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EDITORIAL

# ‘Barbie’ spurs meaningful debate if we let it

This summer, good movies were hitting theaters left and right, but nothing compares to the social phenomenon that is “Barbie.” While shedding light on gender dynamics with an engaging plot, watching and thinking critically about “Barbie” is vital for personal and societal reflection.

Breaking \$500 million at U.S. box offices and \$1.1 billion globally, it surpassed many other cinematic masterpieces. “Barbie” combined nostalgia and relevant societal norms with a symbol many people treasure from their childhood.

An initial watch of the trailer or advertisements paints the movie as more surface-level entertainment than it actually is. It’s funny and a bit cheesy. However, thinking in depth about what the movie illustrated is important to understand its obvious criticism of the patriarchy and ideas of the female and male experiences.

That being said, the messages and portrayals in the film should not be analyzed as anti-men or excluding the male experience in any way. The contrasts between



Gwen Henry | Cartoonist

the Kens and the Barbies are intentional to show struggles both men and women face. Though gender inequalities have been slowly improving, many still exist today.

People offended by this film or turning a blind eye to the commentary might seem surprising since “Barbie” was very popular, with almost 90%

on Rotten Tomatoes. Despite this, many high-profile figures and some media outlets shared their distaste for the themes.

Political commentator Ben Shapiro, who has about 6 million subscribers on YouTube, shared his thoughts in a video on his channel titled “Ben Shapiro DESTROYS The Barbie Movie For 43

Minutes.” Sen. Ted Cruz said in an interview with The Daily Signal that the film was “blatantly false, and it’s Chinese propaganda,” referencing a childish cartoon map in the film that includes the South China Sea.

Other criticisms of the movie and its social commentary may be more

subtle, but some are still refusing to take a step back and reflect on the very real gender roles “Barbie” offers insight to in today’s world. Generally disliking the film is one thing, but refusing to recognize the reality of the social injustices it includes is another.

In an interview with The New York Times, “Barbie”

director Greta Gerwig explained a key moment in the film: cast member America Ferrera’s monologue about the tightrope women walk in society.

“Then I looked around, and everyone was crying; even the men were tearing up,” Gerwig told The New York Times. “I suddenly thought that this tightrope she’s explaining is something that is present for women in the way that she’s describing it, but it’s also present for everybody.”

“Barbie” is calling us to support the men and women in our lives and to notice existing gender issues. The mythical world in “Barbie” did not run successfully with the leadership of just the Kens or just the Barbies. Instead, it shows how men and women lead successfully alongside each other, not with just one or the other in control.

Whether you liked the film or not, be a girl’s girl (or guy) and practice empathy for others. Build up the women, men and people around you, validate their experiences and learn from the gender-related hardships they may face.

## Survival guide for class of 2027

SHELBY PECK  
Copy Editor

You made it. Maybe home for you is hours away, or maybe you’re from Lorena and only had to drive 15 minutes down Interstate 35. Wherever you come from, you’re here. You’ve made it through those painfully awkward first few hours in your residence hall with the stranger who is now your roommate, and hopefully you’ve found all of your classes. You’ve said goodbye to your family, visited Indy and Belle and bought your first Cowboy Coffee from Common Grounds.



As I begin my junior year, I won’t tell you I have it all figured out — I don’t. What I will tell you, however, is that not only do I think you will survive at Baylor, I also believe you will thrive. It’s OK to be intimidated by the drastic

change, and it’s OK to be excited about your newfound independence. What I’ve written here is advice on how to survive the jump into life at Baylor socially, academically and spiritually. You don’t have to follow it word for word, but I hope at least some small piece offers you encouragement for your first semester. You’ve got this!

### SURVIVING SOCIALLY

Consistent community will take time. Not everyone makes friends as quickly as they want you to believe. The massive friend group taking first day of school pictures in front of Pat Neff probably won’t be friends by November. If you miss out on the Penland Late Night invitation or the Labor Day road trip, don’t stress. There will be plenty more opportunities for you to build lifelong friendships — friendships that are often found in the unexpected. Even if certain relationships with the people you followed on Instagram in May don’t work out, you will find your community. Almost everyone else is starting over too.

Introduce yourself to the people who live in your dorm.

They may not be your best friends or your roommates next year, but they are your current community. Your friendship can be an unexpected source of encouragement.

To all the introverts, don’t be afraid to say yes. To all the extroverts, don’t be afraid to say no. Your social life is all about balance. Use discernment to decide when it is time to study and when it is time to push yourself out of your comfort zone. Introduce yourself to anyone you sit next to in class. They may become your best friend or the study buddy you couldn’t survive the class without. Be the first to welcome and extend hospitality.

Be careful with what you wear on Halloween. You never know when those pictures on Snapchat will resurface.

### SURVIVING ACADEMICALLY

Start the semester strong, but be careful not to become burned out too quickly. Staying on top of assignments at the beginning will pay off in December, but if you need sleep, make rest a priority. Sometimes SparkNotes is sufficient.

Your professors should be some of your best friends. Not literally — that is not what they are there for. However, go to those 15 minutes of office hours even if you don’t want or necessarily need to. Give them a handwritten thank you note. Students who go the extra mile are students who stand out and are (usually) given more grace.

Wait to buy books. In some classes, you will never open the “required” texts. Amazon often has rental prices that are less expensive than those in the bookstore. Find people who took the class before you and ask them about their experience.

It is completely OK if you have no idea what you are doing with your life and change your major four times. That is beyond normal and exactly where I was my first semester at Baylor. Keep going. Don’t sit in the unknown; do your research, visit the Career Center, find out what makes you passionate and pursue it.

### SURVIVING SPIRITUALLY

Baylor describes itself as an “unapologetically Christian” institution. If you are a Christian or are interested in Christianity, there are countless resources for you to grow your faith and discover God. If you are not a Christian or practice a different religion, there are also resources for you to explore your beliefs. Whatever religion you practice, find a place of worship to call home. College is hard, and finding a steadfast community to support you through the rough days is crucial to your success.

Find a place to serve, through your place of worship or elsewhere. Joy comes from loving others well. In the “Baylor bubble” it can be easy to focus our mindsets on ourselves and be self-serving. Let us not forget those in our community who may be struggling and could use love and encouragement.

Lastly, I want to encourage you that God is good and has placed you here at Baylor for exactly this moment. He has good plans for your life. Whatever you think your dream internship or Greek organization could be, trust Him in the process. Rely on Him. He has you here for a purpose greater than you can imagine, and it’s so exciting to watch this next chapter unfold.

Happy first semester, and as always, Sic ‘em Bears!

## BU phone home: Dial in on calling back

KENNETH PRABHAKAR  
Photo Editor

Calling your parents and loved ones back is one of those small things that every college student can get better at. I’ll admit that it feels almost hypocritical to write this article because this is something I seem to have always struggled with.

However, as my last semester of college is about to begin, reflecting on where all the time has gone has opened my eyes to what is possibly one of my biggest regrets of college.

It is so easy to get caught up in your own world once you step foot on campus. Suddenly, your life back at home seems like a whole different world — a world where you’re not responsible for your normal duties because you’re not there physically.

With school, work and the reunion of your college friends, life hits you quickly when you return to college. Things move faster than they do at home. It almost makes sense why it is so hard to call home. However, there is no excuse for neglecting the people who love you.

Whether it is family, friends or whoever else you call your support system, it never hurts to give the people you love a call. The harshest reality three years of college has taught me is that your loved ones age along with you. As a kid, you may have

overlooked your parents’ aging because it appeared much slower than how you aged through your childhood. However, while spending time away from them, you begin to realize they are aging and always have been. They spent all of your life looking after you and putting your needs before theirs. It only takes one call to make their day. One call can remind them that you are alive and well and put all of their anxiety to rest.



Calling your loved ones is a two-way street. They want to know how you are doing and what is going on in your life. Call them back with that same energy. Learn about what is going on in their lives and everything you are missing while you are away from home.

Learn to treasure all your moments with them because, after college, the windows of when you get to see them are going to get progressively smaller. It is never too late to get close to your loved ones; start by calling them today.

Lean on these campus support resources for students!



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# Baylor responds to viral complaints regarding Title IX religious exemptions

**SYDNEY MATTHEWS**  
Assistant News Editor

In response to social media claims regarding Baylor’s religious exemptions from Title IX, President Linda Livingstone released a statement clarifying that such exemptions do not impact how Baylor handles sexual harassment cases.

“There will be NO CHANGES to Baylor’s current practices or policies related to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual and interpersonal conduct resulting from this assertion of our existing religious exemptions,” the statement reads. “Our Office of Equity, Civil Rights and Title IX will continue to investigate sexual harassment allegations or related complaints and investigate these thoroughly and fairly.”

Baylor currently holds religious exemptions from Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which “prohibits sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity) discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.”

Livingstone sent a letter to the Office for Civil Rights in May, arguing that complaints about Baylor not responding to harassment claims from LGBTQ+ students should not have standing because of the university’s religious beliefs. According to the letter, such complaints include the university’s alleged decision to not officially charter Gamma Alpha Upsilon, its alleged response to a notification that students were subjected to harassment based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and its alleged decision to pressure university media not to report on LGBTQ+ protests and events in 2021.

Further, the letter said Baylor is exempt from any requirements under Title IX about sexual orientation that contradict its Baptist doctrine because “Baylor could not be found in violation of Title IX on the ground that the belief in or practice of its religious tenets by the

University or its students constitutes ‘unwelcome conduct.’”

“Since Baylor ‘affirms the biblical understanding of sexuality as a gift from God’ and requires ‘purity in singleness and fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman as the biblical norm,’ any asserted Title IX requirement that Baylor must allow sexual behavior outside of marital union between a man and a woman, or that contradicts the Baptist doctrine of marriage and the created distinction between men and women, is inconsistent with Baylor’s religious tenets, and the University is exempt from such requirement,” the letter reads.

According to the Department of Education, requests for such exemptions are required to “identify the religious organization that controls the educational institution” while clarifying the specific contradictions with its religious tenets.

The DOE granted Baylor the religious exemptions after an investigation confirmed that its request met those requirements.

“Under Title IX, you can’t discriminate against certain things, and sexual orientation is among them,” Mike Hiestand, senior legal counsel of the Student Press Law Center, said. “Some of those are contradictory to the religious beliefs of a particular institution, and there is an exemption that schools can apply for. My understanding is that Baylor has applied for and has received an exemption in the past.”

Hiestand said he believes the letter sent by Livingstone to the DOE came in light of the expanded definition of Title IX under the Biden administration, which will take effect in October.

According to the DOE, the new regulations “will strengthen protections for LGBTQI+ students who face discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. And they will require that school procedures for complaints



Josh McSwain | Baylor Roundup File Photo

**RESPONSE TO REPORTS** President Linda Livingstone released a statement Monday addressing recent reports about Baylor’s religious exemptions to Title IX. She said these current policies and practices will not be changed.

of sex discrimination, including sexual violence and other sex-based harassment, are fair to all involved.”

Following the communication between Livingstone and the DOE, a thread from the Religious Exemption Accountability Act (REAP) went viral on X, previously known as Twitter. The thread discussed the letters requesting and granting the exemptions, claiming the exemptions meant Baylor would stop or modify Title IX and other protections for the LGBTQ+ community.

As a result, many students who are part of the LGBTQ+ community expressed concern about what the future holds for them at religious institutions and whether this sets a precedent for what Baylor is allowed to do.

“While private universities should be allowed to express their religion and uphold their beliefs in what is regarded as necessary for its student body and faculty, that in no way should infringe upon national laws like Title IX,” said Elgin, Okla., junior and Gamma Alpha Upsilon external chair Bee Matthey, who uses they/them pronouns. “This exemption, whether it changes policy or not, shows a systematic lack of accountability and sets worrying precedents for future cases that deal with disagreements from any community, not just the queer community and the Baptist church. And as Livingstone says, these matters have implications for all religious-based universities, not just Baylor.”

Although they have had positive experiences with professors and fellow students during their time at Baylor, Matthey said a religious institution should go above and beyond to show support and kindness to its LGBTQ+ students since they are less likely to find it from their peers. With the exemptions, Matthey said Baylor is failing to show the LGBTQ+ community the support it needs.

“In a Baptist church community where there is a history of prejudice toward a specific group, that organization needs to go out of their way to show that community support,” Matthey said. “Having policies in place to make sure the communities that have been historically discriminated against are taken care of should be a really big priority, and it not being, is really scary for people.”

Amid such concerns, the Office of the President affirmed its commitment to fostering a caring community for all students.

“Baylor has taken and will continue to take meaningful steps to ensure members of the LGBTQ community are loved, cared for and protected as a part of the Baylor Family,” Baylor spokesperson Lori Fogleman said via email. “Further, the University remains committed to promoting and maintaining an educational environment in which students can learn and grow in accordance with our Christian mission and our call to love our neighbors as ourselves.”

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**LEND A HAND** Volunteers help over 3,000 freshmen move to campus and into residence halls.



Kenneth Prabhakar | Photo Editor  
**BEAT THE HEAT** Students enjoy a warm welcome for move-in.



Kenneth Prabhakar | Photo Editor  
**PRECIOUS CARGO** The freshmen didn't forget their best kicks.



Kenneth Prabhakar | Photo Editor  
**SETTLING IN** Students storm Baylor residence halls with arms full of boxes, bags and other things.



Lilly Yablon | Photographer  
**SEEING MOVE2BU THROUGH** Volunteers including faculty, staff and students have it down to a science during the 21st year of fully coordinated move-in.



**GOLDEN SMILES** Greek organization members help with move-in.

NEW







Lilly Yablon | Photographer  
ations stepped out to lend a hand in Move2BU. Operating much like an airport, volunteers helping with move-in act as baggage handlers to transport new students' personal belongings to the residence halls.

# W BEARS MOVE2BU



Kenneth Prabhakar | Photo Editor  
Lilly Yablon | Photographer





Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer  
**NEW FRONT DOOR** Collins Hall introduces a new entrance facing campus.



Assoah Ndomo | Photographer  
**INSIDE THE HALLS** Collins has updated rooms, as well as a staff room.

# Renovation brings Collins ‘from crusty to classy’

**SYDNEY MATTHEWS**  
Assistant News Editor

Collins Residence Hall has re-opened its doors to 466 women after a 14-month renovation that started in May 2022.

Construction project manager Nichole Bekken said via email that the overall cost of the remodel was \$38.5 million. The much-awaited renovations include state-of-the-art amenities and a complete communal bathroom redesign — all while keeping the original character of a building that has been loved by generations of women.

“Anytime we do a renovation, almost everything is touched,” Curtis

Odle, associate director for facilities and operations, said. “When it is a community bath-style building, we try to keep it the same style. One of the big changes with Collins is that instead of it just being a row of showers and a row of toilets, we went to a ‘pod-style’ community bath. So when you walk into the bathroom, there are five to seven pods to choose from.”

Odle said the new pod-style bathrooms are enclosed rooms equipped with a shower, toilet and sink for privacy.

“What students really want is privacy,” Tiffany Lowe, director of Campus Living and Learning, said. “We still kept some sinks on the wall with mirrors and outlets if students

still wanted to do that, but this way, it is really like having semi-private bathrooms. That is exciting because it allows students to have what they are looking for and have much more flexibility for what they need.”

Odle said the classic room style for Collins is staying the same, but every room has had top-to-bottom renovations. New flooring, lighting, air conditioning, locks, paint and furniture are included.

“The entire building will be exclusively LED lighting, which will help from a maintenance standpoint, as well as preventing lights from burning out and less power being used,” Odle said. “Those are really good improvements as well.”

Lowe said her favorite part of the Collins renovation has been showing the community leaders around for the first time. Many of them are past residents of Collins who share memories in the building.

“The students are the goal in mind, and to see their reactions is so exciting,” Lowe said. “I can’t wait for move-in day when I get to see all the parents that lived here and all the students who are super excited to see it. There is so much satisfaction in that, because that’s who this is for.”

Lowe said when she speaks about the renovation, she thinks of the legacy of Collins and the women who lived there prior. She said the facility creates a community that is irreplace-

able.

“People, relationships and programs is really what happens in the hall,” Lowe said. “So I think what we’ve done here is continued the legacy of Collins but brought it into 2023, where people want to live there even if they don’t have that previous experience. The facility reflects the community.”

This is only the beginning for residence hall renovations across campus. Baylor spokesperson Lori Fogleman said via email that a renovation of Memorial and Alexander Halls is currently underway, and renovations of Allen, Dawson and Kokernot will follow.

# New degrees to explore diverse health careers

**ASHLYN BECK**  
Staff Writer

The Board of Regents has approved two new degree programs: bachelor’s and master’s degrees in biology of global health and a master’s degree in physician assistant studies, which will become available in fall 2023 and fall 2025, respectively.

Dr. Joseph Taube, associate professor of biology, said the biology of global health program is five years long, allowing students to earn a bachelor’s, master’s and certificate in tropical medicine and biotechnology. In their fifth year of study, students also have the opportunity to complete their master’s at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston or continue at Baylor University in Waco.

According to Taube, the program differs from other medical programs because of its concentration on diseases around the world.

“This track really helps to broaden students’ perspectives, to see those major needs in terms of health care around the world that are not the top priority for biotech industries and pharmaceutical companies,” Taube said. “They don’t necessarily drive their bottom lines very well, but they are unmet needs by many of the poorest countries around the world.”

Taube said the program is expected to be small and selective, admitting around 12 students per year.

“The opportunity inherent in the program to do research at the National School of Tropical Medicine and the Baylor College of Medicine is a pretty special opportunity,” Taube said.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jason Carter, dean of Robbins College of Health and Human Sciences,

said the master’s degree in physician assistant studies targets the need for mid-level care in medicine.

“We are hitting massive shortages within the field of medicine, and the physician assistant route has become an important pathway, much like the nurse practitioner pathway,” Carter said.

Ripon, Calif., senior and pre-physician assistant studies major Gianna Brocchini said the profession is in high demand but differs from the traditional physician path.

“The job takes on a more holistic approach than a physician,” Brocchini said. “I love getting to know my patients and being able to help them through their difficulties.”

According to Carter, one of the draws of the master’s degree is its hybrid nature. Students are able to do coursework and clinical studies remotely from all over the country, while coming to Waco for “immersive experiences” with staff. He said the program ultimately allows physician assistants to serve in rural communities that might lack sufficient medical care.

“We are creating that level of care that can address areas that may not always have the medical care that they need,” Carter said.

Carter said the program anticipates admitting around 70 or 75 students per year, pending approval from the accrediting body.

“We have a very strong presence in the state of Texas and beyond as a great university for careers in health, and this is only going to expand that,” Carter said. “What this enables is for us to go one more notch upward in the kind of providers we can contribute to the greater communities throughout Texas and beyond.”

“What this enables is for us to go one more notch upward in the kind of providers we can contribute to the greater communities throughout Texas and beyond.”

**JASON CARTER |  
DEAN OF ROBBINS COLLEGE**



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photographer  
**NEW DEGREES** New degree programs in health science make their way to Baylor’s campus.



Lilly Yablon | Photographer  
**LEADERSHIP** Student Body President Nick Madincea said he is excited to welcome students back to school.

# StuGov initiatives focus on airport shuttle, safety, campus communication

**MADLINE CONDOR**  
Staff Writer

Student government is preparing for the new school year with a number of goals, including solidifying the airport shuttle service, improving safety and cultivating stronger relationships on campus.

The Woodlands senior and Student Body President Nick Madincea said student government is “the best vehicle for advocacy, support and change on Baylor’s campus.” The organization has already accomplished numerous initiatives, such as renovating the Bill and Eva Williams Bear Habitat, buying new lights for Pat Neff Hall and renovating the National Pan-Hellenic Garden, he said.

Student government follows the same structure as the federal government with a legislative branch, executive branch and judicial branch. The legislative branch, consisting of the Student Senate, meets on Thursday nights. The executive branch, made up of the cabinet for the student body president and external vice president, meets weekly or biweekly to discuss various projects. The judicial branch meets as needed depending on its caseload.

Madincea said one of his goals as student body president is to continue the airport shuttle and expand that initiative in order to make it a permanent part of student life. Three shuttle trips are planned during the school year for Thanksgiving, Christmas and spring break.

Another goal of his is to improve off-campus safety, particularly from Eighth Street to 18th Street, Madincea said.

“I’m looking at and working with the Baylor University Police Department, our district attorney and Waco [Police Department] on how we improve off-campus safety and how we make the communities that our Baylor Bears live in safer,” Madincea said.

Trophy Club senior and Internal Vice President McKenzie Arata said one of her goals is to cultivate relationships with students.

“My goal is to increase communication

between different areas of campus and search for new ways to further enrich the Baylor experience,” Arata said.

Arata said she strives to serve members of student government to the best of her ability.

“As the IVP, I want to inspire the senators to pursue projects they are interested in and to walk alongside them as they do,” Arata said. “I want to be a resource and foster an environment that enables members to be equipped to serve in their positions.”

The timeline for freshman Senate elections is still being finalized, but Arata said elections will occur within the first six weeks of the school year.

“The process includes a general interest meeting being held before filing opens, followed by filing, the mandatory candidate meeting, the campaign period and then elections,” Arata said.

Those interested in getting involved with student government can visit its website.

“This is going to be a great year for student government because we have a multitude of things that are really maturing all at the same time,” Madincea said. “We’ve got three once-in-a-decade, if not once-in-a-lifetime opportunities all coming together at once.”



Scan here for information on how to get involved with StuGov.



# Community engagement efforts push Baylor to top 10 of most trusted university ranking

RORY DULOCK  
Staff Writer

Baylor was ranked among the top 10 in the Morning Consult's, a business intelligence company, 2023 Most Trusted Universities report. Universities such as Yale, Princeton and Johns Hopkins University were also included in the report.

In this year's reserach, trust was used as a metric of academic reputation—especially among parents, students, employers and key stakeholders, the report said.

Dean and Sarah Chrestman, Baylor alumni and parents of a 2023 Baylor graduate, said they both trusted the university with their student's education

because of the morals and values it prioritizes.

"I feel that [Baylor] holds true to the strong morals and values that we believe in," Sarah Chrestman said.

Another reason why the Chrestmans said they trusted Baylor is because of the university's commitment to its Christian traditions.

"There are very few universities left that are strong academically while maintaining their Christian foundation, and Baylor has stuck to that," Dean Chrestman said. "Baylor has maintained its Christian heritage, even through a period of time where other universities are not doing that."

Dr. Richard Edwards, professor of communication,

has worked at Baylor for 34 years and said Livingstone's studies were a major milestone for the university.

"As many internal surveys have disclosed, Baylor is a great place to work," Edwards said. "I can speak especially for the Department of Communication — a very collegial atmosphere, outstanding faculty, a lot of trust among faculty members ... The atmosphere among the faculty here at Baylor is amazing."

The student body has also noticed many of Baylor's efforts. Pflugerville sophomore and student senator Landon Self said Morning Consult's report is important for Baylor's reputation because it demonstrates

how the university has strived to improve campus safety, academics and the establishment of a healthy learning environment.

"I think under the leadership of [President] Linda Livingstone, there's been a lot of things that have been done," Self said. "One was to improve campus safety, and there have been many ways [Baylor] has done that. And also being ranked as an R1 institution I think academically proves that [Baylor] is definitely worthy of people's trust."

Tyler sophomore Joshua Coe said he trusts Baylor because of how involved the faculty is with the student body. He said professors care about their studies and are



**ICONIC SYMBOL** Pat Neff Hall houses important campus offices and is one of BAYLOR's most historic features.

always available to help and maintain an active relationship with their students.

"I think that [the report] means a lot to the university's reputation, and it really goes to show what the university stands for and what it has stood for among students," Coe said. "I think that trustworthiness is evident among [the students], and it's great that is starting to become more evident to the people around."

The data behind Morning Consult's report came from a survey conducted in April that used a sample of 11,010 adults.

The university rankings were determined by calculating the net trust — the share of respondents who said they trust the university to do the right thing "a lot" and "some" minus the share who said "not much" and "not at all."

Morning Consult's 2023 Most Trusted Brands report was released in May, ranking Baylor No. 9 among universities in the United States and marking Baylor's second year in a row to make the top 10.

# Listening sessions to shape future of Illuminate Forward

PIPER RUTHERFORD  
Staff Writer

With help from the Give Light campaign, Baylor accomplished its second-highest fundraising year in school history. Since its start in 2018, the campaign has raised a total of \$1.3 billion.

Vice President and Provost Nancy Brickhouse and chief of staff Tiffany Hogue pivot to lead initiatives of the Strategic Planning Group. This task force will organize the Give Light funds, an ongoing fundraiser, to improve the university, guided by feedback from the Baylor community. Students, faculty and staff are welcome to participate in the numerous upcoming listening sessions that aim to shape the next strategic plan, Illuminate Forward.

"We currently have 77 Strategic

Planning Group sessions scheduled for the fall months," Hogue said. "We could possibly add 10 to 15 more if they prove to be as successful as the previous five sessions, which we have held so far. They are designed to give every faculty member, staff member and student the opportunity to contribute their great ideas to Baylor's next plan for the upcoming five years, in what will be referred to as Illuminate Forward."

The listening sessions, held in person or via Zoom, will last 45 minutes. Attendees will be put in groups of eight to answer five discussion questions.

"We came up with the discussion questions together," Hogue said. "We want people to come to the conversation in an organic manner while being given the chance to

interact with their peers, colleagues and professors seated at their table. I hope that those involved critically think about how the school should prioritize our Baylor family."

Brickhouse said the discussion questions cover what makes Baylor unique, why the world needs a Baylor and what Baylor can improve upon to further its mission of influencing the world for good.

"President Livingstone launched her presidency talking about how this is a great opportunity for Baylor to set its sights higher," Brickhouse said. "The certain aspects of Baylor that are so crucial to who we are will not change with the [strategic planning], and one of those is our transformational undergraduate education, which remains our Christian mission, whether that is

reflected in our powerful athletics or excellence in the arts. The only difference is that we are now adding on the pursuit of furthering our research capabilities while also expanding scholarship opportunities for prospective students."

The Office of the Provost has enlisted the assistance and expertise of Dr. Tod Bolsinger and his colleagues from Fuller Seminary, who are experienced in leadership and strategic planning processes. They use technological tools to sort through the data collected from their online Qualtrics survey, which helps the Strategic Planning Group sift through the online form's responses.

"The strategic plan sets the tone for the institution over the next few years while providing us with more clarity about how we ought to be

spending our time," Brickhouse said. "It is crucial that we discern how to use our platform in important ways that are consistent with our faith. In a nutshell, the question is now how we can move forward from here."

The Strategic Planning Group is working to prepare for its April 2024 deadline, when it is scheduled to present its plan to Livingstone. Livingstone will then share the group's work with the Baylor Board of Regents in May 2024, when the board will decide if the new Illuminate Forward stage will proceed.

Brickhouse said the leaders of the Strategic Planning Group are confident they can get the job done.

"At Baylor, we believe that we can walk and chew gum at the same time," Brickhouse said. "This plan is no exception."

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WELCOME CENTER

from Page 1

more skills working in this new and improved space, and I think it will really just show the step up that Baylor has been needing.”

The Baylor community doesn’t have to wait until September to check it out. The Welcome Center is now open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. On Sept. 17, its schedule will shift to be open seven days a week.

Waco junior Hannah Chu visited the Welcome Center with her family friends from the Philippines. She said she brought them to tour Baylor and they were excited the Welcome Center was open so they could experience it together for the first time.

“It was great getting to see them so excited about Baylor and sharing

that special moment with them,” Chu said. “I think it just has this welcoming atmosphere.”

Barnett said the Welcome Center is partnering with Student Life to host a grand opening event on Sept. 8. There will be a large dedication event in the ballroom.

“We will be kind of celebrating the donors not only to this building, but several of the other projects,” Barnett said.

Cook said the Welcome Center will also be partnering with Pi Beta Phi sorority for Howdy at the Hurd, which will include food trucks, festivities and line dancing, as well as a concert with singer Bailey Zimmerman.



HERE COMES THE HURD The Hurd Welcome Center will host a grand opening dedication event on Sept. 8.

Kenneth Prabhakar | Photo Editor

RECOVERY

from Page 1

the start of the fall semester.”

Early in the recovery process, Livingstone said it was difficult to remain fully active. She said she was unable to go up and down stairs by herself, and she had to use a cane or a walker to move around.

“I really like to do things for myself, so it was really hard to ... have to rely on other people,” Livingstone said.

Livingstone said first gent Brad Livingstone was a huge support for her throughout the recovery process. He helped take care of her around the house and took her to physical therapy for the first few weeks.

“To be honest, from my perspective, it was a piece of cake taking care of Linda because she, as you can imagine, likes to get back on her feet very quickly and do things on her own,” Brad Livingstone said.

Brad Livingstone said the community’s support was one of the biggest helps throughout the whole process. He said that everyone had been very encouraging, from people sending cards and prayers to businesses bringing meals.

“I know it’s overused, but it does take a community for something like this,” Brad Livingstone said.

With the help of physical therapy staff, Livingstone said she feels even better than she did before the surgery. After only eight weeks of recovery, she said it will only continue to get better.

“I’m really back to normal office schedule and traveling some,” Livingstone said. “For the most part, the doctor, probably about a week and a half or two weeks ago, told me I could do whatever I felt comfortable doing.”

The Livingstones said they are excited to welcome all students back and to feel the energy on campus, and they are especially looking forward to all the exciting events and activities for the upcoming semester.

“I would just encourage the students to take full advantage of all the opportunities there are on campus when they come back, whether they’re new or returning students, to just get the full college experience,” Livingstone said.

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SOCCER PREVIEW

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pg. B4



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Kenneth Prabhakar | Photo Editor

CRUNCH TIME Baylor football head coach Dave Aranda hypes up his team during warm-ups at fall camp.

# Aranda energized by transfers, football's offseason training

MICHAEL HAAG  
Sports Editor

Coming off a disappointing 6-7 season, the Baylor football team doesn't need much motivation to put together a better campaign. With fall camp taking up the month of August, the Bears have shifted their focus to the 2023 season, which kicks off against Texas State University on Sept. 2 at McLane Stadium.

Head coach Dave Aranda said he thought this summer "was one of the better summers that our guys have had" and said he's seen growth from his group throughout the early fall period.

"We were outside in the stadium," Aranda said. "We didn't have an indoor [stadium] during that time, and we weren't on the practice fields. And so it's 110 [degrees] in the stadium, and our guys crushed it. So there's a good amount of confidence and a good amount of, 'Hey, I'm fighting for something. I'm sacrificing for something.' And so there's a lot to build off of that."

Aranda is entering his fourth season at the helm of the Baylor football program, and he's admitted that he's had to adapt to different coaching methods. Baylor went 2-7 in Aranda's first year, but the Bears bounced back with a 12-2 season, the best in program history, in 2021. The team capped off their Big 12 championship season with a Sugar Bowl trophy.

The team entered 2022 with sky-high expectations but lost four games straight to close the lackluster year. In the spring, Aranda said he needed to be harder on his athletes and not give out as many second chances. He said his other mistake was not utilizing the transfer portal following the historic 2021 season.

With several newcomers having since been ushered in via the transfer portal, Aranda said this fall has been essential for getting those athletes comfortable with the team.

"I think from a scheme perspective and player development perspective, it's a little chopped up just because of what we first addressed in the beginning with

“Overall as a team — and the chemistry part and the confidence part and the work to try to develop a swagger, that part — I feel strong about that.”

DAVE ARANDA |  
HEAD COACH

new guys coming and getting acclimated and a couple of new guys still yet to come," Aranda said. "But I think overall as a team — and the chemistry part and the confidence part and the work to try to develop a swagger, that part — I feel strong about that. And I feel I can sense that. I can see that."

At this point in the year, new faces are looking for someone to lean on and look up to. Seventh-year senior safety Bryson Jackson provides more experience than the typical senior, and he said he continues as a prominent

voice in the locker room.

Jackson added that fall camp has been full of energy, a great deal of which can be attributed to some of the transfer additions.

"All [of] those guys are athletic. Those are our teammates; those are our brothers," Jackson said. "So when they came in, Byron [Vaughns] and all the transfers that came in, we made connections with them. It feels like a brotherhood. That's something that makes great teams — definitely having those guys here and seeing the energy they bring. They could be other places with that energy. You could see it the first day of practice; you could see it in the film room. It feels like something we're going to be very good at throughout the season."

Jackson made the switch to the STAR position in the spring following multiple years at the outside linebacker and JACK spot.

Redshirt sophomore wide receiver Josh Cameron, another returner for Aranda's group, said the excitement level to get back on the field this fall has been palpable. Cameron is poised to construct a strong campaign after breaking out in 2022. He totaled the second-most yards (386) and fourth-most catches (28) for the Bears a year ago.

"Just being able to be back, basically getting back with my brothers, be able to run around the field again — I've really just been missing it," Cameron said. "Just kind of leading up, going through the summer, you kind of just start getting that itch."

Cameron and the Bears will get the chance to scratch that itch in their first game against Texas State University. Baylor will host a program-record eight home games in 2023, with only four road contests.

## Baylor Athletics loses old foes, faces new rivals in coming season

FOSTER NICHOLAS  
Sports Writer

From familiar foes to new faces, the 2023-24 Big 12 season will be filled with first times and last times, meaning the Baylor Bears are in for one of the most hyped seasons of all time.

There has never been a college sports season quite like the one the Big 12 will soon experience. Not only is the conference introducing four new schools this year, it's also adding four more next year, compensating for the departure of the University of Oklahoma and the University of Texas. The door is wide open for new Big 12 faces to rise to the top.

Baylor and the rest of the "hateful eight" will usher Brigham Young University, the University of Cincinnati, the University of Houston and the University of Central Florida into the conference this season, creating pivotal first-time matchups. The new squads will look to find sure footing while the green and gold will try to assert its dominance.

"It's just different; it's going to be an adventure for us this season," Baylor volleyball head coach Ryan McGuyre said. "To me, it excites me. I think as a staff, we have to adapt. ... Preparing for the unknown means we have to do things unlike how we've done it before."

The recent news of the University of Colorado, the University of Arizona, Arizona State University and the University of Utah joining the Big 12 in 2024 has elevated how paramount the upcoming athletics season will be. The league just finished one of the biggest seasons for the conference after Texas Christian University's football team made it all the way to the national championship game, and seven men's basketball teams (70% of the Big 12) made it into the NCAA Tournament.

"Knowing some of the coaches that are in the [Pac-12] league, [our] league just got tougher," Baylor football head coach Dave Aranda said when addressing the expansion of the Big 12. "[There will be] a lot of quality [and] physical teams. I'm excited for it, and I'm blessed to be a part of it."

The conference's stability

helped inspire the "Four Corners" schools to join. Baylor has newly added pressure in 2023-24 to prove to the league its reputation as a top-end program. So long to the Power Five conferences, as the national eye is now fixated on four conferences. With the Big 12 being one of them, success can lead to more than just current time in the spotlight, but also cementing that spot in the future.

For the green and gold, the yearlong sports calendar will be juiced not only with new matchups that will be seen for years to come, but it also holds last time in-conference matchups sure to leave an impression. Oklahoma and Texas will be departing the Big 12 for the SEC after the 2023-24 season, giving the Bears the perfect opportunity to close those rivalries on a high note.

UT and OU, seen as well-rounded powerhouses throughout their tenure in the Big 12, have taken a few steps back in recent years. The Longhorns' football squad has tallied only one 10-win season in the past 13 years. For the Sooners, the 2022-23 season was the first time both football (6-7) and basketball (15-17) finished with sub .500 records in the same season since 1965.

The Bears will have the chance to kick the former conference bullies aside and get the last laugh. While matchups on the gridiron, court and diamond will all seem bigger to Baylor, there could be more pressure for the Longhorns and Sooners. With both departing institutions looking to go out on top, the hateful eight — along with the four newcomers — have the chance to be spoilers.

It's no lie that most eyes will be fixated on football and basketball, but every sport on campus will experience significant change. From Betty Lou Mays Soccer Field to the Hurd Tennis Center, each match is expected to bring renewed excitement.

The bottom line is the stakes feel higher than ever for Baylor and each team in the Big 12. The deck is stacked, and the cards have been dealt. The Bears have the chance to run the table and cement their name at the forefront of the new Big 12.



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Baylor Roundup file photo

BIG CHANGES Baylor looks to cement itself as a top-tier talent in the new Big 12 during the 2023-24 season.



# Colleen, women’s basketball attack transfer portal, reload for season

**JACKSON POSEY**  
Sports Writer

Another season begins for the Baylor women’s basketball program, welcoming a roster full of fresh faces, amended expectations and even a new arena in January.

After falling short of a Big 12 title last season for the first time since 2010, the Bears find themselves in a liminal space. Only one player, senior guard Sarah Andrews, remains from the 2022 title team. No other active player has spent more than a year in the program.

But head coach Nicki Colleen has pivoted quickly, hitting the transfer portal hard this offseason to keep the firepower prevalent.

The class headliners are both from the state of Kentucky, and it all starts with graduate student forward Dre’Una Edwards. When Edwards transferred to Baylor last year, she did not see any game action. She instead became the center of controversy when University of Kentucky head coach Kyra Elzy refused to sign a waiver that would have allowed her to play immediately. As a second-time non-graduate transfer, Edwards needed her former coach to sign an NCAA No Participation Opportunity form to be eligible without sitting out a season.

Edwards is now eligible, and she’s expected to be a force for the Bears. In her final season at Kentucky, she finished sixth in the SEC in scoring, putting up 16.8 points and 8.4 rebounds per game on 52.1% shooting. The Las Vegas native continually encounters success, winning



Baylor Athletics

**BON VOYAGE** The Baylor women’s basketball program poses with fans and family for a picture during its trip to Europe on Aug. 10.

Pac-12 Freshman of the Year at the University of Utah and dropping 29 points and a game-winning shot against the University of South Carolina in the SEC title game for Kentucky. She’ll play a key role for a Baylor team that’s losing two of its top three scorers.

Edwards didn’t come alone. Enter another Wildcat transfer in junior guard Jada Walker, a former SEC All-Freshman Team member and defensive specialist who finished third among major-conference players at 2.61 steals per game last year. Pair that with 12.9 points, 3.1 boards and 3.1 assists per game, and you get a player who should make an instant impact in Waco.

The Bears recruited outside

of power conferences, too. Junior guard Yaya Felder was a bona fide star at the University of Ohio, dropping 22.0 points, 5.1 rebounds, 4.0 assists and 2.2 steals per game. She led the Mid-American Conference in scoring by four points per game. Felder earned Second Team All-Conference honors, and likely would’ve competed for MAC Player of the Year if the Bobcats — who finished 6-23 — had found more team success.

At 6-foot-3, Belmont University transfer Madison Bartley brings a powerful inside scoring presence to the Bears. Bartley earned First Team All-Missouri Valley Conference honors last season

after averaging 14.1 points and 5.1 rebounds per game for the Bruins. She’s the 34th 1,000-point scorer in Belmont history and has a chance to play significant minutes for Baylor in 2023.

Bartley said the “family environment” at Baylor drew her in and that fitting into the team dynamic has been a seamless transition.

“I remember meeting Sarah [Andrews] for the first time, and she was so welcoming, and we went bowling,” Bartley said. “But just having that family feeling and knowing that everyone has the same goal here. We want to win, and we want to be in the Final Four, and we want to win a

championship. So being able to come to a program like that and to where everyone [within] the first week bought into what we want to do is just something really special.”

Felder and Bartley didn’t come from big brand schools, but Colleen said she thinks their skills can be translated to the highest levels of college basketball.

“I love the idea that maybe a Madison or a Yaya didn’t play in a Power Five league, but they’re out to prove that they deserve to — and should’ve, maybe, from the beginning,” Colleen said. “There’s a hunger in all of [the transfers] to show they belong [at this level at Baylor].”

The Baylor women’s basketball team hasn’t announced its non-conference schedule yet, but stay tuned with @BULariatSports on X, formerly known as Twitter, for the latest news.

“ [Fritz] brought a toughness and a little bit of swag to her that we felt like we needed.”

**NICKI COLLEN | HEAD COACH**



**IN THE ZONE** Baylor volleyball huddles before its 2022 NCAA Division I Volleyball Championship first round match against Stephen F. Austin State University on Dec. 1, 2022, in the Ferrell Center.

## Baylor volleyball’s McGuyre braces for senior-less squad

**JACKSON POSEY**  
Sports Writer

Despite being a team that consists of zero seniors for the first time in head coach Ryan McGuyre’s career, Baylor volleyball is aiming to rise to the top of the Big 12 standings in 2023.

The Bears are left with the daunting task of replacing both elite production and leadership following the graduations of All-Big 12 First Team members Kara McGhee, Lauren Harrison and Mallory Talbert. The burden will fall on the shoulders of a young roster that features six true freshmen.

“I’ve never had a team with no seniors, so leadership is a big team goal this year,” McGuyre said after the team’s first fall practice. “I love the leadership growth we’ve seen in the freshmen that are now sophomores, and then we have a special freshman class here that has really increased the energy.”

The freshman class is headlined by outside hitter Kyndal Stowers, a blue-chip recruit from Denton who was named Co-Big 12 Preseason Freshman of the Year.

The depth chart is crowded for outside hitters, as Stowers will be joined by junior Elise McGhee, who finished the 2022 season as second in total attempts on the Bears.

Trailing McGhee is sophomore opposite hitter Allie Szech, who won gold for Team USA at the 2023 Pan American Cup. Stowers is still expected to play an early role for the Bears.

“I loved being with her in the spring, and she definitely is a big part of our team for sure,” McGhee said. “All of our freshmen are awesome. I appreciate all the effort they’re giving. They’re such a joy. They’re so fun, and every single one of them is rising to the occasion.”

With the regular season approaching, McGhee said Stowers, Szech and redshirt sophomore Riley Simpson are outside hitters to watch.

“I’m hoping that since our team is pretty young and I’m considered one of the oldest, that I will be a go-to hitter,” McGhee said. “But I feel like we have so many of those, like Kyndal, Allie Szech, Riley; we have so many. And I feel like everyone has the opportunity to be a go-to hitter this year.”

On the back line, junior libero and defensive specialist Lauren Briseño is again set to anchor the team after finishing sixth in the Big 12 in digs last year. Briseño earned a spot on the USA Women’s Collegiate National Team and won gold in the Pan American Cup alongside Szech, who earned All-Big 12 Second Team and All-Big 12 Rookie Team

honors as a freshman in 2022.

McGuyre praised Briseño’s leadership this summer, and added that McGhee and junior middle blocker Ava Grace Haggard have stepped up as well.

With standout blockers Kara McGhee and Mallory Talbert no longer on the squad, Haggard, redshirt sophomore middle blocker Alicia Andrew and junior middle blocker Manuela Bibinbe are expected to compete for minutes. Bibinbe is entering her first year in the green and gold after transferring from Missouri State University-West Plains.

Lastly, setter sophomore Averil Carlson is primed for a huge season after leading the Big 12 in assists as a true freshman. Carlson also finished second on the team in digs, trailing Briseño. Her success aided in her being named Big 12 Freshman of the Year. She also was able to secure All-Big 12 First Team honors.

The Bears may be light on senior experience, but they’re equipped with returners and newcomers. McGuyre said he’s preaching the same mindset in practice day after day, regardless of how young the squad is.

“We want to know one way to play, and here we’re trying to win a national championship,” McGuyre said.

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Baylor Roundup file photo

**LEGEND** Junior forward women’s basketball player Brittney Griner (42) high fives fans following her dominant 41-point game against Iowa State University on March 3, 2012, in the Ferrell Center.



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

**REUNION** Baylor alumni and WNBA player Brittney Griner visits with coach Nicki Collen and the 2023-2024 women’s basketball team on June 7 in Arlington.

# Collen vows to retire Griner’s No. 42 jersey

**MICHAEL HAAG**  
Sports Editor

It’s hard to find a word that perfectly epitomizes what the last 17 months have been like for Brittney Griner, but “hectic” might be a good place to start.

After being detained for over eight months in Russia on drug possession charges, Griner settled back into life as a WNBA player. In early June she shared a special moment with the Baylor women’s basketball team. Griner is a 6-foot-9 forward on the Phoenix Mercury, and when her squad played against the Dallas Wings on June 7 in Arlington, her alma mater showed up to welcome her home.

Baylor women’s basketball head coach Nicki Collen and several members of the program took the

97-mile trip north to see Griner, a former Lady Bear from 2009 to 2013. Now that Griner is safely home in the United States, Collen made sure to double down on her plans to get Griner’s No. 42 jersey retired in the soon-to-open Foster Pavilion.

“That’s the goal,” Collen said. “We’re opening a new arena. There’s no doubt that I want to see her jersey in the rafters.”

Griner became the subject of national headlines on Feb. 17, 2022, when she was wrongfully detained by Russian officials. But now having been free for over 250 days, Griner is back on the WNBA court and looks to continue the All-Star level dominance she displayed before her Russian imprisonment.

Hearing Collen’s comments and being surrounded with love from the green and gold family gave Griner

the chance to reflect on her time at Baylor and how much she still loves the school.

“I played some of my best basketball there, met some really amazing people there, met my wife there,” Griner said. “I can’t wait to get back. It’s safe to say I’m never going overseas to play ball again, so in the offseason, I’ll be able to actually go and see games — just walk the same halls that I walked before. It was amazing to have [the Baylor team] here. I was really, really, really, really happy to see the Baylor team. That meant a lot, having them here.”

Griner played for former Lady Bears head coach Kim Mulkey, who left Baylor in 2021 to take over the Louisiana State University women’s basketball program. Mulkey and Griner had a falling out after Griner finished her time at Baylor. Mulkey

said for years the main reason the number wasn’t retired was because Griner didn’t officially graduate.

According to ESPN, Griner confirmed that she has since received her college degree from Baylor. With Collen at the helm and Griner home safely, Baylor’s plans to retire the No. 42 jersey can be put in motion.

A Houston native, Griner piled in 3,283 points, 1,305 rebounds and a NCAA-record 748 blocks in the green and gold, and she helped lead the squad to two Final Fours. In 2012, her junior season, the team went 40-0 en route to a national championship — an NCAA-record undefeated season.

“I love Baylor,” Griner said. “Without that, I don’t get to where I’m at right here.”

Collen took over Baylor women’s hoops in May 2021 and didn’t take long to voice her goal of rekindling

the relationship between Griner and the institution. Collen had coached against Griner at the WNBA level, both as a head coach and as an assistant coach.

ESPN reported in December 2021 that Griner said she wanted to visit Baylor “soon” and that she was hoping to reunite with her former collegiate program. Then, only a few months later, she was detained in Russia. The 10-month journey to obtain her freedom ensued.

With both sides now safe and happy, Baylor has the opportunity to bring her back to campus for the first time since her playing days and retire her jersey. The Foster Pavilion is still set to open in January 2024, barring any delays. It will be the new home for the men’s and women’s basketball programs, as they will depart the Ferrell Center.

<b>FEB. 17, 2022</b> Griner detained in Russia	<b>MARCH 23, 2022</b> Griner meets with U.S. officials	<b>JUNE 14, 2022</b> Detention extended for third time	<b>JULY 7, 2022</b> Griner pleads guilty	<b>SEPT. 16, 2022</b> Biden meets with Griner’s family	<b>NOV. 9, 2022</b> Griner is sent to Penal Colony	<b>FEB. 18, 2023</b> Griner resigns with Phoenix Mercury
<b>MARCH 17, 2022</b> Detention extended	<b>MAY 13, 2022</b> Detention extended for second time	<b>JUNE 27, 2022</b> Preliminary hearing, extended for fourth time	<b>AUG. 4, 2022</b> Griner sentenced to nine and a half years	<b>SEPT. 26, 2022</b> Collen speaks to media about Griner	<b>DEC. 8, 2022</b> Russia trades Griner for arms dealer Viktor Bout with the U.S.	

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A photograph of a young woman with dark hair, smiling and looking towards the camera. She is holding a purple folder or tablet against her chest. She is wearing a grey t-shirt and blue jeans, and has a black backpack on. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green trees.





**BEAR DOWN** Baylor women’s soccer high-fives members of the University of Iowa following the national anthem and starting lineups during a home contest on Oct. 13, 2022, at Betty Lou Mays Field.

# Michelle Lenard looks to lead Baylor soccer to success in 2023 through culture, comfort

**FOSTER NICHOLAS**  
Sports Writer

With a full season under her belt and a pair of exhibition wins to start the 2023 campaign, Baylor soccer head coach Michelle Lenard is ready to continue her efforts to build a strong culture.

Following a 4-11-2 season in Lenard’s first year, the Bears went into the offseason with the goal to grow and find comfortability in Waco on the pitch and in the locker room. Lenard only had a few months to prepare in 2022, and now she’s focused on using the time available to her to make Baylor feel like home.

“I think for me and for the entire team, there’s an entirely different comfort level,” Lenard said. “We’ve had time to lay the foundation that we wanted to lay. This group has been fantastic so far. They’re easy to coach. It’s just been a fun environment. Everybody’s really enjoying themselves. That makes everybody more comfortable and makes you enjoy your job.”

Lenard molded the team in the direction she saw fit during her introductory season and has continued to shape a roster of her own. Baylor added 14 new faces in preparation for the upcoming year, and all players will be expected to make an impact.

“We feel good about our first 11 [players],” Lenard said. “I think what’s really great about this team right now is there’s a number of players who could be in the first 11 any day. So when we

make our first round of substitutions, that group could be our first 11, and that’s a difference in depth from last year.”

Baylor scored 14 goals for all of 2022. In just two exhibition matches against the University of Oklahoma and Tarleton State University, the Bears scored seven. The team is focusing on having a stronger attack for the regular season.

“We have multiple scoring threads,” Lenard said. “There’s a lot of people, and not all of them are going to score 15 to 20 goals a year, but if they’re all scoring a handful of goals, we’re already in a better position [than] last year. We wanted to create a lot of chances on goal. We did that [and] we scored some great goals, and these are not one-off type goals. We’re replicating a lot of the same type of goals, which is a really positive sign that we’ll

be able to continue doing that going into the regular season.”

Dallas Baptist University transfer and senior midfielder Ashley Merrill joined the Baylor squad last year and said she has meshed well with her teammates. Merrill said time was critical and she feels more in tune with the locker room.

“Coming into a new program and being older, it was hard because you come in and you’re new, so you’re not really a leader, and that was kind of hard for me,” Merrill said. “We have minimal upperclassmen, so I knew I had to step up. Everyone knew the expectations that the leaders now have and what we want for the team. I think we all want the same thing, so whenever you have a leader that wants the same thing as you, you listen to them and you follow them.”

“We feel good about our first 11 [players]. I think what’s really great about this team right now is there’s a number of players who could be in the first 11 any day.”

**MICHELLE LENARD | HEAD COACH**

Lenard adjusted not only to the differences on the pitch but also to the challenges off of it. Between extensive hours of travel and difficult academics, Lenard said she’s focused on supporting players as college students to help in-game performance.

“Knowing how to manage [travel and academics] better and support our athletes is going to help our players play to the best of their ability,” Lenard said. “I do think that the model that we came in with can and will work. We spent a lot of time teaching it, and we brought in some players that are just more suited for it. I feel really confident that we’ve learned from last year, but we’re ready to be a better team now.”

The team spent the spring focused on cultivating unity and creating relationships that will translate from the locker room onto the pitch.

“I really liked springtime as a team because there’s a lot of time to grow, develop and focus on our relationships off-field with each other,” graduate student forward Jenna Patterson said. “Bringing in new people in the spring is honestly sometimes more beneficial because we use that time and summer to really get to know each other before going into the fall.”

The green and gold will start its season with three road matches before heading home for a duel with Louisiana Tech University at 7 p.m. on Aug. 31.



Scan here to tune in to Don’t Feed The Bears — our weekly sports podcast hosted by Foster Nicholas, Joe Pratt and Jackson Posey.



## Sports Take: Daily Northwestern proves student journalists maintain powerful voice

**MICHAEL HAAG**  
Sports Editor

As Baylor students reconvene in classrooms across campus, the quintessential “What did you do over the summer?” question has probably come up 100 times already. While sitting on a beach in a foreign country is a pretty tough vacation to top, some students around the country continued to embrace the grind well beyond their final exams.

Such is the case for a team of student journalists at the Daily Northwestern, a student-run newspaper that covers all things Northwestern University. Over the summer break, some Daily Northwestern reporters uncovered years of hazing allegations regarding the university’s football program and head coach.

This stunning revelation proved yet again that student journalists have an important voice that should be taken seriously. Look, I get it. It’s “cool” to make fun of the Lariat for whatever trendy reason Yik Yak feeds you, but this summer showed the boundless potential for a voice such as a student newspaper. Before scoffing at the Lariat and disregarding its publications, it’s important to keep in mind that there’s some serious weight to what can and will come out on behalf of the staff.

When Pat Fitzgerald, Northwestern’s head football coach, was suspended for two weeks in early July, there was a brief news release on the matter. It noted that there was an investigation finding evidence to support a claim regarding hazing within the football program, but that was about it.

Most media outlets paid little mind to the situation, as the dust could’ve settled completely on the entire matter if given enough time. But the Daily Northwestern felt there was more to the story. With a little bit of investigative reporting, a team of student journalists who were on summer break wound up breaking one of the biggest



**SCANDAL** The Northwestern Wildcats defend kick during a regular season contest against Southern Illinois University on Sept. 17, 2022, in Evanston, Ill.

stories of the college football offseason.

Northwestern’s administration sent out the initial release July 8, and the Daily Northwestern broke the details of the hazing allegations in full, with a dazzling 1,600-word article that fleshes out everything you need to know about what was going on behind the scenes. By the time July 10 rolled around, Fitzgerald and the Northwestern football program were included in national headlines and displayed on TVs across the country.

With evidence publicized, Northwestern fired Fitzgerald and began its search for a new head coach just two months before the 2023 season. Fitzgerald helmed the Wildcats for 17 years and was even a linebacker on the team from 1993 to 1996. Northwestern was left with no choice but to fire its revered leader, largely due to the Daily Northwestern.

There’s a real possibility that Fitzgerald would still be employed as the head football coach at Northwestern had it not been for the brave souls of the Daily Northwestern. It’s also worth noting that the Daily Northwestern is not affiliated with or funded by the university, so the newspaper received no pushback from the institution while it reported on the matter.

The student journalists stayed engaged all summer long and continued to follow the story, doing so to this day. It’s been a hectic but impressive run for these part-student, part-workers, and it serves as a reminder to take all reporters seriously.

It shouldn’t take a national story such as this to spark a call to action to respect student journalists, but let this be an opportunity to spread awareness that student newspapers should never be taken for granted.



BLOCKBUSTERS

Fans of “Barbie” and “Oppenheimer” discuss the movie event of the year.  
**pg. B6**



CAR-FREE FUN

Looking to get off campus without a car? Check out this list of walkable spots! **pg. B7**



**I took it as my responsibility to create an inclusive space for student artists to express their perspectives through art.**

Baylor students unleash their creativity through art and poetry in their new magazine. **pg. B6**

BaylorLariat.com

Baylor Theatre’s most controversial production to return after 60 years



ERIKA KUEHL  
Staff Writer

With the dawn of another season of shows ahead, Baylor Theatre has been diligently preparing for the return of the production that caused a schoolwide scandal in 1963.

Jojo Jones, interim chair of theater arts and associate professor of lighting design, said the staged reading of Eugene O’Neill’s “Long Day’s Journey Into Night,” which will come on Sept. 15 and 17 to Hooper-Schaefer Fine Arts Center, caused an uproar decades ago.

“Sixty years ago, it was this really big controversy on Baylor campus,” Jones said. “The president basically stopped production of it, which led to about half of the theater faculty at the time quitting. It was a huge scandal. We are doing a staged reading of it for the 60th anniversary. It’s a really powerful play, and I’m really excited to work on that.”

The theater brochure describes the play as an unflinching depiction of love, betrayal and addiction for one family. It examines the fragility of dysfunctional family bonds and the fallout of intergenerational trauma.

John-Michael Marrs, associate professor of theatre arts and director of the show, said Paul Baker, who was head of Baylor Theatre in 1963, was called into the president’s office at the time. After being told to cut the production altogether, Baker was given an ultimatum: to remove the references to addiction, dark themes and explicit language, or to leave the university.

“He did refuse and then proceeded to leave Baylor and take a lot of the theater faculty and staff when they went to Trinity University,” Marrs said.

This year, the staged reading will feature professional actors from the Actors’ Equity Association.

“They’ll get to kind of mentor the students while they’re here,” Marrs said. “So that’s probably the thing I’m most looking forward to. I love the educational side of all this.”

Marrs said the show will mainly be focused on dialogue, rather than an elaborate set. He said he wants “the words of the play to specifically take center stage.”

“It’ll probably be pretty minimal staging,” Marrs said. “I’m really interested in, you know, with a bare stage, everything on it becomes important. So we’re being really selective about which chairs to choose for each character. Is it indicative of their personality or their nature? Lighting and sound I’m sure will provide a lot of the ambience and nuance, but the pretty minimal staging allows the words to take focus.”

Marrs described the play as a way to talk about complex material and ask if the story is a cautionary tale or an endorsement of a particular lifestyle.

“I think it’s neat to unpack this together, to talk about it in conversation,” Marrs said. “To talk about also if it’s a cautionary tale — you know, not all depictions of life are endorsements of that life.”

Marrs said few things in society are “truly communal,” but dialogue and conversation between art and individuals are valuable to the community.

“It’s a little bit like meeting people where they are and coming in dialogue — meeting in the middle as opposed to expecting someone to come to the art and understand and make all the concessions,” Marrs said.

**NEWSFLASH FROM THE PAST** The Baylor Lariat reported on the controversial rift between the Baylor Theatre and then-Baylor President Abner McCall on March 9, 1963. Lariat historical archives are available online though Baylor’s Digital Collection.

Student musician explores avenue for self-expression in Cordoba band

ERIKA KUEHL  
Staff Writer

When San Antonio senior Brando Lezzana decided to start sharing his music beyond his computer, he needed a name for his project. So he clung to his mother’s birthplace: Cordoba, Argentina.

Lezzana began his official music career in 2021, launching Cordoba as his form of self-expression.

“I’ve been making music since I was in high school,” Lezzana said. “And now in college, I’ve just started to release stuff. And it’s always been a big passion of mine, and it’s always just something I can do.”

Lezzana is not only a self-taught guitarist but also played saxophone in his high school marching band. He said he gives his band director credit for his decision to start his career.

“My band director was a big musical influence for me,” Lezzana said. “And so maybe that pushed me a bit to make music.”

Lezzana is a member of the Baylor Jazz Combo, which he refers to as the “chill version” of the jazz band. Because his major — management information systems — doesn’t involve musical endeavors, he said it’s a great way to keep playing the saxophone.

Plenty of bands inspire Lezzana’s music. He particularly noted the Beatles and indie-pop project Dayglow.

“Someone who’s really inspired me in everything is Dayglow,” Lezzana said. “I just really liked how he does everything himself. And he’s able to produce his own music and mix, be a multi-instrumentalist and everything. Just a huge inspiration for me.”

Lezzana does all of the writing and producing for Cordoba on his own. He said he learned how to produce through YouTube and has aspirations for a future in Austin or another urban setting.

“I think maybe being a producer would be pretty cool if the whole Cordoba thing doesn’t blow up or anything,” Lezzana said.

“So yeah, I guess just producing music for other people or just being a songwriter would be awesome.”

Lezzana said he describes his style as indie rock and has plans to put out two new singles by the end of August. One upcoming single is about how his relationships changed from high school to college.

“It’s really just about how my friendships around me have changed and how some relationships have just gone away and stuff,” Lezzana said. “Just how I guess it makes me feel like a new person because the people around me are different.”

Lezzana said his ideas are sporadic, with “1,000 voice memos full of ideas” waiting to be transformed into finished songs.

“I usually just pick up my guitar or play the piano and just try to hum a melody,” Lezzana said. “I usually just say random words until something kind of fits into the melodies and just write the song around that.”

While Lezzana said he doesn’t know specifically how his image will change in the future, he said it will probably shift depending on the genre he is catering to. For example, his upcoming music discusses heavier topics than he previously approached, such as a disagreement he had with his girlfriend.

“It’s about how small arguments can be made out of nonsense,” Lezzana said. “And once you talk it over, you can work out any issues you have in your relationship.”

Leah Bullinger, Lezzana’s girlfriend and a 2022 Baylor graduate, said she was initially hesitant toward the song but loved it when she listened to the finished product.

“I think initially, it could have turned into an issue: ‘Oh, you’re writing a song about having a disagreement. That’s probably not good,’” Bullinger said. “But he was saying he wanted it to reflect more of the positive side of being able to work through things together as a team in a way that he hadn’t experienced before. Then I was like, ‘OK, yeah, that makes sense.’”



Photo courtesy of Averie Zant

**PASSION MAKES PERFECT** Singer-songwriter Brando Lezzana, also known as Cordoba, smiles brightly after a productive practice.

Bullinger said she wishes people could see how much time Lezzana puts into his music and how he incorporates the stories of his friends and loved ones. She emphasized how much joy it brings him to share what he loves with others.

“Even if he’s humble about it and doesn’t, you know, speak out about it a lot, I know he really appreciates everyone,” Bullinger said.

Lezzana said he has been working toward a live show in the fall, with the addition of bass and drum players. He also said he helps run the sound at Common Grounds on Eighth Street and hopes to get a gig there soon.

“I want people to be inspired to express themselves better, because I feel like I’m a pretty reserved guy,” Lezzana said. “And whenever I’m writing music and stuff, I’m able to express what I’m actually feeling better. And so if I could, [I want to] try to inspire someone to express themselves in the same way and not be scared to hide their feelings.”

What to Do in Waco: First week edition

HERMES IN THE HEART OF TEXAS: THE ART OF KERMIT OLIVER

Aug. 4 - Oct. 14 | 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. | Art Center Waco, 701 S Eighth St. | Art Center Waco presents a collection of art from Texas artist Kermit Oliver in collaboration with the iconic Hermès fashion house.

TEXAS, YOUR TEXAS: CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF THE TEXAS COLLECTION AT BAYLOR

Starting Aug. 8 | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. | Carroll Library, 1429 S Fifth St. | Carroll Library is showcasing rare pieces of Texas history and holding special events to celebrate the collection’s centennial year at Baylor.

STAKE! A COMEDIC DRAMA BY DR. MICHAEL LONG

Aug. 18 - 27 | Times vary by date | The Brazos Theatre, 7524 Bosque Blvd. | Tickets are \$28.25 and up | This show puts a comedic spin on the classic tale of Dracula, with Dr. Van Helsing retelling the saga.

SEE MORE EVENTS ONLINE:





# Student sound-off: ‘Barbie’ vs. ‘Oppenheimer’

EMMA WEIDMANN  
Arts and Life Editor

The talk of the summer and the inspiration for countless memes have all centered around two drastically different films that premiered on the same day: “Barbie” and “Oppenheimer.” Which one reigns supreme — Greta Gerwig’s daydream in neon pink or Christopher Nolan’s gritty biopic?

According to Corpus Christi senior Eric Jaramillo, life in plastic really is fantastic. Katy junior Michael Okonkwo, however, is a fan of Nolan’s three-hour dive into the father of the atomic bomb.

Did you see both “Barbie” and “Oppenheimer”?

Jaramillo: I did not. I just saw “Barbie.” I really liked it ... I can’t speak for my friends who are women, but I saw the effect it had on them. If it had kind of an impact on me, I can only imagine what it did for them. So I think it was a really great movie.

Okonkwo: I saw both back-to-back.

What drew you to the films?

Jaramillo: I’m a pop culture buff. I knew the movie was coming out ever since the poster came out with Margot Robbie in the Barbie car, so I was like, “Oh, I’m going to watch it” ... It wasn’t that I didn’t want to see [“Oppenheimer”], but it just didn’t catch my eye. ... If I had the choice, I probably wouldn’t [see “Oppenheimer”].

Okonkwo: If you go online, there were a bunch of memes about “Barbie” and “Oppenheimer” and stuff like that everywhere. I’m not the type of person who goes to the theater like that; I’m usually the type to wait until it’s out on DVD so I can watch it, but

there was just so much hype around it. ... With movies, what you usually see is superheroes and Marvel — stuff like that. So “Oppenheimer” being a historical thing was new.

How did your expectation of the film measure up to the film in reality?

Jaramillo: I remember I heard from a TikTok that it was sad, so I was like, “Oh, I’m going to be sad at the end.” So it was pretty different, and it was not what I was expecting when I went into it. So when I got out, I was like, “Oh, that kind of hit me and made me really sad.” It was way different from what I expected.

Okonkwo: For “Barbie,” it was a lot more meaningful than I expected it to be. For the most part, I expected it to be just about Barbie, but there were some more mature jokes. It was that, but it got into more about how girls are treated in real life. ... It’s nice that they incorporated that into something like “Barbie.”

Christopher Nolan made all the scenes [of “Oppenheimer”] so dramatic and everything, and usually historical people talking is not the most exciting thing to watch, but he made it seem so much cooler than it is.

What did you like most about the films?

Jaramillo: I really liked the message it had, especially at the end. At the end, I think people were expecting [Barbie] and Ken to kiss, and they didn’t. That made me really happy because I think a lot of men wanted them to kiss. ... I liked that it didn’t give them that. I think that it’s a testament to feminism.

Okonkwo: I liked both for different reasons. I loved “Oppenheimer” because it was three hours long, but I was locked in for the entire thing. ... I feel like “Barbie” was a lot of fun and had a deep message to it. ... From just enjoying



‘BARBENHEIMER’ SUMMER In their opening weekend, “Barbie” grossed \$155 million in ticket sales, and “Oppenheimer” brought in \$82.4 million.

the cool visuals and everything, obviously “Oppenheimer,” but story-wise, I feel like I enjoyed “Barbie” more in that sense.

Say you got to make your own director’s cut of the film. What changes would you make?

Jaramillo: I would probably include more scenes in the Barbie world, because the set was so pretty but they didn’t include much of it. ... They did it so good; I don’t know what else I would add. I guess more dancing scenes; those

were nice.

Okonkwo: For “Barbie,” I feel like the mom should have her speech, and the way to dehypnotize the Barbies was to tell them what made them special. Like, “You’re the president. You did this. You don’t need to worry about [Ken].”

I don’t know how [Nolan] would incorporate [stories of the effects of nuclear testing in New Mexico], but I feel like if I was director, I would put that in to show, “Yeah, he’s remorseful, and there were a lot of people who were affected.”



Photo courtesy of Simin Kurji  
**BREAKING BOUNDARIES** The executive directors of Trope Magazine are Vennela Vattikuti, Simin Kurji, Carly Wuerch, Ruthann Daniel and Mackenzie Henton.

## Trope Magazine explores new realms of creativity

OLIVIA EIKEN  
Staff Writer

Founded by a group of Baylor students, Trope Magazine seeks to be a common landing space for Baylor and Waco creatives alike. Its motto is “shattering the boundaries of storytelling,” and it is doing just that.

Irving junior Vennela Vattikuti, creative and styling director, said she created Trope Magazine as a way to redefine the very essence of narrative and diverse expression. She said her inspiration came from a unique opportunity she had while working as a stylist for Saffron — an editorial South Asian magazine based in Austin.

“The creative environment I was able to be a part of inspired me to create a similar experience for Baylor and Waco creatives,” Vattikuti said. “Therefore, I took it as my responsibility to create an inclusive space for student artists to express their perspectives through art.”

Vattikuti said each edition has a specific theme. Each contributor will then pitch whatever media they prefer that falls within the theme, ranging from editorial photoshoots to creative writing pieces.

This semester, the Trope Magazine team is creating and curating all of the creative elements for the first edition, expecting print and digital publication by January 2024.

Dallas junior Simin Kurji, marketing and social media director for Trope Magazine, said she is confident that a magazine is the perfect medium to execute the creatives’ vision.

Similar to Vattikuti, she said she credits fashion and creative magazines as a significant inspiration for her growing up and would like to provide that inspiration to others.

“Magazines are a great form of expression because they can combine literature, photography, art and fashion in a way that not a lot of other mediums can,” Kurji said.

Vattikuti said the Trope Magazine team chose to not be affiliated with Baylor for a few reasons, one being that they wanted the opportunity to invite young Waco artists outside of the Baylor community to contribute to the magazine.

“Our decision to be unaffiliated with Baylor is not based on what it lacks as an institution, but instead as a growth opportunity to expand our community further than campus grounds,” Vattikuti said.

According to Kurji, the team also made the decision for independence to promote inclusivity.

“We wanted to make this magazine diverse and welcoming to everyone, regardless of their background and what they bring to the table,” Kurji said.

## Baylor’s fall fashion lookbook: How to sic the semester with style

BELLA WHITMORE  
Intern

With a diverse college campus like Baylor comes a wide variety of fashion choices. As students begin the fall semester, let’s look back at past trends and toward the future of fashion to predict what they will be wearing on their daily walks through campus. The fall lookbook for Baylor Bears can generally be divided into four categories, with a special Halloween bonus.

### Athleisure

Athleisure is a classic choice, proving to withstand the test of time with ease. This choice may include a Lululemon “Align” tank top, a tasteful tennis skirt and a pair of colorful HOKA shoes — along with a Stanley cup to maintain hydration on 95-degree walks to and from the Baylor Sciences Building. An honorable mention for this category goes to the iconic Free People high-waisted shorts, which may not be everyone’s style but will undoubtedly stand out on campus once again this fall with their bright colors and large waistband.

### Greek chic

Greek Life is an important part of Baylor’s campus culture and community. This look includes a fraternity-sponsored event T-shirt for men and a sorority

jersey for women, as they sport their letters with pride. As for the rest of the outfit, this look can easily be combined with the athleisure category: pair it with athletic elements like the On “Cloud” shoes and a Lululemon skirt. Finally, an honorable mention for this category goes to the classic backward baseball cap (bonus points if it has fraternity letters on it).

### Fall-struck

This is the style for those who wish it felt like fall when it certainly does not. We’ve all seen her, and we’ve probably all been her. With a cute, undoubtedly sweat-filled cable-knit sweater, along with high-waisted mom jeans and Converse, this style is not for the faint of heart. For accessories, a canvas tote bag and Starbucks in hand are indispensable. The honorable mention for this autumnal look is Dr. Martens boots, which have been a seasonal staple for many years.

### Candid comfort

Have you ever woken up precisely 10 minutes before class starts? This style is the result — an overworked college student’s staple. The crucial facets of this look are sweatpants or the occasional pajama pants with an oversized T-shirt. Throw on your choice of comfy shoes to complete the fresh-out-of-bed style. But hey, at least you went to class,

right? Lastly, the honorable mention is Birkenstock clogs, which have been taking college campuses by storm with their versatility and comfort.

### ‘I Know Where I’m Going’

This T-shirt is a freshman classic as Move2BU wraps up and the class of 2027 takes on campus. Baylor spirit gear will be in full revival. With Baylor basketball and football T-shirts, Baylor brand sweatpants and the iconic 2021 NCAA basketball champions hat, this look encapsulates freshmen’s enthusiastic school spirit and loyalty. An honorable mention goes to any of the notorious Baylor-issued merch sent to upcoming students every year.

### A special Halloween bonus

With the extravagant and iconic wardrobe featured in the “Barbie” movie this summer, Baylor couples will have no shortage of inspiration for their Halloween costumes. More specifically, the Barbie and Ken Western outfits will likely be the frontrunners.

These are just a few of the looks that are bound to pop up on campus throughout the fall semester. Whatever it is you choose to wear — from sweatpants to your Greek letters — wear it with pride.

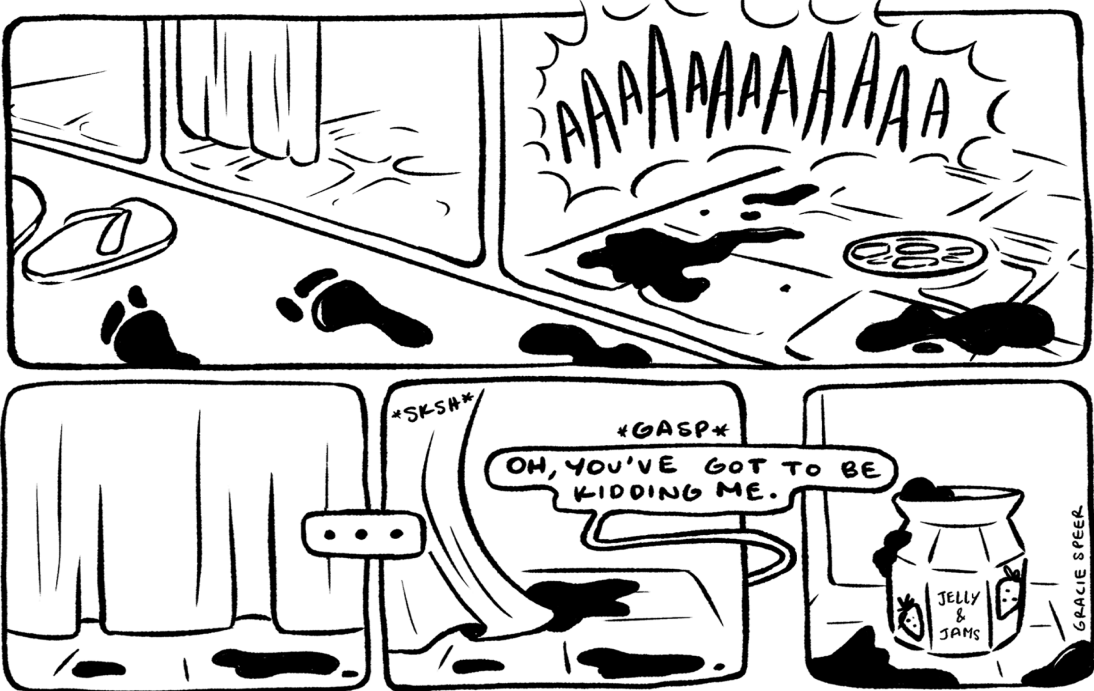


Gracie Speer | Cartoonist



Lariat Laughs

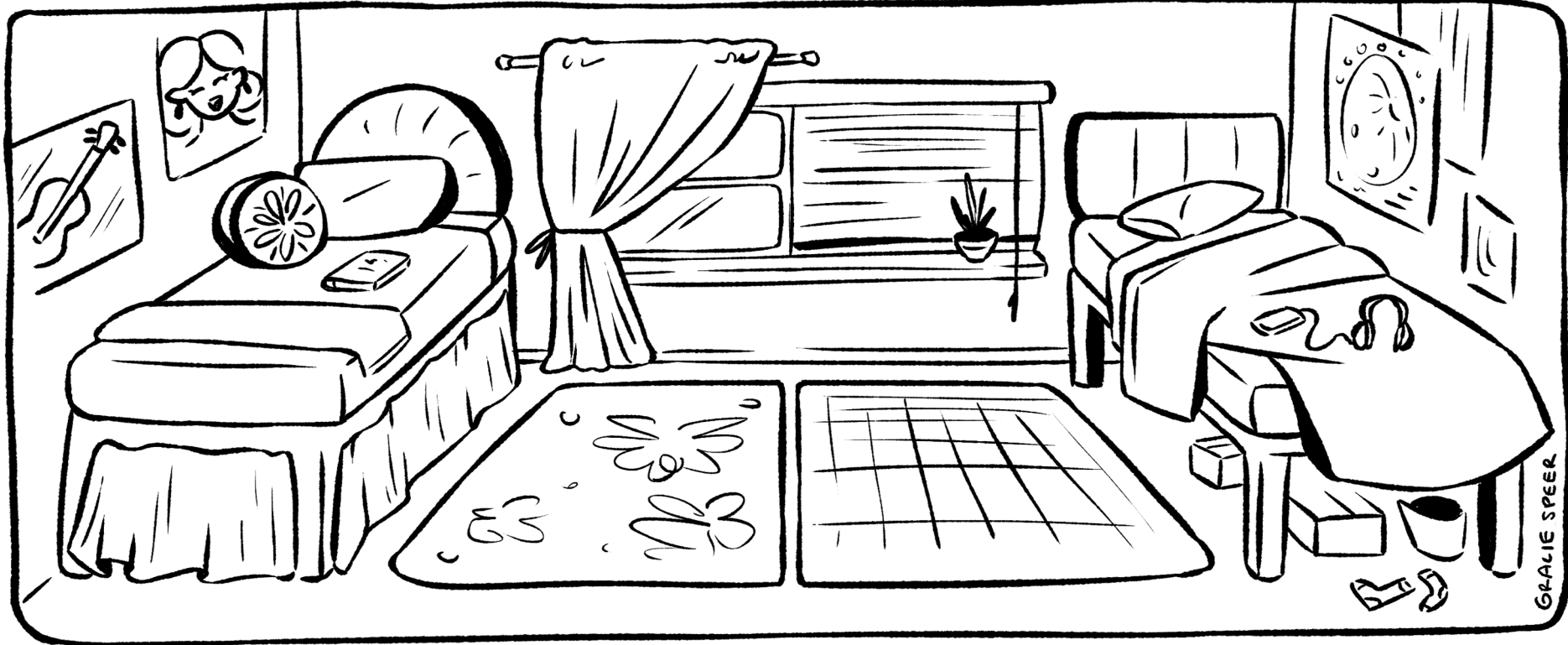
"TRUE TALES FROM A C.L."



"INTROVERTS"



"RANDOM ROOMMATES"



Assoah Ndomo | Photographer  
WALKING THE 254 Common Grounds on Eighth Street is a Baylor staple just off campus where students can hang out or study.

No car, no problem:  
How to explore  
Waco's best on foot

OLIVIA EIKEN  
Staff Writer

With Interstate-35 separating Baylor's campus from the "grease pit," navigating Waco can seem awfully challenging without a car. However, there are plenty of things to do and places to see all within walking distance of campus.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Grab your friends and enjoy some leisure and relaxation by floating on the Brazos River. Located across from Baylor's campus, the Pullin Family Marina provides students with the perfect way to spend an evening after a long day of classes. The marina offers students, faculty and staff paddleboards, kayaks, canoes and even sunfish sailboats to check out. The only requirement to obtain a rental is to present your Baylor ID at checkout.

What better way to start your weekend than taking a "hot girl walk" with your friends to the Waco Downtown Farmers Market? Located at 500 Washington Ave., the market is open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. It hosts nearly 40 vendors with everything from local produce and handcrafted jewelry to baked goods and home decor. Visiting the market is a great way to support local businesses while also ensuring you start your weekend off on the right foot.

GAME DAY SHOPPING

Football season is just around the corner. If you're an out-of-state student and didn't know already, Texans take football and dressing to the nines very seriously.

Barefoot Campus Outfitter at 1508 Speight Ave. has plenty of options for game day in Waco. It offers both men's and women's apparel, with everything from jerseys to dresses.

The Baylor University Bookstore is also stocked with the best gear. At 1201 S Fifth St., it is conveniently located next to the Bill and Eva Williams Bear Habitat. When you get done visiting Indy and Belle, swing by the bookstore to guarantee you look your best for game day.

CLASSIC HANGOUTS

While we're on the topic of Baylor essentials, Common Grounds can't go unmentioned. The tiny but mighty coffee shop located at 1123 S Eighth St. is ideal for students looking to hang out or study off campus without having to go too far. Common Grounds is known for its delicious drinks, often featuring its "Secret Sauce." Inside, it is packed with vintage couches and chairs to study in or just relax. Out back, there are plenty more tables and seating options, as well as a stage where they regularly host open mic nights and showcase student bands.

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