END OF THE DECADE

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What are the effects of social media in the 2010s?

TYLER BUI & MATT MUIR
Staff Writers

The rise of social media and smartphones during the 2010s has led to a shift in the way people interact with one another. These technologies, which were still in their early years a decade ago, have become ubiquitous parts of our daily lives, and have had widespread effects on human behavior in the process.

Baylor marketing professor Dr. James Roberts has published research on the effects of social media and smartphones on their users. Roberts said the way we interact has changed with these new technologies—we rely on technology to communicate rather than speaking face to face.

“It has really changed—it’s what we call computer-mediated communication,” Roberts said. “We’re not talking as much face-to-face as we did... we’re taking ourselves out of the immediate social environment to be social on social media. So it has changed dramatically.”

In “secluding” themselves to be active on social media, Roberts said users are becoming worse at communicating in the real world, and that younger generations are no longer able to read basic social cues, which can be lost through social media.

“We’ve lost and we are losing the ability to read social cues in person, like body language and tone,” Roberts said. “All that stuff is pretty much lost on social media. We’re becoming less adept at being able to interact socially because we just aren’t getting as much experience.”

Roberts said that many people think of communicating through technology as equivalent to face-to-face interaction.

“It offers so much, and I think in a way, it makes relationships easier,” Roberts said. “It makes it easier to send a text and think you’re interacting. You are at some level, but it’s just a lot less messy on social media.”

While relationships maintained through social media may seem easier, Roberts said these relationships are weaker than those built on genuine interaction.

Robert Darden, a journalism professor at Baylor, said studies show social media use is tied to having fewer close friends.

“[Studies] are showing that while you have ‘thousands of friends,’ with the reliance on Facebook instead of personal interactions, along with texting and Instagram, you actually have fewer very close friends,” Darden said. “People, instead of talking to their neighbors during their classes or at lunch, default back to the same group of friends... mindlessly [searching] for that little hit of dopamine that scrolling through your Facebook and Instagram friends gives you.”

Compounding this problem is the concurrent rise of smartphones. With bona fide computers in our pockets, social media is always at arms-length.

“Clearly we use our phones for a lot of things, but most frequently or most of the time we do use—which is amazing how much time we spend on our phone—most of it is on social media,” Roberts said. “That has shifted how we relate, how we interact with people from more face-to-face, or at least talking, to texting and posting.”

Roberts said being drawn away from face-to-face interactions by smartphones is a common problem, and that the phenomenon of “phubbing,” or phone snubbing, has become an obstacle to personal interaction.

“We don’t give anyone our undivided attention anymore, and what our research tells us, when we feel that the person we’re talking to isn’t fully engaged, isn’t present for us... we report less connection with them,” Roberts said. “We report less satisfaction with that relationship, and we report less desire to want to continue that relationship.”

Roberts said smartphones’ portability and versatility are factors that lead to the devices’ addictive nature.

“It occurs gradually—we first start out, ‘Oh this is nice’ and we use it, and as we slowly use it, gradually it becomes something we can’t live without,” Roberts said. “We can take it wherever we want, and it can do so many things that it has just taken off, and we’re just obsessed.”

Addiction is not an overstatement—Roberts said a survey of Baylor students showed they spend a significant portion of their day on their phones.

“When we first got those results, this is about 2014, 2015, I [said], ‘That’s got to be a mistake; no one is on their phone that much,’” Roberts said. “It has only increased since then, if not stabilized, but [Baylor students spent] about eight and a half hours a day on [their] phones.”

While studies like this offer a glimpse into the effect smartphones and social media have already had, Darden said conclusive, long-term scientific studies are still years or decades away.

“We’re past the sea change, and we’re into the application and the impact on an entire generation worldwide,” Darden said. “And it’s scary because we don’t really know. I don’t think social scientists will tell you they have a whole lot of definite answers on what that means yet. I don’t.”
Understanding of mental illness evolved this past decade through shifts in diagnoses, a decrease in stigma, innovations in technology and a willingness to communicate.

Dr. Sara Dolan, the director for the clinical psychology doctorate program and associate professor of psychology and neuroscience, said the definition of mental illness has changed over time and continues to change.

Dolan said when defining mental illness, a scientist would turn to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health (DSM) for answers.

The book lists data about each disorder, including symptoms, what the course and prognosis could be, as well as how to divide these disorders from each other based on their symptoms — even when they tend to overlap.

Mental health professionals and scientists look to the fifth edition, of the DSM, which was published in 2013, more than a decade after the previous edition which was published in 2000.

Dolan said for this decade's edition, there were significant changes made in the way different disorders were diagnosed and defined.

“There's been a big change in how mental illness is viewed at least from a scientist and practitioner view,” Dolan said.

Addiction

Before coming to Baylor, Dolan pursued research full time through a postdoctoral fellowship with the Center for Alcohol and Addiction Studies at Brown University. One of the changes in the DSM that stood out to Dolan was the change in the definition of addiction.

“There used to be two separate diagnosis: one was substance abuse or alcohol abuse, and then the other was substance dependence or alcohol dependence, and they were completely separate disorders,” Dolan said. “The DSM-5 research team pulled those both together and made them one diagnosis, which is called alcohol or substance use disorder.”

Dolan said substance abuse was considered the less severe version of the two but with the term “alcohol or substance use disorder,” the symptoms lie on a continuum from less to more severe.

“Fewer people are being diagnosed, so we're really capturing the people who have a legitimate addictive disorder now,” Dolan said. “When alcohol abuse was a possible diagnosis, we were capturing people and diagnosing them who didn't have a serious problem.”

Getting in trouble with the law because of alcohol use was criteria for the diagnosis of “alcohol abuse” in the past. Dolan said people who get in trouble with the law because of alcohol use probably use alcohol in an unhealthy way, but that does not necessarily mean they have an addiction. By changing the criteria and organization of substance use disorder, these people are no longer factored in so other people can have a more accurate or valid diagnosis.

Stigma

When Pooler is not teaching and working with graduate students, he still practices as a social worker and sees clients in his office.

Pooler said he has noticed since the stigma surrounding mental illness decreased in recent years, people became more open to talk about what they are going through with friends and family rather than just professionals.

Dr. David Pooler, associate professor in the Diana R. Garland School of Social Work, said he has noticed other people in his field start to step away from the term “addiction” in recent years.

“I think [addiction] does a good job of including things like the misuse of substances, but [also] addiction to behaviors like sex, food, shopping, gaming and gambling,” Pooler said. “Those are process addictions, so you’re not literally putting a substance in, but you are compulsively engaging in some repetitive behaviors.”
mental illness changed over this decade

“I think it's more acceptable to say, 'I deal with anxiety. I have OCD. I have depression — I take medication for it. I see a therapist,'” Pooler said. “So our understanding of it has been the same for a while, but our willingness to talk about it has definitely changed over the past decade.”

Pooler said that it is not professionals’ overall understanding of mental illness or treatment of mental illness that has changed in the last decade, but the shift of discussion about mental illness to the public sphere.

“What has changed is our willingness to talk about it more broadly, but especially on religious campuses,” Pooler said.

Although Pooler said he strongly believes that religion as a whole does not have a negative effect of mental illness, he said until recently, some people of faith had a limited understanding of mental illness.

“I think religious people, in Christianity in particular, have tended to view addiction [and mental illness] as a spiritual problem that requires discipleship,” Pooler said. “If you just get to know Jesus better — that's the answer.”

Both Pooler and Dolan said a common misunderstanding about mental illness that they noticed among Christians and other people of faith in the past is its basis in sin.

“I think people are starting to see it's not a sin,” Dolan said. “Mental illness is not the result of not praying enough or behaving badly.”

Dolan said people are learning that mental illness is based on many different biological, psychological and social factors.

“I think the more we see that really these are biologically based disorders, the more people can accept that these are real illnesses and not things that people are choosing to do,” Dolan said.

Pooler said religious people and institutions, including Baylor, are starting to understand how religion complements the scientific awareness of mental illness rather than competing with each other.

Dolan said the general population’s view of mental illness is moving in the right direction.

“People don't want to be mentally ill. People don't want their psychiatric or psychological symptoms to interfere with their lives, so that they can't work and be in relationships,” Dolan said.

Technology

Although it does not fall under his expertise, Pooler said social media and the internet has played a part in destigmatizing mental illness.

“There are lots of apps that deal with mental health problems — that help people deal with mental health problems,” Pooler said. “Treatment doesn't have to be, 'I'm going to see a therapist.' Treatment and maintenance of dealing with something that's chronic can involve this app that gives me a reminder.”

Dolan also said innovations in technology have also created an excellent resource for people to understand mental health better and even access treatment.

“Technology has allowed us to integrate stress management techniques into our lives more,” Dolan said. “We've got Telehealth interventions, where instead of going to someone's office to have a psychotherapy session, you can talk to them through Skype or something like that.”

According to Dolan, the arrival of social media platforms has also allowed people to find other people struggling with similar problems — forming online community.

“Social media has really allowed us to be more open about our symptoms,” Dolan said.

Dolan said communicating and talking about mental illness is the most important thing for people to do in order to help reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.

“The more people we have been talking about it, the more people we have in our personal lives who are willing to share their experiences with mental health issues, [and] the more we're going to be familiar with it, not frightened by it and not put off by it,” Dolan said.
It’s not a home field advantage without a home field

MATTHEW SODERBERG
Sports Writer

Over the past decade, Baylor athletics has not only changed on the field, but the fields have changed, too. From McLane Stadium to Williams Golf Practice Facility, the prestige of the university has brought new and improved facilities to its student-athletes. Baylor’s renovation project began in 2014 with the opening of McLane Stadium, the flagship property on I-35. A downgrade in seating from 50,000 to 45,000, Henry Howard, associate athletic director for capital projects and championships, said the new spot on the Brazos wasn’t an SEC “how many seats can we stuff here,” kind of improvement, but one meant to bring the fans closer to the game.

“We knew we could build a very large stadium … the coaches want a game to feel sold out, you know, where the fans are right on top of you really creating a home-field advantage,” Howard said. “You know, I think it’s over 200 million travel I-35 annually. They each see that big billboard saying Baylor University McLane Stadium.

Prior to the move, people inside and outside of the program were unsure Baylor would ever make that grand of a move, but Jerry Hill, director of sports journalism, said a certain Heisman Trophy-winner gave the Bears a chance to step up with the rest of the country.

“It can’t be understated that I think Robert Griffin played a big part in that, I mean, you can say whether it was Art Briles or Robert Griffin, but I think they played a big part in that stadium being built.”

Brice Cherry, sports editor of the Waco-Tribune Herald, agreed with Hill.

“McLane Stadium would not be here without him. I mean, it’s truly the house that RG3 built,” Cherry said.

After the Simpson Athletics and Academic Center was built in 2008, McLane Stadium also represents an easier Saturday for student-athletes. When the Highers Athletic Complex opened, football players no longer had to travel to Floyd Casey Stadium to practice. The weight rooms were moved to Simpson, practices are now at Allison Indoor Football Practice Faculty or the outdoor fields in the complex, rather than team workouts out at Floyd Casey Stadium. Howard said the complex and McLane have heavily affected the lives of the players.

“So Floyd Casey Stadium was about four miles off campus, so that meant every student-athlete had to either drive their car, catch a ride, figure out a way to get to practice. Now they’re walking, they’re using mopeds,” Howard said. “I think it’s significantly impacted their time management.”

The Highers Athletic Complex also features the Beauchamp Athletics Nutrition Center (BANC), which is available to all student-athletes. Players can fuel up before and after workouts, keep up on meals and just have a place to hang out on the waterfront.

“They can do weightlifting, weight training in Simpson, they can walk about 20 yards to the BANC and get their nutrition, and then they’ve got the Allison Indoor to practice, so it’s kind of a one-stop shop and that’s where they’re doing most of their training,” Howard said.

The athletics office is also constantly doing renovations on existing facilities to improve the lives of those they serve. The Williams Family Soccer Center was constructed in 2015 for the soccer team, featuring weight rooms, a coach’s suite and updated locker rooms for home and visiting squads. Betty Lou Mays Soccer Field and Getterman Stadium both received field updates in the past few years, with softball now playing on artificial turf and soccer playing on a sand-based natural grass.

One of the biggest projects this decade was the Billy W. Williams Golf Practice Facility. Completed in 2018, the complex features tee areas and putting greens, along with a clubhouse with locker rooms and a state-of-the-art hitting bay to analyze swings. Howard said it’s just one more way the athletics office is moving to make lives easier.

“In the past, they were practicing at a place called Twin Rivers, which might have technically been Waco, but it felt like McGregor, and it was a 15 to 20 minute trip for the student-athletes and coaches,” Howard said. “From my view, we’re the best in the Big 12, if not the region.”

The university is now in the process of designing the new Baylor Basketball Pavilion, aiming to relocate the basketball teams next to Baylor Ballpark and give a permanent home to the volleyball and Acrobatics and Tumbling teams at the Ferrell Center. Howard said the new facility will be a game-changer for all parties affected.

“We’re hoping it changes a lot of people’s lives and not just the student-athletes. The students, the student body is so important at Baylor. And they’re really the folks that make the home-court advantage,” Howard said. “I think it’s going to be a win for everyone. It can’t get here soon enough, but now that the regents have approved phase one and design, you know we’re going to get moving full steam ahead to make sure it’s the best facility in the country.”
How technology has affected career networking

TYLER BUI
Staff Writer

Over the past 10 years, the job search process has evolved due to technology advancements, with platforms like LinkedIn and Handshake becoming a near necessity in the current job search process.

Kenneth Buckley, assistant dean of career management at Baylor, said technology has made the job market more accessible.

“Technology has enhanced people’s ability to get a job,” Buckley said. “Technology is an amazing bridge to success, but I feel like it’s just a piece of the puzzle of your career. You need to know how to use it for your benefit, but you have to realize that you have to be a person that people want to hire, not just a digital image on a screen that people want to see.”

Buckley said that prior to 2010, the internet was already widely utilized to search for jobs; however, specialized platforms like Handshake did not yet exist.

“I think 10 years ago, students would go online, and if they didn’t find jobs they would simply go through company sites and apply online,” Buckley said. “They would send out their resume or hand it out to people. It was not nearly efficient as the process we have today. It’s much easier on students.”

Baylor was one of the first schools to bring Handshake, a college job search program, to campus, and today there are over 900 universities that utilize this platform.

Shelby Cefaratti, marketing and communications coordinator at the Baylor Career Center, said technology advancements have been beneficial to students regarding the ability to apply for jobs and the wide range of jobs available today.

“The more you utilize the technology and the resources that are available, the better chance you have of getting the job you’re looking for,” Cefaratti said. “You didn’t have things like LinkedIn and Indeed. You didn’t have all of these job search engines, so you looked where you could. I think now, it’s easier to find different jobs, but it’s also more challenging because there are so many more options.”

Cefaratti said the job search process has become more of a science given the aid that technology provides to employers and applicants alike.

“I think [the job search process] has gotten more focused,” Cefaratti said. “I think it has become a bit more of a science than it used to be - just the focus on tailoring everything to the specific job and being more clear. Technology has most definitely had an impact on this.”

Cefaratti said employers are looking for a more tailored resume and application to their specific company and position, which has not been the case in the past.

“A resume is really handcrafted to each position, and I feel like that is different than it used to be,” Cefaratti said. “Now, you look at the job description and you try to tailor what you’re offering to what they’re asking for. The cover letter is more personal, and research is everything. All of these things have become much more important in the past 10 years, that if you don’t do these things, you’re not doing any service for yourself.”

Cefaratti said that not only have the tools of the job search process changed, but the way networking has as well.

“We now have social media for our jobs, and that’s a huge change,” Cefaratti said. “Networking is easier. The computer resources have been a complete game changer. Networking has gotten even more important. All these things that may have not been understood before are coming to the front line now.”

Buckley said factors like the rise of social media have completely changed the job search process.

“Most students today are more comfortable texting or even emailing as opposed to speaking face to face,” Buckley said. “Everyone has their head down in their phones, so there’s not a lot of traditional face-to-face interaction. Networking has become really interesting because in many ways, technology helps you with respect to research and representing yourself, but it’s a tool you use [in order to] get face to face with people to try and sell yourself.”

He said an individual’s social media must reflect the skills and experience on their resume and display the assets they can bring to the employer’s company.

“In many ways, you are able to represent yourself through your social media, whether it’s you or not,” Buckley said. “But from an employment standpoint, they want to know you when you’re not behind your computer screen or your cellphone. Your resume, your social media and even your LinkedIn must all tie together and paint a picture of you and why someone would want to hire you.”

Looking ahead into the next decade, Buckley said he thinks technology will become increasingly important in the job search process.

“I think you have to be keenly aware of the technology platforms and the technology vehicles that exist out there in order to give you as much of an advantage as you can,” Buckley said. “To me, technology, at least as far as I can see in the future, is only going to be a bigger and more important presence and enabler to our students’ success.”
The Bears’ Wild, Wild Rollercoaster Ride
An insider’s look into the highs and lows of Baylor athletics over the past decade

DJ RAMIREZ, MATTHEW SODERBERG and DRAKE TOLL

Sports Editor, Sports Writer and Broadcast Reporter

In just one decade, Baylor athletics has risen from the wallows of mediocrity to the peak of athletic achievement. From five acrobatics and tumbling national championships to two women’s basketball national titles and even a Heisman Trophy winner, every program has seen unprecedented success in the last decade.

Voices of the Bears

While most Bears fans are constrained to observing the success from bleachers and TV screens, a few lucky Bear insiders have had a front-row seat to both the highs and lows of the past 10 years. John Morris, Jerry Hill and Brice Cherry are three of those lucky ones. Each has worked as close to Baylor’s golden era as anyone. They have watched it unfold before the eyes of the world and witnessed firsthand all of the unexpected twists and turns.

Morris, the signature “Voice of the Bears,” has been with the university for over 30 years and covered more than a dozen sports since arriving. Morris is a Baylor guy to the core, and, as the assistant director for broadcasting, he’s seen it all. “I mean, I love it,” Morris said while reclined in his office filled with Baylor memorabilia. “I love doing the games, win or lose, because this is my school. I went to Baylor, I graduated from here, and I love representing Baylor in this way.”

In a similar way, Jerry Hill, the director of sports journalism for Baylor athletics, hasn’t missed a beat. Hill has covered the rollercoaster ride of the last decade from multiple angles. Hill was hired by the university to be the Baylor Bear Insider in 2008 and has been in charge of writing Baylor-endorsed sports recaps ever since.

Brice Cherry adds another angle, coming into the picture as the sports editor of the local paper, the Waco Tribune-Herald. He’s covered a majority of Baylor sports since 2008, when the climb began.

Football Sparks Resurgence

The turn of the decade was an ideal time for Morris, Hill and Cherry to cover Baylor sports considering the Bears’ football drought was ending, and ending dramatically. Other sports were winning at the time, but football is the flagship program of collegiate athletics, especially in Texas. And Baylor football, for a long time, had been seen as a joke — that is until Art Briles walked in the door and brought revival in the form of a quarterback like Baylor had never seen.

Across the decade there have been many stars in the constellation of Baylor’s athletic successes — from Brittney Griner to Johnathan Motley to Bryce Petty, among others — but the rise to the top began to click with a kid from Copperas Cove named Robert Griffin III.

“There was a lot of excitement with [RGIII] and just the way he came on, and you could see immediately … that he could make a big difference,” Hill said.

With an offense tailored around RGIII and Kendall Wright, the Bears began to win game after game — which was new. In 2010, Baylor returned to postseason play and prepared the program for a great awakening. The Bears dominated a record-setting 2011 with the first 10-win season since 1986 and their first Heisman trophy winner in Griffin.

“Before Briles arrived and before RGIII got here, that would have been like foreign concept for Baylor football,” Cherry said. “And even as it happened, I think a lot of people were still just so caught up in, ‘This is unbelievable… that the Griner to Johnathan Motley to Bryce Petty, among others — but the rise to the top began to click with a kid from Copperas Cove named Robert Griffin III.

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Sustained Success

Building off the momentum of the 2011 football season, Baylor athletics embarked on what is now known as the Year of the Bear Baylor garnered two national championships, two national players of the year, three Big 12 championships and each of the 19 athletic programs made a postseason appearance.

“The Year of the Bear, we called 2011-2012,” Morris said. “That year when we had more success than any school in the country. Every sport was so good. Every sport was playing at a really high level, conference championship, threatening for national championship level.”

Over the course of the season, Baylor broke a national record for combined wins between the four major sports (football, men’s basketball, women’s basketball and baseball) with an overall finish of 129-28. The Bears dominated a stretch between Nov. 1, 2011, and Jan. 16, 2012, where football and men’s and women’s basketball combined for an NCAA record 40 straight wins.

“It did feel like one season just kind of bled into the next,” Cherry said. “I do feel like there was this idea, espoused by [former athletic director] Ian [McCaw] that, ‘We want to be good in everything.’”

At the close of the year, Baylor athletics took a hit when RGIII left early. With a year of eligibility remaining, Griffin declared for the NFL draft and was the second pick of the first round by the Washington Redskins in 2012.

“The thinking was, and maybe even internally, but certainly outside was ‘OK, they had their guy … Baylor will go back to where Baylor is supposed to be,’” Hill said.

They didn’t go back. Football followed up RGIII’s departure with five-straight bowl appearances and two Big 12 titles, and each program continued to steamroll. Men’s and women’s basketball combined for 12 postseason appearances and seven years, with two women’s titles. Soccer and volleyball have each made four postseasons and baseball won their first Big 12 Tournament title.

The turn in sports culture goes as far as the acro and tumbling team who had been in the doldrums of the ACTA before Felecia Mulkey showed up to town.

“It was unbelievable … you’re winning a national championship with a lot of the other coach’s recruits, so that was fun to see,” Hill said. “You knew she had won at Oregon, but you had no idea she’d be able to do it that quickly here.”

GAME CHANGER Former Baylor quarterback Robert Griffin III makes a pass against Oklahoma in Baylor’s 45-38 win over the Sooners Nov. 19, 2011 at Floyd Casey Stadium. Griffin would go on to win the Heisman Trophy and get drafted by the Washington Redskins in the 2012 NFL Draft.
We’re not fans but we, felt the excitement just like everybody else did because it was unbelievable, and it was a breakthrough. And the buzz around town — everybody was walking on air. It was incredible.

BRICE CHERRY | WACO TRIBUNE
SPORTS EDITOR

Fall from Grace

But what goes up must come down, and Baylor fell into an ugly spiral of sexual assault allegations and lawsuits that rocked the university. Many of the allegations revolved around the once heralded football coach, Art Briles, and his football program.

According to Cherry, everyone knew that Briles was the kind of guy to take risks and give second chances. The culture around Baylor football had become rooted in a “win at all costs mentality.”

“Specifically speaking from a football perspective here, I think winning got to be intoxicating for Baylor, and Briles was right at the head of that,” Cherry said.

Briles was fired in late May of 2016, and soon after that, McCaw handed in his resignation and the university’s president, Ken Starr, was also fired. The scandal presented a major culture shift, not only within the football program, or even just the athletic program, but throughout the entire university.

“We took a walk through that, will shake you to your core,” Morris said. “We had a lot of good people here that got caught up in that, and kind of that tidal wave of cleaning house. And it’s a shame that we lost some of those people because they are really good … but it was part of it. And it just showed that we were committed to doing whatever it took to make sure things were clean.”

Attacking the Watchdog

With Baylor under fire, the rest of Waco was under the spotlight as well, and that included the local media. Local newspapers and stations came under heat for missing the signs of what the players and people associated with Baylor had been accused of.

While Cherry believed that local media could have handled the scandal better, the aftermath led to news outlets in the area re-evaluating how they covered Baylor.

“In response to that, we doubled down a bit in terms of, ‘we can’t let anything get past us now,’” Cherry said. “I thought a lot of the criticism was unfair because we have never looked at ourselves as Baylor cheerleaders or Baylor haters. We’ve just looked at ourselves as impartial journalists who try to follow the story and be fair. And I think we had been doing that, but there were things that just slipped through.”

Since then Baylor, the Waco Tribune and the rest of the local media have been devoted to being more vigilant.

“People know now what Baylor stands for more than any time in the past,” Morris said. “It’s a safe place to come — safer than probably any school in the country to come to. It was tough to go through, but kind of like the old ‘iron sharpens iron,’ you go through it, and maybe you’re better coming out of it than we were going into it.”

Renaissance

In the aftermath of the scandal, Baylor rebranded almost entirely. Dr. Linda Livingstone was named the new university president and Mack Rhoades filled the position of athletic director.

With the football program becoming a pile of rubble to resurrect, Rhoades brought in a 21-year coaching veteran from New York City who had just wrapped up his fourth year at mid-major Temple University.

“Mack went out and got a guy that nobody had heard of, you know. I had no clue who Matt Rhule was,” Hill said. “But he was looking for a specific type of guy … I think they’re looking for those coaches that can make an impact on not just wins, and that’s the big thing because that’s what keeps them here. But I think they do look for coaches that can make a difference … preparing champions for life.”

Rhule began to put the pieces back together, caring more about sticking to the process of developing his young team on and off the field. That mentality has translated to wins in the football and life columns.

According to Hill, you can see the changes in coaching through the athletes. They aren’t as cocky anymore, and they’re more “laser-focused” on the next opponent.

“[Senior linebacker] Jordan Williams talks about it. I mean, he hears [Rhule] in his sleep,” Hill said. “These guys, it’s ingrained in them. So yeah, I think there is a little bit of a difference. There’s probably a little bit more of a humility with these guys.”

There hasn’t been enough time to truly put the past behind just yet, but in just three years, Rhule and his staff have turned the remains of Baylor football into a postseason contender once again.

“I think that because of the scandal that Baylor is always going to have, for a while at least, have a microscope on it,” Cherry said. “I think Matt Rhule takes the idea of building up the man as much as the player very seriously. And that’s good. That’s good to see.”

Wouldn’t Want to be Anywhere Else

The past 10 years have certainly been a rollercoaster for Baylor’s sports teams and for the journalists that have had the privilege of covering them. But more than just being witness to the winning and losing, as well as the grizzly underbelly of college athletics, these three men have fallen in love with Baylor over the last 10 years.

“There’s no way you could say that there’s been a better decade than this. It’s been the best decade overall,” Hill said.

According to Cherry, it was a decade that surprised a lot of people.

“We’re not fans, but we felt the excitement just like everybody else did because it was unbelievable, and it was a breakthrough. And the buzz around town — everybody was just walking on air. It was incredible,” Cherry noted.

“We have things in place here that are unbelievable...There is no place better than Baylor.

JOHN MORRIS | BAYLOR’S ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR BROADCASTING
The Sky is the Limit: Baylor baseball continues tradition of growth on, off field

DJ RAMIREZ
Sports Editor

On March 24, 2012, during a Saturday afternoon game against Kansas, Baylor baseball was looking to claim the series after a 10-2 win the previous night. The Bears had scored a run in the second inning to take an early 1-0 lead. In the third, with first baseman Max Muncy at the plate, sophomore pitcher Josh Michalec called out to the future LA Dodger the chant that would define the 2012 baseball season.

"Feed the Beaver!"

Muncy blasted that ball into the Brazos River, breaking a 15-game home run drought.

Beaver Magic

It was mid-March 2012, and the Baylor baseball team had just returned to Waco following a tough loss to UT Arlington. After holding a 4-2 lead through six scoreless innings, a botched double play allowed the Mustangs to plate three in the top of the ninth, handing the Bears their seventh loss of what would become a historic season for Baylor.

Assistant coach Steve “Hoot” Johnigan and one of the team’s volunteer coaches were preparing the field for the next day’s practice when then-senior pitcher Joey Hainsfurther called them over to the parking lot. There, under one of the big oak trees by the river sat a large beaver, minding its own business, eating some acorns.

“I mean, it was big, and they’re just mesmerized by it,” Johnigan said. “And it wasn’t running from us. And next thing I know, they got a leash on that thing. They’re walking it around the parking lot.”

That Tuesday night was just the start of what would spark a phenomenal run for the Bears. After the loss to the Mustangs, Baylor kicked off a new 24-game win streak, sweeping its first six conference series along the way.

“The ‘Feed the Beaver’ thing kind of took off,” Johnigan said. “Nobody planned that. It just kind of happened; and when it did, next thing you know, we got T-shirts printed and got signs. We even get a guy that’s dressed up as a beaver. It worked right then, and then people kept yelling it and we kept producing. Then it just kept spiraling, and there really was a beaver... it was just crazy.”

But the magic of the Beaver would eventually run out. Baylor would miss the boat to Omaha and the College World Series due to two heartbreaking losses to Arkansas in the Waco Regional in early June.

A Surprising Farewell

When thinking about Baylor baseball in the past decade, the 2012 season is a standout year, not just because of the wild success the team experienced that year, but also because it marked the beginning of the end of the Steve Smith era.

Smith, who took over for Mickey Sullivan in 1994, built up an impressive resume as the head coach of Baylor’s baseball team. In 21 years of coaching the Bears, Smith led the program to 13 NCAA Regional appearances, four Super Regional appearances and one College World Series in 2005. As the most tenured coach in the Big 12, he also has the most wins out of any Baylor coach in any of the university’s 19 programs.

Johnigan, who worked as one of Smith’s assistant coaches throughout his entire Baylor career and now serves Baylor Athletics’ director of event management and facilities, said Smith was a stellar head coach because of the humility he has as a person.

“Deep down inside he is as good a guy as there ever is,” Johnigan said. “Sometimes it’s hard for that to come out and show, but the guy was humble. The guy was genuine; and he wanted to win. His philosophy was, ‘I’m going to win on the field without compromising our character or our integrity,’ and he did that, and he lived that out to a tee.”

According to Johnigan, Baylor baseball, no matter who’s in charge, has made it its mission to develop the man and the student, as well as, the player. The Bears have worked hard toward that goal, having produced the most academic honors in the Big 12 conference.

In Johnigan’s words, Smith wanted his players to have “every opportunity to grow” on and off the field.

“Some people just want to do it on the field,” Johnigan said. “It’s all I’m worried about because that does keep your job. But [Smith] was about more than that — it’s about relationships. It’s about helping these kids develop. And if we make a mistake on recruiting, we’re going to live with it. We’re going to make them better.”

A perfect example of that philosophy was former Baylor catcher Josh Ludy. As a freshman in 2009, Ludy was not ready to be a starter; and having not had the best year on the field, the coaching staff had to convince him to stay at Baylor. But it paid off as the slugger finished his collegiate career in 2012 as the Big 12 Player of the Year and was drafted by the Phillies in the eighth round of that year’s draft.

But after that outstanding 2012 season, the Bears went through a three-year postseason drought; and in 2015, after building up the program the way he did, Smith was let go.

“I think he was a little surprised,” Johnigan said of Smith’s firing. “That’s the business; we get it. And it’s hard to take sometimes, but it is. You got to win to keep your job; and three years, I guess, not making the NCAA was enough to cost him his.”

Smith moved on to become the volunteer pitching coach at the University of Auburn, and Baylor had to find someone new to take over the program.
A Little California Sunshine on the Banks of the Brazos

A lot of Texas-based names were tossed around, but ultimately, the Bears found their new head coach in Pepperdine’s Steve Rodriguez, who had been at the helm for the Waves’ since 2003. Rodriguez told the Lariat in an email Q&A that he was excited when he got the offer to come to Waco and lead a “storied program.”

“Baylor and Waco have been a great fit for me and my family,” Rodriguez said.

The first year of the Rodriguez era was a transition year for the Bears, as it always is when there's a change in leadership; but by 2017, Baylor was back to winning and back in a regional.

Under Rodriguez in 2017, the Bears produced their first All-American closer since 2012 in Troy Montemayor, their first freshman All-American in Shea Langeliers and the program’s first ever Big 12 Scholar-Athlete of the Year in outfielder Richard Cunningham.

In 2018, Baylor once again made a regional appearance after grabbing its first ever Big 12 Championship Tournament title, in which Langeliers and then-sophomore pitcher Cody Bradford received the tournament's Co-MVP award.

A year later, the Bears made their third NCAA regional under Rodriguez and produced six MLB draft picks, including two first-rounders in Langeliers and third baseman Davis Wendzel.

Johnigan said Rodriguez has done a good job at handling the program and developing some very talented players both on and off the field.

“He’s got a lot of talent. He’s got a lot of good players,” Johnigan said.

With Langeliers last year, I mean holy cow, Davis Wendzel — those guys were outstanding. And he’s got some of the lesser profile guys like Josh Bissonette who’s just scrappy.

With the direction that Baylor athletic program has been taking, Baylor baseball has stuck to its mission of success both on and off the diamond. With new players for the 2020 season and veteran group that’s established it can face adversity and win, Rodriguez only sees improvement for his team.

“I have had great support from our administration, and the student athletes we have here at Baylor are a special bunch,” Rodriguez said. “They have bought into our way of doing things and have been the real catalyst for our improvement over the last four seasons. The sky is the limit for this program as we continue to develop our student athletes both on and off the field and prepare champions for life.”

“Everybody loves you here at Baylor, and you’re really going to prosper as a person and as a baseball player — and that just shows how special this place is.”

- Shea Langeliers, Former Baylor Catcher

To the media after the 2019 MLB Draft. The Keller native was selected in the first round, ninth overall, by the Atlanta Braves.
When head coach Matt Rhule arrived to Baylor in 2016, he overtook a program in shambles. But in just three seasons, the Bears have found their identity again after a decade that consisted of Baylor’s most successful achievements and utter disaster.

With a peak in the first half of the decade (2010-15), the Baylor Bears advanced to five consecutive bowl games after a 15-year drought and produced a Heisman Trophy winner. The pinnacle of Baylor football was short lived as it came to a sudden collapse when the infamous sexual assault scandal came to light in 2016.

After Rhule’s introduction, the Bears witnessed a transformation from an 1-11 season, to clinching the Texas Bowl the following year and starting the 2019 season with nine straight wins for the first time since 2015 — their only loss of the season so far coming from Oklahoma.

The football team has seen the ultimate highs and lows a program can endure and recover from — and some may call it the quickest turnaround in college football — including Jerry Hill, the director of sports journalism at Baylor.

“I think everybody thought, ‘Well, they’ve had their time, and they won’t get back to that point.’ And now you’re sitting here at [9]-0, and you’re back to that point,” Hill said. “You’re in November and you’re playing games to get to a conference championship game. The other rebuild [was] a little more gradual. You started out 4-8, 6-7, then you started hitting some of those seasons. This has been 1-11 to back into a bowl game the next year.”

The rebuild of the football program began in 2008 with the arrival of former head coach Art Briles and quarterback Robert Griffin III.

The Heisman winning quarterback opened his tenure with the Bears starting 11 of 12 games his true freshman year. Over the course of three complete seasons and a three-game redshirt season in 2009, Griffin completed 67.1% of his passes with 10,366 yards, 2,254 total rushing yards, 78 touchdowns and a quarterback rating of 158.9 under his belt.

To Waco-Tribune Herald sports editor Brice Cherry, Griffin was unlike anything Waco had ever seen before and “push[ed] Baylor to new limits.”

“McLane Stadium would not be here without him. I mean, it’s truly the house that RGIII built,” Cherry said.

The cherry on top of the former quarterback’s record-setting career was Baylor’s 45-38 victory over Oklahoma, the Bears’ first-ever win against the Sooners. When Griffin was drafted in 2012 as the second overall pick to the Washington Redskins although having a year of eligibility left, the Bears were without their superstar.

Usually when you lose the captain of your offense, you expect a dropoff. That held true in the beginning of the following season, as the Bears began 4-5 and on a four-game losing streak. The team didn’t panic, though.

Senior quarterback Nick Florence led Baylor to a tone-setting 52-24 victory against No. 2 Kansas State at the time, which not only sparked a four-game win streak, but also marked the start of a new transition — a focus on defense.

“That was a big deal, because I really think that’s kind of what people were thinking was, ‘They’re just going to go back to being Baylor,’ and that year really helped and set off what happened in ‘13 and ‘14,” Hill said. “The defense really started clicking. Phil Bennett had come in as the defensive coordinator and [...] you could see where the defense went from that point to the end of the year when they were just shutting down teams.”

The Bears came back stronger than ever in 2013, finishing the season 11-2 and outscoring opponents 681-306. The impressive offensive season proved one important thing under new quarterback Bryce Petty.

“I think it showed that, you know, Baylor didn’t have to have one guy. They can keep doing it,” Hill said.

The dominating offense continued, racking up 1,936 points in three years. But the Bears fell apart in the postseason, dropping two of three bowl games played over three seasons from 2013 to 2015. Those postseason runs nearly foreshadowed what would happen to the program — a complete downfall.

In early 2016, Briles and former Baylor president Ken Starr were terminated and a Heisman Trophy winner. The Bears began 4-5 and on a four-game losing streak. The team didn’t panic, though.

As Baylor prepares to enter a new decade, the future looks bright for their athletic teams. As football is back on the rise, Hill said if there’s one word to describe the program, it would be resilient.

“They’re not going away,” Hill said. “One of the things is, I don’t think fighters go away.”
A changing campus

Baylor creates updated projects in the 2010s

MATTHEW MUIR
Staff Writer

Baylor's campus experienced tremendous growth and modernization during the 2010s, with changes ranging from construction of new buildings to renovations of existing spaces.

Over the decade, a handful of new buildings sprung up around campus. Across the Brazos River, McLane stadium opened for the start of the 2014 football season, replacing the Bears' prior home at the historic Floyd Casey Stadium. Next to McLane, the Clyde Hart Track and Field Stadium saw its first season of use in 2015. On campus, the East Village Residential Community first housed students in 2013 and the Paul L. Foster Campus for Business and Innovation was completed for the fall 2015 semester.

Foster provided almost 40% more space than the Hankamer School of Business' former home in the Hankamer and Cashion Academic Centers. Anthony Lapes, the business school's assistant dean for operations, said Foster was designed to provide a better learning environment than the business school's prior home.

"We have the ability to collaborate in the space in a way we really didn't have the opportunity to in Hankamer-Cashion," Lapes said. "The old facility was one where students would come, they would take their classes and then they would leave. Dean [Terry] Maness really had a vision for people coming and staying in the space."

Foster was built with growth in mind, and Lapes said it will be a long-term home for the business school. Lapes said for a facility of its "size and scope," Foster presents few issues, with faculty and staff adapting quickly to the ones that did arise.

"One of the challenges, I think, was that we were a little delayed in when we actually could take occupancy of the building," Lapes said. "There was a sense where moving in did get compressed, so that was a bit challenging to get up and going for the first semester, but people I think adjusted to that very well."

Other spaces around campus were renovated and repurposed. After the business school moved its operations to Foster, Hankamer-Cashion was renovated before the 2016-2017 school year, including repurposing space in the building for the Department of Communications Sciences and Disorders' Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic.

North and South Russell, Penland, and Martin residence halls also reopened after renovations in 2015, 2016 and 2017 respectively. A planned renovation of Collins Residence Hall was postponed during this time.

For fall 2017, the Beauchamp Addiction Recovery Center (BARC) opened its doors in a repurposed space in the East Village Residential Community. Lilly Ettinger, Baylor's assistant director of wellness and recovery services, said the BARC's establishment made it much easier to reach out to students in need.

"At the time before the BARC, there were recovery meetings, but some were at the counseling center, some were in classrooms we rented on campus, some were literally held in my old office which was a converted mechanical office… for us to have a community space was a very big change we were excited about," Ettinger said. "We are grateful for the space. Honestly we've exceeded how much we thought we were going to utilize it; that's an exciting thing."

Ettinger also said the decade's changes around campus, including the BARC's opening, are indicative of Baylor's recent growth.

"That has been the story of a growing university; it's really exciting to be a part of that," Ettinger said.

In preparing for the next decade, Baylor's Board of Regents approved funding early this month for the university's upcoming projects: The Mark and Paula Hurd Welcome Center and the Baylor Basketball Pavilion. With both set to open in the early 2020s, the development of Baylor's campus shows no signs of slowing down.
While trends cycle in and out of the mainstream fashion realm, they have influenced the style of students. Some believe the influence is detrimental to their individuality, while others believe they have a positive impact.

This past decade faced a mass fluctuation in mainstream fashion from popular trends derived from social media. Students dressed in a mix of styles ranging from preppy, hipster, scene, hip-hop, sporty and retro — throughout the last 10 years.

As a Baylor alumna turned lecturer in apparel studies, Andie J. Day witnessed the shift in different trends sported by Baylor students over the last decade.

“I would say there’s a vintage revival,” Day said. “I was a kid in the ’90s, and stuff teenagers wore when I was a kid is what students are wearing now.”

Day said the pieces of clothing like tube tops and high-waisted jeans made a comeback this decade.

“When I was in college, low-rise jeans were popular, and now high-rise jeans have finally become popular,” Day stated.

During her college experience, Day said mainstream fashion shifted from preppy and fitted clothing, such as button-up polos and khakis, to oversized and relaxed clothing.

“I feel like clothes have gotten more and more oversized over time,” Day said.

Waco senior Jacob Sloan said he also believes students have shifted toward a retro style of clothing. After discovering a demand for thrfted clothes among students on campus, Sloan began a small business through Instagram called Bop Town.

Last summer, Sloan collected random and unique pieces of clothing during his free time at local thrift stores in the Waco area. Being an entrepreneurship and estate sales major, he saw the opportunity to resell the clothes, which led to the creation of his business.

On a college budget, Sloan said there is a major bonus to this retro and thrfted style of clothing becoming trendy.

“There’s nothing in my closet that I pay more than 20 bucks for,” Sloan said.

Burlington, N.C., freshman Courtney Britt said she also believes retro style clothing has gained major popularity within this decade. Britt majors in apparel design and product development.

“I think retro trends are coming back just because I think the fashion cycle works in a big circle, and this trend is wrapping back through,” Britt said.

Sloan said fashion allows individuals to express themselves, and he is drawn to dress as carelessly as possible because he wants to separate himself from dressing like the majority of people do.

“Naturally we have the tendency to be drawn to people that are interested in the same things,” Sloan said. “But when we start to become more like each other, I think that’s dangerous.”

Instagram was created in 2010. Day said she remembers when she was in college that Instagram did not have the influence it now has on fashion.

“It obviously has grown significantly, but [Instagram] was brand new when I was in school, so it wasn’t yet used as a way for people to talk about fashion,” Day said.

Today, Day said she notices the influence of social media on her students’ sense of fashion, especially on students such as Sloan, who believe students are becoming too alike because of rapidly spreading trends on the internet.

As college students shift to a more independent lifestyle, they are also trying to figure out who they are. Day said she believes this makes them more susceptible to trying new styles and being more vulnerable to the influences around them, as well as on their screens.

Day said she looks back and questions her style from when she was a student. Day is the owner of a woman’s apparel brand, Mary Claret.

“I remember wearing clothing that I look back and go like, ‘Why was wearing that? That’s not who I am,’” Day said.

Britt, however, said the trends that spread across social media have a positive impact on society. As the current trends continue to rise, Britt said it cultivates an “enlivening and cheery” energy.

“Clothing has so much power, and utilizing it in a positive way can impact the world,” Britt said. “I think that these bright colors [from the VSCO girl trend] are actually putting a positive spin onto people’s personalities — like the bright hydro flasks, stickers and big scrunchies.”

As this decade comes to an end, students can reflect on past trends and anticipate what will become fashionable in the future as the new decade approaches right around the corner.
The phrase “Me Too” was coined in 2006 by Tarana Burke, a civil rights activist, but it didn’t truly become a widespread movement until 2017 when actress, Alyssa Milano, tweeted the hashtag and it went viral.

According to the ‘me too’ movement website, Burke founded this movement to “help survivors of sexual violence, particularly black women and girls, and other young women of color from low wealth communities, find pathways to healing.”

#MeToo has touched almost every corner of the world, with Spain, India, China and many other countries adopting the social movement after protesters take to the streets. #MeToo has also heavily affected Hollywood, with many women now feeling encouraged to share their experiences after seeing other actresses and celebrities do so.

Baylor is not immune to the effects brought on by the #MeToo movement, but views vary on what changes have been brought about.

Hoffman Estates, Ill., sophomore Zachary Tufenkjian, co-president of It’s On Us BU, said he thinks Baylor is better off because of the #MeToo movement.

“There has been a lot more activity on campus as far as activism and also on part of Baylor itself and the administration, when it comes to raising the importance of domestic violence and sexual violence at Baylor,” Tufenkjian said.

Tufenkjian also said he believed other factors have contributed to increased activism at Baylor.

“I think it kind of coincided with the whole [sexual assault] scandal as well. Overall, there has been a lot of changes made, not only from the scandal, but also from the #MeToo movement itself, that have resulted in survivors probably being taken more seriously and having more resources provided to them, which I think is really good,” Tufenkjian said.

One administrative change Tufenkjian said he appreciated was the expansion of Title IX-related employees at Baylor.

“The Title IX office used to be a part of another office; however, now the Title IX office is its own proprietary office where it has its own coordinator, staff, investigators, administrative assistants and the whole nine yards, and it’s also growing as well,” Tufenkjian said. “So I think that played a big shift just because rather than lumping it in with other disciplinary actions, whether that be academic or just following the student code of conduct, eventually it established its own office that has been earmarked for dealing with sexual violence issues and domestic violence on campus.”

Jacksonville, Fla., senior Grace Stotlemyer said she has not seen changes in culture at Baylor following #MeToo.

“I think the emphasis on accountability and consequences at Baylor has been grossly exaggerated,” Stotlemyer said. “Even with the #MeToo movement, sexual assault on our campus and real statistics are being concealed.”

Other social movements of the 2010s include Time’s Up, which fights gender inequality, Black Lives Matter, Fourth Wave Feminism and many others.
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