



News
PAGE 05

UT-Austin has identified four cases of the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant as of Thursday.

Opinion
PAGE 04

UT should grant student-parents and students working full time priority registration.

Life&Arts
PAGE 09

Student business Rethread ATX promotes sustainable fashion by reselling unique clothing pieces.

Sports
PAGE 12

Texas softball faces a challenging schedule without opt-out star pitcher Miranda Elish.

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AUSTIN WEATHER

TODAY
Feb. 12



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TOMORROW
Feb. 13



HI 37°
LO 25°

brrrrrrrrr be safe y'all

City Council votes to conduct study exploring tobacco use among LGBTQ+ community

By Sheryl Lawrence
@sheryl_adelle

UT will conduct a community health needs assessment on tobacco use disparities among the LGBTQ+ population in Austin after the Austin City Council voted in favor of the study Feb. 4.

The Gender, Sexuality and Behavioral Health Lab is conducting the assessment through focus groups made up of Austin community members. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 20.5% of lesbian, gay and bisexual adults

smoke cigarettes compared to 15.3% of straight adults. The report said limited information exists on cigarette smoking prevalence among transgender individuals.

Stephanie Helfman, manager of the Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention program at Austin Public Health, said Austin Public Health received the grant from the Texas Department of State Health Services to conduct this study because tobacco is the leading preventable cause of death in Travis County.

Michael Parent, assistant professor of educational psychology, said multiple studies

have already shown increased tobacco use in LGBTQ+ communities, but the lab will be focusing on why these disparities exist.

"The end goal is to provide strategies that can be used to address this health disparity, this persistent high level of tobacco use, and then incurable costs to the health care system of that elevated use," Parent said.

Lexie Wille, educational psychology graduate student, said they are focusing on the age ranges of 18-24 and 50+ because the different demographics have different needs.

"(We want) to make sure that we're not assuming that we can apply the same intervention to a broad swath, (and) that it'll be helpful and beneficial for all LGBT folks," Wille said.

Wille said the lab is focusing on nonbinary individuals, transgender individuals and people of color within the LGBTQ+

community because they are underresearched.

"We're seeing significant disparities in mental and physical health in trans and nonbinary folks," Wille said.

Wille said that as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, she is excited to see researchers and public health officials working together to help create change in the community.

"We're not going into the community and saying, 'Here's what we think you need, here's some resources,'" Wille said. "We're asking them what they need with the idea that then Austin Public Health and (the) City Council (are) committed to meeting that need."

Helfman said after Austin Public Health receives the data from the needs assessment, they will form a community coalition to help them identify what programs need to be in place.

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RESEARCH

Research study analyzes Reddit post language before, after breakups

By Kevin Vu
@Kevin_Vu_

A UT psychology study published on Feb. 16 found that the changes in a person's language on social media before and after a breakup can expose their emotional and logical thinking.

Psychology researchers at the University analyzed more than 1 million posts by 6,803 Reddit users on the subreddit r/BreakUps to understand how a person's language changes during the course of a breakup. The researchers found that changes in language can be detected three months before a breakup, with continued psychological effects lasting six months after the breakup.

Psychology professor James Pennebaker said this study is significant because it's the first time, through technology, researchers are able to study the psychological changes in a person going through a breakup in real time.

"This is not some kind of laboratory study, we're not asking people to fill out questionnaires, we are getting a real sense of how humans change in their thinking and feeling over time," Pennebaker, a co-author of the study, said.

Sarah Seraj, the study's lead author and a psychology graduate student, said the team used Reddit because the website offers anonymity and the ability to collect data from the website, unlike Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

"(On) Reddit because people post under anonymous handles, there's no way we can reverse engineer their identities," Seraj said.

Pennebaker said the team selected users based on if they posted both inside and outside the breakup subreddit before and after the breakups. Then, the team used computational text analysis and downloaded posts made by users a year before and after the first breakup post.

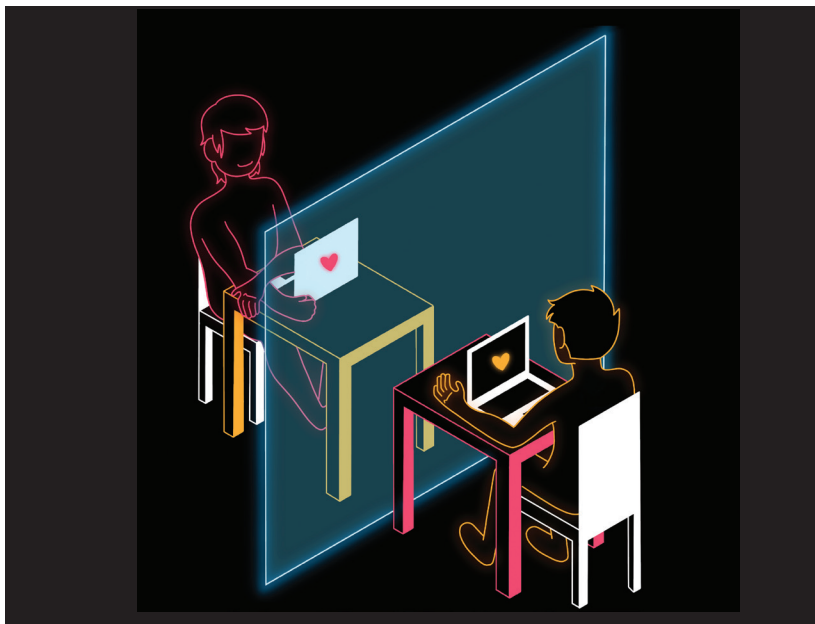
Kate Blackburn, a psychology postdoctoral research fellow and a co-author of the study, said the study found that months before a Reddit user is involved in a breakup, the person tends to use words such as "I," "me" and "my" more than usual. This language trend would then last for six months, Blackburn said.

"We know from other research when people increase their use of 'I' this can sometimes reflect anxiety or depression," Blackburn said.

Additionally, Pennebaker said the team discovered a person's analytical or logical thinking reached the lowest point at the breakup, causing them to make more mistakes and become less focused.

Blackburn said the study could be used as a tool for practical implications in clinical interventions.

"This may be another tool for people to check out to see how far along in the process somebody is just by looking at their language," Blackburn said.



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COLUMN

Expand priority registration

UT must also grant priority registration to student-parents and students working full time.

By **Eva Strelitz-Block**
Opinion Columnist

In both culture and policy, university life tends to be tailored to the “traditional” student who enters college ready for a four-year, full-time student experience.

Nontraditional students, on the other hand — particularly student-parents and students working full time — must navigate an institutional infrastructure that’s neither designed for them nor has the flexibility or equity-oriented remedies necessary to accommodate their needs.

By granting students working full time and parenting students priority registration, UT could ensure nontraditional students get the classes they need. In doing so, UT could finally effectively prioritize nontraditional students.

School days are usually designed for the “traditional” student, whose biggest scheduling hurdle involves avoiding early morning classes. However, it is a privilege to not have to schedule education around other obligations — one that’s unfortunately easy to overlook.

Christella Villatoro, a sociology and psychology junior as well as a student-parent, highlights the scheduling struggles nontraditional students face that don’t cross the minds of most undergraduates.

“Nontraditional students, we have other priorities, we have other things that don’t necessarily come before school, but like I said, are priorities,” Villatoro said. “I think it is important that we register for classes first because either way professors are already tailoring the class toward traditional students, so it would be nice if we could at least pick our schedules.”

Jeff Mayo, assistant director of the First-Year Experience Office, corroborated priority registration as being a service that could benefit this population of students, noting that this is something he has been thinking about.

“Student-parents share with us that their commitment to their children pulls them from campus sometimes either early or late in the day,” Mayo said. “When we have done surveys and focus groups,

priority registration typically comes up as a recommendation or as a service that they identify that would be helpful.”

However, a simple acknowledgement that this would be a worthwhile service is not enough. UT must take actionable steps to implement this change.

The Office of the Registrar, which typically handles registration decisions, was not able to respond to requests for comment before the publication of this column.

Extending priority registration to student-parents and those working full time would be a fairly simple process, as some students already have access to priority registration.

Students registered with Services for Students with Disabilities may be granted access to priority registration in order to “have more flexibility in choosing times and locations of classes” and “better make accommodations for a disability.”

Moreover, according to the student athlete resource guide, student-athletes must only “complete their appropriate advising activity to be granted the privilege of early registration.”

The fact that athletes can schedule their classes around their athletic practices while working and parenting students’ needs are not accommodated demonstrates that UT’s registration policies are not aligned with their stated commitment to equity.

Parenting and working students just need to be invited to tap into this existing service.



ANDREANA LOZANO / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

Granting parenting and working students access to priority registration is a simple and painless step that UT could take to make its academic environment more inclusive. It would signal to all students that no matter how they got here, they are valued.

It would also help students succeed.

“That’s the first step because

that gives them some type of autonomy and control over their schedules,” Villatoro said.

UT must take action to remove obstacles that reinforce the idea that “traditional” students (and athletes) are more of a priority than their peers.

Strelitz-Block is a Plan II and anthropology sophomore from Austin, Texas.

GALLERY



CHARLIE HYMAN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

COVID-19

What is the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant, and how is UT-Austin reacting to its arrival?

By **Skye Seipp**
@seippetc

B.1.1.7, the COVID-19 variant first identified in the United Kingdom, found its way to UT's campus Feb. 5, and as of Thursday UT has identified four cases of B.1.1.7.

The new variant spreads faster than the current circulating strain and is expected to become the dominant coronavirus variant in the United States by March, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The first B.1.1.7 case in the U.S. was reported on Dec. 29, and by Jan. 7 it was in Texas. Travis County first identified a case of the variant on Feb. 3.

Amy Young, chief clinical officer for UT Health Austin, said UT expects the number of B.1.1.7 cases to increase. Young said the University plans to strengthen health and quarantine guidelines.

Young said UT will soon announce new health recommendations for people to double mask using a surgical mask underneath a cloth mask. The recommendation is partially because of the variant, but also because of new CDC recommendations, she said.

UT also plans to remove the opportunity for COVID-19 positive patients to test out of quarantine, Young said. The University previously allowed people who were in recommended 10-day quarantines to leave early if they tested negative on day eight.

"Until we know a little bit more about (the variant), we want to take a conservative approach and not offer testing to get out early," Young said.

Ilya Finkelstein, associate professor of molecular biosciences, said B.1.1.7 seems to be 40-50% more transmissible, which could overrun health care systems and lead to more deaths if the variant is widespread.

British scientists have found evidence that B.1.1.7 is slightly more deadly, and a mutation known as E484K in the strain could make vaccines less effective. Austin Public Health officials have said they believe current vaccines will work against the variant.

"I think concerns about vaccine efficacy are a little overblown at the moment," Finkelstein said. "The data's not fully in, but it sure looks to me like vaccine efficacy is still very high for these circulating variants."

The variant possibly spreads more easily because of mutations in the virus' spike protein, Finkelstein said. He said the spike protein acts like a "molecular key" to unlock the human cell, and the variant's mutation makes it a better "key" to increase transmissibility.

Finkelstein said scientists don't fully understand what makes the virus more transmissible.

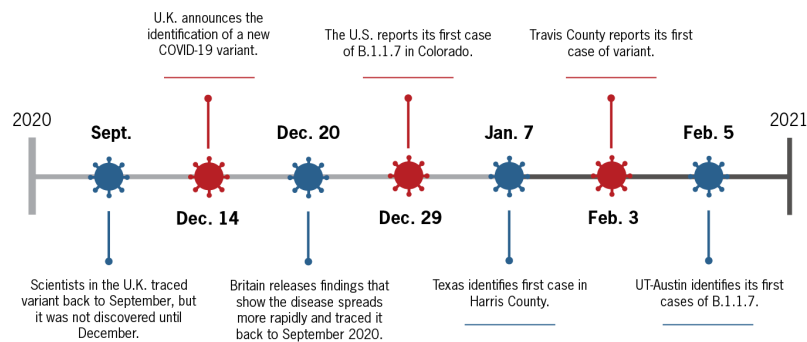
One leading hypothesis for how the B.1.1.7 variant formed was after the virus infected an immunocompromised person and persisted for months, he said.

Multiple variants of COVID-19 are circulating, but health officials and experts are mainly watching three: B.1.351 from South Africa, P.1 from Brazil and B.1.1.7 from the U.K.

To detect B.1.1.7, scientists use a sequencing machine to determine a positive COVID-19 sample's DNA. UT started this process, which takes one to two weeks, in January, said Andreas Matouschek, associate dean for research and facilities in the College of Natural Sciences. The University expects to finish analyzing January's samples next week, he said.

"We, as everybody else, saw that the virus was mutating," Matouschek said. "(UT) wanted to know when these viruses were coming to campus so we could be able to respond better."

Timeline of B.1.1.7 Spread



SOURCE: U.K. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES, AUSTIN PUBLIC HEALTH, UT-AUSTIN

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WEST CAMPUS

Students, advocates speak out about slow lighting improvements in West Campus

By **Tori Duff**
@torianneduff

Local safety organizations and UT students say they are frustrated by the city's lack of communication about when West Campus lighting improvements will occur to increase safety amid rising crime rates.

Austin Energy is set to upgrade 1,125 existing streetlights to LED lights and install new fixtures in West Campus to improve visibility, according to a January 2019 city memo. The new lighting fixtures will cost upward of \$1.7 million and will be funded by a five-year city plan.

"Austin Energy is in the contracting process for engineering services to provide 229 new streetlights," Calily Bien, Austin Energy senior public information specialist, said in an email. "Once started, we expect this project to be a two-year effort."

So far, only nonfunctioning streetlights have been repaired, and the city is working to maintain vegetation that blocks light from fixtures, Bien said.

Bien said no improvements have been made in accordance with the plans, but the company expects to begin this spring. However, some advocates say they have heard little about the timeline of the improvements since they were announced.

Currently, students can report nonoperational or blocked



HANNAH CLARK / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Mechanical engineering junior D'Andra Luster walks through West Campus back to her apartment on Feb. 8. Local safety organizations and UT students say they are frustrated by the city's lack of communication about when West Campus lighting improvements will occur to increase safety amid rising crime rates.

streetlights by calling 3-1-1 and reporting the number of the light pole, which is located on a placard on the light pole itself.

Joell McNew, president of the nonprofit SafeHorns, said she has tried communicating with Austin Energy about the state of lighting improvements but has not received a concrete answer.

"There's been no priority, no communication ... it's always (SafeHorns and parents) reaching out, asking for communication," McNew said. "We

should have a full understanding and expectation of some sort of results."

Following multiple robberies in October 2020, some students voiced fear over safety in West Campus. David Carter, UTPD chief of police and assistant vice president for campus security, said to KXAN in October 2020 that there will be upgrades to surveillance to improve safety. In November 2020, UTPD also decided to keep their blue and red vehicle lights on at night

because of the robberies.

However, some students did not support the decision, according to previous reporting by the Texan, as there is less trust in police presence within the Black community due to a history of police violence disproportionately affecting them. A June 2020 NPR/PBS NewsHour Poll found that 48% of Black Americans have very little or no confidence that police officers treat Black and white people equally.

James

Richardson,

community outreach officer at student safety organization Horns for Safety, said the improvements need to happen more quickly to prioritize the safety of students currently living in West Campus.

"Unfortunately, (UTPD) doesn't have jurisdiction in West Campus," law student Richardson said. "The unfortunate consequence of that is that the University can't really do anything about how unsafe West Campus is, and City Hall seems reluctant to step in and be a leader there in speeding up the process."

Political communications junior Chloe Baker started a petition in 2019 to improve lighting in West Campus, which received over 1,000 signatures.

"(Improving lighting) is a meaningful difference that can be made," Baker said. "When a concern is voiced by multiple people, it'll be voiced again and again."

Richardson said groups such as Horns for Safety exist to maintain student voices for public safety, which is difficult since students only live in West Campus for a few years while in college.

"So many different student voices cycle in and out and that makes it tough to build momentum and really see progress," Richardson said. "People who go to school here need to feel safe. If there were more light, it could be night and day difference."

STUDENT LIFE

Valentine's Day: COVID-19 edition

Six safe ways for couples, friends to celebrate Valentine's Day.

By Morgan-Taylor Thomas
@mtthomas

Whether you're head over heels in love or just vibing to the beat of your own drum, everyone deserves to treat themselves this Valentine's Day.

It can be stressful trying to plan a show-stopping yet COVID-19 friendly date. The Daily Texan has curated a list of local

businesses with safe events for you and your significant other — or platonic bestie — to participate in.

Valentine's at the Drive-In

Blue Starlite Drive-In is hosting their "Valentines at the Drive-In," screening iconic romances such as "Love & Basketball," "Sixteen Candles" and, of course, "The Notebook." For \$40-\$50, you can enjoy concessions and a movie from the comfort of your own vehicle. In accordance to COVID-19 guidelines, you must sit inside your car and masks must be worn if

windows are 75% down. The fun will last until Feb. 15.

Personalized Chocolate-Covered Strawberries

If you're looking for something subtle that still says "I love you," check out Jaydin Bonilla (@jaydinbonilla), a health and society junior, and biology freshman Kyahria Thomas (@kyahriadaje) on Twitter for their personalized chocolate-covered strawberries. Each baker has their order options, procedures and delivery dates available via tweets or direct messages. Prices range from \$20-\$40.

atxGALS Galentine's Show

Women should support women, and what better way to do that than at atxGALS' fifth annual Galentine's Show. For \$15 a person, you can walk The Cathedral on East 16th Street while taking in the talent of nine local women artists, including Neena Buxani and Danika Ostrowski. The pop-up event will be held on Feb. 13 and 14 from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. in 90-minute shifts to maintain social distancing. Masks must be worn.

To the Moon and Back Date Night

A pricier choice for lovebirds, and even platonic couples, is Mozart's "To the Moon and Back" date night event. The full-service, three-course dessert (yes, dessert)

and coffee tasting event not only includes all the chocolate and sugar you could ever desire, but live music and a beautiful lakeside view. Tables will be spaced six feet apart and reservations can be made for \$166.50 per couple from Feb. 11 through Feb. 14.

Matchmaker Band at Far Out Lounge

For dynamic duos who want a more relaxed musical experience, head on over to The Far Out Lounge and Stage and watch the 10 talented musicians of Austin's Matchmaker Band. From cover songs of the influential Jackson 5 to the queen Beyoncé, it's sure to be a night of funk and soul. It's only \$10 for this outdoor, socially distanced, mask enforced, limited capacity Valentine's Day night extravaganza.

Austin Pets Alive! Palentine's 5K

If your valentine is your pet, wait until Feb. 20 to join Austin Pets Alive! in their Palentine's 5K. This socially distanced solo 5K run is happening on National Love Your Pet Day and supports pets who are homeless. For \$25 (\$30 if you want the exclusive Palentine's 5K T-shirt), you can connect with other pet lovers and outdoor enthusiasts via social media by posting pictures after the run to the Facebook event page or any other social media site. Everyone's best friend deserves some love, too!



BARBRA DALY / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

FEATURE

Local bookstore continues to navigate COVID-19 pandemic, hosts online events

By Lana Haffar
@haffaraway

Under a blue neon sign reading “Malvern Books,” owner Joe Bratcher prepares for a solitary day fulfilling curbside pick-up orders. Located near campus on West 29th Street, Bratcher said he opened the bookstore in 2013 to create a community event space for the Austin literary scene.

“(I wanted) people to feel comfortable here,” Bratcher said. “I wanted that kind of space where you could just browse and be helped. That energy has been lacking since March of last year.”

February marks nearly a year since Malvern Books shifted to online sales due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Manager Becky Garcia said staying afloat as an independent bookstore has been difficult yet rewarding.

“Now that we don’t have people coming into the store, the inventory isn’t moving as quickly as it used to,” Garcia said. “That’s always a challenge.”

Bratcher said Malvern specializes in poetry and fiction from small presses, so their staff members are resident experts in emerging authors and less mainstream literature.

Their focus on localized stories attracted Sophia Kontos, an international relations and global studies and Plan II sophomore, who purchased four translated fiction books through their curbside pick-up service.

“The collections of books that they have ... are a little off the beaten path, and having the help to navigate that (field) was really useful,” Kontos said. “I’d like to go



KIRSTEN HAHN / THE DAILY TEXAN STAFF

Joe Bratcher, the owner of Malvern Books, in his West Campus store on Feb. 9. February marks nearly a year since Malvern Books shifted to online sales due to the pandemic.

talk to them in person (after the pandemic).”

Although in-person shopping is currently unavailable, the bookstore hosts book clubs, author readings and open mics virtually through Zoom.

“It’s very exciting ... because we can have people in the Zoom conferences from all around the country,” Bratcher said. “But it’s disappointing because none of it really converts to sales.”

Although Malvern sees many returning customers, book sales can be heavily dependent on face-to-face interaction.

“If we got people into the store for an event ... chances are real good they’d buy something,” Garcia said. “That’s not so much the case now.”

When curating their catalog of books, the bookstore often orders titles based on customers’ demonstrated interest. Garcia said they have started using social media more to connect with

their audience.

“We really tried to up our social media game so (customers) can see what’s in the store,” Garcia said. “It’s been really gratifying when we (recommend) something on Instagram and (then) people will call and say, ‘Hey, I want that book!’”

While Malvern is handling these new circumstances, they are eager to return to in-person shopping as soon as they can ensure staff and customer safety.

“We’re a very concerned bunch,” Garcia said.

“We always err on the side of caution.”

Malvern continues to serve as a virtual community space for booklovers, and they hope to open their doors to the public in the near future.

“There’s something about going to a bookstore and picking a book out ... with some friends or just bumping into somebody at the store,” Bratcher said. “Just the serendipitous kind of meetings like that don’t happen online. I’m looking forward to that.”

FEATURE

Students promote sustainable fashion through Instagram business

By Carolyn Parmer
@_carolynparmer

Jostling for a front-row spot, Ivy Jones and Kassidy Litchenburg plan their shopping strategy among other eager shoppers. When a Goodwill employee finishes counting down, they sprint to sort through massive laundry bins of second-hand clothes.

Before COVID-19 arrived in Austin in March, advertising sophomore Jones and communication and leadership sophomore Litchenburg endured this madness at thrift stores around Austin.

Now, the pair don masks and keep their distance from other shoppers to seek out unique finds such as funky scarves and embroidered tops to sell through their Instagram-based company, RethreadATX.

"We can get wrapped up in it because it doesn't feel like work a lot of the time," Litchenburg said. "We struggle with wanting to do Rethread more than we want to do school."

Last year, Jones and Litchenburg started thrifting together and later turned their hobby into a business. The duo launched the account, @RethreadATX, in January 2020 and celebrated the one-year anniversary of their first sale on Jan. 29.

When shopping for Rethread, Jones and Litchenburg said they try to purchase brands that don't participate in fast fashion, the process of producing cheap clothes which can harm both the environment and the workers producing the clothes.

"I grew up thrifting with my mom ... so I wasn't ever super involved in fast fashion," Jones said. "When we started Rethread and I became close friends with Kassidy, my eyes were opened to other (issues) besides fast fashion."

To prepare for a new Instagram release, they spend a week washing the

clothes, logging prices, planning models' outfits, photographing the models and editing the photos. The girls post new photos every Thursday at 6 p.m., and customers either comment on the post or direct message the account to purchase items.

"Our goal is not to totally transform our buyers into buying all secondhand because we understand that that's really hard," Litchenburg said. "Our goal is to be that middleman that goes and does the work so that more people are encouraged to secondhand shop."

From Rethread's conception, Macy McFarlin, a human development and family sciences sophomore, has been a frequent buyer. McFarlin owns about 30 pieces and said she feels good about her large collection because she's supporting a small business and sustainable fashion.

"My favorite part of (Rethread) is the convenience to still do a good thing for the Earth and for your bank account with the convenience of being able to just buy from an Instagram shop," McFarlin said.

Bailey Fitzhugh, one of Jones and Litchenburg's close friends and a human development and family sciences sophomore, has modeled for Rethread since February 2020.

"They for sure are doing things for the right reasons, and it's really cool to watch them learn about business and how to make it something that helps others and also is sustainable," Fitzhugh said.

Jones and Litchenburg plan to run Rethread throughout college with a focus on keeping it lighthearted. Although Rethread isn't completely waste-free, the pair hopes it will be someday.

"It's fun to leave it open-ended and not have specific (criteria) we feel like we need to meet or a standard we want to live up to," Jones said. "Because we started it for fun, I think that has carried on and led us to where we are."



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Advertising sophomore Ivy Jones and Kassidy Litchenburg, communication and leadership sophomore, pose for a Rethread photoshoot.

TRACK & FIELD

One last run for Track & Field

Texas will wrap up its indoor regular season at the Tyson Invitational on Friday and Saturday.

By Kaitlyn Harmon
@kait_harmon

Longhorn runners are tying up their laces for one last meet this regular season as the team is scheduled to compete at the Tyson Invitational in Fayetteville, Arkansas, on Friday and Saturday.

For the second time this season, Texas will compete against the Arkansas Razorbacks. Nationally ranked No. 4 Texas women will take on No. 1 Arkansas alongside A&M, LSU, Alabama, Florida, Florida State and Oregon. The No. 9 Texas men will meet the top-three men's programs in the nation with Oregon, LSU and Arkansas.

The Tyson Invitational is the conclusion of the regular indoor season. The indoor portion of the 2019-2020 regular season was cut short after the COVID-19 pandemic caused the NCAA Indoor Championships to be



ELIAS HUERTA / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Senior distance runner Claudine Blancaflor leads the pack at the Texas Relays in March 2019. The Texas Track & Field team ends their indoor regular season this weekend at the Tyson Invitational.

canceled. This year, the team is on track to head back to the championship with 41 new members in tow.

Senior Chanel Brissett joined the burnt orange after a three-year journey at USC, where she won two NCAA individual titles and four Pac-12 titles. Brissett made her Longhorn debut at the Wooo Pig Classic in Fayetteville on Jan. 22 with a first-place finish in the 60-meter hurdles. The No. 2-ranked senior will be competing in the 60-meter dash, the 60-meter hurdles and the 200-meter dash on Friday.

"I'm excited about the fact

that everyone on the team is hardworking and we really push each other at practice," Brissett said. "We have a lot of common goals which is a huge transition for me from USC. We're all going in the same direction."

Sophomore distance runner Crayton Carrozza is also heading in the same direction this weekend in Arkansas as the sophomore takes on Alabama's Eliud Kipsang in the one-mile race. Kipsang currently holds the season's fifth-fastest time in the mile with a 3:57.83. Carrozza's collegiate best is a 3:59.82, which he accomplished in

the 2019-2020 season as a freshman.

"I'm definitely trying to get my nationals mark down, and also I don't like to focus too much on the specific time because you can win, but you don't get the time you wanted," Carrozza said. "I like to go into races and try to get the win, and usually, the time will come along with it."

The 2020-2021 regular season has been good to Carrozza — the Longhorn hit a personal best Feb. 6 at the Charlie Thomas Invitational in College Station, Texas. Carrozza recorded a 1:49.66 in the 800-meter.

Like the distance runner, Texas Track & Field set the bar high with school records and personal bests this indoor season. Senior thrower Tripp Piperi broke former Longhorn and Olympic gold medalist Ryan Crouser's record at the Charlie Thomas Invitational with a recorded 21.74 meters, putting up the second-best throw in NCAA indoors history. Junior sprinter Julien Alfred also scored a meet record in College Station in the 60-meter dash. Alfred clocked a 7.15 in the race, tying her for the sixth-best run in UT history.

“

I like to go into races and try to get the win, and usually, the time will come along with it.”

CRAYTON CARROZZA
SOPHOMORE DISTANCE RUNNER

The Razorbacks will host the final meet of the regular season at the Randal Tyson Track Center, which will be livestreamed by the SEC Network. Upon returning from a strong finish in Arkansas, the Longhorns hope to appear in the Big 12 Indoor Championships in Lubbock, set to kick off Feb. 26.

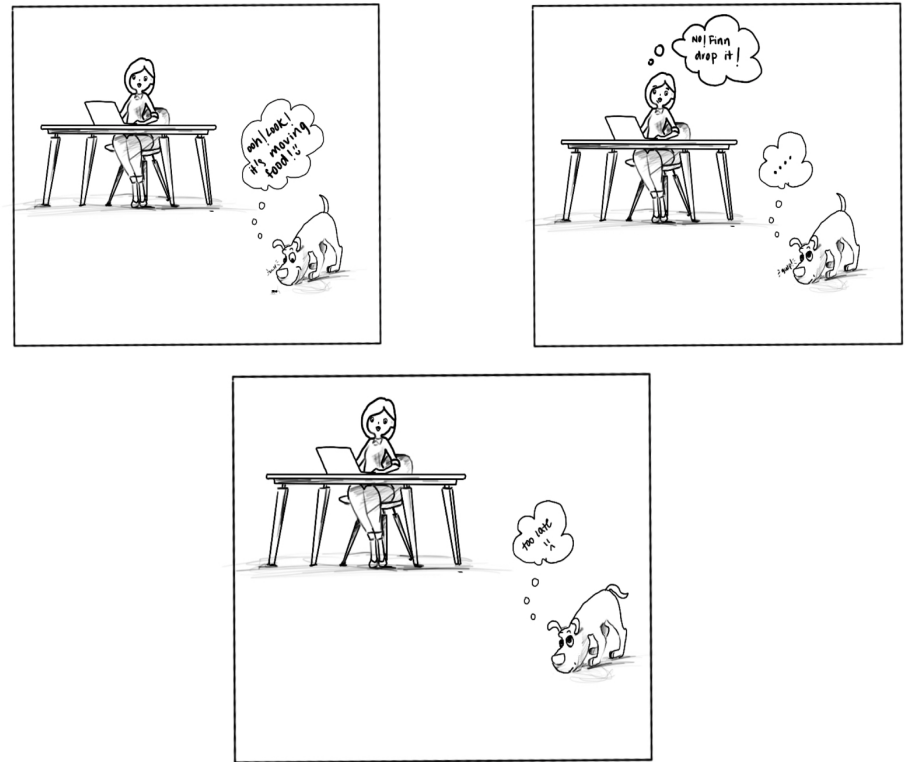
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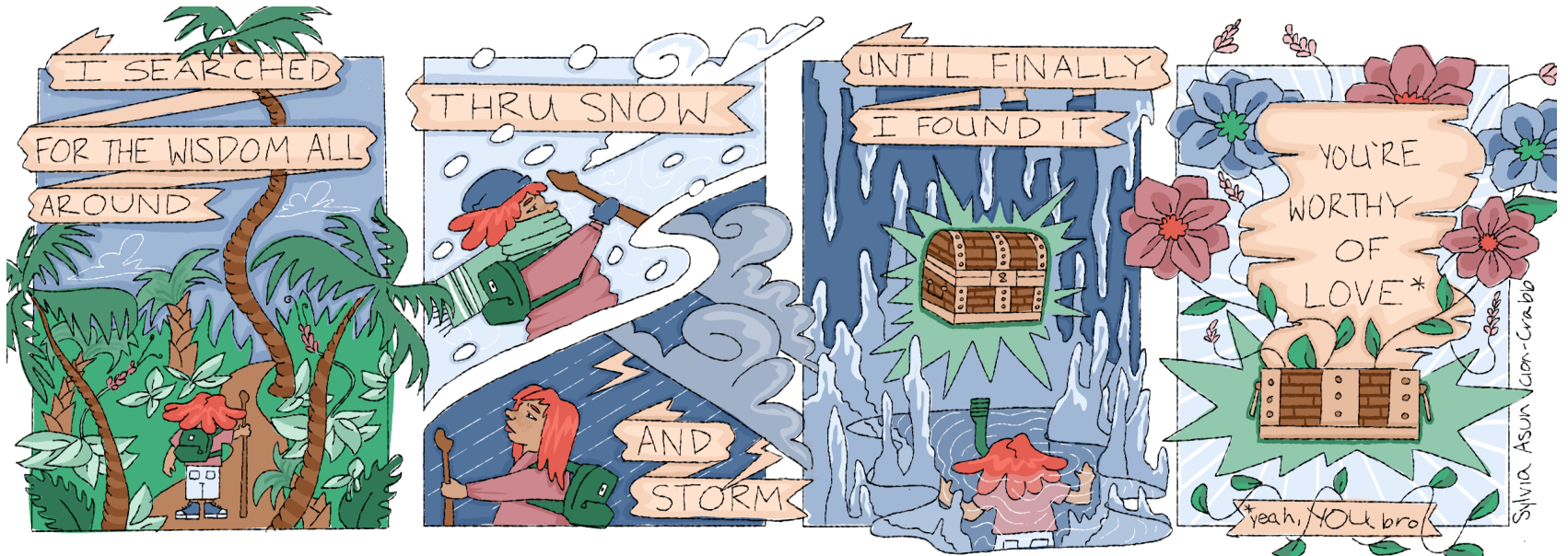
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BY CATE LOWRY



@CATE_SKETCHES



SOFTBALL

Longhorn softball looks forward to 'tough' season against challenging schedule

By Jaclyn Helton
@jaclynghelton

In anticipation for the Longhorns' first game since the shortened spring season, softball head coach Mike White told reporters in a Tuesday teleconference that the outlook for the upcoming season centers around being "tough."

As the team prepares for their opener against North Texas on Feb. 17, White confidently reassured Longhorn Nation that despite the unexpected opt-out of star pitcher Miranda Elish and a daunting schedule, the upcoming spring season will allow the team to show what they can overcome.

"We've got a lot of hard work ahead of us," White said in the teleconference Tuesday.

Although former Longhorn Miranda Elish was a strong asset to the team, closing out her senior season pitching a perfect game, the Longhorns don't find themselves short of promising pitching talent.

Mary Iakopo, junior catcher and utility player, spoke on graduate transfer Molly Jacobsen and freshman Ryleigh White and the contributions they bring to the team.

"They fit in well," Iakopo said in the teleconference Tuesday. "They have a few of the things that Miranda had physically and mentally: Molly with the experience and Ryleigh with the same zones and speed that Miranda had."

Jacobsen is a left-handed pitcher who transferred from the University of Mississippi. In her two years at Ole Miss, the southpaw won 19 games with a 2.53 ERA and 230

strikeouts over 238 innings.

"Molly Jacobsen is a competitor," White said. "She has a lot of experience."

Ryleigh is a first-year, right-handed pitcher from Immaculate Heart Academy in Washington Township, New Jersey. She placed No. 7 on the Extra Elite 100 Class of 2020 national player rankings and No. 17 on Softball America's Top-100 recruit list.

"I think you're going to be impressed with the new pitcher we have. ... I think she is doing excellent," White said of Ryleigh.

White also discussed Ryleigh's potential to be a young leader on the team based on her skill and ability to maintain a cool façade on the field.

"We've stuck her out there, and she's not overwhelmed by anything," White said.

With Jacobsen and Ryleigh replacing Elish in the pitching rotation, the team looks ahead to a challenging schedule that will truly test the toughness of the team.

This upcoming weekend, the Longhorns were set to start their season out against

No. 3 Arizona and No. 8 Alabama in the Texas Classic in Austin. However, due to an inclement weather the tournament has been canceled.

Though the Longhorns were eager for the competition in this weekend's tournament, their upcoming schedule still provides ample opportunity for the team to compete against top teams. This spring, Texas will face No. 4 Oklahoma, No. 5 LSU and No. 9 Louisiana, with hopes to see No. 8 Alabama later in the postseason.

"To be the best, you got to play the best," White said with a smile.

As the Longhorns face North Texas next Wednesday to kick off their season, they look ahead and begin preparing to take each week one game at a time.

With the new season here, Iakopo confidently expects her and her team to come out with energy and ready to take on the next team.

"I just want to see us put on a show," Iakopo said. "If we can face them now, we can face them then."



JACK MYER / THE DAILY TEXAN FILE

Sophomore utility infielder Colleen Sullivan swings at a pitch. The team's opening weekend tournament was canceled due to inclement weather, so Texas softball will kick off their season against North Texas on Feb. 17.