

THE SHORTHORN

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

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The Shorthorn: Anna Geyer

CAMPUS GONE QUIET

Offices, lecture halls and common spaces lie empty as the threat of coronavirus keeps the community at home



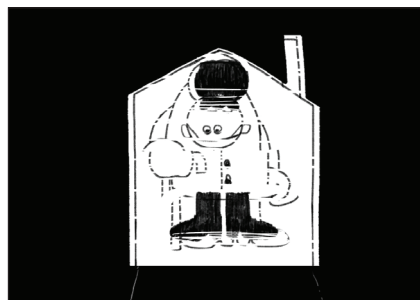
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INTERNATIONAL

Global travel restrictions affect international students

While some students were able to return home before travel restrictions took hold, others remained in the U.S. and were forced to adapt.

BY SHAMBHAVI RIMAL
The Shorthorn staff

Industrial engineering sophomore Arafaa Khan had plans to fly back to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to meet her parents on Friday. However, the country suspended all flights from many countries, including the United States, amid the COVID-19 crisis.

Travel restrictions and nationwide lockdowns are among the steps many countries have taken to maintain social distancing and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Khan, who contacts her parents regularly, said malls, cinema halls

and religious places in Dubai have shut down during the lockdown.

However, unlike the United States, Dubai has strict rules such as issuing fines for people who are seen outside without a valid permit for work or emergency situations, Khan said. The country is now slowly reopening restaurants and businesses with restrictions.

“My parents even told me you can’t go to the grocery store for more than three days in a row,” she said.

The United Arab Emirates currently has 19,661 positive COVID-19 cases, according to data retrieved Tuesday evening from Johns Hopkins University.

Rather than being alone at her apartment, being with family during this situation would be more comforting and securing,

Khan said.

Her parents understand the situation that many international students are in, including her sister who is in the U.K. Like herself, her sister can’t travel back home.

“They are pretty much understanding of the situation, but of course they do keep a check on me,” Khan said. “They call me almost every day, stay connected and get updates.”

Information systems junior Mitul Kachhla is in a similar situation. He planned to travel back home to Gujarat, India, during the summer, but the country currently has a travel ban that has shut down airports.

India’s government has imposed serious lockdown restrictions to control the spread

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ARLINGTON



City implements COVID-19 recovery plan

Upcoming phases of the response will address the budgets of fiscal years 2020 and 2021.

BY BRAYDEN GARCIA
The Shorthorn senior staff

Facing an \$18.3 million deficit on its 2020 budget, the city of Arlington has implemented a plan to help itself recover from the effects of COVID-19.

City manager Trey Yelverton

presented the five-phase plan at the April 14 Arlington City Council meeting.

The first three phases have already been implemented, he said. Phase one included freezing vacant positions for the rest of the year, suspending employee raises and freezing vehicle purchases, among other things.

Phase two included financial restructuring in the city’s park fees program, which collects fees for new developments in a certain zone for

RECOVERY continues on page 2

UNIVERSITY

UTA on track to achieve Texas Tier 1 university status

The university remains committed to completing the benchmarks in spite of COVID-19, interim President Teik Lim said.

BY MEGAN CARDONA
The Shorthorn senior staff

UTA is on track to become a Texas Tier 1 university by September, interim President Teik Lim said in a statement.

The university is already a Carnegie R1 institution, and adding the Tier 1 designation would cement UTA in the upper echelon of higher education and research institutions, he said.

In order to be designated as Tier 1, universities must meet the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s accountability system along with several other criteria including:

- expenditures of at least \$45 million in restricted research
- \$400 million endowment annually
- 200 doctoral degrees awarded annually
- freshman class with high academic achievement
- membership in Association of Research Libraries, Phi Beta Kappa or equivalent national recognition
- high quality faculty
- commitment to high quality graduate education

Universities need to meet the board’s criteria for two consecutive years. UTA will complete the criteria

on Aug. 31.

The designation would also make the university eligible for the National Research University Fund. The fund was established by the 81st Texas Legislature to provide funding for emerging Texas research universities to achieve national prominence, according to its website.

The designation would provide the university with \$8 million each year, said Pranesh Aswath, interim provost and vice president of Academic Affairs. Once granted Tier 1 status, the university keeps that designation.

Yearly funding would go to facilitating and supporting research, chief communications officer Joe Carpenter said.

Each research undertaking has a budget, and the funding would help pay for researcher staff, equipment and materials, he said.

Aswath’s previous position as senior vice provost for Academic Planning and Policy involves student success, and he works closely with the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Office of Graduate Studies to meet the 200 doctoral degree goal.

He also works on a report every year that shows UTA’s progress towards Tier 1. When putting together the report, Aswath said it’s easy to tell whether or not they made the cut.

Tier 1 designation would validate UTA as one of the best universities in Texas, Carpenter said.

The prestigious title not only helps attract high quality faculty and researchers but also increases



The Shorthorn: File photo/Shay Cohen

The Science and Engineering Innovation and Research Building on Aug. 23, 2018. The building emphasizes sustainability in both its large exterior windows and native species landscaping, senior project manager Bill Amendola said.

support for the university, he said. It shows prospective students the level of academic and research expertise the university has to offer.

Having a high quality freshman class is an area overseen by Troy Johnson, vice president for enrollment management. Johnson said his job is to help the university meet strategic enrollment goals such as attracting high quality students.

He said this year the university is projected to have its highest number of high school graduates indicating their interest to enroll at UTA.

While there are still some uncertainties in the time of COVID-19, Johnson said they are not going to adjust their initial goal.

Prior to the pandemic’s outbreak, Aswath said UTA was well on its way to reaching Tier 1.

“COVID-19 threw us a curveball,” he said. “It was completely unexpected.”

Aswath said the university is providing ways for doctoral students to conduct research using social distancing measures so that they can finish their degree.

Although COVID-19 affected the certainty in how the university operates, UTA remains focused and committed to continuing progress toward completing the benchmarks, Lim said.

“This accomplishment is the result of rigorous work and dedication by our students, faculty and staff,” he said. “The work we have put in to reach this point opens up countless doors for UTA’s future.”

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Restrictions

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of coronavirus and protect its population, Kachhla said. Currently, India has 74,292 confirmed COVID-19 cases, according to data retrieved Tuesday evening from Johns Hopkins University.

Kachhla, who is an only child, said his parents are worried as the number of coronavirus cases rise in the U.S.

“They call twice in a day and tell me ‘Don’t go outside, please keep social distancing,’” Kachhla said.

While many UTA students could not go back home, public health senior Clarence McCarthy-Grogan was fortunate enough to go home just in time.

“It’s been great being back with my family because I never have too many opportunities to be able to spend a lot of time with my parents,” he said in an email.

McCarthy-Grogan remained in isolation for two weeks after getting back to Darwin, Northern Territory Australia, he said.

In the Northern Territory Australia, people are following social distancing rules, he said. As of Tuesday evening, there are currently 6,980 COVID-19 confirmed cases in Australia, according to data retrieved from Johns Hopkins University.

“There is still a lot of uncertainty on what the remainder of 2020 looks like, but the main thing is that we are all keeping well and we can only worry about what we can control,” McCarthy-Grogan said.

The 15-hour time difference is exhausting for him, but he keeps himself motivated to finish the semester off as strong as he can.

“I am not sure when I will be able to return. It will all depend on the International Travel Ban from Australia,” he said.

Business freshman Elodie Tessier also



The Shorthorn: Anna Geyer

Informations systems junior Mitul Kachhla sits at his desk in his bedroom May 12 in his on-campus apartment. Kachhla said that besides homework, he’s been keeping busy by cooking and watching movies.

traveled back home to Quebec, Canada, to be with her family. Canada currently has 72,419 confirmed COVID-19 cases, according to data retrieved Tuesday evening from Johns Hopkins University.

Tessier said being around family is easier in this situation. Staying in the states would be more challenging.

Tessier finds it challenging to access the online tutoring, but her professors have done a great job adjusting classes online, she said. Tessier said she hopes to return to UTA by September.

“I don’t even know if I will be able to come back as of right now,” she said. “There’s a lot of question[s] with no answer.”

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Recovery

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future park expansion and development.

Phase three included departmental reductions. Yelverton said at the April 14 meeting that the reductions they asked departments to make were positions they could manage between now and the end of the year.

Phases four and five include using reserves and furloughs/layoffs. Yelverton said if the budget can’t get to where it needs to by the end of the fiscal year, using the reserves in phase four will help fill it in.

Phase five could help this fiscal year as well. However, it could potentially help more toward the fiscal year 2021, he said. If the city was to go ahead with furloughs/layoffs now, then there would only be savings for a few months, Yelverton said.

“Savings is what we need, but you don’t really get what we would call a full-year funding type savings,” he said. “Those type of measures would not only potentially help us this year, but more than likely it will help us going into fiscal [year 2021.]”

Yelverton said COVID-19’s impact on the budget will have effects on the fiscal year budgets for 2021 and 2022. He said the city’s budget works on a few main revenue streams, including property tax and sales tax, with sales tax being the one felt almost immediately.

Even with some businesses

reopening, the city’s plan is set, and there are only a few instances where plans would change, he said.

Inaccurate revenue assumptions and possible federal or state assistance are just some aspects that could change the plan, Yelverton said.

“We’ve implemented it partially; we stand ready to implement it more fully if information dictates that,” he said.

Yelverton said the city is missing big economic generators like UTA and Six Flags Over Texas as well.

Now that UTA has transitioned to online classes due to COVID-19, the downtown area is missing the foot traffic that its students and staff provide when they eat at restaurants or shop around, he said. With the Six Flags Over Texas park closed, the city is losing sales tax and hotel occupancy tax from people coming and staying in town, he said.

Jim Brothers, Six Flags Over Texas marketing director, said in an email that when the park does reopen it will adhere to the governmental guidelines.

Another business taking precautions and waiting for relief is Free Play, the arcade and bar company. The company has an Arlington location and four Metroplex locations in total, with another on the way.

Free Play president Corey Hyden said it’s been rough since they had to shut their doors in March. He said the shutdown couldn’t have come at a worse time, with March historically being their busiest month of the year.

After shutting down, the

company put all its employees on disaster furlough and tried to think of other ways to generate revenue. The company sold gift cards, merchandise and even duplicate arcade machines it had, Hyden said.

“We tried everything,” he said. “And we were pretty successful. We were able to get enough funds kind of raised that we’re still around.”

The company applied for every governmental loan or program out there, Hyden said. Now it’s just a waiting game to see when the company will be approved for funds, he said.

However, Hyden does think that Free Play will be able to open whenever the government allows it.

As of recently, some businesses are allowed to open under Gov. Greg Abbott’s reopening order. These businesses include restaurants, hair salons and malls, among others.

While the city has had to make difficult economic changes, Yelverton said it does have the capability to continue providing city services. The city and its community will have a lot to reflect upon after COVID-19, he said.

“Everybody’s going to have this common experience that they’re going to be able to share for a long time,” he said. “As opposed to people’s experiences that are typically a little more unique and sometimes maybe can’t relate because of it, well now we’re all going to be able to relate with each other because we all just lived through the same thing.”

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SAFETY AND SECURITY

Social distancing endangers victims of domestic violence

As most people stay confined to their homes, domestic violence is increasing in severity, and many fear intimate partner homicide will also increase.

BY SPENCER BREWER AND BRAYDEN GARCIA
The Shorthorn staff

Editor's note: This story contains language about domestic violence that may be upsetting to some readers.

Domestic violence severity is increasing in Tarrant County because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with two domestic violence-related murders already happening during this time, said Kathryn Jacob, SafeHaven of Tarrant County president and CEO.

The fear is that the pandemic will cause intimate partner homicide to increase this year, she said.

SafeHaven is a nonprofit dedicated to ending domestic violence that operates in Tarrant County. It provides multiple services, including a domestic violence shelter and hotline.

While the number of hotline calls has not increased during the stay-at-home order, the severity of the calls has increased dramatically, Jacob said. An alarming portion of hotline callers are reporting extreme violence, including strangulation and use of weapons, she said.

“We heard about an offender who tied up a victim for days at a time and would repeatedly put his gun in her mouth,” Jacob said.

Now that the stay-at-home order has been lifted, Jacob said the violence may gradually fall. However, because so many offenders are given bond to avoid overcrowding jails, a lot of victims are still in danger, she said.

“Once offenders are in jail, many victims are able to find places to stay with family or friends,” Jacob said. “But when an offender is out on bond, shelter is often the only safe option.”

Jacob believes that until the bond issues are addressed, a lot of domestic abuse survivors will still need emergency shelters such as SafeHaven.

Additionally, the number of

hotline calls has begun to fluctuate. The average number of calls a day is about 65, but some days it gets up to 93, Jacob said.

She believes the number of hotline calls and domestic violence survivors seeking shelter hasn’t consistently increased during this time because victims are stuck at home with their abusers. This means they’re unable to safely call the hotline or seek shelter, she said.

Gloria Terry, Texas Council on Family Violence CEO, said the situation in Tarrant County is mirrored across Texas.

“If there was already abuse happening in the home, if there [were] already the telltale signs of violence in the home, [COVID-19] is just going to escalate those,” Terry said.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline hasn’t experienced an increase in calls either, likely because the domestic violence survivors are around their abusers more, according to the organization. However, data shows that after a disaster like an earthquake or hurricane, calls increase because things go back to a sense of normalcy.

Terry said data from Hurricane Harvey shows that domestic violence becomes more severe during a catastrophe. Stressors related to disasters such as economic or safety concerns lead to more violence, she said.

“All of those [stressors] are the perfect storm,” Terry said.

About 4,449 survivors have contacted the hotline, citing COVID-19 as a condition they’re dealing with, according to information provided by the organization on April 27. Abuse related to COVID-19 could include threatening to put the victim on the street or forcing them to wash their hands excessively.

Taking the first step to contact the hotline shows how strong and resourceful survivors are, and it’s something the hotline recommends as long as it’s safe.

The best thing friends and family can do in these situations is support the survivor and contact the hotline themselves, according to the organization.



The Shorthorn: File photo/Duy Vu

Rachel Voth Schrag, assistant professor in the School of Social Work, said the pandemic has caused domestic violence survivors to lose the ability to deescalate abuse situations and seek outside resources. Voth Schrag has studied domestic violence for 15 years.

If there is extreme violence in a relationship, such as strangulation or use of a weapon, the chances of a homicide occurring increase dramatically, Voth Schrag said. While it has always been a problem, she believes the number of intimate partner homicides will increase during the quarantine.

Social connection is a huge protective factor for domestic abuse survivors, Voth Schrag said. When the stay-at-home order was in effect, survivors couldn’t contact friends and family to escape abusers.

Additionally, seeking shelter at a place like SafeHaven could be perceived as a risk by survivors who fear they might contact the virus, she said.

“You’re not only then thinking about the risk of leaving an abusive partner and what that might do to escalate violence, but you’re

RESOURCES

MAVS Talk 24 Hour Crisis Line is available for students at **817-272-8255**.

If you or someone you know is affected by domestic or sexual abuse, call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-7233**.

If you’re unable to speak safely, you can log onto **thehotline.org** or text **LOVEIS** to **22522**. You are not alone.

thinking about putting yourself and potentially your children at risk of exposure to [the] coronavirus,” Voth Schrag said.

The Women’s Center of Tarrant County houses several departments helping women who have survived sexual violence. Departments include employment solutions, general counseling and rape crisis and victim services.

One of the things the rape crisis and victim services department does is accompany someone getting a sexual assault exam, said Alisha Byerly, assistant director of crisis services. However, with COVID-19, victim advocates can’t accompany people getting these tests.

“It’s been really difficult because

there’s still people going to get exams, there’s still sexual assault happening,” she said. “Just because the world’s kind of on a weird pause or like a weird spot, stuff still happens.”

While the center is able to contact hospitals and clients, Byerly said services are still heavily human interaction-based.

“Our world has been kinda turned upside down,” she said. “We’re so used to kind of working directly with people that we’ve had to really shift what we’ve done, but we’re trying the best we can.”

Many organizations have taken this opportunity to bring resources to those in need of them. Voth Schrag said her hope is that COVID-19 will teach experts and service providers new ways to contact and assist domestic violence survivors.

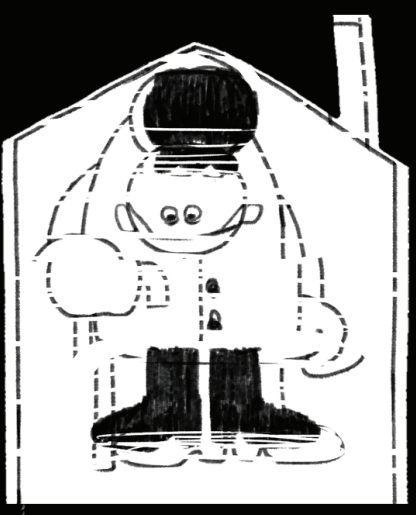
“Even if there is an additional wave of social distancing in the future, we’ve learned some stuff, and we’ll be able to continue to learn things,” she said.

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MENTAL HEALTH

How social isolation affects the elderly

Under stay-at-home orders, many older adults are losing connection with support networks and health and social service providers



BY DAISY GARCIA
The Shorthorn staff

Illustration: Chelsea Akpan

On top of adjusting to the move to online teaching caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Jim Langford, an assistant professor of practice at the School of Social Work, is three hours away from the Metroplex caring for one of his parents.

His mother, who is currently in a rehab unit because of a broken hip, is 90 years old, and his father is 93 years old. Both parents have various levels of dementia. And both are fiercely independent, he said, making it difficult to find a balance.

“You want your parents to be as independent as they generally want to be,” Langford said. “And most older adults, they really want to maintain their independence.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, older adults could be at higher risk for severe illness if infected by COVID-19, especially if they have underlying medical conditions like heart or lung disease, or diabetes.

Older adults can generally be defined as those of 65 years of age and older, said Kathy Lee, an assistant professor in the School of Social Work, in an email.

Eight out of 10 COVID-19-related deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults 65 years or older, according to the CDC website. The CDC recommends older adults stay home as much as possible. For adults living in long-term care facilities, visitations should be restricted.

With stay-at-home orders,

many older adults lost ways to connect with support networks and health and social service providers, according to an article published April 14 in *The Journal of Nutrition, Health and Aging* called “Loneliness and Social Isolation in Older Adults During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Gerontological Social Work.”

“Many of the traditional strategies for engaging older adults have become obsolete in the new normal,” according to the article.

Not only are adults now at higher risk for illness from COVID-19; while attempting to prevent infection, they become vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness. That risk has only heightened since the start of the pandemic, Langford said.

“Among older adults, gender, widowhood, living alone, poor health and restricted mobility are correlated with social isolation,” Lee said.

Socially-isolated older adults are more likely to feel lonely and depressed, she said. These adults also tend to have lower levels of quality of life, physical and mental health, and well-being.

It’s not worth the risk to visit grandparents or older adult relatives during the pandemic, but it is important to keep in contact with them, Lee said.

Lee, who has a grandmother-in-law who lives alone, said among the four grandchildren, they pick a day and try to contact her every week. Whether by phone, internet or email, this interaction can lower the risk of

social isolation and loneliness.

“We should make phone calls, send nice text messages, send photos of family, [email] them if they can use the internet,” Lee said.

Langford said many older adults, such as his parents, are not tech-savvy, so it’s also important to have community involvement through organizations, even during a pandemic.

When Langford is back at home in the Metroplex, Meals on Wheels will come four times a week to deliver food and check on his parents, he said.

Similar to Meals on Wheels, Sixty and Better in Fort Worth has provided a place for older adults to stay connected for more than five decades now, said Jeffrey Harse, development and marketing director for the organization, in an email.

Its mission is to empower adults to live with purpose, independence and dignity, according to the organization’s website. It has delivered meals to its participants and has provided information on the spread of the coronavirus.

Langford said while people understand physical issues that affect older adults, oftentimes they don’t realize how at-risk this population is to cognitive issues such as anxiety and depression.

“It is more challenging when you are trying to be a caregiver from a distance,” he said. “It kind of depends on what the needs are with the elderly parents and how accessible the caregivers are.”

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COVID-19 DISRUPTED THE LIVES OF VIRTUALLY EVERYONE AT UTA, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. HERE'S HOW OUR COMMUNITY HAS ADAPTED TO A CHANGED WORLD.



BY REESE OXNER
The Shorthorn managing editor

SHORTHORN STAFF MEMBERS MEGAN
CARDONA, SHAY COHEN AND EDWARD
MEDELES CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.

THOUSANDS WITHIN THE UTA COMMUNITY



set off for spring break, not knowing their lives would change completely.

Routines evaporated. Education was upended. Living spaces vacated. All in a matter of days.

Risk society theory refers to the way society orients itself around the knowledge of risk, sociology professor Robert Kunovich said.

“Basically, we live in a world that’s full of risks,” he said. “If you were to stop every morning when you get out of bed and think about all the things that could go wrong in your life, nobody would be able to get out of bed.”

However, Kunovich said our routines protect us from this thinking and put us in a “protective cocoon.” The COVID-19 pandemic shattered those routines, and without them, we’ve been left vulnerable and uncertain about the future, he said.

“Everybody’s lives have been completely interrupted,” he said.

Since March, UTA has responded to COVID-19 by moving classes online, postponing commencement, canceling all on-campus events and vacating most residence halls. The new coronavirus has topped 4 million cases worldwide, with almost 300,000 deaths.

As the world adjusts to the pandemic with shelter-in-place orders, new health guidelines and more closures than you can count, communities everywhere struggle to find new routines.

As the dust settles, universities and their communities scramble to find what’s next and students, faculty and administrators adjust to their new normal.

THE STUDENTS

Studio art sophomore Rebeca Compean is getting used to more than just online classes or being away from campus. After testing positive in March, she is still feeling the effects of COVID-19 on her body.

She still has trouble walking for a long time and runs out of breath far quicker than normal — even when talking on the phone, her breathing became heavier.

Prior medical issues left Compean with a weakened immune system and a higher chance for complications. Still, when she first exhibited symptoms, she convinced herself it probably wasn’t COVID-19. She thought she might’ve had the flu.

“I could barely walk; I felt so weak,” she said. “My chest felt like it weighed a ton.”

Her dad drove her to a health clinic in Dallas to be tested. Once her father told clinic staff she was being tested for COVID-19, the energy immediately changed.

“Even the nurses kind of look at you differently, like no one wants to be near you,” Compean said.

The nurse pushed a swab through her nose to the back of her throat. It hurt. They did it a few more times and told her results shouldn’t take long.

Days passed, and she began to feel anxious. When she got her positive diagnosis, she burst into tears. In the days after, Compean said she began to feel more isolated than ever — even more than she does from social distancing.

“Instead of concern, a lot of people were angry with me for being sick,” she said. “I felt a lot of guilt. Once I cried because I felt like it was my fault; I felt like people in my family were going to get sick because of me.”

She called everyone she was in contact with recently to inform them of her diagnosis. Many of them wanted to know where she got it, and she didn’t know what to tell them. She had no idea.

While some students are experiencing the effects of the virus firsthand, others are worried about what it could mean for their loved ones.

Nursing freshman Alyssa Cordero comes from a family of nurses. This is a fact that she’s proud of, but now, one that also makes her fearful for their lives.

Because of the pandemic, both her parents, who work in two different health care facilities, have decided to practice social distancing even at home to avoid passing the disease to each other or to their children. Each member of the household is isolated to one room.

The hardest part for Cordero was a conversation she had with her mom about what to do if she or her father died.

A few weeks prior, Cordero’s mom heard of a family where both the parents died from COVID-19, leaving their children confused and lost. She wanted Cordero and her sister — a freshman in high school — to be prepared for the worst, going over the family assets and plans.

“It made me think about what I could do if this were to happen,” she said. “Would I be able to tell my sister?”

Journalism junior Kim’Breanna Whitaker faces some of the same struggles as her classmates: too many emails from her professors, trouble focusing on online classes and adjusting to a less-than-social lifestyle. But she’s also experiencing the pandemic in a way unique to most.

She’s seven months pregnant. After the virus began to spread in Texas, Whitaker expressed concerns for how it could affect her or her pregnancy. Now, she’s very careful while trying to prepare her daughter’s room.

Currently her husband would be allowed to be present during childbirth, but Whitaker’s biggest fear is that the situation will worsen and that she’ll have to give birth to her baby without him at her side.

She and her husband were scheduled to see the baby’s final sonogram together. But when she arrived, they told her she could not have any guests.

She tried to FaceTime him the screen results, but the screen was too far to show a clear picture. And the clinic required her

to mute his call.

“I got to see our baby girl’s face for the first time ever without him,” she said.

Going to doctor appointments without her husband is usually stress-inducing, Whitaker said. All she can think is, “What if something goes wrong?”

Without live instruction or even online lectures, biology freshman Emily Heald’s days are spent mostly in pajamas. The structure of living on campus and having a strict class schedule are gone. What’s left are days intertwined with schoolwork, video games, YouTube and late-night showers.

Heald was camping near the

of become normal,” he said.

Ghoddosian makes the short trek from the Heights on Pecan apartments to his lab on campus. The new rules dictate that only two people can be in the lab at a time, but it’s not unusual for it to be just himself.

He felt very lonely at first, and that feeling can flare back up from time to time. But as an international student, he said there wasn’t really an option to return home to Iran right now.

After spring break, the number of students living in residence halls dropped from 2,244 to 144. Over a quarter of students living in UTA apartments also chose to leave and end their leases.

Virtually all offices and on-campus resources are closed, with staff working remotely



Brazos River for spring break when UTA announced it would transition to online learning. She wouldn’t fully realize the extent of the situation until she returned home and learned she’d have to move out of her dorm room at Vandergriff Hall.

Although professors across colleges have taken measures to adjust curriculums and practice leniency, Heald has found the new system to be much more difficult to handle.

“Now with it online, I feel like I’m having much more trouble keeping myself accountable for the work that I do and the quality of work that I do,” she said.

For her, just like many other students, lab classes have become challenging as well without group discussions or live instruction.

A more unforeseen hurdle has been readjusting to the lack of freedom of living at home again.

Pre-pandemic, Heald spent time with friends and in her dorm room. Even though her time living on campus was short-lived, readjusting has been tricky.

Heald’s quarantine home in Bedford is shared with five others, including her parents and brothers. More so than another semester online, Heald was worried about the possibility of having to stay at home this fall.

“I’m concerned that I’m losing some of the individuality that I built while I was on campus, while I was beginning my life outside of my home,” she said.

THE CAMPUS

If you were to walk on campus now, you might only see one or two students strolling the empty sidewalks.

You might even start to recognize them — there are only a handful of students still on campus, doing research, taking online classes and settling into new routines. Some chose to stay in their on-campus apartments. Others had no choice.

It seemed like a ghost town at first, said Reza Ghoddosian, computer science doctoral student. It still can, but he’s gotten used to the daily routine.

“I think all of us have adapted to this new life that just kind

from their homes. For the few students left, only a single UTA dining option remains available: carryout from The Market.

The event calendar is empty, and classes will be held online through the summer.

The most activity comes from campus construction and maintenance, such as on the University Center’s new entrance.

For spring 2020 seniors, a commencement ceremony is still up in the air.

As a first-generation college student, public health senior Whitney Nguyen has looked forward to college graduation her whole life.

“I think what really hurt me was that ceremony doesn’t mean as much to me as it does for my parents,” Nguyen said. “I thought I was going to be the first in the family to walk the stage.”

Now that the ceremony is postponed, she’s unsure she’ll ever attend.

“It doesn’t discredit all the work that I’ve done,” she said. “It’s gonna show on my diploma that I made honors and stuff like that, but for them not to be there and not to see it — I feel like that really hurts.”

FACULTY AND STAFF

Students weren’t the only ones surprised by the transition to online classes. Faculty and staff members had to make the jump to moving online as well.

The university used the extended spring break and the week after to train over 1,200 faculty members on how to transition to online teaching, said Pranesh Aswath, interim provost and vice president of Academic Affairs.

“The most important challenge we had to face was to bring all the faculty who never taught online and train them in a period of two weeks,” Aswath said.

Staff members, too, had to adjust quickly to figure out how they could still do their jobs remotely.

“It was like a frantic sprint really for two weeks trying to get



The Shorthorn: Anna Geyer

Above: An empty stretch of the University Center mall on May 9.

The Shorthorn: Chris Amaya

Right: College Park Center lies vacant after the final men’s basketball game of the season March 7.

as much done as possible,” said Michael Barera, university and labor archivist.

Barera said it was a juggling act of figuring out new workflows, adapting to new tools and tying any loose ends for on-campus work.

“Since late March I’ve been working from home, and it took me a while to kind of settle into the rhythm,” he said. “But for me personally, I really like it.”

Now Barera feels as productive or possibly more productive than before and is able to take time to cook and read.

...

Brad McCorkle, architecture adjunct assistant professor, teaches a course where students collaborate to build a house that they designed.

He said they were all on the construction site for a concrete pour in March when several phones buzzed with a notification from the university — classes would be moved online.

“It was like a kick in the stomach,” McCorkle said. “For two or three days after that, man, I was really down and bummed out about it.”

Now that the students returned home, McCorkle had to rework the course and turned over the labor to a contractor. He keeps his students updated with progress and holds chats to check in and make sure they’re doing OK.

The hardest part for everyone would probably be the lack of face-to-face interaction, he said.

“You really become like a little family,” he said. “You build this camaraderie that you lose a lot of by going online.”

...

Architecture assistant professor Oswald Jenewein said he hopes UTA comes out of this experience stronger and uses it as a catalyst to use digital communication to its full potential.

“Nobody wanted this situation that we are in right now. But we all had to adjust,” Jenewein said.

In terms of his students, Jenewein said it was a fairly painless transition. The students were able to switch to online faster than the faculty, but both were done efficiently, he said.

“I do miss the personal interactions — seeing people face to face, seeing all the students at the same time, not just through the small screens,” he said.

Because classes were moved online, Jenewein was able to return to his home country of Austria in early May.

He took an Uber to the airport, expecting it to be relatively empty. However, he said it was much more crowded than he thought.

His normally 14-hour flight became a 27-hour flight with two layovers, but the

number of people who traveled with him surprised him the most.

“The flight was packed,” he said. “There were barely masks — I was lucky to have one.”

He now faces a seven-hour time difference, which makes his virtual meetings run as late as midnight.

However, Jenewein thinks this situation has also had positive benefits, specifically in terms of digital innovation, and that it should shape the future of how UTA teaches.

THE FUTURE

It’s been about two months since the online transition was announced, and as the state begins to reopen, the UT System looks to the fall with hopes of open campuses.

The administration knows they want students to return to campus, but it’s unclear what exactly that looks like, university spokesperson Joe Carpenter said.

“We know that we want to, to the degree that we can, be back on campus,” Carpenter said.

Right now, the university is looking at a blend of in-person and online courses, as well as a variety of other measures, he said.

All around the university, new processes discovered through necessity are revealing efficient and accessible ways of

getting things done.

John Hillas, student organizations assistant director, said his office used to be very “paper heavy,” but due to the pandemic it had to transition to digital. He now hopes to make this change permanent.

Rebekah Chojnacki, interdisciplinary studies assistant director, said video chat advising appointments have worked well and could be a good future option in addition to in-person meetings.

Kunovich said he hopes to adopt some of the video recording techniques he’s employing now in his regular classes. Jenewein wants to continue using screen sharing in his face-to-face studios to provide live red-line critiques.

Jenewein said the pandemic opens the opportunity for innovation and for young people to step up into leadership positions.

It’s also an opportunity to advance the way people teach, the way people work and the way people live.

“What kind of world are we creating in this global pandemic? What do we learn from it?” Jenewein asked. “Now is the time to move forward with a kind of new thinking with some fresh energy and fresh ideas to make sure that we can improve things in the future.”

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The Shorthorn: File photo/Anna Geyer



The Shorthorn: File photo/Elias Valverde II



The Shorthorn: File photo/Anna Geyer

Top: Blackmon Mooring employee Isabel Menchaca wipes down doors March 14 in Nedderman Hall.

Above left: A formation of jets from the Navy’s Blue Angels fly over the city as part of Operation America Strong on May 6 in Fort Worth.

Above right: International business freshman Kristin Alderete, left, pulls her belongings toward her father’s truck with the help of her friend Leslie Ramos, critical languages and international studies freshman, on March 19 outside of Kalpana Chawla Hall.

Right: Fort Worth residents Lindsay Naylor, right, and Lindsey White chat in the back of their cars at sunset April 27 in Fort Worth.



The Shorthorn: File photo/Elias Valverde II

QUARANTINE QUESTIONNAIRE: STUDENTS COPE AWAY FROM CAMPUS

It's been two months since classes were held on campus, and *The Shorthorn* posed three questions to students about how they are dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. View a selection of the comments below and a longer list online.*

**Comments have been lightly edited for clarity and consistency.*



WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT CAMPUS?

The overall camaraderie that allowed for a flow of thoughts and ideas to be opened daily. A sense of being able to connect to people from all backgrounds and allow discourse in any lecture or at the library.

Daniella Granados
Linguistics senior

**I miss being in the classroom.
I miss the dynamic from an in-person lecture.**

Karissa Tomlinson
Criminology and criminal justice senior

Connecting with other people and getting to study on campus/use campus resources.

Mary Kenney
Communication technology junior

I missed working and interacting with people face to face.

Rama Al Taba
Visual communication design senior

I miss my friends and playing soccer or volleyball at the MAC!

Jonathan Guzman
Architecture sophomore

Honestly, not being able to go to [the] library and have really quiet time to do homework or being able to go to the MAC.

Jeremy Meredith
Kinesiology junior

WHAT IS THE MOST CHALLENGING PART OF THIS PANDEMIC?



Finding work to pay my bills and studying at the same time.

Ryan Jacobson
Advertising and business senior

I have family members with immune deficiencies I could be putting at risk if I go out. So I don't leave my house much anymore. I miss physical contact with other people.

Marshall Wimberly
History junior

Adjusting to this new normal, adapting if you will, to this weird period in our life. Not knowing when it will end is quite discomforting.

Kristen Lee
English literature senior

The most challenging part, I think, has been either trying to keep a positive mental state, or the financial crisis many of us are trying to survive.

Chloe Pak
Criminal justice sophomore

My family has been hit unbelievably hard by COVID-19, so it's been really hard staying positive. I have little to no motivation for school and found it difficult to keep up with my schoolwork given my circumstances.

Marizela Garza
Visual communication design sophomore

WHAT IS AN UNEXPECTED SILVER LINING OR POSITIVE DURING THIS TIME?



Thinking outside the box for ways that I can connect with old friends, and growing closer to my family.

Caitlyn Burge
Communication and English junior

God is still good, and He is in control.

Katlyn Backus
Linguistics and TESOL senior

I have been able to organize my room and have a better, more relaxing atmosphere.

Maribel Garcia
Business management junior

More time with family, experiencing online classes for the first time, no printing of projects.

Morgan Burks
Visual communication design junior

I get to spend time with my family and watch the sunset with them.

Sarah Kelly
Nursing freshman

I actually have a chance to pass all my classes. Sad, I know, but I've been struggling keeping my grades up for a while.

Spenser Moncrief
Computer science sophomore

EDITORIAL



Reopening UTA is questionable at best, dangerous at worst

The university should have realistic expectations about the ever-changing COVID-19 situation and plan accordingly

On April 30, Chancellor James Milliken announced that UT System institutions will reopen for fall 2020.

On May 8, UTA announced it would conduct in-person instruction in the fall.

Frankly, these are questionable announcements.

We understand that there are a myriad of reasons why the UT System and UTA want us to be back on campus, from greater learning opportunities to revenue purposes, and we admit that we want to be on campus, too.

We on *The Shorthorn* editorial board are all students, and we miss what UTA's campus has offered us. We don't enjoy being away from friends or missing out on various amenities and resources. Virtual lectures and assignments aren't ideal, and we wish we could say for certain that we don't have to do it all again.

But we know to keep our expectations realistic, and we realize that we're going to have to be flexible for whichever way the COVID-19 situation shakes out in Texas.

We hope the UT System and our institution will do the same. Our leaders should prepare plans for a variety of scenarios and communicate those plans with their students and employees.

Milliken said universities are looking to develop plans for reopening that may involve eliminating large lecture classes, having single-person occupancy in residence halls, spreading out schedules and isolating testing.

We find reopening campus a risky move even if such guidelines are enacted.

Health experts predict that a second, and perhaps worse, wave of the coronavirus could hit during the fall and winter.

Anthony Fauci, director of the

THE ISSUE

The UT System and UTA announced that classes will be in-person for the fall semester.

WE THINK

Reopening campuses could be the wrong move. There are a variety of scenarios that could play out regarding COVID-19.

TAKE ACTION

The UT System and UTA should acknowledge the uncertainty that we face next semester and prepare different plans for its employees and students.

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said a second wave is "inevitable."

If we reopen in the fall, those social distancing guidelines could work and keep spreading to a minimum. Or those guidelines could not work, and we could see a huge spike in cases on our campuses and have to transition to online like we did this semester.

And if a student or employee gets the coronavirus, the fallout and blame could fall on the shoulders of our campus and system leaders.

There are other scenarios yet. If Texas continues to loosen its stay-at-home orders and cases spike in the summer, it may be smarter to conduct the entire semester online from the beginning.

We don't really know. We don't have the answers to what's going to happen.

UT System and UTA leaders likely understand that, they have to admit it.

They have to communicate with employees and students about different situations and prepare them to maneuver through them.

Milliken said campus life will not be like this spring, but that's not a guarantee he should make.

The UT System and its universities can't control the spread of COVID-19 in Texas, fix the lack of sufficient testing single-handedly or control which county places a shelter-in-place order.

Some UT System campuses, in-

cluding UTA, don't even know if they should hold commencement at any point this year, so why do these institutions and their students have to operate and prepare for next semester as if campuses should and will be open?

"Health and safety concerns will be of paramount importance in our planning," interim President Teik Lim said in an email to the UTA community.

But if this is true, then not being on campus should be a part of their planning.

Presenting and preparing with a variety of plans is the key to next semester, and perhaps the semester after.

It may initially seem overwhelming, but in the long run, everyone that's a part of the UT System will benefit.

Communicating the likelihood of plans will help everyone under the UT System be informed, prepared and safe for the uncertainty that lies ahead.

The *Shorthorn Editorial Board* is made up of opinion editor David Silva Ramirez; Editor-in-Chief Brian Lopez; associate news editor Angelica Perez; multimedia editor Anna Geyer; Jacob Reyes, life and entertainment editor; news reporter Daisy Garcia; and copy editor Andrew Walter.

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COMMUNITY

Now is the time to fight for universal basic income

Offering people UBI could be a solution to the economic crisis caused by COVID-19

JOEL CUETO



Cueto is a public relations and journalism junior and Community Voices columnist for *The Shorthorn*.

Join the discussion by commenting online at theshorthorn.com.

With coronavirus ravaging the nation, now is the time to fight for universal basic income.

Universal Basic Income (UBI) emerged in the modern American spotlight during Andrew Yang's 2020 Democratic presidential primary campaign.

A crucial part of Yang's policy platform was UBI. The policy would pay American citizens over the age of 18 a nontaxable payment of \$1,000 a month every month. Even though Yang dropped out in mid-February, his policy proposals won over many people.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, a Hill-Harris X poll found that 43% of registered voters supported UBI. Fifty-five percent of registered voters aged 18-34 and 53% of voters aged 35-49 supported it. Only 21% of voters aged 65 and above supported UBI.

These figures showed that younger generations saw something inherently wrong in a system where 63% Americans can't afford to cover a \$500 emergency and wanted to do something to mitigate it.

Now with the American economy in a freefall and over 30 million people filing for unemployment since mid-March, many politicians are rethinking what they can do to help.

In a recent interview with MSNBC, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Congress needs to find ways to guarantee income for Americans until the pandemic is over.

"Others have suggested a minimum income, a guaranteed income for people. Is that worthy of attention now? Perhaps so," Pelosi said.

This pivot is important coming from Pelosi. It took a global pandemic and a near economic collapse for the Speaker to start talking about a basic income. Just a few months ago, UBI was considered a fringe idea in Congress, only supported by the far left. But now with the pandemic leaving many out of work, its appeal has gained significant traction.

The onetime \$1,200 stimulus payment sent out by the Coronavirus Aid Relief

and Economic Security Act was a band-aid trying to stop a bullet wound. What happens when those funds are spent to pay living expenses? What happens to the people who didn't get a stimulus check, like many of our fellow college students?

At this moment we don't need people to work. We need to stay at home to prevent the spread of coronavirus, but people still have to pay their bills and other expenses. In a country where most people are living paycheck to paycheck, UBI would give nonessential employees a way to stay at home to stop the spread of the disease and be able to live.

The idea of UBI still has many critics who will argue that it is too expensive of a policy and that we need to have certain means tests to be able to send out money to people.

Providing people with a basic income can help alleviate the stressors of having to pay bills, feeding their families and any living expenses they don't see coming like car repairs and hospital bills. Offering people basic income can be effective, especially during an unpredictable crisis like this pandemic.

Right now, there is no clear right answer to the economic problems that COVID-19 has brought, but people are suffering. If we can get money into the hands of people that need it the most, it will only yield positive results.

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NURSING



The Shorthorn: Elias Valverde II

Isabel Muñoz, nurse practitioner and alumna, stands in full personal protective equipment April 30 outside of Clinicas Mi Doctor clinic in Dallas.

Nursing alumna proactive in coronavirus fight

Isabel Muñoz finds strength in caring for her community by testing for coronavirus through Clinicas Mi Doctor

BY CECILIA LENZEN
The Shorthorn senior staff

Every day after her eight-hour shift, nursing alumna Isabel Muñoz drives home from Dallas to Arlington, strips all her clothes off in the garage and heads straight to the shower. Her clothing goes directly into the washing machine.

Before heading to bed, she calls her father to let him know she, her husband and two sons are still OK.

Her nightly ritual is a necessary precaution in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Muñoz works all day as a family nurse practitioner at Clinicas Mi Doctor, a family medical clinic in the heart of Dallas.

"It's just a change of lifestyle," she said. "It's something new, but it's what we're going to keep doing until this ends."

Muñoz is part of a team of 12 staff members at Clinicas Mi Doctor. The clinic uses a triage system to vet each of its patients for COVID-19, Muñoz said. If a patient meets the criteria to be tested for COVID-19, they're sent to the Mi Doctor testing location down the street from the clinic. Although the clinic itself isn't a testing site, she said the team is infrequently forced to perform emergency tests.

Daniel Saldana, Clinicas Mi Doctor COVID-19 response lead, said the Mi Doctor system has 59 active locations and 15 drive-thru COVID-19 testing centers throughout Texas and tests 600 to 700 patients for the virus daily. Each clinic is also equipped with testing swabs for those emergency situations.

Clinicas Mi Doctor tested its first COVID-19 positive patient during the second week of March, Saldana said. Since then, over 11,000 patients have been tested, with over 1,200 positive results at numerous Clinicas Mi Doctor testing sites. Every day, those numbers grow, and the nurses at Clinicas Mi Doctor have to adapt.

Muñoz said she always wanted to be a nurse; even as a child, she sought to help others. If another child fell down at school, she'd rush to help them up and check if they were OK. Throughout high school, she worked at a nursing home through a nursing assistant program called HOSA.

"I just always wanted to help others since I was a little girl," she said.

Nursing was the best outlet for her to continue that.

This isn't her first time handling infectious diseases, though. In 1994, she worked for a year at Harris Methodist Hospital on the infectious disease floor, handling patients with tuberculosis, AIDS, MRSA, hepatitis and chicken pox in adults.

Still, she said nothing she has experienced compares to the large-scale magnitude of the

coronavirus.

When the virus initially became widespread, Muñoz's first concern wasn't for herself.

"I just started worrying about all my patients," she said. "I'm hoping they're staying at home."

Most of Muñoz's patients are Hispanic, and she said she's especially glad to work at a clinic where she's able to speak Spanish every day. She sees a lot of need in Hispanic and Latin communities, and those needs haven't changed because of COVID-19 — they've grown.

However, sometimes those needs go unmet or unsatisfied because of language barriers. People aren't able to let go and truly connect to medical personnel unless you speak their language fluently, Muñoz said.

Because of this, she felt drawn to Clinicas Mi Doctor.

"I did look for this community," she said. "I've always served in communities with high Latin populations because I'm able to speak Spanish and understand it. It's a calling, it is. It's a wonderful community."

Muñoz's father, Victor Alcocer, a 1978 criminal justice alumnus, said it's especially important to have Latin nurses serving Latin communities because they can understand and break down large, complicated medical terminology in a way that Spanish-speaking patients can understand. That type of representation is sorely lacking, he said.

"Most of her patients are Hispanic, and she can relate to them," Alcocer said. "And the patients can relate to her and trust her."

Much of Muñoz's personal motivation and inspiration comes from her late grandmother, who had diabetes, hypertension and high cholesterol. Her grandmother spoke mostly Spanish, and Muñoz had to give her insulin shots every day.

"I just always think of her when I see my patients," she said.

In return for her dedication, she's seen an outpouring of support, especially during the outbreak. Patients reach out to her virtually to offer comfort and tell her daily they're praying for her and the other nurses at Clinicas Mi Doctor.

Even Alcocer brings homemade meals to the clinic each week, just to make the nurses feel good and enjoy something that isn't microwaved.

He said he's enjoyed cooking for the clinic each week, bringing them Swedish meatballs, brisket, pulled pork, smoked chicken and other meals. As someone who loves to cook, he said he's just trying to do his part to help out his community and support Clinicas Mi Doctor and its efforts.

Muñoz said these random acts of kindness, either from her family or her patients, have



The Shorthorn: Elias Valverde II

Isabel Muñoz, nurse practitioner and alumna, wears full personal protective equipment April 30 outside of Clinicas Mi Doctor clinic in Dallas. Muñoz enjoys working at Clinicas Mi Doctor because she gets to speak Spanish every day.

reinforced to her that she's truly part of a community. One that she's proud to serve.

Although the pandemic prompted a number of protocol adjustments and transitions, she wants her patients to feel comfortable and safe coming into the clinic for their usual care. During her appointments, she's covered head to toe in personal protective equipment and her patients wear a face mask.

Muñoz said one of the major changes she has had to adjust to during this pandemic is curbside care and telecare. She's able to treat and diagnose patients from their car or in a video chat. With each curbside patient though, she's required to completely cover herself in personal protective equipment.

"It's been different but creative," she said. "I love that we're able to help in whatever manner possible here."

Saldana said the overriding sentiment he's seen in Muñoz and the other nurses at Clinicas Mi Doctor is an excitement to be able to truly help their community in a time of such unprecedented need.

It's a humbling experience to be able to work on the front lines of a pandemic, Muñoz said. She receives plentiful praise for her service during COVID-19, but to her, it's just part of a nurse's job.

"It's what we signed up for," she said. "This is what [I] signed up for, to take care of others."

Many people have hailed nurses as heroes, commending them for their work during COVID-19, and Muñoz's son, Jovi Muñoz, a supply chain management junior at UT-Dallas, said that term couldn't be more accurate. His

mother might "just be doing her job," but it's a service that the country couldn't survive without.

"A hero is somebody that goes ahead and thinks of other people more than themselves," he said. "They know in the long term it's going to help not just them but the community."

To him, that defines Isabel Muñoz. Alcocer's emotions mirrored his grandson's.

"Isabel is — she's my hero," Alcocer's voice cracked with pride. "And all the other nurses that work there, they're heroes to me because they're on the front line."

Jovi Muñoz said he's proud of his mother for keeping her job during this difficult time. While many nurses have quit their jobs or at least considered it because of the pandemic, quitting was never an option for his mother. She visibly loves her job every day, he said.

Although it's a difficult time to be a nurse right now, Isabel Muñoz said her family and her church help her keep a positive outlook on life.

There's no definitive end to COVID-19 in sight yet, with the number of cases growing daily. So far, Dallas County has seen over 6,000 cases and over 145 total deaths.

It's concerning having to work in one of the state's COVID-19 hotspots, but the most Muñoz said she can hope for is that people follow social distancing guidelines and try to minimize the spread until a vaccine is developed.

"We're all a community here," she said. "We're all in this together."

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FACULTY AND STAFF

How UTA professors adapted to virtual classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic

Different professors had varying experiences with online classes prior to the campus shutdown, and each course provided different challenges amid the transition.

BY SAMANTHA KNOWLES
The Shorthorn staff

When classes were moved online, Jaya Davis’ course load was unaffected.

The crime and public policy professor taught only two online courses this semester, with over five years of experience in both.

Despite this, when the shelter-in-place announcement was made, Davis felt anxious.

“Because I was already teaching online, I wasn’t concerned about my course design or delivery,” she said in an email. “However, I was, and am, concerned about my students.”

Davis said helping her students adjust was a new part of the situation, but something she was able to do in the wake of COVID-19 was help support her fellow professors with the transition, as she was familiar with the process.

“I have put in quite a bit of work to develop quality online courses,” Davis said. “I felt confident in my abilities to help students and fellow faculty navigate the hurdles of moving everything online.”

As someone with a lot of experience, Davis preaches communication above all else and said if done right, real connections can be formed.

“I will remember this time as a turning point for virtual education,” Davis said. “I think this experience has shown that virtual education is important, and quality virtual education can be just as strong as what happens in the classroom.”

Like Davis, theater arts professor Amanda Jackson had experience with Canvas and online work.

But unlike Davis, when COVID-19 hit, Jackson had to navigate teaching a dance class through a screen.

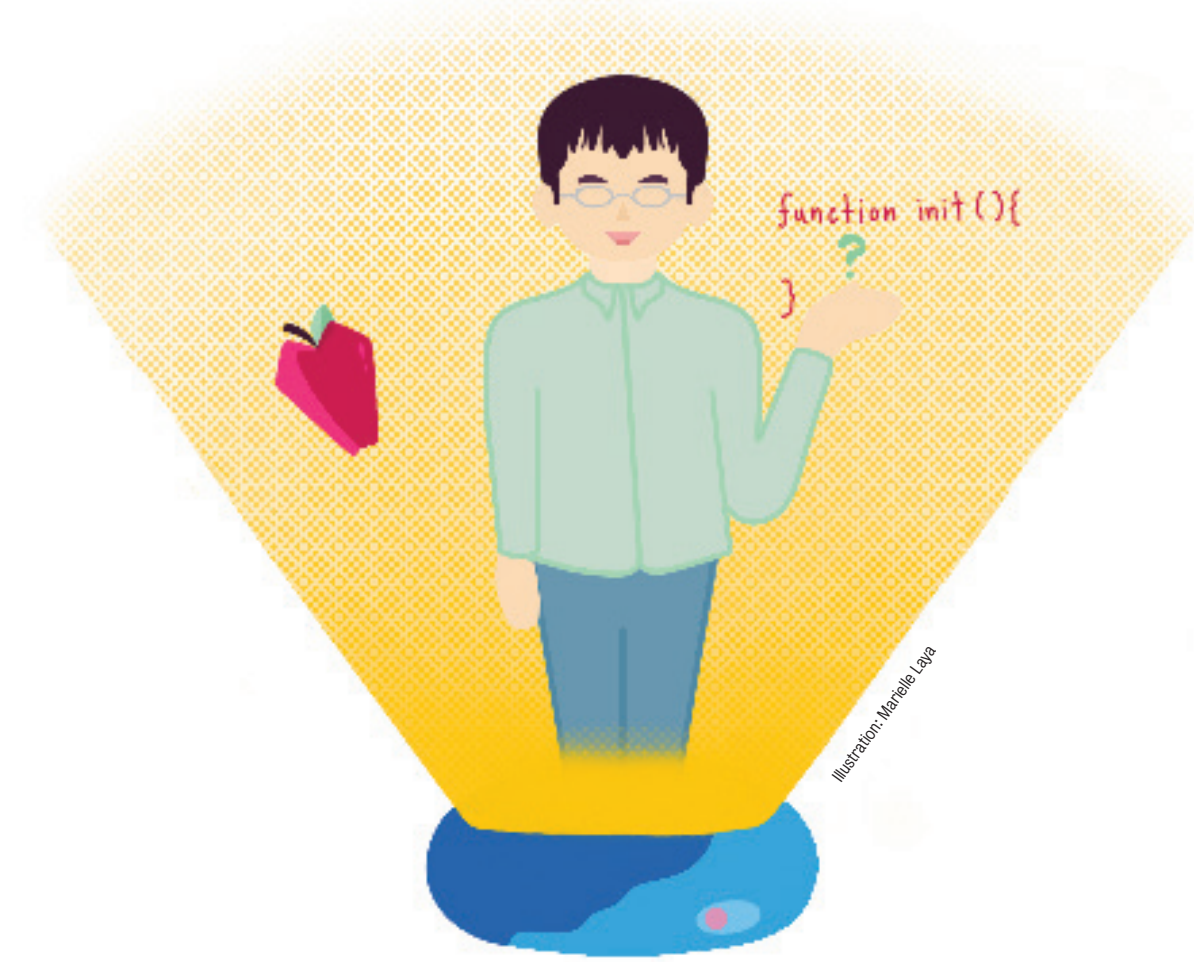
“None of us have access to a large amount of space with a safe floor for jumping, turning and traveling,” Jackson said. “So I decided to investigate the more creative and performative side of what we do.”

Jackson said she tasked her musical theater students with looking at a space in their home as if it were part of a theatrical set.

“Watching their work solidified how resourceful, creative and talented they all are,” Jackson said. “I think it’s normal to feel unmotivated, uninspired and overwhelmed right now, but my students, incredibly, keep pushing through.”

It’s seeing that creativity and talent that leaves Jackson heartbroken, she said, as the students she grew close, only to miss dance conferences, performances and concerts they practiced so hard for.

“This graduating class will always hold a special place in my



heart, especially since our dance students didn’t get their final bow,” Jackson said. “What I’ll remember most is the authenticity and empathy that we’ve all shared with one another.”

Unlike Davis and Jackson, Laura Berrios, stage management adjunct professor, didn’t have those few years teaching online classes under her belt.

In fact, Spring 2020 was her first semester teaching at UTA.

“[COVID-19] changed things

up,” Berrios said in an email. “Mostly because the project we were about to enter into when we came back from break involved one-on-one meetings.”

The second half of the semester was also supposed to be more hands-on, Berrios said, which made the situation even trickier than just the fact that her class is theater and very face-to-face oriented.

But through online meetings in Zoom and Canvas walkthroughs provided by UTA’s Center for

Distance Education, Berrios managed to end her first semester teaching in one piece and with some thoughts on the situation.

“The overall COVID-19 experience has reminded me about the human experience,” Berrios said. “This is truly a huge moment in history. It is going to change all of us in ways we can’t even understand yet.”

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The Shorthorn: File photo/Anna Geyer

The day the UTA sports world stood still

The Shorthorn sports desk talks to UTA's coaches about how the COVID-19 outbreak has affected each of the university's sports programs

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March 11 became the starting point of a domino effect in the sports world due to the coronavirus outbreak in the U.S.

From college to the pros, seasons and championships were suspended or canceled one after another. UTA sports were no exception.

The Sun Belt Conference suspended all sports indefinitely on Thursday, March 12. By the following Monday, the league had canceled all of its events for the rest of the season. That meant no March Madness, no conference tournaments and for the Movin' Mavs — no national championship.

Players who compete in spring sports will be granted an extra year of eligibility. Athletic Director Jim Baker said seniors who wish to return for a fifth year won't negatively impact their team's roster and scholarship limits. Basketball is a winter sport and is not included.

Baker said most of the questions he has received from coaches were about what the future looks like and how the virus will affect each program long-term.

"Everybody's just trying to figure out where we go from here," Baker said.

UTA's coaches weren't available to comment on the situation until now. *The Shorthorn* sports desk sheds light on how COVID-19 has affected each team.

Tennis

Junior Eduard Simo contracted COVID-19 after returning home to Barcelona, he told UTA Athletics.

Simo said his grandparents were sick before he arrived, but his grandmother was getting worse, so they took her to the hospital. She was there for 20 days. Later, they realized everyone in his home had the coronavirus, including his siblings and grandfather.

"I had a headache for like three days, and that was it," said Simo. "My sister had a fever for like a day, and my mom felt bad for a couple days, but that was pretty much it."

His family quarantined for two weeks until the virus subsided.

After recovering, Simo joined Health Warriors, an organization started by a friend of his that supports health care workers by providing them with prepared meals.

"It's very gratifying for me because you go to these hospitals that are overloaded with so many people and doctors," Simo said. "We go there and bring big boxes of food, and they are just so happy. They all start clapping. Every single doctor comes out and says thank you. They're doing like 12 hour turns, so it's the least we could do for them."

UTA's tennis teams were gearing up for conference play, each with only three losses on the season. The news of a canceled season was surreal, head coach Diego Benitez said, but the team had to gather its emotions.

Benitez said when the news broke, his main concern was getting his athletes home safely. Since most of the athletes are from other countries, making that happen had its road bumps, especially with junior Almudena Boza and sophomore Liz Chileno, who are from South America.

Alejandro Hayen is the lone senior on Benitez's squad and plans to return for an extra year, he said.

"He wants to play pro," Benitez said. "He's really using his platform to get better and to hopefully excel in the pro tour when he's finished

at UTA."

Given the circumstances, Benitez has developed a new appreciation for things, and wants his teams to recognize the same.

"One thing that I told them before they left was that this is a time to really appreciate what they have; to really miss our courts, our equipment and the competition, the feeling of playing under pressure, the feeling of defending the colors of the university," Benitez said.

Women's basketball

The Lady Mavericks had just been knocked out of the conference tournament a day before their season was canceled. The team was fully focused on competing in the National Invitation Tournament, but that never happened.

That lack of closure for the season was the most heartbreaking part of the situation, head coach Krista Gerlich said.

Although separated and in isolation, the Lady Mavericks are now preparing for the next season. They're holding Zoom workout meetings, keeping each other in check with group chats and are holding weekly one-on-one meetings with players.

Ashley Crawford, associate head coach and recruiting coordinator, said one of the biggest changes is how the team will recruit while social distancing. UTA has already added Oklahoma duo Lexy Keys and Wyvette Mayberry this season, but now the challenge will be attracting prospects without the in-person interactions and campus visits.

Softball

While en route to face the University of Louisiana Monroe, head coach Peejay Brun received a phone call informing the team that the series against the Warhawks had been canceled.

The team bus made a U-turn and headed back to Arlington, everyone uncertain of the future.

Shortly after arriving on campus, the team learned that the rest of its season would be canceled.

"I don't think that there was anything that we could have said to make it easier," assistant coach Miranda Kramer said. "I think the best thing that all of us could have offered at that point was help for them and clarity and trying our best just to be a support for them."

For the next seven hours, they gathered in the outfield at Allan Saxe Field to soak it all in — in the same place they had battled together all season.

"It was hard. There was a lot of tears being shed out there," Brun said. "A lot of shock, and for a while there, we were really just sitting in a circle not even knowing what to do or what to say and just kind of just being there for each other."

As the team looks forward to the next season, Brun said she won't pressure any of the seven seniors on claiming an additional year of eligibility.

"They had their expectations of their lives moving on, they had plans, and it's a struggle to figure out. Do you want to draw it out? Or was this a sign and just hang it up?" Brun said.

With it all under wraps, Brun goes back to that final day in the outfield to describe the true merits of the 2019-20 softball season.

"It wasn't a perfect season, but I absolutely loved the way the season went," Brun said. "I saw how we changed, and for what the world was having to go through, [and] what we're going through now, I really feel like it was at least a perfect day to end on."

Baseball

The baseball team was near Texarkana when it got the call to come back home. The Mavericks were supposed to be preparing for their conference opener against the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

They got back, had a team meeting on Friday and planned to meet again on Monday.

"By the weekend we were told they all needed to try to go home because everything was going to be online," head coach Darin Thomas said.

Before the season ended abruptly, Thomas was coaching a seasoned 12-4 squad that was off to its best start in almost two decades. They ranked as high as No. 4 in RPI, they had a strong defense and the pitching was as good as it's ever been, Thomas said.

"That all adds up to a good ballclub," he said. "It didn't matter who we played, we had a shot."

Thomas said the NCAA granting athletes an extra year of eligibility benefits veteran teams like UTA. With 13 seniors on the roster, he said most of them have indicated that they want to return for a fifth year.

A lot of value can come in a year of playing college baseball, he said. That additional season could potentially help players' chances in the MLB Draft.

Movin' Mavs and Lady Movin' Mavs

Instead of preparing for a trip to nationals in Wichita, Kansas, the Movin' Mavs held a morning team meeting in the Physical Education Building.

A week before its scheduled start, the NWBA canceled the 2020 National Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball Tournament because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Movin' Mavs were set to be the tournament's No. 1 seed, with a ninth national title in sight.

"What they did this season was very magical," head coach Doug Garner said. "I didn't want them to let anything else take away from what they had put into the season and gotten out of the season."

UTA finished the regular season with a 22-1 record. The Movin' Mavs defeated opponents by a victory margin of 35 points and their only loss of the season came against the Dallas Wheelchair Mavericks.

UTA went 14-0 in conference play, marking the first undefeated run in 15 years.

The Lady Movin' Mavs were on their way to claim the second seed in the women's tournament, something they planned their season around.

"I think it's really sad that we don't get to see where this team would have gone," said Jason Nelms, Lady Movin' Mavs head coach.

With the season over, Nelms' focus is usually on recruiting, but the pandemic could delay some things. Campus visits from international recruits have been canceled, and uncertainty looms.

"Sometimes the ball bounces your way and sometimes it doesn't," Nelms said. "Right now we don't even get to see the ball bounce."

Track and field

UTA was hosting its dual meet with the University of North Texas when the meet was called off just after the first events were starting.

Head coach John Sauerhage was told by UTA administrators to end the meet then and there and send everybody home.

"I don't want to get too sci-fi with you, but it was like right out of one of those virus movies," he said. "Time froze. I was in disbelief."

He had never experienced something like that ever before, not as an athlete or coach. Now, Sauerhage is dealing with the uncertainty the next few months will bring.

"We're still proceeding with business as usual, and we still are confident next year is going to be there. I think," he said, but with a caveat.

"The 'I think' part has never really been in the equation before. There's always next year. There's always a track program. There's always a track team to take care of."

But this setback could be what filters out exemplary teams, he said.

"The real programs are going to get through this," he said. "The programs that don't care about winning are going to let their kids just drift off and do whatever, and they'll come back worse. We have to be ready to face this."

Golf

Head coach Casey Devoll, and the men's golf team had just returned from the Bash at the Beach tournament in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, when he found out their 2019-2020 campaign was cut short. Head coach Catherine Matranga was holding a practice for the women's golf team at the Texas Rangers Golf Club in Arlington when they heard the news.

The coaches knew changes were coming in regards to their seasons, but they never thought they would be canceled completely.

"We didn't know if maybe just flying events were going to be impacted. We weren't sure," Matranga said. "After the first initial tournament was canceled, I knew it wasn't looking great for the rest of the season. I didn't expect them to cancel it so quickly."

Devoll said it felt like everything was falling in a domino effect after his team couldn't compete in the Redhawk Invitational in University Place, Washington. He said it seemed like the country shut down after the NBA started postponing games.

Despite the abrupt end to their seasons, both coaches see positives in taking a step back.

Heading into the 2019-20 campaign, the men's golf team only had one senior on its roster in Sully Billingsley. Devoll said he has already filled the spot the Arlington native will leave behind by signing a new recruit before the COVID-19 outbreak. The NCAA's decision to grant athletes an extra year of eligibility means the team will have more time to work with its top three golfers in sophomores Caleb Hicks and Kyle Cox and junior Paul Gonzalez.

Matranga said the women's team was heading in the right direction before things suddenly stopped. Three days before the conference canceled all events, junior Kate Tran was named league Player of the Week, the first player to do so in team history. The team had no seniors on its roster, meaning Matranga will not change her approach when all of her golfers return for next season.

"We're still on the same track," Matranga said. "It doesn't change eligibility or anything for us at this moment, being that we are so young."

With social distancing guidelines changing the way things are normally done, both teams will need to look for ways to stay active and stay in touch. Matranga said she is already conducting virtual meetings to catch up with her golfers who are spread out across the state of Texas. Devoll said some of his golfers are keeping up with their routines with personal stations set up at their homes.

"I can't wait to get started," Devoll said. "This is terrible, but we'll get through it."

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