

## INSIDE

Hurtado Barbecue's journey from pop-up to brick-and-mortar locations, **see page 6**

Editorial: Arlington needs to expand its nightlife, **see page 7**

## BASKETBALL

# Behind the buy games at UTA

These games, also known as "guarantee games," help smaller schools fund their athletic department budget by playing bigger colleges.

BY ISAAC APPELT

The Shorthorn sports editor

In sports, the goal is simple. You play to win the game.

But for schools like UTA — schools with limited athletics budgets — that fundamental goal of securing victories can sometimes be upended by a painful-but-necessary pay structure that keeps universities' athletics departments afloat: "guarantee games."

In these games, bigger, established programs pay smaller schools to come to their arena and play. The bigger schools pay smaller programs to ensure they don't have to play them again. It's essentially a one-and-done contract.

## MONEY COLLECTED THROUGH GUARANTEE GAMES BY SEASON:

2018-2019: \$330,000  
2019-2020: \$285,000  
2020-2021: \$70,000  
2021-2022: \$185,000  
2022-2023: \$95,000  
2023-2024: \$295,000

Over the last six seasons, the men's basketball team played in at least 17 such games and collected more than \$1.2 million from those matchups, according to records obtained by *The Shorthorn*.

Through interviews, documents and analysis, *The Shorthorn* investigated why UTA plays these games, how they benefit the program and how this system works.

GUARANTEE continues on page 8

## UNIVERSITY



The Shorthorn: Ronaldo Bolaños

The University Center opened in 1953 and it was renamed to add E.H. Herford to the namesake in 1959. In April, a resolution to renovate the building will be voted on by students.

BY MANDY HUYNH

The Shorthorn editor-in-chief

The university, alongside various student groups, is proposing renovations to the University Center and will soon ask students to approve the funding.

The 242,000-square-foot building, located in the center of campus, acts as a hub of student activities and offers various services to the UTA community.

Resolution 24-03, "Renovate & Renew," aims to put a referendum on the April 1 and 2 ballot to ask students if they support an increase to the student union fee to renovate and expand the UC.

During the Student Senate's Feb. 13 meeting, the resolution was passed unanimously and is now on the ballot for the larger student body to vote on during Student Government's April elections.

If passed during those elections, the student union fee, which is currently \$39 and has been the

# Renovation vote returns

## Students can vote on the student union fee change in the April 1 and 2 elections



Courtesy of BRW Architects

same since 1985, will increase to \$150 for fall/spring semesters and \$75 per summer semester.

UC operations director David Albart said the increase will be

implemented and collected after the UT System Board of Regents approves the renovations. Construction dates and the timing of the fee increase hinge upon

the system's approval, but the planning process will take about a year to complete. Construction is expected to take about three years.

In April 2022, a similar referendum was put on the ballot. Students voted 730 in favor of a new UC and 733 in opposition, failing by three votes, according to previous *Shorthorn* reporting.

Last summer, a group of about 35 students was formed to provide feedback and give insight on why the spring 2022 referendum failed, Albart said. The students toured other universities' student union buildings and gave suggestions to improve UTA's.

UC associate director Bear Lunce said the 2022 spring campaign for the renovation could've been better, and with this new campaign, they are using student voices to guide the project.

NEW UC continues on page 2

## SCIENCE

# Lab makes key cancer discovery

The lab, located on the fourth floor of the Science and Engineering Innovation and Research building, hosts the empirical study on T cells.

BY MARIE RENEA

The Shorthorn staff

In 2020, the Center for Disease Control reported over 1.6 million new cancer cases in the U.S. with one of every five deaths being due to cancer.

Scientists have been in pursuit of a cure for decades, but on the fourth floor of the Science and Engineering Innovation and Research

building, a new multi-institutional study could make waves in the field of cancer research.

Jon Weidanz, associate vice president for research and innovation, and post-doctoral fellow Soroush Ghaffari, co-authored the study alongside researchers from Leiden University in Leiden, Netherlands, and Karolinska University in Solna, Sweden. Their research uncovered a mechanism preventing people's immune systems from attacking cancer cells.

Additionally, the study ascertained why immuno-

**"Hopefully, it creates other options for the patient and saves money for the health care system."**

**Jon Weidanz**  
associate vice president for research and innovation

therapy doesn't work for everyone and every type of cancer. Colon, pancreatic, prostate and brain cancers have shown resistance to the treatment.

Immunotherapy uses

substances, made in a lab or naturally within the body, to boost the immune system's ability to fight cancer cells, according to the American Society of Clinical Oncology.

"There are many types of different immune checkpoints, and there are several of what we call dominant immune checkpoints," Weidanz said. "One of those immune checkpoint pathways that I've been studying and my lab's been studying is one that we call the NKG2A pathway."

ONCOLOGY continues on page 3

## CULTURE

# Black leaders A to Z



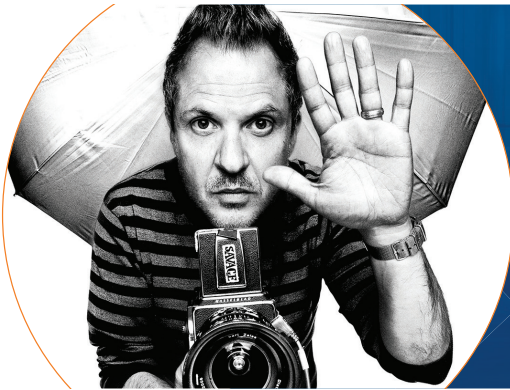
Illustration by Abbas Ghor

A TO Z continues on pages 4 and 5



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Courtesy of BRW Architects

## New UC

continued from page 1

Some proposed improvements to the UC include modernized student lounge spaces, new meeting spaces, a resource center for student organizations, study spaces, more dining options, natural lighting, improved technology, sustainable designs and infrastructure improvements.

The group that formed in the summer became the University Center Student Advisory Committee. Last fall, the committee toured student unions at the University of North Texas, University of Houston and Sam Houston State University.

Albart said some of the things that stuck out were the natural lighting that reached multiple floors of the building, which was achieved through the open space, and the lounge space that was more ample compared to UTA.

Committee co-chairs Daniela Pedraja and Alejandro Tamez only got the chance to tour UNT's student union.

Pedraja said it was a different experience compared to UTA's as it was full of life. She feels

like UTA's building was missing a component of school spirit and she liked how UNT incorporated their culture and traditions to the space.

Tamez added that UNT had the alma mater printed across the floor and different murals by students hung on the walls.

"It really showed that they not only cared about their students but they put a lot of effort into making it feel like a university center by the students and for the students," he said.

The functionality of the building also had students in mind, Pedraja said. There was a quiet floor for students to study and a space called the Syndicate, used for fun activities like karaoke and games.

Albart said the students they spoke with in 2022 and students now are asking for similar things: more open spaces, meeting rooms, food options and lounge spaces.

Lunce added that students didn't just ask for more space but areas that look nicer.

One of the features they plan to implement is various options of seating, he said. He points to the lounge outside of Starbucks at the UC as an example.

A few months ago the lounge was re-done, and they had intentionally bought different styles of seating like tall tables, smaller tables and couches for the space.



The Shorthorn: Joel Solis

**Students sit** at tables and couches Feb. 19 in the Palo Duro Lounge in the University Center. The UC has three floors that provide various shops, food vendors, study rooms, offices, lounge space and services for students to use throughout the semester.

"I think that with this project, what we would also try to do intentionally is having more needs being met for more different kinds of students," Lunce said.

Pedraja said it feels lovely to see her and the committee's vision of the new UC be represented on the conceptual renderings.

"Obviously, it was amazing that the Student Senate passed the referendum, but I think to me the feeling that I have now is just the work isn't over," she said.

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Bring factual errors to *The Shorthorn's* attention via email to [editor.shorthorn@uta.edu](mailto:editor.shorthorn@uta.edu) or call 817-272-3188. A correction or clarification will be printed in this space.

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COMICS

# Basket Case

A weekly continuing comic series  
by *The Shorthorn* design desk

# "The Bus"

Illustration by Kennedie Hakes

FOR RELEASE MAY 2, 2007

## THE Daily Crossword

Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

**ACROSS**

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12 Gilmore of the NBA  
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34 Actress Blyth  
35 Stag's mate  
37 WW2 hero  
38 "Goosebumps" author  
39 Diaphanous  
41 Nearby in the burbs  
42 Fashion monogram

47 Director Spike  
49 Binding promise  
50 Old Greek marketplace  
51 Prepared an apple  
52 Muslim scholars

53 Time after time  
54 Marine starter?  
55 Transmits  
58 Zola heroine  
59 Coconut fiber  
63 Whitney or Wallach  
64 2000 lbs.  
65 Help!

By Philip J. Anderson  
Portland, OR

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5				8		9		
					6		5	
			7	2				
6	3							
	9		1					8
		6				1	3	
			7	5		4	6	



# Oncology

continued from page 1

The pathway was found to regulate the killing mechanism of T cells, a type of cancer-fighting white blood cell. Weidanz said T cells will not interact with cancer cells until the correct circumstances are met, which depends upon the

cell's stimulations. Tumors are classified as hot or cold depending on their stimulation, which can be impacted by chemotherapy, cancer vaccines, or other methods of treatment, Ghaffari said. Hot tumors are stimulated, becoming active and ready to bind cancer cells, meaning T cells can target them. Without this stimulation, the tumors are cold, and the cancer cells

within them cannot engage with the T cells. Weidanz said their research could help inform patients whether certain treatments will work prior to beginning them. "There's no sense being on a six-month [or] nine-month treatment course if you're not going to ever respond," he said. "Hopefully, it creates other options for the patient and saves money

for the health care system." Emphasizing that their research is not supposed to cure cancer, Ghaffari said that his work will create a foundation for others conducting similar research. He said he found interest in cancer research after losing a loved one to the disease and returned to UTA, his alma mater, to join Weidanz's lab team after completing his Ph.D. Having worked with

other international universities, Weidanz said teamwork made the process efficient and effective. "I wish I was smart enough to say that this is exactly what we were looking for," Weidanz said. "Science tends to work through generating a hypothesis, right, and as a researcher, we build on other people's research." The team is additionally working on a publication

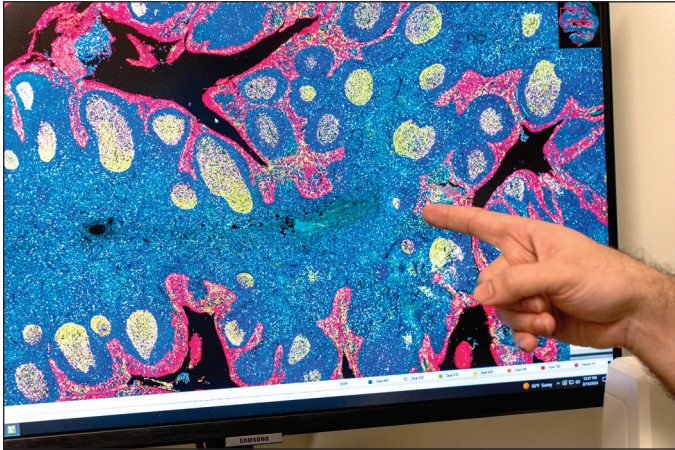
describing the clinical applications in humans in hopes that this research will allow for innovations in the field of oncology. "Hopefully some will read it and say 'hey, this might be for me' and want to come by and talk to me or other faculty," Weidanz said.

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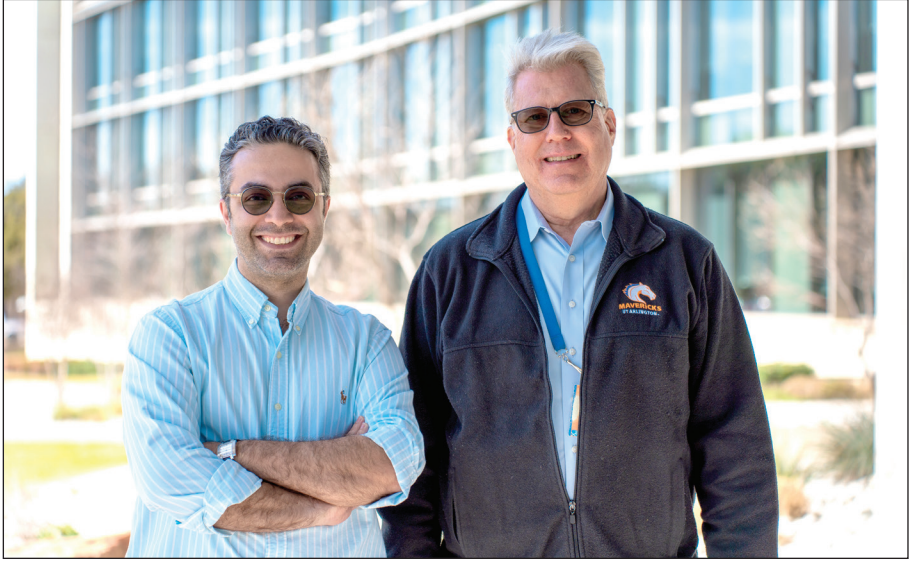
The Shorthorn: Natanael Mazarlego

A research laboratory contains equipment Feb. 14 inside the Science and Engineering Innovation and Research Building. The \$125 million four-story building opened Sep. 28, 2018 following two years of construction.




The Shorthorn: Natanael Mazarlego

Post-doctoral fellow Soroush Ghaffari looks at a scan Feb. 14 inside the lab room. This room is used to identify and classify cancerous tissue.



The Shorthorn: Natanael Mazarlego

Post-doctoral fellow Soroush Ghaffari, left, works at Jon Weidanz's, associate vice president for research and innovation, lab. They co-authored a study uncovering a mechanism preventing people's immune systems from attacking cancer cells, alongside researchers from universities in Leiden, Netherlands, and Solna, Sweden.



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Annie Lee Cooper, 1910 – 2010

Cooper was a part of the first Freedom Day, urging Black residents to travel together to Selma, Alabama, and try to register to vote.



Barack Obama, 1961 – present

Obama was elected as the first African American president in 2008 and was the fourth president to win a Nobel Peace Prize.



Coke La Rock, 1955 – present

Though he often improvised lyrics and did not record his material, Coke La Rock is credited with being hip-hop's first MC ever.



Dapper Dan, 1944 – present

A fashion designer from Harlem, New York, Dapper Dan pioneered “Jogomania,” a style incorporating popular brand symbols.



Elaine Brown, 1943 – present

As an activist, Brown's efforts extend to prison reform and providing educational resources for African American children in poverty.



Frederick Douglass, 1818 – 1895

Douglass' famous “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” speech offered provoking and powerful testaments to the reality of slavery.



Guion Bluford, 1942 – present

Bluford became the first African American in space after the STS-8 mission launched its crew in 1983. He spent over 28 days in space across four missions.



Harriet Tubman, 1822 – 1913

Born to slavery, Tubman used skills she learned about secret African American communication networks to aid escapes through the Underground Railroad.



Kamala Harris, 1964 – present

In 2021, Harris became the first woman, Black American and South Asian American to be elected vice president.



Louis Armstrong, 1901 – 1971

Armstrong dropped out of school to begin working, eventually saving enough to buy his first cornet and setting his sights on becoming a professional musician.



Muhammad Ali, 1942 – 2016

Ali went professional in boxing after his win in the Rome 1960 Olympic Games, traveling the world as philanthropist and activist promoting peace.



Nelson Mandela, 1918 – 2013

Mandela's famous “Speech from the Dock” stated he was ready to die for a democratic and free society. He became South Africa's first democratically elected president in 1994.



Oscar Micheaux, 1884 – 1951

Known as the country's first major Black filmmaker, Micheaux directed and produced 44 films throughout his career, usually depicting contemporary Black life.



Paul Robeson, 1898 – 1976

Robeson was one of the first Black men to hold serious theater roles. His *Othello* was the longest-running Shakespeare play in Broadway history.



Queen Latifah, 1970 – present

In 1989, Queen Latifah released one of the first feminist hip-hop albums at that time. In a male-dominated genre, she's carved out a feminist niche.



Rebecca Lee Crumpler, 1831 – 1895

Dr. Crumpler was the first Black woman to earn a medical degree in the U.S., battling the prejudice against women and African Americans in medicine.



Shaquille O'Neal, 1972 – present

During his 19-year basketball career, O'Neal played for the Orlando Magic, Los Angeles Lakers, Miami Heat, Phoenix Suns, Cleveland Cavaliers and Boston Celtics.



Tina Turner, 1939 – 2023

In 1985, Turner's signature song “What's Love Got to Do with It” won Grammy awards for Record of the Year and Best Female Vocal Artist.



Usain Bolt, 1986 – present

The “fastest man in the world,” Bolt secured and broke world records in the men's 100-meter and 200-meter sprints in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.



Venus Williams, 1980 – present

A professional tennis player, Williams has won seven Grand Slam singles titles. Five at the Wimbledon Championships and two at the U.S. Open Tennis Championships.



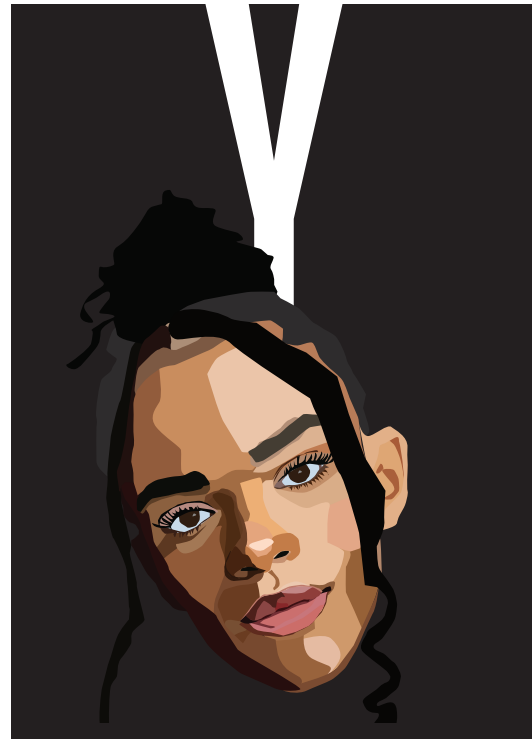
Willie O'Ree, 1935 – present

Canadian-born O'Ree was the first Black player in the National Hockey League, debuting with the Boston Bruins against the Montreal Canadiens in 1958.



Malcolm X, 1925 – 1965

Malcolm X was a minister, civil rights activist and prominent Black leader who served as a spokesman for the Nation of Islam during the 1950s and 1960s.



Yasmin Finney, 2003 – present

Widely known for her role in “Heartstopper,” Finney often speaks about her identity as a Black, British transgender woman in the acting industry.



Zora Neale Hurston, 1891 – 1960

Hurston was a world-renowned writer and anthropologist. Her novels, short stories and plays often depicted African American life in the South.

## BLACK HISTORY

# A to Z: Celebrating Black leaders

Here are 26 Black leaders to commemorate Black History Month

STORY BY HANNAH GARCÍA; ILLUSTRATION BY ABBAS GHOR  
The Shorthorn staff

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements made by African Americans and their pivotal role in U.S. history. Since its officialization in 1976, every February has become a time of remembrance.

In 1915, historian Carter G. Woodson and minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and others of African descent.

Now known as the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the group sponsored a national “Negro History Week” in 1926, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of former President Abraham Lincoln

and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures.

President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to honor the “too-often” neglected accomplishments and endeavors of Black Americans.

This month, take time to honor and observe the contributions of Black leaders throughout history. From A to Z, here's a list of historically impactful people from activists to entertainers.

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ARLINGTON



Members of the pit crew work to ensure meats are being cooked properly and that fire temperatures are correct.



Different cuts of meat are prepared throughout the day or the day before to ensure the meat is keeping up with demand.



Line cooks prep and cook side dishes such as Mexican Street Corn, Mexican Cornbread and the Texas Twinkies.

# Hurtado Barbecue expands to serve

The restaurant grew from pop-ups to brick-and-mortar with a third location on the way

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RONALDO BOLAÑOS  
The Shorthorn multimedia editor

Braving a crisp morning, eager customers bundled in coats lined outside Hurtado Barbecue an hour before its 11 a.m. opening.

With the number of visitors flowing through the doors of the restaurant, some would assume it has been here for decades.

Yet like a brisket that has just been placed in a smoker, Hurtado Barbecue, owned by UTA alumnus Brandon Hurtado, is just starting to warm up.

A lot has changed since its early pop-ups in 2018. With two brick-and-mortar locations in Arlington and Fort Worth and a third soon to follow, then placing in *Texas Monthly's* Top 50 Texas BBQ Joints in 2021 and becoming the official barbecue of the Texas Rangers, Hurtado Barbecue has garnered attention across the Metroplex.

Neither Brandon Hurtado nor his wife had any experience in the industry before owning the restaurant. They jumped into the unknown with their unique perspectives by knowing what their customers deserve, which shaped Hurtado Barbecue's identity, he said. The aromas and flavors are not typically found in traditional barbecue.

"My dad's Hispanic and I grew up in a Hispanic household eating Mexican food. My wife's Hispanic, we eat Tex-Mex food pretty much four or five times a week," Brandon Hurtado said. "You know, that's just home to us. Marrying the flavors of what we grew up with to traditional Central Texas-style barbecue just makes sense for us."

From a food truck parked at Division Brewing to now its own location across the train tracks, Hurtado Barbecue survived the pandemic a month after its opening. After four years, the restaurant will have its ribbon cutting.

The 120-year-old former railroad station-turned-restaurant has become a destination for locals and tourists passing by.

The restaurant pulls flavors from Mexico, earning the restaurant cuisine the title of Mexicue. From the rubs used in the meats to sides like street corn that transport you to a small puesto in a flea market, the culture is represented in the food.

"It's something that only a handful of places were doing whenever we first opened, and that's kind of the direction that we wanted for Arlington and for the barbecue that we serve here," Brandon Hurtado said.

Spanglish keeps communication flowing throughout the restaurant.



Above: Line cooks prep food Feb. 17 at Hurtado Barbecue. The side dishes are prepared in-house, as staff are constantly cooking new batches.

Left: Arlington pit manager Ralph Diaz works at Hurtado Barbecue five days a week from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. most days. Diaz is originally from the Bronx, New York, having worked over a decade in the restaurant industry.

While you wait in line and look around, chaos ensues as orders are yelled to the back and fellow customers squeeze into the 1,700-square-foot building, waiting to get a taste.

But the staff is prepared for the rush, taking time to ask how you are doing. After five minutes with Brandon Hurtado, one can understand where the mentality stems from.

Following a meeting at the upcoming location, Brandon Hurtado can be seen helping in the expo line, checking on customers and joking with his employees. He credits his success to his staff.

"We have great staff here who truly care about our customers. They care about each other," he said. "They care about the product that we're serving, and I think by hav-

ing great people, I don't have to be everywhere at once because they can do that for me. They know the vision. They understand where we want to be five years from now."

Customers Heather Drake and Dennis Law come to Hurtado Barbecue weekly, sometimes with a large group, or in this case, just the two of them. At 10 a.m., they were the first in line.

The pair met at Hurtado. Arlington locals have formed a community through the barbecue.

Since the pop-up days, Law said the restaurant has been a place of comfort.

"It was like going to your friend's backyard for a barbecue," he said. "And that feeling still remains even though it's a brick-and-mortar"

After opening two locations, Hurtado Barbecue is in the process of opening its third location in Mansfield in a couple weeks. Brandon Hurtado said he wants to focus on consistency and giving back to the community.

"Our main goal is to create synergies between all the three restaurants, employ more people, provide jobs to our communities and find other ways to give back," he said.

With caring, passionate staff and great barbecue, it's no surprise that even in its beginnings, Hurtado Barbecue has built a loyal following.

At the core of the restaurant is good, local barbecue, great service and a community supporting it at every step.

With each new location, the Arlington shop serves as the blueprint, taking those humbling beginnings of hard work and passion into the rest of the Metroplex, Brandon Hurtado said.

"The lessons that we've learned here, we've been able to take those and apply them to other locations that

we open up," he said.

Wrapping up its first year with Globe Life Field and continuous expansion, those lessons guide the growth of Hurtado Barbecue.

Behind the growing barbecue business is the staff that keeps each location running. The beating heart through the night is the pit crew.

Pit crew member Ralph Diaz, a native New Yorker from the Bronx, didn't grow up around barbecue. He traded the sprawling city life with its distinct Puerto Rican cuisine for a slow-burn Mexicue joint.

Though Diaz has had more than a decade in the culinary industry, this has been his first experience working with barbecue. Starting at the restaurant around three years ago, the change has brought him a new perspective.

"I've been cooking in the kitchen background. I just wanted to try something different," he said. "A little less stressful, more enjoyable, more rewarding."

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EDITORIAL

# Arlington needs better nightlife

Late night entertainment is important to the college experience and economic growth

It's around 10 p.m. and after a long day of classes, work or both you want to let off some steam. Maybe you could grab a bite to eat or drink at a bar if you're of age; but by the time you decide what you want to do, there are not many places left open in Arlington. Many students consider nightlife an integral part of the college experience. It's not always about clubbing and barhopping — the experience of eating a soul-filling, unhealthy meal at 3 a.m. can be just as memorable. For students at UTA and some residents, few choose to stay in Arlington and instead travel across the Metroplex to have some fun. Restaurants, bars and clubs in Arlington should consider staying open later on weeks that would garner more traffic. Major events like sporting games, concerts and conventions should be considered prime time to catch crowds. For students on campus, finals and midterm weeks consistently see students staying up at ungodly times to study.

THE ISSUE:

Arlington's nightlife is almost non-existent with businesses closing at 9 or 10 p.m. most days.

WE THINK:

Plenty of residents and UTA students would enjoy a more active nightlife, as it's essential to a thriving social scene.

TAKE ACTION:

Businesses should consider staying open later on weeks that would garner more traffic like finals week or weekends with major events.



Illustration by Lita Cruz

Arlington has many major stadiums, like AT&T Stadium, Globe Life Field, Choctaw Stadium and the eSports stadium. These venues host events like concerts and various sports games. With AT&T Stadium slated to host nine games in the 2026 FIFA World Cup, the city is sure to see a large crowd looking to mingle and have fun after the games in a few years. The city shouldn't wait until 2026 to up its nightlife game, as plenty of UTA students and residents would love a more active nightlife now. Washington D.C.'s nightlife contributes \$7.1 billion to the city's economy, according to a 2020 economic impact study. The study also states that nightlife is important,

as it relies on traffic flow outside the regular nine-to-five job, meaning it offers second jobs and more flexible work. Many businesses around downtown Arlington, the Entertainment District and other surrounding areas close around 9 or 10 p.m. While some bars and clubs are open past that time, the cutoff for most is midnight. That timing might be reasonable for a weekday, but it is far too early for weekends. For places that want to capitalize on the late-night crowds on the weekends, midnight should be the minimum, while others could stay open until 1 or 2 a.m. Texas Live, located in the Entertainment District, closes at 10 p.m.

on regular weekdays but is open until 1 a.m. over the weekend. This is a great example of accommodating a weekend crowd, but other businesses outside of Texas Live don't have the same hours. For people leaving other events like concerts late at night, there are only a few nearby restaurants or bars to go and decompress. While fast food places like Popeyes and Wendy's are options, it's not quite the same if you want the atmosphere of a restaurant or bar. Popular nightlife areas around the Metroplex like Deep Ellum or Oak Lawn in Dallas and West Magnolia Avenue in Fort Worth have businesses open until 2 a.m. It's not just bars and clubs either, as some

restaurants stay open a little later to accommodate the late-night crowd. Arlington isn't like the rest of the Metroplex. It doesn't need to be, as it has many late-night hidden gems. From places like J. Gilligan's Bar & Grill, Caves Lounge and The Tippy Oak, there's plenty to do and see in Arlington. However, the city should take a page out of its neighbors' books as the areas mentioned above offer more than just nice bars and clubs. Many of these areas have restaurants that stay open late and events that encourage crowds to come and visit. It's unreasonable to ask businesses in Arlington to stay open later if there's not a good stream of customers coming in late at night. These places have to produce enough revenue to maintain operations and stay open. Instead, businesses can look at the calendar and major events to decide when to stay open later. Concerts, games and for students, finals weeks are sure to have late-night crowds, so businesses should capitalize on them. The nightlife in Arlington can't just be improved through the businesses either. Next time you want to blow off some steam, consider visiting one of the city's local businesses. The Shorthorn Editorial Board is made up of opinion editor Chris Huddleston, editor-in-chief Mandy Huynh, copy desk chief Deekota Diaz, news editor Hannah Garcia, sports editor Isaac Appelt, news reporter Marie Renea, sports reporter Orlando Torres and copy editor Jinelle Sanchez.

COLUMN

## Preserving media in the digital age

Buying digital media is convenient but takes ownership away from consumers

Ever since I was a kid, I've grown up with video games. I remember being six years old and watching my oldest brother play the first *Kingdom Hearts* or arguing with my other brother about what version of *Pokémon* we were going to get for Christmas. I'm 21 now, and gaming is still an active part of my life. Sometimes I'll want to revisit those childhood memories or dive deeper into a long-standing series that I only recently picked up. But trying to find older games today has become increasingly difficult, if not altogether impossible. The rise of digital media seems like a step forward, but it also highlights an unfortunate reality. So many of the games I grew up with vanished underneath my nose, and it's likely the same thing has happened to you. Of 4,000 classic games released before 2010, only

13% of them are available in the current marketplace, according to a 2023 study done by the Video Game History Foundation. Across all platforms, the study never cracked 20% availability for any time period between 1960 and 2009. Nintendo closed their 3DS and Wii U digital storefronts in March 2023, putting decades of games out of reach. Now if you want to play a retro Nintendo game, you must own a Nintendo Switch and shell out extra cash for a

While video games are a dire example, this isn't unique. Disney famously cycled their most popular movies in and out of the "Disney Vault," periodically suspending sales of box sets and DVDs to later rerelease them. In 2019, the company ended this practice to instead make them available to watch on Disney+. These forms of media may not be disappearing for good, but the move to digital reveals a distressing fact that these companies aren't shy to remind us of — you don't really own anything you buy digitally. California resident Amada Caudel sued Amazon in 2020, claiming that the company secretly held the right to revoke access to purchased content on Prime Video. The lawsuit was ultimately dismissed, as the company cited this right was in the Terms of Use presented to the customer every time they make a purchase.

The convenience streaming services offer is tempting. Being able to watch your favorite show or movie whenever and wherever you want is often worth the cost, but what happens when the company decides to cut it? If you're lucky, the show simply moves to another platform, like how "The Office" left Netflix in 2021 to promote Peacock, NBC Universal's streaming service. In the worst-case scenario? The show disappears completely. In August 2022, Max came under fire for pulling 20 original titles as a cost-cutting maneuver. The removal included shows like "Infinity Train," where show creator Owen Dennis reported being completely blindsided by the move. "I had no idea it was coming, neither did any other show creator I've talked with, nor any of their representatives," Dennis wrote on his personal blog. Media has always been ephemeral. Books can fall

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Join the discussion by commenting online at [theshorthorn.com](https://theshorthorn.com).

out of print, shows can get discontinued and game cartridges can deteriorate, but at least they physically existed in the world. Nowadays, creators are lucky if they can even get a copy of their own work. The advent of digital media is a double-edged sword. It's a hallmark of our culture's progress and a black hole that absorbs everything we let go of. As time passes, more and more of our history disappears and it feels like all we can do is watch. Despite talented creators pouring their livelihoods into making something and a vast market of consumers

willing to purchase it, the ability to decide who can access the media belongs to neither of them. Instead, it's up to the whims of a company whether that media is valuable enough to remain available. It's easy to feel helpless in a situation like this. However, there's always something you can do for yourself, even if it's something small. Tell your parents to keep that box of games that have been sitting on your bedroom shelf for years or dig out your old DVD collection for a movie night. There's no time like the present to start preserving your past.

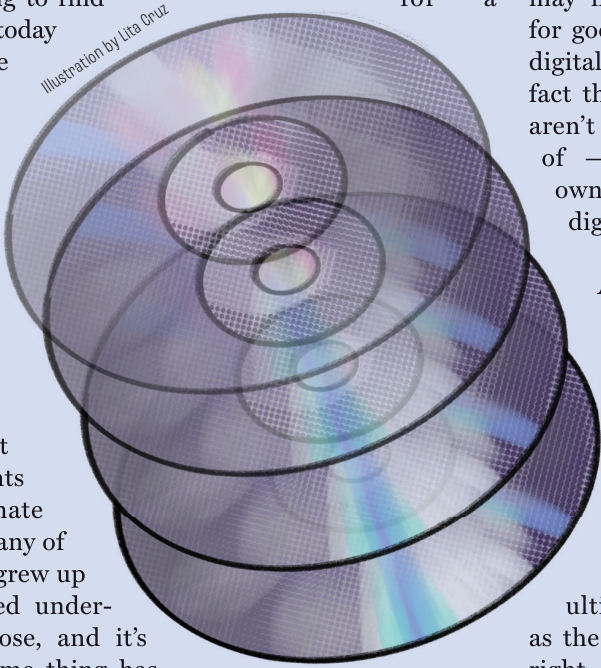


Illustration by Lita Cruz





# Guarantee

continued from page 1

## Who are the big schools and who are the small schools?

In college basketball, there are unofficial tiers that separate teams and conferences: Power Five, mid-major and low-major schools.

The Power Five conferences reign supreme. The Big 12, Big Ten, Atlantic Coast, Pac-12 and Southeastern conferences host 69 of the nation's top basketball teams, who have combined to win 17 of the last 23 national championships. The Big East Conference hosts the other six champions in that time span.

Six of the NCAA's 32 conferences dominate one of the nation's biggest sports, men's basketball, leaving most of the remaining 26 conferences to fight for scraps of national attention and advertising money the larger schools attract.

Programs like UTA's men's basketball team are in a tier colloquially called mid-major programs, a term college basketball experts and fans use to describe teams that aren't part of the six conferences listed above.

"Guarantee games are, for most schools like UTA, are a necessary piece of funding the overall program," Athletics director Jon Fagg said.

## Why do mid-major teams take these games?

The money earned from these games is necessary to keep the program alive. Fagg said he gave head coach KT Turner and his staff a goal to raise a certain amount this season through guarantee games. Turner met and exceeded the goal, though Fagg would not specify the dollar amount.

Fagg said the money is then placed in the Athletics department's general budget and can be used for many things like nutrition, more gear for the teams or to enter tournaments with a significant buy-in price.

In addition to the money, schools want this opportunity to show they belong with the nation's best teams. Rodney Terry is the head coach at the University of Texas at Austin, a Big 12 school. Before that he was a mid-major coach at UT-El Paso and Fresno State University. He said his mid-major teams always went into the game thinking they could win.

Turner shared the same sentiment.

"I felt like every game we went into, we thought, 'hey, we have a chance, if we can take them down to two minutes, we might have a chance to win it,'" Turner said.

The Mavericks dropped all four of their guarantee games this season, but were competitive in three of them. Their December game against Texas Tech University was tied late in the first half and the team nearly staged a second-half comeback before ultimately falling 77-66. A November contest against the University of New Mexico went down to the wire before UTA lost 82-80.

Those two games netted UTA \$80,000 each, records obtained by *The Shorthorn* show, and the Mavericks nearly pulled out wins on top of those checks. Turner said winning guarantee games is one of the best feelings in the world.

It's a great experience for the players, getting to play in bigger arenas in front of more fans, he said.

"You get to go play in these buildings and play against the best," Turner said. "Some guys never get a chance to step in buildings like that. So I think it's really good for that, for the experience for them."

Playing against better opponents also prepares the team for conference play, he said. UTA gained confidence after hanging tough with some of the top teams in the nation and the team rode that confidence into Western Athletic Conference play.

"I can see us competing against anybody," graduate guard Aaron Cash said. "It doesn't matter how big your name is or what you came from, like, I put in the same hours you put in or probably even more."

The WAC introduced a seeding system last season for their conference tournament. The system values wins over higher-ranked schools and ties into the conference wanting their teams to have stronger resumes when the season ends, so they have a better chance of reaching post-season tournaments.

These "guarantee games" now have added incentive for WAC teams through this new system. If UTA were to win one of these games, their score in this new system would increase.

"That non-conference schedule that we played could benefit us when it comes to WAC tournament seeding," said Jason MacBain, UTA associate athletics director for brand development.

## When are these games played?

All schools, regardless of their tier, play three types of games in their seasons: non-conference games, conference games and post-season

games. UTA's conference is the Western Athletic Conference.

Team schedules are broken down into three sections. During a season, a team will play a certain amount of conference games. Those games are determined by conference officials and schools have no control over them.

The WAC announced a 20-game conference schedule this season. After that, UTA's coaching staff scheduled a series of games before its conference schedule began. These are called non-conference games. UTA plays local schools like the University of North Texas and UT-Dallas during this section of their schedule.

Beyond the conference breakdown, schedules are essentially broken up into three tiers for mid-major schools:

- Games that universities pay for
- Home-and-homes where teams play one game at one arena and one game at the other
- Games that universities are paid for

Teams can play a total of 30 games in a season, or 31 if they're part of an in-season tournament, MacBain said.

Even UTA pays other schools to play them. The Athletics department paid UT-Tyler and UT-Dallas \$5,000 each in recent years to play at College Park Center. Fagg said these games are factored into the budget.

"It's hard for us to get home games too," he

said. "We have a great program, we have a great environment, and so people don't want to come play in it. It's hard to win here."

Since College Park Center opened in 2012, UTA has accumulated an 118-55 record at home. UTA pays up to \$5,000 for guarantee games while records show bigger schools pay up to \$100,000 for a game.

This is where guarantee games come into play. Power Five schools also want to schedule as many non-conference home games against lower-tiered opponents as they can before their grueling conference schedules.

Fagg said this can happen for a number of reasons. A coach may feel they have a young team and may want to build their team's confidence by picking up wins. Others may want to stack wins and head into conference play undefeated.

an SEC school, for 14 years and handled guarantee games during his tenure there. He said these games are a chance for higher-resourced institutions to play games without having to travel to play that team in their home arena the next year.

For example, UT paid UTA \$95,000 to play them on Jan. 1 this year. The Longhorns won that game, 79-62, and the Mavericks headed home to start conference play. Other games, like UTA's November matchup against Texas State University, are part of a "home-and-home" agreement where teams agree to play one game in each team's arena.

"A guarantee game is basically an acknowledgement that I don't want to have to come play at your place," Fagg said. "To put it in easy terms, the University of Texas doesn't have any incentive to come play here [at UTA]."

UT basketball coach Terry said after Jan. 1's game that guarantee games are getting more difficult with the transfer portal bringing more experienced players to the mid-major level.

"You better come in and bring your A-game," Terry said. "If you don't, you will get beat in these guarantee games. So there's no 'guarantee' anymore in guarantee games. You got to come and you got to come to play."

## The Scoreboard

The games are necessary for mid-major programs and can provide teams with confidence and a great experience, but guarantee games rarely produce positive results on the scoreboard.

UTA's 101-56 defeat to the University of Arizona earlier this season shows how lopsided these games can get. The team has won just one guarantee game in the last six seasons: a Dec. 19, 2022 victory over the University of San Francisco. Most guarantee games end in double-digit losses.

Turner had been an assistant at multiple Power Five schools before taking on his current role at UTA in March 2023.

These schools, he said, schedule guarantee games against schools they're confident they can beat.

"You pay the money because you feel good about winning the game," he said.

"Usually, you want to get teams that you know you can beat, give them some money and get you a win."

Now a mid-major coach, Turner said he would never schedule a guarantee game if he didn't have to raise money for the school. The team played four guarantee games this year, but he said he wants to get that down to three.

"If you lose six games in a row or whatever, it's hard to keep that team together without them starting to lose confidence and faith in the coaching staff," Turner said. "So you don't want to play too many because it can tear you down and by the time you get to conference, your team is disappointed because they've just been getting beat down so much."

MacBain said the team will look to spread out guarantee games moving forward. This year saw UTA play three (Texas Tech, UNT and UT) games back to back. Two of them were guarantee games and one was against UNT, the reigning National Invitation Tournament champions.

UTA will work to make sure that hopefully doesn't happen in future seasons, he said.

"I would love to get a home game against Texas or Texas Tech or Arizona, but they're just not going to, so I might as well play them there and get somebody to help our budget," Fagg said.

## Necessary, but not wanted

Though these games are currently par for the course at schools like UTA, the goal is to eventually get to the point where these games are no longer necessary, Fagg said. He would love to "not have to play a game for the budget."

Winning at least one guarantee game can give the school publicity, but it also makes scheduling these games harder in future years. Fagg mentioned schools like Gonzaga University and Xavier University as examples. At one point, everybody wanted to play them, but now nobody does.

Those schools no longer have to worry about getting their revenue through guarantee games as they get money from NCAA Tournament wins and other avenues like sponsorships with bigger brands such as Nike and Adidas. Gonzaga, once a guarantee-game school, has actually paid UTA to come play them twice, once for \$95,000 and the other for \$100,000 in 2018 and 2019 respectively, records obtained by *The Shorthorn* show.

"The best problem a mid-major institution can have is having trouble filling out their schedule," Fagg said. "That means you've arrived."

