot of people in the cosplay community have jobs all over the place," Ballesteros said. "You have some engineers, waiters and waitresses ... and since the pandemic is affecting pretty much everybody, you have a much tighter financial restriction. Cosplay, especially nowadays, is not a cheap hobby to get into."

For pre-made costumes, Morales said the average price range is from \$100-\$200. However, some conventions have started adding a contest category called "closet cosplay," encouraging people to modify things from their closets.

"Giving people a space to feel cute and feel pretty like cartoon



COPYRIGHT DALI MORALES, AND REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION
Dali Morales poses as anime character Gakupo from "Vocaloid" at the Austin anime convention IKKiCON in 2018.

characters ... I think is a really important part of it," Morales said.

In the future, Morales said she'll be ready with new costumes and a lot of hope.

"I've had so many ideas and plans (for costumes) that I want to make," Morales said. "Hopefully (the pandemic) will end soon so we can wear our silly costumes again."

STUDENT LIFE

Students express themselves through nail care

By Morgan-Taylor Thomas
@mtthomas_

Kendyl Clayton's text message alert chimes. Glancing at the screen, she sees her nail technician has responded to her latest bright-colored polish design idea in preparation for her biweekly appointment.

"Everyone's nail taste is definitely different, and it's kind of cool to

see the differences between yours and your friends," studio art junior Clayton said. "Nail art is really endless with what you can do, and it's a unique thing to do for yourself."

Nail care is an essential part of some UT students' beauty routines, who use nail art to express individuality and boost their confidence.

When people meet sociology junior Erin Whalen, she said they often comment on her nails,

and the remarks aren't always positive.

"I deal with a lot of negative comments from people about my nails being too long or too extra ... but I do it for me, not them," Whalen said.

Every three weeks, Whalen takes time for herself and drives to Bliss Nail Bar of Austin. She said she feels comfortable at her appointments because of safety measures such as masks, social distancing

and protective plastic barriers.

"I'll spend so much time right before I'm going to the nail appointment (thinking) about what color I'm going to get, and then sometimes when I get there and start looking at the colors, I change my mind and do the exact opposite of what I was thinking," Whalen said.

She said she often uses her mood, upcoming holidays or even outfits as inspiration for her nail

art. Without her nails, Whalen said she wouldn't feel complete or have a creative escape.

"It's definitely an outlet to express yourself," Whalen said. "Having my nails (look) beautiful just makes me feel better throughout the day."

When Clayton sits across from her nail technician, she places her hands underneath a plexiglass barrier. As an art student, she said she admires the technique and process of getting her nails done, especially when she requests abstract designs.

"I've really been into bright colors lately," Clayton said. "I'm also obsessed with butterflies so I'll get those sometimes, but every time I get my nails done, I like to have a whole different color scheme."

Design junior Caroline Blanton said she has been getting her nails done every month since her senior year of high school and always goes alone.

"The (salon) is a 20-minute walk from my apartment, (so) I listen to a podcast and just take time by myself," Blanton said. "I like having a designated time of two hours where I'm not thinking about school or anything else."

Although the salon follows COVID-19 guidelines, Blanton said it's a physically small space and she goes in the mornings to avoid afternoon crowds.

Blanton said she sticks to light or dark colors to offset her pale skin and even makes notes of her favorites.

"I found this really good brown color and I was like, 'This is life changing. I have to write this down,'" Blanton said. "A big thing for me is going with my skin tone because it looks weird if it clashes."

Although nails can be expensive, Blanton said it's a built-in cost to her monthly budget. For her, nails are more than just a creative space — they've become a part of her identity.

"It's just expressing who you are as a person," Blanton said. "My nails are a part of who I am."



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Kendyl Clayton holds up her hand, showing off her fresh set of flowers after one of her biweekly nail appointments.

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FILM

2021's most anticipated films

By Grace Barnes
@gracebarnes210



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Timothée Chalamet and Zendaya star in Denis Villeneuve's adaptation of the bestselling science-fiction novel "Dune" by Frank Herbert.

"Delayed" was the word that marked Hollywood in 2020 as COVID-19 made theatergoing risky, leading many studios to push their films' release dates to 2021. A number of cinephile favorites, such as Wes Anderson's "The French Dispatch," still have a mysterious "TBD" instead of a release date.

As the pandemic continues, the fate of this year's theatrical releases still hangs in the balance. The Daily Texan compiled a list of some of the most anticipated films of 2021 — hopeful release dates included.

"Malcolm & Marie"

From "Euphoria" creator Sam Levinson comes a black and white portrait of a complicated romance between a film director, played by "Tenet" star John David Washington, and his girlfriend, played by Emmy-winner Zendaya. According to Deadline, the film was one of the first to be shot and completed during the pandemic. "Malcolm & Marie" will be released on Netflix on Feb. 5.

"Cherry"

A far cry from their top-grossing "Avengers" finales, the Russo brothers' upcoming film will explore the breakdown and post-traumatic stress disorder of a former army medic, played by Tom Holland. According to Variety, Holland "may be too young for a play in best actor, but this lays the groundwork for a near-future nomination." "Cherry" will be released in theaters Feb. 26 and on Apple TV on March 12.

"No Time to Die"

The "James Bond" installment starring Daniel Craig,

Rami Malek and Ana de Armas will follow a semiretired Bond as he tracks down a dangerous villain (Malek). With a strong ensemble cast and a theme song performed by Billie Eilish, "No Time to Die" should send fans flocking to theaters. But as COVID-19 cases continue to rise, its April 2 release will likely be delayed, according to Deadline.

"Last Night in Soho"

Anya Taylor-Joy's first film since Netflix's "The Queen's Gambit," this Edgar Wright-directed thriller follows a young girl who is able to time travel to 1960s London where she meets her idol, but all is not as whimsical as it seems. The film also stars "The Crown's" Matt Smith and "Jojo Rabbit's" Thomasin McKenzie. "Last Night in Soho" is set to release in theaters April 23.

"Black Widow"

Set in the aftermath of "Captain America: Civil War" and the first of Marvel's "Phase Four," "Black Widow" will follow Natasha Romanoff (Scarlett Johansson) as she is forced to reckon with her past. The film also stars Florence Pugh as Yelena Belova, another trained Black Widow to whom Romanoff will hand off the

baton. "Black Widow" is set to release in theaters May 7.

"In the Heights"

Lin-Manuel Miranda's award-winning Broadway musical is coming to the big screen, with "Hamilton" favorite Anthony Ramos as Usnavi, a bodega owner in Manhattan who inherits his grandmother's fortune. The adaptation will be released in theaters and on HBO Max on June 18.

"Candyman"

A sequel to the 1992 film "Candyman" about a murderer with a hook for a hand, this Jordan Peele-written, Nia DaCosta-directed film has been eagerly awaited by horror fans. Originally slated for last June, "Candyman" stars Yahya Abdul-Mateen II and Teyonah Parris and will release in theaters Aug. 27.

"Dune"

Originally set to release Nov. 20, 2020, Denis Villeneuve's "Dune" is an adaptation of Frank Herbert's science-fiction epic. Timothée Chalamet leads a strong ensemble cast of Rebecca Ferguson, Zendaya, Josh Brolin and Oscar Isaac. Set far in the future on the perilous desert planet of Arrakis, "Dune" will be released in theaters and on HBO Max on Oct. 1.



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MEN'S BASKETBALL

From hot seat to cool throne

Head coach Shaka Smart has quelled hot seat rumors with an exciting start to the season.

By Matthew Boncosky
@mboncosky

At this time last year, the Texas men's basketball team was flailing through another disappointing year.

The Longhorns lost by 38 points on the road in West Virginia, the most lopsided loss of head coach Shaka Smart's tenure. Less than two weeks later, Texas tipped off a four-game losing streak to put the team at a discouraging 4-8 in Big 12 conference play. In his fifth season as head coach, Smart appeared to be suffering through his final days at The University of Texas.

Flash forward a calendar year and Smart has his team ranked No. 5 in the nation, off to a hot 11-2 start with impressive wins over Indiana, North Carolina, Kansas and West Virginia.

"One year ago seems like 10 years ago," Smart said in a Jan. 11 teleconference. "I think the guys have taken ownership of just trying to work towards being a better team over the course of the last 12 months."

Last year's Texas team took a lot of criticism from restless fans for their underwhelming results on the court. This year's Longhorns haven't forgotten what that felt like to endure, Smart said.



JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Texas head coach Shaka Smart provides in-game adjustments from the sideline against UAB on Dec. 3, 2019. Smart is off to his best start to a season in his sixth year at the helm with an 11-2 record and has his Longhorns ranked No. 5 in the nation.

"There's certainly some lessons that you can take from that as human beings but then also as coaches and players," Smart said. "I certainly haven't forgotten that. That's something that we use (as motivation)."

The turnaround began right after the four-game conference losing streak last season. Texas rattled off five straight wins, which, when combined with a 10-3 non conference record, brought the Longhorns back onto the NCAA Tournament bubble before the season came to a halt because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"What we have to remember is any time we've been in a certain position before, like winning a

couple games, losing a game, two games whatever it may be, (we have) to glean lessons from those experiences," Smart said.

At the beginning of this season, Texas had retained every player from the coronavirus-shortened season. The only new face was five-star freshman forward Greg Brown out of Vandegrift High School in Austin, Texas. Smart's squad is now one of the most talented and experienced teams in the country, and that experience is paying off on the court.

"We know with winning comes a lot of praise, a lot of high-fives," senior guard Matt Coleman said in a Jan. 7 teleconference. "But we also know how it feels to be on the other end, having a roller

coaster of a season and just keeping the mindset of one game at a time."

Over the years, Smart has become known for his animated style of coaching on the sidelines. The 43-year-old is often seen getting down on one knee to slam the floor or wildly waving his arms when his team is on defense. Smart's intensity provides the Longhorns with an extra burst of energy, Coleman said.

"It's good to feel his presence," Coleman said. "It just creates more energy for myself and the team to want to get a stop or to buy in."

The Longhorns feel like they are playing 6-on-5 on the defensive end with the amount

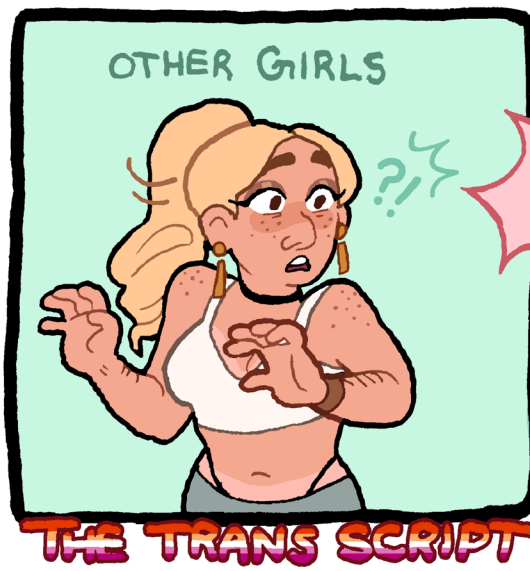
of talking between the five players on the court combined with Smart on the sideline, Brown said.

"I love it to be honest," Brown said. "It gets me going in games just knowing that he's locked in, and everybody else is locked in, so I have no choice but to lock in."

Smart's contagious game-time energy is part of how he forms tight relationships with his players — something that will be crucial going forward as Texas navigates an unusual season.

"He creates relationships in different ways," Coleman said. "The little things matter, you know, definitely from a head coach in a Division I program."

DAILY TEXAN COMICS



MEN'S BASKETBALL

Williams settling into complimentary role after extensive knee surgery



JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Sophomore guard Donovan Williams looks to pass in a Feb. 19, 2020, game against TCU. Williams is contributing to the Longhorns' rotation after undergoing knee surgery in March.

By Nathan Han
@NathanHan13

Donovan Williams has played through pain almost his entire basketball career.

The sophomore guard's left knee issues first began during his junior year of high school. But Williams played through the first injury. And then he played through his second knee injury during his senior year.

"Going all the way back into March and even back into last season, I just wasn't 100%," Williams said.

He even played through an injury during warmups for a Feb. 29 game in Lubbock before he reached his breaking point during halftime, head coach Shaka Smart said.

"He missed a dunk in the first half of that game, and I thought he hurt it then," Smart said. "But

he had already hurt it, actually in warmups ... At halftime, he didn't lace up and just said he's not going to be able to go."

It's been a long journey back for Williams, who had just begun to receive heavy minutes as a freshman before his season was cut short. He had surgery on March 11 to implant four screws in his kneecap.

But, Williams said, the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed him valuable time to recover. He became an internet student of the game, focusing on growing his basketball IQ and watching Kobe Bryant videos and YouTube highlights.

"It gave me time to rest, heal up and really get myself into a position where I can be 100% healthy and in a better position to help the team," Williams said. "The mental game is what I developed the most during the pandemic. ... I wanted to grow my IQ

so on the off chance that I don't get back to being as athletic as I was in the past, I can still make a contribution."

“

I think the biggest thing for him is confidence and just believing in himself because we believe in him.”

COURTNEY RAMEY
JUNIOR GUARD

During a normal year, Williams said he would have had to rush his recovery. Even with the postponed start to the season, the guard wasn't fully cleared for live

play as Texas started practice.

In those practices, Williams had to get used to wearing a cumbersome brace. But he continued to push through the discomfort, just as he has had to do so often in his career, Smart said.

"Sometimes you run into players that are just stubborn about wanting to push the envelope and go further than maybe the doctors want them to go at that point," Smart said. "That was definitely him. But I'll give him a lot of credit for how hard he attacked."

In a Dec. 20 game against Oklahoma State, Williams made his first significant contribution of his sophomore campaign. His four offensive rebounds and energy off the bench would prove crucial in Texas's 77-74 win.

The backup guard is often the seventh or eighth man off the bench, behind the three starting guards: senior

Matt Coleman, redshirt junior Andrew Jones and junior Courtney Ramey.

"Let's say he's out there with two out of the three (starting guards)," Smart said. "He doesn't necessarily have to create."

But Williams will have to shoot the ball better and capitalize on open looks to contribute in his role off the bench. The sophomore shot 2-of-9 against Kansas and then 0-for-4 against Iowa State. He stayed after the Iowa State game in Frank Erwin Center to get shot after shot up. Smart said Williams has been spending a lot of time working on his shot.

It's the same drive that pushed him to play through pain and through a long recovery.

"We see it in practice every day," Ramey said. "I think the biggest thing for him is confidence and just believing in himself because we believe in him."