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Arlington community cares for local cats, **see page 2**

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Lady Movin' Mavs to explore, learn in Peru, **see page 10**

STATE FAIR

State Fair of Texas arrives Friday



The Shorthorn: Ronaldo Bolaños

Big Tex touches down at the State Fair of Texas on Sept. 20 at Fair Park. The fair opens Sept. 27 through Oct. 20 with carnival rides, live music and fair food.

The fair opens its doors Sept. 27 through Oct. 20 at Fair Park.

BY JAMES WARD
The Shorthorn staff

Get the deep fryers and Twinkies ready — the State Fair of Texas will be in full swing from Sept. 27 to Oct. 20.

The fair runs from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Fairgoers can look forward to a variety of events including live music, frivolous foods and games, exhibits and museums, a rodeo and more.

Taylor Pulfer, director of communications for the State Fair of

Texas, said there are many reasons people come out to the fair. The fair prides itself on having something for everyone.

The State Fair of Texas has multiple ticket options for visitors to choose from, available for purchase online or at the entry gate. Season passes range from \$50 to \$60 each; premium one-day admission tickets are \$24; and daily admission prices vary each day, starting at \$15 to \$25 for adults and \$5 to \$18 for children and seniors.

In partnership with the North Texas Food Bank, the fair will accept two peanut butter jars per guest, lowering admission to \$10 per ticket on opening day.

STATE FAIR continues on page 6

CAMPUS

Libraries explains change

UTA's Central Library recorded a low number of visitors during late-night operations, data shows.

BY DANG LE
The Shorthorn staff

The UTA Libraries' decision to scale back the Central Library late-night operational hours was based on usage statistics, which showed it needed to reallocate support to its peak hours.

The library doesn't expect to save money from the decision, library officials said. That amount is instead shifted toward maintaining academic databases, investing in staff training to help students with coursework and offering the community more value. UTA Libraries expects to be budget neutral with the main location's new hours.

No full-time employee or student workers will be cut, as overnight staff are reassigned to cover day and evening shifts, Dean of Libraries John Wang said.

"It is a very challenging decision for the library," Wang said. "It's never easy because we know any change touches people's lives, regardless of how small that group is."

LIBRARY continues on page 4

UNIVERSITY

UTA's regalia gets a refresh

Students collaborated to design the new gown to showcase Maverick spirit.

BY ANGEL JEFFERSON
The Shorthorn staff

For at least eight years, UTA undergraduate students have worn the same regalia for graduation. This year's Mavericks will blaze across the stage in a new look for their big day.

The new regalia changes colors from the robe's original black to UTA's signature blue. The sleeve's blue trim will be white with UTA's logo embroidered on.

The regalia set now costs \$125, compared to last year's \$142. For the early-bird option, it's \$105 compared to the previous \$122.

David Eberhardt, assistant vice president for Student Affairs Administration, said the new design came at no extra cost to students.

Eberhardt said the change to make UTA's gown unique, distinguished and distinctive is a meaningful one.

"Graduation, as it should be, is a moment of pride in this milestone that you've achieved, this accomplishment," he said. "Having regalia that matches that, that is distinctive, that stands out, I think will be a really cool moment."

The original idea came when Student Body President Deon Rodrigues said he wanted to implement a sense of identity and tradition for Mavericks. He wants every student to look their best during their big moment as they walk across the stage.

"I wanted them to be presentable and also represent UTA as a whole, because I want you to feel the pride that [comes] when you take the name of UTA, and also the degree, the program and everything that you worked for," Rodrigues said.

REGALIA continues on page 2

OOZEBALL

The Shorthorn: Joel Solis

Information systems senior Dean Sabu gets covered in mud during Oozeball on Sept. 20 on the corner of Summit Avenue and Greek Row Drive. Organizations and clubs across UTA participated in the event.

OOZEBALL continues on page 5



Cruising for an oozing

Oozeball, UTA's muddiest tradition, returned Sept. 20



The Shorthorn: Joel Solis

Players go for the ball during Oozeball on Sept. 20 on the corner of Summit Avenue and Greek Row Drive. Seventy-five teams competed.

AROUND TOWN

Giving back through cuisine

The Sajori restaurant provides hot meals to students, faculty and staff every Wednesday.

BY SARAH SIMMONS
The Shorthorn staff

Ernesto Volmar begins his days at 7 a.m. prepping food for customers. As the owner of Sajori Puerto Rican Cuisine, he dedicates everything to his clients, but his generosity doesn't end there.

Sajori works with the Maverick Pantry, located on 520 S. Center Street, to provide free hot meals for UTA students, faculty and staff every Wednesday. Volmar always dreamed of giving back to the community and the partnership is just one of the ways he does so.

One of Sajori's priorities is making customers feel like they're back in Puerto Rico or providing an authentic experience for those who've never been. Volmar said the restaurant is filled with various trinkets that remind him of his culture back home — customers see those items and often have "flashbacks" of home.

"I want everyone who comes, whether they're Puerto Rican or not, to taste the dishes we eat on a daily basis in Puerto Rico," he said.

The menu features traditional Puerto Rican home-cooked dishes, staying true to the island's culinary roots. Volmar uses passed-down recipes, focusing on authenticity rather than innovation.

SAJORI continues on page 6



Ernesto Volmar,
Sajori owner

ARLINGTON

Community provides aid, protects local stray cats

The community provides basic needs for local stray cats by providing food, medical supervision and fostering them.

BY MOHAMED ALANSARI
The Shorthorn staff

UTA students are no strangers to the furry felines that wander campus, but some may not know who cares for them.

The Campus Cat Coalition's mission is to provide basic needs for the 150 to 200 cats around UTA, offering food, medical supervision and a watchful eye to the unofficial Mavericks. Shelters and feeding locations are stationed throughout campus.

Coalition president McKayla Mellen said because Arlington has one of the highest populations of feral cats in Texas, many make UTA their home. The coalition aims to help maintain the growing cat population through sterilization.

"We are just a group of cat lovers who all join for the common cause and work to just make sure that the cats are taken care of," Mellen said.

Although students often run into the gray-white cat Microwave at the UTA Planetarium, Mellen said the best spot for students to see campus cats is outside the Business Building.

With a continuously growing cat population, she said the group tries to foster as many cats as possible and get them adopted, but there's only so much space to hold them all.

"They're all really sweet, and we really just want them to have forever homes," she said.

The coalition enters the cats through the Trap-Neuter-Return program, which removes a cat's reproductive organs to prevent diseases and mass reproduction.

Coalition vice president Brandon Isom said the previous president's fight to legalize the Trap-Neuter-Return program dates back to 2004, which was approved by the

city in 2013.

Through the program, Annette De La Rosa, City of Arlington's Animal Services officer and Trap-Neuter-Return coordinator, said feral cats brought to the shelter's veterinary clinic are spayed, neutered and ear-tipped.

The Arlington Animal Services Center, located at 1000 SE Green Oaks Blvd., hosts monthly free neuter and spay clinics for 20 feral cats.

Megan DiGiovanni, the

"It's also really rewarding when you get to help the cats and you get to see them happy and safe."

Megan DiGiovanni
Campus Cat Coalition feeding head



Photo courtesy of Mary Abby Goss

Regalia

continued from page 1



The Shorthorn: Haley Walton

UTA Student Government, EXCEL Campus Activities, UTA Ambassadors and other organizations worked together to design the new gown. Rodrigues encouraged students to share their ideas, draw up sketches and give feedback.

This led to a final design that showcases UTA as a whole, he said.

"Having that feeling of giving my input or having that student input, it makes a big difference," Rodrigues said. "That's one of the last things you would expect from higher authorities and administration is, 'Hey, let students decide.'"

Juan Martinez, Involvement and Engagement student graphic designer, said he never imagined he would get the opportunity to redesign UTA regalia.

Working closely with Rodrigues and his team

on the new design, Martinez said he has spent hours researching and creating drafts, that bring the ideas to life.

As a senior, Martinez will soon be wearing his own design to get his diploma at commencement.

"This new change definitely resembles more toward the Maverick spirit," Martinez said. "Knowing that I will be wearing it, it makes me feel happy knowing that not only have I made it, but knowing I'll be wearing the school colors with it."

Graduating students can secure their regalia at the UTA Bookstore starting Oct. 1 and attend the Grad Finale event from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Oct. 15-17 for all their graduation needs.

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CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

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

In the Sept. 18 print edition of *The Shorthorn*, TheSpeedGamers was misspelt in: "UTA alumnus levels up charity stream donations."

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39 Mexican treat

40 Hawaii's Mauna

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43 Sprite

46 Detonations

49 "___ Calloways" (Disney film)

51 Red Sea peninsula

52 Filly's mother

53 Monopoly token

54 Primary

57 Garage job

58 Olympic archer

59 Cotillion V.I.P.

62 Bauxite, e.g.

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SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

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

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THE SHORTHORN

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

S	E	I	L	E	N	S	E	V	N	N	E
B	O	E	V	N	R	I	L	S	T	I	O
E	R	N	N	E	O	T	S	O	T	R	V
C	E	L	I	V	S	W	A	T	E	R	I
S	N	I	T	E	L	L	I				
X	E	L	O	A	V	E	R	S			
E	A	V	G	T	O	R	E	A	L	O	S
S	T	I	L	L	E	T					
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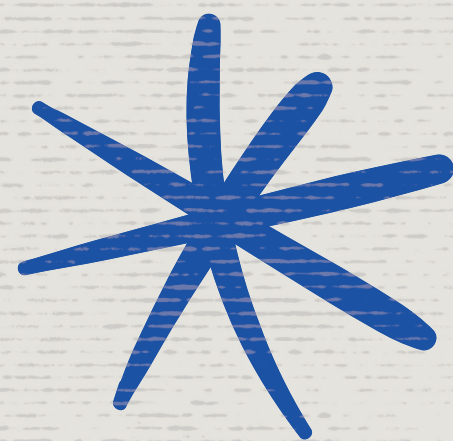
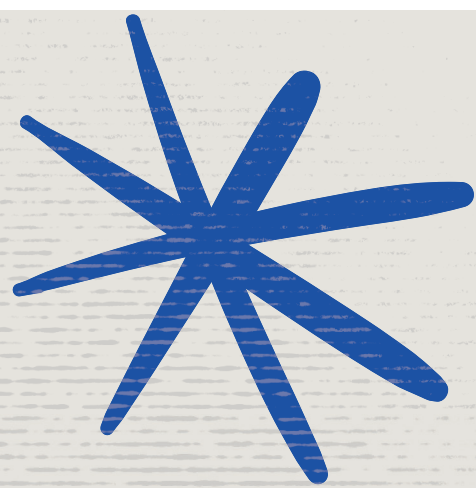
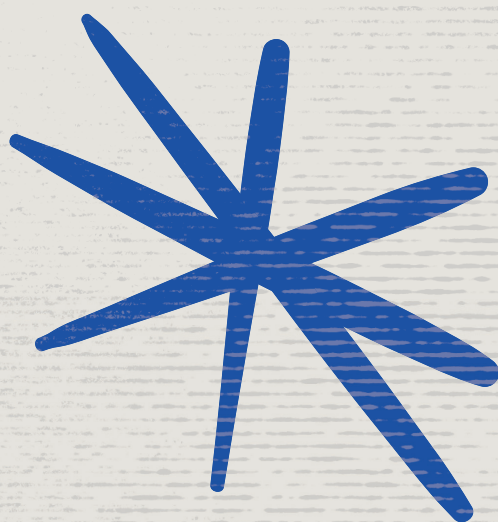
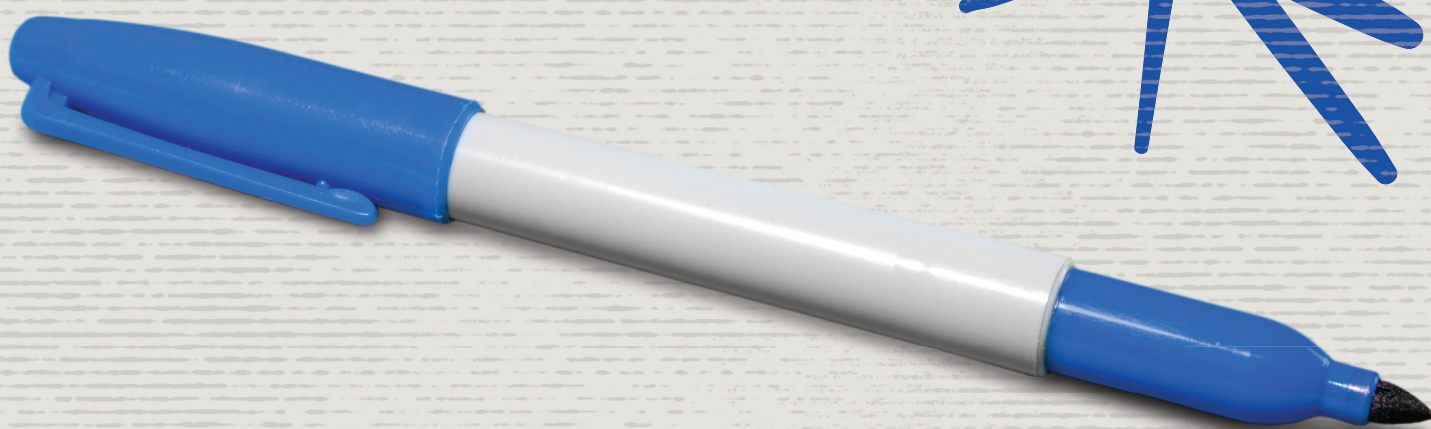
SUDOKU

2	9	6	2	9	8	1	4
9	8	9	5	4	1	2	6
1	4	2	1	6	8	9	9
2	1	9	9	2	6	4	8
8	9	4	2	9	1	6	2
6	2	4	1	8	9	9	2
9	9	1	6	9	4	2	8
4	6	2	8	1	2	9	9
9	2	8	9	2	6	4	1

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Library

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A data-driven decision

At the beginning of the fall semester, the Central Library shifted its 24/7 operations to being open from 7 a.m. to 2 a.m. on weekdays and from 9 a.m. to midnight on weekends. It will open 24/7 from 7 a.m. Dec. 3 to 11 p.m. Dec. 11, allowing students to prepare for finals.

The decision was data-driven, Wang said. The libraries began looking into the visiting data last November by observing the number of ID swipes over 24 hours. They also did a subsequent study on the numbers of visitors between midnight and 2 a.m. and from 6 to 7 a.m. up to March 2024 to identify the library’s slowest times.

September was the busiest month for the Central Library in both 2022 and 2023, according to data provided to *The Shorthorn*. In September 2023, 63 people swiped in at 4 a.m., while 13,489 did at noon — that month’s peak.

Throughout every month of 2023, the main library saw significantly lower usage between 2 and 6 a.m. — the times set for closure during this fall semester.

The change in hours aims to support service points during peak times, as users have requested more coverage during those hours, Wang said.

“It wasn’t done in any way trying to make our students’ lives inconvenient but really trying to say, ‘Hey, if we have this much

resource, how are we pivoting to helping our students more?’” he said.

Students react

The decision to reduce hours was met with criticism from students. Some signed a petition to keep the library 24/7, and some took to protesting at the University Center mall.

Wang understands students’ frustration, he said. He was an international student and knew students needed the space for studying.

UTA recently announced a new location for late-night study. After the Central Library closes, all three floors of the breezeway area connecting Hammond Hall and Trimble Hall will be available. Students must swipe their Mav ID to access the facility.

While the new location is a good initiative from the university, Sawar Gupta, chair of the Student Senate’s Special Affairs Committee, said he wants to wait and see how the university furnishes the space and how students react. Currently, it doesn’t have computers nor printing facilities and good lighting arrangements, he said.

UTA’s reduction of operation hours is part of a broader trend across college libraries, said Leo Lo, president of the Association of College and Research Libraries, in an email. Several factors, including staffing challenges, budget constraints and the shift toward digital resources have led libraries to reduce hours.

Funding for academic libraries often remained flat — or decreased — even before the pandemic, Lo said.

Libraries have struggled to secure funding, as they’re viewed as cost centers rather than revenue-generating units.

Earlier this month, the Student Senate introduced Resolution 24-12, “Don’t Close the Book,” which asked the university to restore the 24/7 services, provide an alternative or lower library service fees if services are cut, according to previous *Shorthorn* reporting. Wang later discussed the changes at the Student Senate general body meeting Sept. 17.

Libraries’ struggles

Gupta co-authored Resolution 24-12 with Areeb Khan, Student Body vice president, after being approached by many students — largely international students — about wanting to bring the Central Library back as a reliable, safe 24/7 space.

“[The] library used to be their safe space, and they don’t have it anymore,” Gupta said.

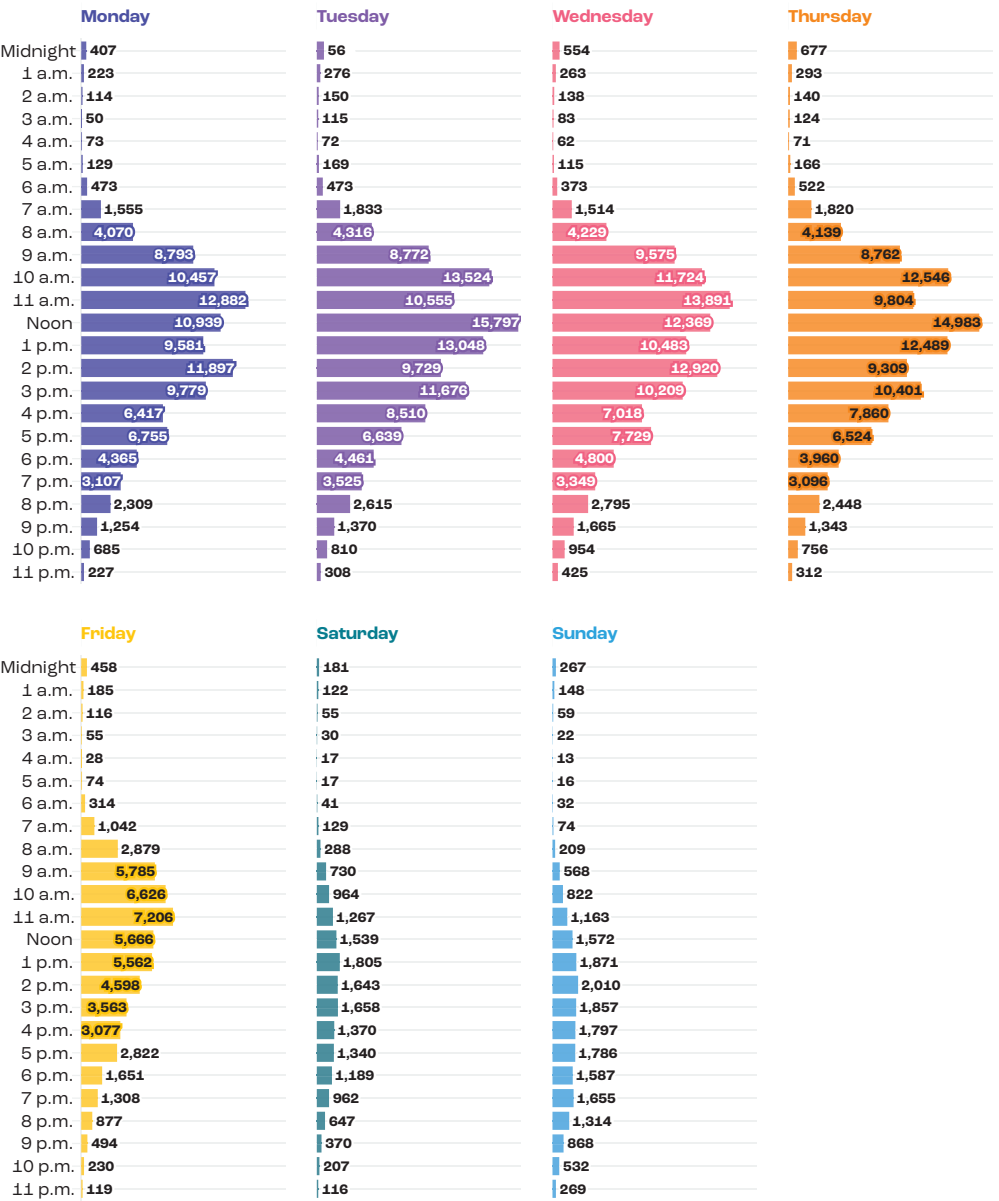
Students pay \$15 per credit hour and a maximum of \$315 for library services fees.

The amount has not been increased since 2004, according to previous *Shorthorn* reporting. UTA Libraries began offering 24-hour services for five days in spring 2003, starting from 9 a.m. Sunday to 8 p.m. Friday. The 24/7 operation hours started in 2017.

UTA’s library services fee is used “for the enhancement of library collections and service,” according to documents provided to *The Shorthorn* based on the

UTA records low number of late-night visitors throughout 2023

Throughout the year, UTA recorded 50 total visitors during the 3 a.m. Monday time slot, according to data provided to The Shorthorn.



Source: Dean of Libraries John Wang · (Dang Le | The Shorthorn)

Texas Education Code.

“Based on the Code, the Libraries need to prioritize services that meet the most critical needs of the campus community — focusing on access to collections, expertise, digital resources, and facility use associated with collections and services,” Wang said. “Some needs, like purchasing and

licensing collections, are unique to the library, while others, such as study spaces, are shared responsibilities with campus partners.”

In fiscal year 2024, the state dropped funding for about 55 academic databases, he said.

UTA Libraries recently invested about \$115,979.43 to retain crucial databases no longer funded by the state, such as Academic Search Complete and Business Source Complete.

While the data for FY 24 is incomplete, UTA has fulfilled over 340,000 searches, almost 390,000 items investigated and over 159,000 items requested from the Academic Search Complete database. These amounts resulted in a total saving of \$5 million for students and faculty who would have paid an average of \$35 for each article download. The average cost for UTA Libraries’ licensing those resources are \$3.50 each.

In FY 2025, the subscription cost for those databases has increased to \$129,053.39 — an 11.27% inflation rate, Wang said.

Inflation causes UTA Libraries to pay a four to seven percent annual increase for over 3,000 databases, he said.

What’s next

Many states have cut funding for both universities and libraries over the

years, forcing institutions to reallocate budgets to maintain access to essential academic resources, Lo said.

UTA is also an R1 doctoral research university, which makes access to those databases to support faculty and graduate research even more critical, he said.

“Without this access, students may face barriers in completing assignments, theses and dissertations, while professors may struggle to access the latest research to incorporate into their courses and scholarly work,” Lo said.

Gupta agreed that inflation has impacted the Libraries’ resources, he said. However, he’s not asking for all floors of the space to open 24/7 but two floors so students can have an accessible space.

For most students who live on campus, money is not the reason to fight for the library, he said. It’s about the sense of safety that students can go there anytime and study without disruption.

For Gupta, the library’s 24/7 operation hours are one of the reasons why he chose UTA as an international student last year.

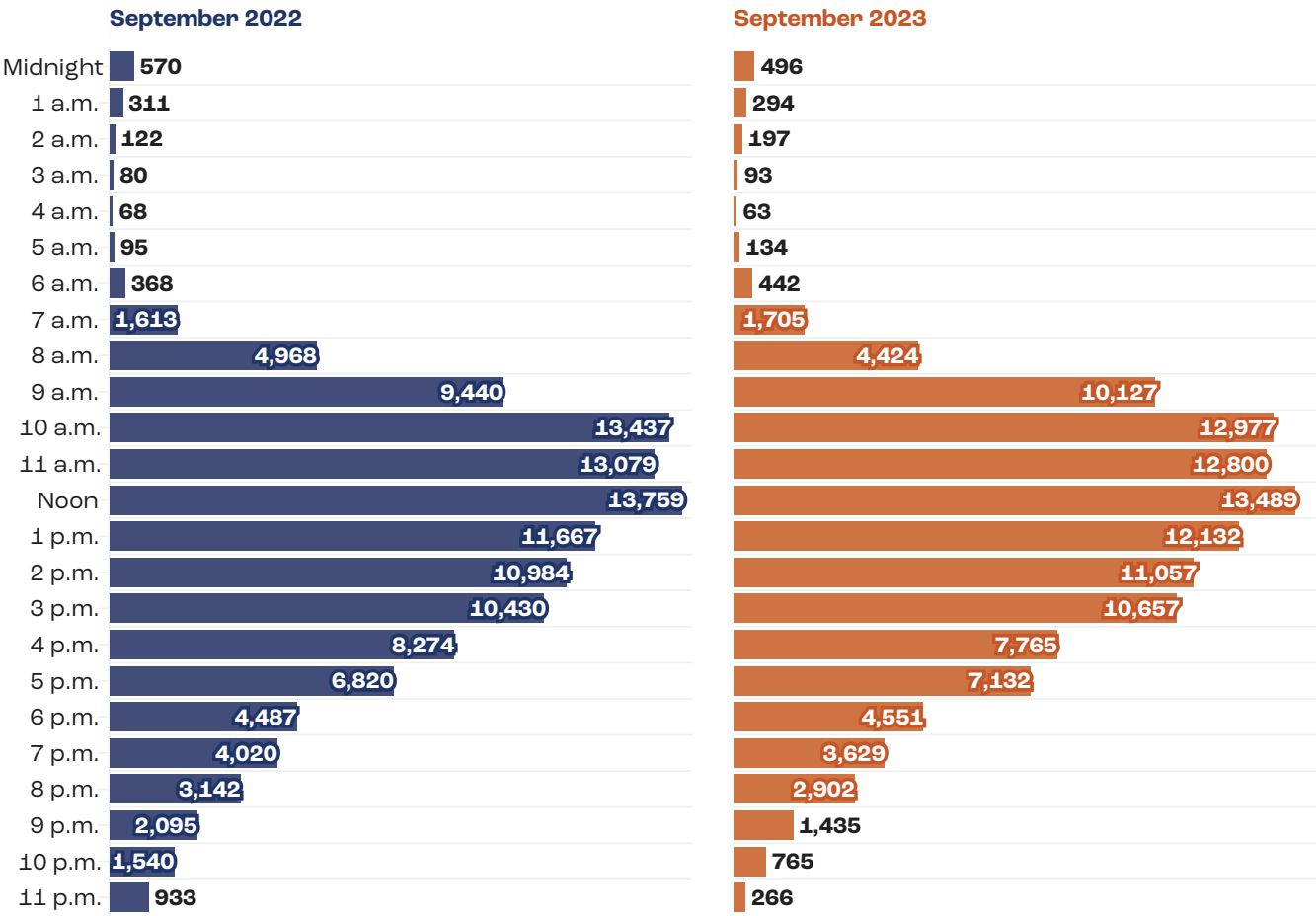
As for now, he intends to keep the resolution going, Gupta said.

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UTA sees lower number of swipe entries between 2 and 6 a.m. in September

The Central Library had 122,302 visitors in September 2022 and 119,532 in September 2023 — the busiest months of its respective years, according to data provided to The Shorthorn.



Source: Dean of Libraries John Wang · (Dang Le | The Shorthorn)

STAY IN

THE SHORTHORN

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Student Publications
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Bull-etin Board: A weekly comic illustrating astrology by The Shorthorn design desk.

Introducing the newest members of the Zodiac Sentinels...

The Guardians of the Earth Zodiacs!

TAURUS

With a flair for luxury and bull-like stubbornness, the dependable Taurus is the team's **FRONTLINE DEFENDER!**

VERGO

Always keen on details and striving for perfection, the group's dedicated **STRATEGIST!**

CAPRICORN

Ambitious as they are disciplined, the team can rely on their **LEADER** to get the job done!

The Shorthorn: Abigail Ponce



The Shorthorn: Joel Solis

Computer science freshman James Nguyen tapes his shoe during Oozeball on Sept. 20 on the corner of Summit Avenue and Greek Row Drive. Nguyen played with the Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers.



The Shorthorn: Christine Vo

UTA Police Chief Kim Lemaux hugs a participant during Oozeball on Sept. 20 at the corner of Summit Avenue and Greek Row Drive. Lemaux hugged players throughout the courts.

OOZEBALL

‘A tradition like no other’



The Shorthorn: Joel Solis

Fraternity brothers tackle each other in celebration during Oozeball on Sept. 20 on the corner of Summit Avenue and Greek Row Drive. A variety of fraternities and sororities participated in the event.



The Shorthorn: Joel Solis

A participant gets sprayed by a hose during Oozeball on Sept. 20 on the corner of Summit Avenue and Greek Row Drive. Volunteers sprayed students with hoses to wash off and keep the courts muddy.



The Shorthorn: Christine Vo

Anthony Sanchez, finance and accounting senior, left, blocks the ball during Oozeball on Sept. 20 at the corner of Summit Avenue and Greek Row Drive. Sanchez said the game was more intense than expected but a fun experience.

Sajori

continued from page 1

He said he values customer feedback and constantly strives to improve his dishes. The response to his food has been positive overall. The best-selling dish is arroz con gandules, or Puerto Rican rice with pigeon peas, a traditional meal usually made for gatherings. Since it's tedious to prepare, many families prefer to order it at the restaurant.

Volmar has been in Texas for over two years. He said he knew there were many Puerto Ricans in the state, but opening the restaurant showed him how large the community is. He enjoys meeting fellow Puerto Ricans and asking where they're from on the island.

Volmar works with his assistant during the week, and his wife steps in to help, adding to the family atmosphere of the restaurant. This teamwork and attention to detail ensure that every customer enjoys a true taste of Puerto Rico.

His assistant joins him to help with chopping and prepping, ensuring they can focus on making dishes fresh to order throughout the day. Saturdays are especially busy, he said, and this advance prep keeps the kitchen running smoothly.

Volmar said he focuses on freshness and creating dishes catered for his customers, so the prep is done to ensure quality and keep the flow of the kitchen going.

Volmar told his wife that if God gave them the opportunity to open a restaurant, Volmar would want it to be "100% Puerto Rican."

Volmar and his wife, Gloria Claudio, opened their restaurant nine months ago. Originally from San Juan, Volmar said his dreams of becoming a culinary chef were put on hold after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico. As his family relocated to the U.S., the COVID-19 pandemic further delayed his plans for a restaurant.

Volmar's family first moved to Georgia for five years after the hurricane, eventually coming to Texas, where they've been for the

past two years. With the Maverick Pantry, Sajori currently serves 25 meals a week at UTA, but Volmar hopes to one day serve 50.

Claudio said the couple provided meals to the homeless every Saturday in Puerto Rico, so it's no surprise they continue to serve their community in Texas.

"The thing that really touched us was that when [customers] try for the first time the food,

they say, 'This reminds me of my mom's food or my grandmother's food,'" Claudio said.

Claudio said she went back to college at the age of 40 for a bachelor's degree in social work. In school, she met a student who told her he would look in the trash for food. Claudio said she would never forget the moment he told her that.

"I was a mother. My daughters were in college, too, by that time, and that broke

my heart," she said. Claudio said when she had the opportunity to feed UTA students, she took it. "It's an investment because they are working so hard, trying to make their future," she said. "This is just a way to help them. Invest in them."

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The Shorthorn: Ronaldo Bolaños

Ernesto Volmar rolls dough for an arepa de coco Sept. 23 at Sajori Puerto Rican Cuisine. The fried dough was adorned with crab meat in Creole sauce and cilantro.

State fair

continued from page 1

As a nonprofit, the State Fair of Texas enjoys collaborating with other organizations in the area, Pulfer said.

Every Wednesday, admission will drop to \$5 a ticket with a donation of five canned food items per guest for Feed the Need day. People over 60 years old can purchase \$5 tickets every Thursday for Senior Day.

Qualifying visitors and their families can receive military and first responder discounts on daily admission tickets by showing a valid ID online or at the gate. Military rickets are reduced to \$10-\$15.

After 5 p.m. on weekdays, visitors of all ages pay the price of a child ticket for entry to the fairgrounds. More information on admission prices can be found online at the State Fair of Texas website.

The State Fair of Texas offers parking for \$30 per space at official lots around Fair

Park, with designated spaces for handicapped parking and bicycle racks.

Last year, three people were injured in a shooting on the fairgrounds, according to NBC. In previous years, the weapons policy allowed licensed concealed carry. Following the incident, the State Fair of Texas has banned concealed carry and open carry of firearms anywhere on the property, including Cotton Bowl Stadium.

According to its website, the State Fair of Texas' security team has had ample training to enforce the new policy and has made "significant financial investments" in security technology. At entry, it'll use OPENGATE, a weapons detection system designed for screening people and their bags.

From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Wednesday, the fair will host sensory-friendly mornings, supplying accommodations to those with sensitivities through designated quiet areas, and fewer lights and sounds from noon to 1 p.m. at the Midway.



The Shorthorn: Ronaldo Bolaños

An attendee walks past Big Tex's shoe as it awaits installation Sept. 20 at Fair Park. Big Tex wears size 96 boots.

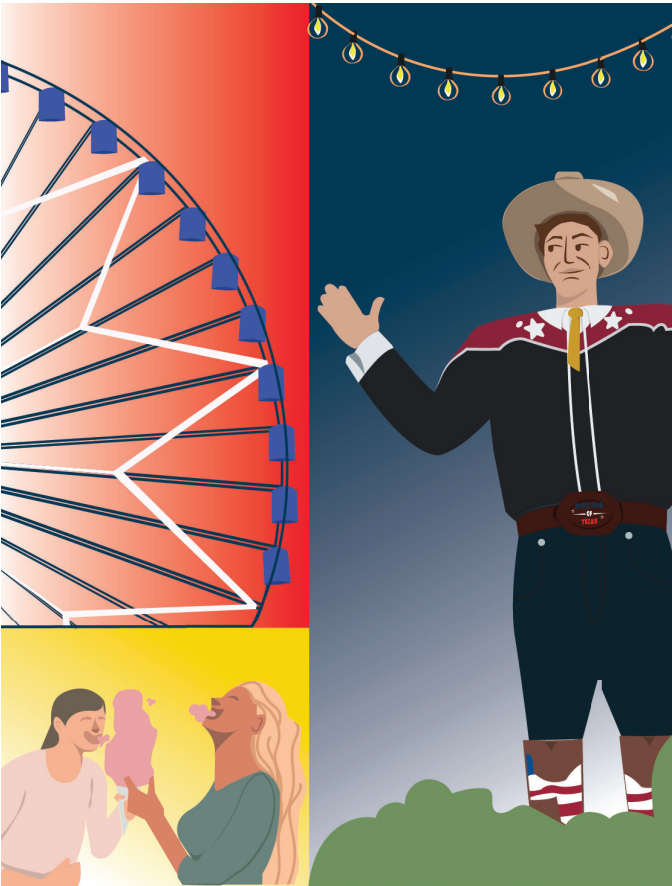
The fair has wagons, strollers, wheelchairs and mobility scooters available to rent through HomeTown Mobility's website. Rental locations include gates 5 and 11, the Front Gate and the Pan-American Gate. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance.

Guests are permitted to bring food to the fairgrounds, as well as softshell coolers. Storage and food containers will be searched upon entry to the fair, and all alcohol, glass

containers, and metal knives and forks are prohibited.

"Our biggest goal is to continue being that tradition in family and friends' life. That each year you can come out to the State Fair of Texas to have fun," Pulfer said. "That is the ultimate goal, to have fun and create memories with your family and friends."

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STATE FAIR of TEXAS

The Shorthorn: Anayah Darrett

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FROM SCRATCH

How conchas became a Mexican icon

Concha, a sweet bread with a sugary, crunchy topping, has arguably emerged as the most popular among Mexican pastries

BY FRANCISCA GOMEZ
The Shorthorn engagement editor

You're reading From Scratch, a series deconstructing the food we eat (and the drinks we drink) to explore their history, variety and the ways we consume them.

From cinnamon-covered churros to buttery polvorones, pan dulce, also known as sweet bread, are staples in Mexican culture.

Concha, a traditional sweet bread covered with a sugary, crunchy topping, is one of the most popular Mexican pastries. It's often eaten for breakfast or dessert accompanied by coffee, hot chocolate or champurrado.

Marquez Bakery, located on East Division Street, offers a variety of pan dulce. Owner Sally Marquez said conchas are their most popular item, making about 200 to 250 of the pastries daily.

The history

In the early 16th century, wheat was introduced to México by Spanish conquistadors. However, pan dulce rose in popularity in the mid 1800s during the French occupation.

Though influenced by the French, México created its own unique style of



The Shorthorn: Jay Montoya

textures and shapes. Today, there may be as many as 200 types of pan dulce in the country, according to *Nuestro Stories*.

By the end of the 20th century, classic conchas were introduced in Mexican restaurants. The topping

was left intact, blanketing the pastry instead of being scored into the shell design we see today.

The famous pan dulce gets its name from its sweet, characteristic covering that resembles a seashell, or in Spanish, concha.

The variety

Marquez said her bakery prepares the conchas traditionally, mixing the ingredients, allowing them to rise, then creating the sugary paste to top the pastry and cutting their design on top before baking.

The sweet topping is traditionally white, pink or yellow and may be flavored with vanilla or cinnamon. Brown conchas are often made with cocoa powder. For special occasions, bakeries can create custom designs, colors and sizes to

fit their customers' needs.

Marquez said her bakery has made tri-colored conchas for UTA, the Texas Rangers and tequila company launch parties, matching their sweets to the company's label.

She said mini conchas have become popular at the bakery in the last few years, typically making 75 to 100 a day.

The impact

With various concha recipes and a variety of pastry creations going viral online, new, creative renditions of the bread now include uniconchas, concha tortas and concha cupcakes, according to *thrillist*, a travel-ing publication.

Conchas were commonly found in small, Mexican-owned businesses or small grocery stores, Marquez said. But today, the treat can be found in a number of mainstream locations, such as Walmart and Kroger.

"It's such a traditional staple," she said. "Now you can find them everywhere, which it's nice, because everybody likes to see representation of their culture."

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EDITORIAL

Say my name, embracing your titles

It's become common for people to change their name to be more digestible, but this comes with sacrificing history, uniqueness and culture

At the start of the 20th century, many people immigrating to the United States adopted an American name that encouraged assimilation into the labor market and culture.

This included removing accent marks on surnames or changing their name completely. When people around you make your name a challenge, it may be hard to feel a connection to its cultural history and uniqueness.

Microaggressions toward foreign names happen daily. The dread as a professor gets closer to your name during roll call before they hesitate, defaulting to your last name; attempting to enter your information online and having the software say your name is invalid or misspelled; or stripping the pronunciation of your name to cater to those who can't quite get it right.

The Shorthorn Editorial Board believes that, while it may feel easier to make your name more digestible for those around you, people should embrace their traditional names. Owning your identity is an integral part of gaining self-confidence.

THE ISSUE:

Many people make their names more "digestible" for others.

WE THINK:

People shouldn't have to water down or adopt an easier nickname for the sake of those around them.

TAKE ACTION:

Own your identity and support others doing the same.

According to ScienceDirect, adopting a native culture



The Shorthorn: Abigail Ponce

is measured by the adoption of the native language, which in some cases includes taking on a whole new name. While a nickname is traditionally meant to be used with those close to you, it's not meant to become your whole identity.

In the early 1900s, "John" was the most popular name among immigrants, not because they were born with it but because they often chose to adopt the most popular American names after arriving in the U.S., according to ScienceDirect. The 1900 to 1930 censuses, found that around 9% of all immigrants were called John. For women,

the most commonly adopted name was Mary or Anna.

Many Latinos are beginning to reclaim their accent marks, according to Axios. For some, it's about taking stock of their cultural heritage; for others, it's about honoring their ancestors who might not've had a choice.

Accent marks, or diacritics, indicate a letter's different pronunciation, invalidating the argument that accents don't make a difference. Rather than reading phonetically, it forces people to stop and think about how they'd pronounce a name, or simply ask, rather than ignore its existence.

Poor literacy and

technological barriers have kept people from using their accent marks and symbols, according to Axios. Early computer programmers didn't consider non-English letters or symbols, making it harder for people to use their given names. American schools discouraged the use of Spanish as Latinos faced segregation, discrimination and high dropout rates, leading to language loss and the use of accent marks becoming a "sign of shame."

It's difficult not to wonder how many unique and uncommon names have been diluted throughout history. So many stories linger

within these titles, hanging on the branches of their family trees.

Owning your identity should come first, before the comfort or expense of others.

The Shorthorn Editorial Board is made up of editor-in-chief Christine Vo; managing editor Hannah García; associate news editor Amanda Aldridge; copy desk chief Jinelle Sánchez; engagement editor Francisca Gomez; news reporter James Ward; copy editor Leslie Orozco. News editor Pedro Malkomes and multimedia editor Ronaldo Bolaños were not present for this discussion.

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COLUMN

My identity wasn't debatable — until it was

Understanding the duality of my heritage has been a continuous journey, but has given me a greater sense of belonging in return

When I was around 10 years old, I asked my mom why my last name was different from my brothers'. Why was my skin darker than theirs? In fact, why was I darker than my whole family?

Until that point in my life, I hadn't questioned it. Of course, I saw the differences, but it didn't matter to my loved ones, so it didn't matter to me. It wasn't until a classmate asked me, point blank, "Why do you look different from him?"

The validity of my identity was being challenged, and I had no retaliation. More than that, I was the one who looked different from him; tanned skin was easier to spot than white.

My family is predominantly white. My mother is, and my father adopted me at a young age. With my siblings, grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, it's all I've known. Unknowingly, I'd been carrying around a second heritage, one that I

had only seen made fun of in school.

It was the classic curse — too white to be Hispanic, but too Hispanic to be white.

HANNAH GARCÍA



García is a journalism senior and The Shorthorn managing editor.

Join the discussion by commenting online at theshorthorn.com.

In hindsight, there was probably a reason I grew up obsessed with "Dora the Explorer" and why I cried a little too hard watching Coco. They represented me. A part of me that I

couldn't comfortably explore but showed how capable I could be.

I spent the next years of my life believing I had to choose. Every time someone attempted to communicate with me in Spanish, I felt a weird sense of guilt when I had to respond with "No hablo español." I caught the stares and confused faces when my family came to support me at events.

Truthfully, it took me longer than I'd like to admit to stop thinking of my identity as a choice.

Choosing what to wear each day, what I eat and the media I consume are conscious choices. My heritage, ingrained in my very DNA, was never debatable. That wasn't something I was told when I needed it, I had to come to that conclusion on my own.

Educating myself on my heritage and slowly adding cultural traditions into my life has given me more confidence in this identity.



The Shorthorn: Jay Montoya

I don't feel as disconnected from it, and I didn't have to sacrifice the life I lived before it.

There's something incredibly freeing, and oddly empowering, about deciding to use an accent mark in my

last name. With a first name that doesn't really make sense in Spanish, I have the best of both worlds.

I can't ever get the time I spent wondering why I wasn't a "good enough" Hispanic or white person

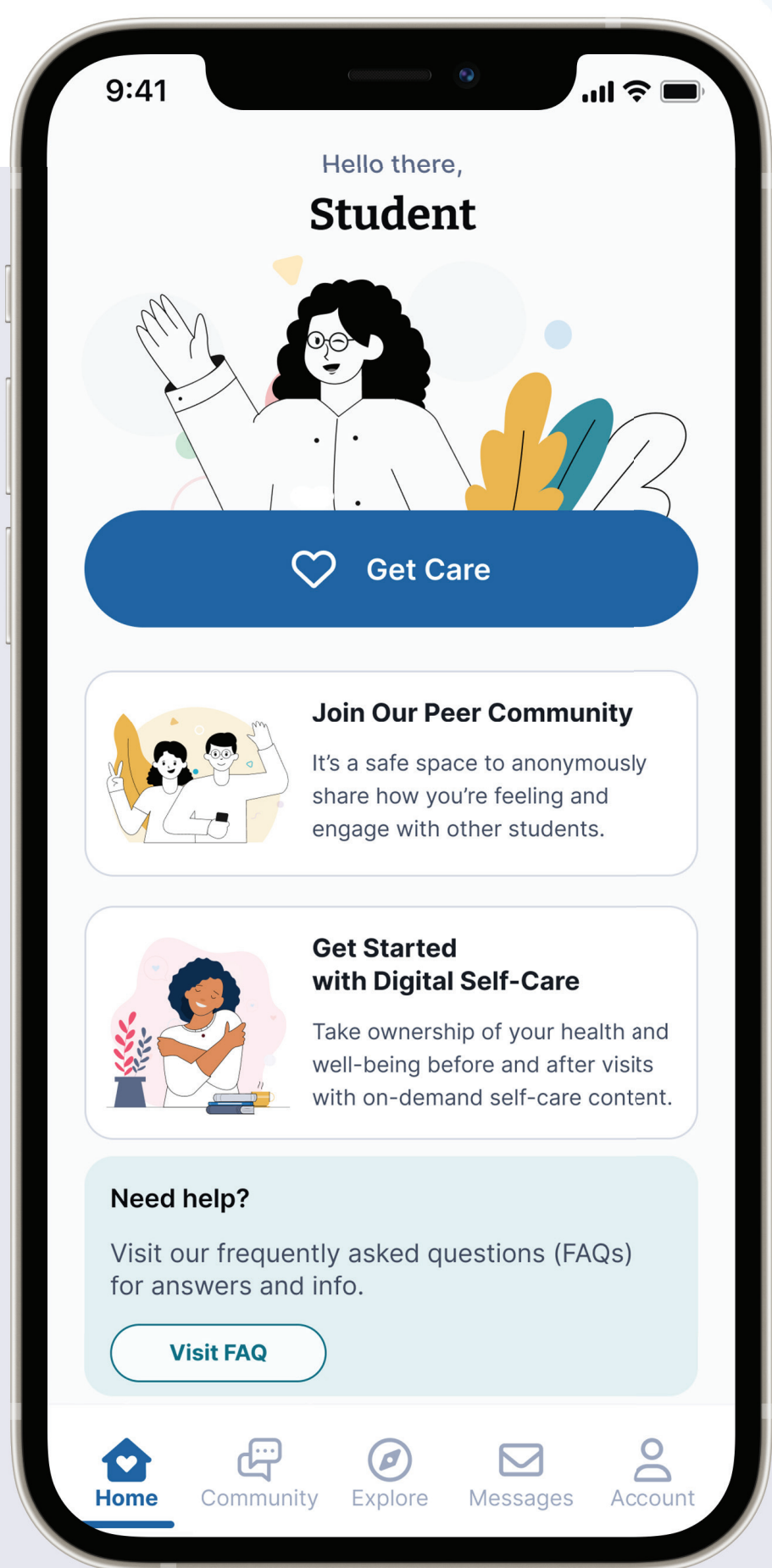
back, but I can spend the rest of my life knowing I'm a perfect mix.

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ABOUT SPORTS

Orlando Torres, editor
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SPORTS

THE SHORTHORN

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Wednesday, September, 25, 2024

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL



Lady Movin' Mavs players left to right: Hannah Exline, Denise Rodriguez, Zoe Voris, Quinn Meyer and Harmonee Ruetes



Denise Rodriguez, Lady Movin' Mavs player, dribbles Sept. 18 at the Physical Education Building. Players will be immersed in Peruvian culture for a two-week cultural exchange.

Lady Movin' Mavs jets off to Peru

The cultural exchange program allows women's basketball players with disabilities to visit the country to share and learn from its wheelchair athletes

BY ORLANDO TORRES
The Shorthorn sports editor

A seven-hour flight and 3,357 miles separate the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport from Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima, Peru.

From Sept. 30 through Oct. 14, players from the Lady Movin' Mavs will be immersed in Peruvian culture for a two-week cultural exchange excursion in collaboration with the University of Houston. Participants will practice wheelchair basketball with international athletes while exploring historical sites, developing their leadership, networking and learning how to make a lasting impact on their community.

"It's a really cool experience where they go to see Peru's wheelchair basketball. How they run their Federation, how they recruit people and they even are sharing quarters with Peruvians, who are going to be training alongside them," said Darlene Hunter, School of Social Work associate professor of practice.

While Hunter assists with the administrative portion, it's Michael Cottingham, University of Houston sports administration associate professor, who applied for the program through the U.S. Embassy. The application was sent to six college women's basketball programs throughout America before landing on 13 players.

Players had to have a valid passport, be full-time university students, play wheelchair basketball and be 19-23 years old to qualify. In total, 13 female players will participate, with five being from UTA: Harmonee Ruetes, Hannah Exline, Zoe Voris, Quinn Meyer and Denise Rodriguez.

Hunter and Cottingham met while studying at the University of Arizona and have remained friends since. When he pitched the idea nine months ago, Hunter knew she had to do it for women in sports, a marginalized population that needs growth.

The U.S. Embassy covers the flight, housing, transportation and food, allowing the athletes to focus on the cultural and learning aspects of the trip.

Hunter said opportunities like this are important because, often,



The Shorthorn: Christine Vo

Harmonee Ruetes, Lady Movin' Mavs player, gets the ball Sept. 18 at the Physical Education Building. Ruetes said everyone is working hard and not taking the trip for granted.

people with disabilities aren't given the chance to participate in sports or have support.

In May, Hunter went on a sports envoys program to Saudi Arabia to build the country's women's wheelchair program. Hunter said she's seen the U.S. invest in women's adapted sports worldwide through these cultural exchanges.

"Doing these cultural exchange programs, you're investing in somebody else's life, and they're investing in yours," Hunter said. "Our world's kind of special in that it becomes lifelong friends in a lot of ways and collaborations."

This will be Ruetes' first trip outside the country and Exline's first time overseas as an adult. Both are eager to experience a new culture and contribute to the sport's growth in other parts of the world.

"It's really important to spread the word of women's programs," Exline said. "Obviously this is true in [adapted] sports, women is underrepresented versus men, and I think it's very important that we strengthen the bonds and strengthen the sport."

In addition to meeting new people, Voris said she's excited to learn and capture Peru's beauty with her camera. She said traveling to places like Brazil, Tokyo and Colombia has changed her perspective of different cultures.

"I'm so intrigued by learning different things from different cultures," Voris said. "I think that's important for everybody to do something like that at least a handful of times in their life."

In the past, participating in adaptive sports felt like a secret society, Hunter said. The existence

was rarely mentioned, and athletes discovered programs through word of mouth. Knowledge and education are changing, and culture exchanges provide insights into areas where other countries excel, such as cultural awareness, marketing and sponsorship.

National Wheelchair Basketball League coaches Lauren Perry and Candice Law will travel alongside the players to bring their knowledge and collaborate for the betterment of the sport, Hunter said.

"We've been a leader in the women's world, and so we want to help other countries continue to expand and build on their programs because we want the competition to be there," she said.

Players abroad will discuss what adaptive sports are like in the U.S. while sharing their knowledge and

skills with Peruvian players.

Peru has competed in the Parapan American Games and qualifiers but has yet to find success at the World Championships or the Paralympics. Hunter said the country needs more resources, equipment and development.

As human beings, Hunter said it's better to know people in different places and see what disability looks like in those spaces. Without the embassy's support, this opportunity wouldn't be possible.

"It's equally as important for them that it is for us to learn about different cultures and different basketball skills and ways of learning," Voris said.

With a tournament coming up, Morgan Wood, Lady Movin' Mavs head coach, could've said no, but Hunter said Wood has been 100% behind the program and encouraging her athletes to go.

Voris said Wood emphasized the importance of this experience while reminding players to stay on top of school work and training to stay sharp for their upcoming tournament Oct. 25.

After placing second at the 2024 National Wheelchair Basketball Association Women's Intercollegiate Nationals, winning a national championship is the goal, Ruetes said. Everyone's working hard and not taking the trip for granted, she said.

"We're super happy about their commitment, and they're excited to go," Hunter said. "They're all really good athletes and players and people, so it'll be great to have their voice be heard in Peru."



Quinn Meyer, Lady Movin' Mavs player, dribbles Sept. 18 at the Physical Education Building. Participants will practice wheelchair basketball with international athletes while exploring historical sites.



Zoe Voris, Lady Movin' Mavs player, watches the ball Sept. 18 at the Physical Education Building. Voris said traveling to places like Brazil, Tokyo and Colombia has changed her perspective of different cultures.

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