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Langston Love makes much-awaited return after injury



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## Back for more: Sing veterans elevate acts

**ELLIOTT NACE**  
Staff Writer

It's one thing to compete in Sing for the first time with little idea of what to expect. It's another to have a second crack at the privilege of wowing that packed crowd in Waco Hall.

Tyler junior Caroline Wells, a member of Kappa Alpha Theta, is lucky enough to have this opportunity.

"I kind of went in not knowing what to expect, and then just immediately being rewarded by such

a wonderful, caring environment that was so clearly built on discipline," she said.

According to Magnolia, Ark. junior Olivia Claire Smith, Chi Omega president, repeat Sing performers bring the enthusiasm of the previous year's performance. In the case of Chi Omega, which put on a top act last year, returning performers may help start a winning dynasty.

"This year, our Sing chairs have taken bold steps to make Sing even more exciting and innovative," Smith said in an email. "It's amazing to see

how Sing grows and improves, and we cannot wait to see what everyone brings to the table this year."

Smith mentioned how repeat performers encourage the many new members who have never sung or danced before in their life and how prior experience "creates a supportive environment" that amplifies the performance.

"Familiarity with the process allows the Sing chairs to hit the ground running, making rehearsals more efficient as they can dive straight into refining performances rather than spending abundant time

on basic groundwork," she said.

Wells recalled how her choreographer last year, affectionately referred to by Theta members as "Miss Pink," brought necessary initiative to the rehearsal process.

"She was just so clearly large and in charge in all of the best ways, which is something so hard to do — when you're in a group of 200 other girls for the performance who are your age, to clearly have this line of authority," Wells said. "That's kind of a big part of Theta: leadership integrity, leadership qualities."

Putting together a Sing act, Smith

said, is a team effort that demands a sense of community as well as efficiency.

"When all members are on board and realize how each individual contributes to the overall success, it creates a deep sense of unity and passion that propels us forward," Smith said. "Our Sing chairs help focus and guide the energy, while [Chi Omega] channels it and takes the performance to the next level."

As Wells prepares to perform for the second time, she noted how

**WINNING STREAK >> B7**



**A FRIENDSHIP FOR THE STAGES** Tomball senior Grace Williams (left) and Katy senior Bella Geiman (right) serve as Zeta Tau Alpha Sing chairs.

## 'It's permanently etched in history'

Seniors look back on a college experience made special by Sing

**BLAKE HOLLINGSWORTH**  
Staff Writer

For many seniors, Sing is more than a tradition; it's a defining Baylor experience that fosters creativity, leadership and lifelong friendships.

"I came to Baylor largely because of Sing; it has always been a creative outlet for me," said Tomball senior Grace Williams, a Zeta Tau Alpha Sing chair. "It allowed me to stay connected to music and performance while studying something more science-based. It kept my artistic spirit alive."

As seniors get set to take part in their final Sing performance, they

reflect on the cherished bonds the annual show has created. For San Antonio senior Lex Cho, a Sigma Chi Sing chair, those bonds made the long hours of preparation worth it.

"It's a chance to get to know guys you might not have interacted with otherwise," Cho said. "Whether it's learning a dance move or helping someone with a routine, it builds connections that last beyond Sing. Practice can suck sometimes, but that's as much chapter involvement as you can get — spending hours and hours on end in a room with your brothers. It definitely makes you close."

Williams said she has become

"best friends" with fellow Zeta Sing chair, Katy senior Bella Geiman.

"We came into Zeta together as babies and played on the same intramural basketball team," Williams said. "We've been Sing chairs together for two years now, and it's so cool to be able to do something so niche ... You make the weirdest connections, and suddenly our sorority of 300 girls doesn't feel so big."

Not only can seniors point to relationships as a result of Sing, but it has also improved their leadership abilities, specifically among the

**NOSTALGIA >> B7**

## Fountain Mall gets green makeover

**RACHEL CHIANG**  
Assistant News Editor

Students making their way to class recently may have noticed the lusciously green grass on Fountain Mall.

Similar to Baylor Eats' efforts in bringing quality food to the dining halls on campus following Aramark's leave, the beautification efforts made on Fountain Mall have been part of Baylor's new groundskeeping contractors five-year plan to enhance and improve the landscape around campus.

Tom Everett, grounds director for HES Facilities Management, said when they first started in June, they noted several high-maintenance locations. Since Fountain Mall is where students spend the most time out of these locations, Everett said they took on the project to make the area look as nice as possible for events.

One of the steps in getting the lawn to look how it does now, includes the aerification of the soil which facilities accomplished

with an aerifier — the spiky plow machine students may have seen poking holes into the ground last semester.

Everett said they then planted rye grass, which favors cooler weather over the currently dormant Bermuda grass, which typically thrives in sunny, warmer weather. So, as spring gradually returns, the rye grass will die out and the Bermuda grass will make its return.

“It's just going to be a sea of color.”

**TOM EVERETT |**  
**GROUNDS DIRECTOR,**  
**HES FACILITIES MANAGEMENT**

"The key to Bermuda grass is it likes a lot of sun and it likes to be watered," Everett said. "And we've redone the entire irrigation over there and fixed everything, so we're going to get head-to-head coverage. And I think we'll have a really beautiful Bermuda lawn before graduation. That's going to be our goal."

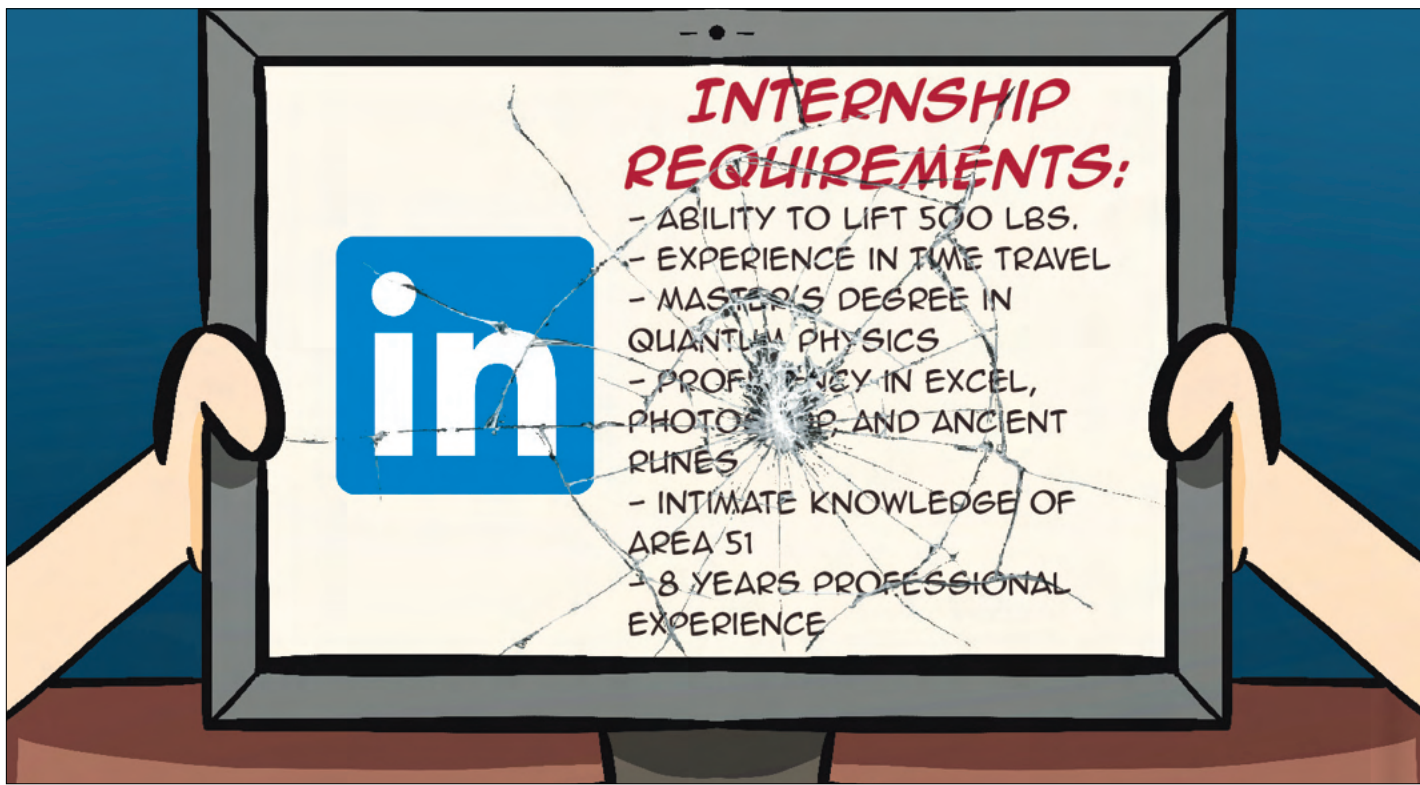
Facilities gave this aeration treatment to Fountain Mall and the rugby field behind the Baylor Sciences Building. Everett said these two were the only areas to receive this

**EVERGREEN >> B7**



**GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?**

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James Ellis | Cartoonist

# Baylor, uphold your DEI practices

**MESHA MITTANASALA**  
Photographer



On Jan. 21, President Trump signed an executive order eliminating diversity, equity and inclusion practices from many sectors in America such as the federal government, private businesses and schools. This has impacted hiring policies, diversity initiatives and eliminated DEI practices that have been in place for years.

The executive order has pushed the narrative that merit-based systems should be prioritized instead of demographic characteristics. However, this doesn't consider how DEI programs work to level the playing field by ensuring that people, regardless of their race, gender or sexual orientation, have the same opportunities.

DEI practices break down systematic hurdles and barriers that historically marginalized groups have faced. This creates a more equitable environment in many different institutions across America. However, these fundamental practices have recently been undermined and eliminated.

In the case of universities, this executive order significantly impacts many states, such as Texas, where public institutions have historically used DEI practices to propel ethnic studies courses and foster an inclusive environment for students and faculty from all backgrounds.

Gov. Greg Abbott already considered eliminating DEI practices in 2023 when he signed Senate Bill 17, which prohibited universities from engaging in DEI practices, threatening funding for Texas public institutions.

Because of this, the University of Texas at Austin fired 60 people who worked in DEI programs and closed some offices as well. UT Dallas fired 20 employees and closed the Office of Campus Resources and Support to comply with this law. The University of Houston has completely shut down its multicultural office and LGBTQ Resources Center.

Gov. Abbot threatened to fire the Texas A&M University president Mark Welsh III after the university promoted a conference for Ph.D. students of Black, Latino and Native American heritage. This impacts the university's academic research, campus climate, conversations in the classroom and various support systems. With the narrative of DEI being discriminatory trickling to the federal level, this issue is only getting worse.

Baylor University, as a private institution, has a unique and important role in the conversation of diversity, equity and inclusion in educational settings. We have the opportunity to be a leader and a trailblazer for DEI research and academia since our main source of funding doesn't come from the government.

Baylor needs to be a campus that encourages open dialogue and a more diverse learning environment. Baylor has already done fantastic work in the case of DEI by having the multicultural affairs office, creating an ethnic studies minor and setting records on hiring the most diverse class of professors.

Baylor needs to continue to implement DEI strategies in its college acceptance and hiring process. By striving to not fall behind, Baylor University could be known for its commitment to inclusion and educating young people on diversity initiatives.

# Don't let job searching frustrate you – becoming qualified is easy

## THE EDITORIAL BOARD

There are few feelings worse than scrolling across your dream job and realizing you don't meet any of the qualifications. It's a feeling so strong that forcefully bashing your head into the computer would be better than continuing to doom-scroll for more letdowns.

With the integration of AI in job boards and a never-ending list of "preferred" and required experience, finding a job or internship has never been harder. But in the same vein, getting the experience required to check all the boxes is extremely accessible, cheap and not time-consuming.

In 2021, almost 90% of recruiters

used LinkedIn, and meeting minimum requirements usually wasn't enough to earn an interview. The idea that recruiters take six seconds to read your resume is almost a distant memory as the new systems in place will instantly archive resumes and applications if certain keywords and positions are not included.

Changing professions or even finding a job that fits your interests and skill sets has become a hassle as some businesses care more about what you studied than a track record of professional success, which feels like the opposite of what it should be. But if your resume doesn't include one special phrase, it'll be automatically vetoed.

But even through the stress and struggles, it has never been easier to quickly acquire the desired skills to succeed immediately in any given industry. Whether it be programming languages, AP style or history, there are several courses provided by LinkedIn through LinkedIn Learning to serve up the skills needed to clear AI bots and come in prepared.

Nearly 50% of jobs already require a college degree to get your foot in the door, and a solid portion of the classes taken in college will have no relevance to your job field of choice. This has led to a boost in internships, where companies are able to test out skill sets before offering a full-time position.

Free online services are now offering the ability to boost knowledge in addition to an internship or semester of schooling. LinkedIn doesn't corner the market either; Harvard Business, Coursera, Udemy and ExecOnline also offer free certifications and courses that develop skills to advance careers. It's truly never been easier to pivot to a different career, and all it takes is the jump.

Starting down a major change is difficult enough, but these resources bridge the gap between advancing professional development.

When doom and gloom job scrolling reaches a breaking point, all it takes is initiative and a couple hours to turn vetoes into interviews.

# Etiquette has disappeared – let's bring it back

## THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Remember when it used to be common to hold the door for someone, to use proper table manners or to just use etiquette in general?

According to an article done by Masters in Communications, many people correlate etiquette to an underlying set of rules or laws for various occasions, formal events or everyday life. This can include using the proper fork, knowing when to applaud or even as simple as how to shake hands (which is something taught even in the Hankamer School of Business).

Merriam-Webster defines etiquette as "the conduct or procedure required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life."

Both definitions emphasize that etiquette is essential in any relationship and how it is a part of daily life. By being able to understand the proper etiquette conventions, it can help people avoid embarrassing situations, build healthy relationships and provide moral guidelines.

No one wants to walk into the room and immediately embarrass themselves because they were unaware of a common courtesy practice or lacking in basic communication skills. Having good communication skills is a key component to being successful in life, and using proper etiquette can play a big part in effective communication. Simple things like talking to a friend, interacting with a coworker, speaking



James Ellis | Cartoonist

during class, conducting job interviews or giving a presentation at work are just some of the many examples where knowing the proper etiquette can go a long way.

Would a person walk into a job interview and say "Sup"? Most people would answer no. Why? Because it is not an appropriate interaction to have with a potential employer and breaks traditional etiquette. If a person were to do this, that would be embarrassing on their part because it shows they lack basic communication skills.

Etiquette practices are also capable of changing over time and can vary from culture to culture, but at the root of all etiquette is knowing how to work with other people and having the

ability to build relationships with others. There are many different techniques to ensure creating a healthy relationship with others.

One way is taking the time to listen to others. It is a simple, yet courteous act that can go a long way in making another individual feel valued. Learning how to listen well can improve both work and personal relationships. People feel much more valued and understood when they feel heard, no matter what the topic may be. Another helpful tip is to be conscious of the tone of voice one is using when talking to another. The tone can impact what one is trying to communicate, and if it does not match the context of the situation, it can do slow damage to a relationship.

Good manners and proper etiquette tie into the golden rule. This can mean being honest, trustworthy and having the ability to put other people before one's self. It also can mean exhibiting courtesy and respect when working with others and demonstrating care and thought, which unfortunately is becoming more and more of a rarity in today's society. There is no reasonable excuse for an individual to not stop, think and consider how their actions may affect those around them and how it may impact them. Stopping, thinking and considering the feelings of others can go a long way.

Too many people have fallen into the category of seeming disrespectful by their actions and communicating ineffectively.

Don't be that person.

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# ‘A playground of opportunities’ offered at spring Career Day



Lariat File Photo

**JOB HUNTING** Students are encouraged to attend the spring All-University Career Day on Wednesday to connect with recruiters and to take advantage of the Career Center resources.

**KRISTY VOLMERT**  
Staff Writer

All-University Career Day will take place from 12 to 5 p.m. Wednesday at the Mark and Paula Hurd Welcome Center. All students are welcome to come and go and will have the chance to connect with job recruiters.

Students of all majors and years are highly encouraged to attend, Amy Rylander, career center director, said.

Rylander said there will be 100 different employers with a diverse selection of positions. She described Career Day as “a wide variety of employers all in one place looking forward to meeting [our] students,” and that many have solidified full-time jobs from the connections they made at Career Day.

Though most employers look to recruit students in the fall, spring Career Day has just as much to offer, Rylander said.

“This event really is for all students,” Rylander said. “If there’s an employer you want to see, find someone from the Career Center. We work hard to bring the employers you’re looking for.”

“This event really is for all students. If there’s an employer you want to see, find someone from the Career Center. We work hard to bring the employers you’re looking for.”

**AMY RYLANDER | CAREER CENTER DIRECTOR**

She advises any student who desires to speak with a specific company to bring it up to the staff, and they will try to make it happen.

She said that she had a communications major who came in blind and ended up landing a full-time job with Sewell Automotive in sales where she has been working for a while now.

Jalyn Monken, career success professional, serves students in studies such as journalism,

communications and English. She received her master’s degree in student affairs administration and higher education from A&M University after earning a bachelor’s in psychology from Baylor.

Monken said Career Day is like “a playground of opportunities” and a perfect way for students to take advantage of the helpful resources that the Career Center provides.

“You don’t need to be a professional walking in,” she said. “You’re learning, you’re exploring, you’re figuring it out. You can have fun with it.”

Rylander said liberal arts majors or students with majors that aren’t tied to a specific job should know that many employers aren’t looking for a particular major, just a degree.

“Don’t tie your job with your major, because they don’t have to align,” she said. “Companies are looking for a degree. They’re not usually looking for the major.”

Underclassmen, though still beginning their college career, can use Career Day to look ahead and form connections early on. Freshmen have a great opportunity to learn about the job market, Rylander said.

Monken said that the Career Center is dedicated to the success of students, and that her use of its resources during her own experience at Baylor helped her discover her path.

She said she came into Baylor undecided and felt totally lost at first, so she is grateful for the resources the Career Center offered her.

“The Career Center was the main reason that I even figured out what I even wanted to do,” she said.

According to the Career Center’s 2024 Annual Report, they had a 92% overall success rate and a 99% knowledge rate, meaning almost every single student was known and served by a career professional.

Another feature of Career Day is that many employment recruiters brought in are Baylor alumni. According to Rylander, they won’t bring in employers who do not hire Baylor students, as they want to ensure that recruiters intend to meet students they will hire.

“That can be another fun thing for freshmen and sophomores — to find Baylor alums and connect with them,” she said. “It’s a great networking opportunity. You might not be ready to go with them now, but they might be able to connect you with somebody else.”

Both Rylander and Monken recommend registering for Career Day ahead of time and to go in with a plan and know who to talk to.

“It’s a hard truth — once you’re out of college, opportunities like Career Day do not exist,” Monken said. “Take advantage of it while you can.”

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## Student preparation list:

- Business professional dress required, arrive already dressed
- Bring several paper copies of your updated résumé to Career Day
- Bring your phone to check-in to the event and scan employer QR codes
- Research attending companies of interest by following them on LinkedIn and Handshake, looking at jobs they have posted, and research Baylor alumni
- In Handshake, complete your student profile, upload your résumé and make it public (Employers review these prior to the event!)
- In LinkedIn, ensure your profile is complete, that you have followed companies and connected with recruiters

Baylor Career Center





Alpha Tau Omega's "Underneath the Tree"



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



REEL IT IN Beta Upsilon Chi makes the audience decide between the bass or the babe during their performance of "Gone Fishin'."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



Chi Omega's "Back on Track"



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



SWEET AS CANDY Kappa Alpha Theta sugarcoats us with "It Takes Two."

Caleb Garcia | Photographer



OUT OF THIS WORLD Kappa Sigma welcomes their action-packed performance, "Back in Black."

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

WHEN IN ROME Delta Tau Delta brings us back to the ancient times of Rome, performing "Rumble in Rome."



Caleb Garcia | Photographer

TRUE COLORS Phi Gamma Delta shows their true colors in "Friendships Bring Color to Life."



Caleb Garcia | Photographer

SO SPOOKY Alpha Phi takes us through a haunting experience with "Escaping Ivy Manor."



Caleb Garcia | Photographer

GENIE MAGIC Sigma Chi performs, "Careful What You Wish For" and brings a life-changing experience.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

GAME OF LIFE Pi Beta Phi and Phi Kappa Chi play the Game of Life in their performance of "That's Life."



Kappa Omega Tau's "Night at the Exhibit"

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



Caleb Garcia | Photographer

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MAGIC Your destiny is written in the cards with Sing Alliance's performance of "It's All in the Cards."

Tau Kappa Epsilon's, "SING for the Fences!"



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



Delta Delta Delta's, "When Pigs Fly"

Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

YOU'VE GOT MAIL Kappa Kappa Gamma delivers us the performance, "Sweet Letter O'Mine."



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

WIND UP Zeta Tau Alpha illuminates the audience with their performance of "Music Box Breakout."



Caleb Garcia | Photographer

WHIP 'YO HAIR Alpha Delta Pi brings a blast from the past with their performance of "The Diamond Salon."



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor



# Social media: dopamine doser or source of stress?

**DELANEY NEWHOUSE**  
Focus Editor

Aaron Rivera spends 35 hours a week on social media.

The San Antonio senior uses various platforms for hours on end, advertising for his clothing business, watching video tutorials and meeting new people.

"I use TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube — Facebook for ads," Rivera said. "I'd say about 70% of it is business."

In the limited personal time he spends on the internet, Rivera said he prefers Instagram to its many competitors. He feels it's the best way to experience a personal connection online.

"I love Instagram," he said. "You can see people; you can post, put stuff in your own thoughts. I love pictures. Even though I use TikTok most ... on TikTok, you can't really interact with your friends as much. You just brain rot and watch videos."

Rivera isn't alone. The Pew Research Center found that 70% of US adults reported using Facebook in 2024, and around half used Instagram. The American Customer Satisfaction Index, a company which "uses customer interviews as input to a multi-equation econometric model developed at the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business," published data showing that general U.S. satisfaction with social media in 2024 had grown to 74%, with TikTok leading the pack at 77% satisfaction.

Others, however, do not share this rosy

outlook. A randomized experiment by the University of Columbia's Knight First Amendment Institute found that the experiences of social platform X users were negatively impacted by the algorithm it used to show users content. The findings "suggesting that the engagement-based algorithm underperforms in satisfying users' stated preferences" are not perfectly reflective of the ACSI's score of 69% consumer satisfaction with the platform.

Kellen Mrkva is an assistant professor of marketing at the Hankamer School of Business. He researches consumer behavior and has seen the myriad ways tech companies are "getting

you to spend a little more time on these websites by any means necessary," for better or for worse. Tech companies offering free options often sell advertisements guaranteed to reach a certain number of users, necessitating that these users spend time on the sites to maintain content balance.

"It's almost like a small addiction; it's just automatic," Mrkva said. "I used to like Twitter before things changed in the last year or so, but I still find myself going there even though I'm not enjoying it as much."

Furthermore, medical studies have consistently shown the negative impacts of social media on quality of life. A UC San Francisco study suggests that even young adolescents show signs of addiction to these platforms.

"Policymakers need to look at TikTok as a systemic social media issue and create effective measures that protect children online," said Dr. Jason Nagata in a January UCSF article covering the study. "TikTok is the most popular social

media platform for children, yet kids reported having more than three different social media accounts, including Instagram and Snapchat."

Conflicting information about overall trends has even led to outright conspiracy theories. In 2021, dead internet theory left chat rooms and blasted onto the mainstream media scene, and it's only been bolstered since then by the emergence of ChatGPT and other generative AI tools. The idea of robots posting and responding to each other all over the internet to generate revenue no longer seems so implausible.

Despite fears, social media companies have joined with other tech giants in promoting and funding AI programs. Snapchat lets users create selfie-based AI images, Facebook is training a chatbot and even LinkedIn is wielding user data to train an AI model.

"I don't quite know exactly how it's going to

change social media websites," Mrkva said. "It seems like they have pretty advanced algorithms already, so it's not necessarily going to be any better than that in terms of targeting our feeds."

Critics, though, are less concerned about the companies themselves and more about the possibility of malevolent content mills. A Stanford study investigating the use of Facebook pages in scams found pages attempting to divert users to off-platform content farms, sell fake items or steal information — often using AI content.

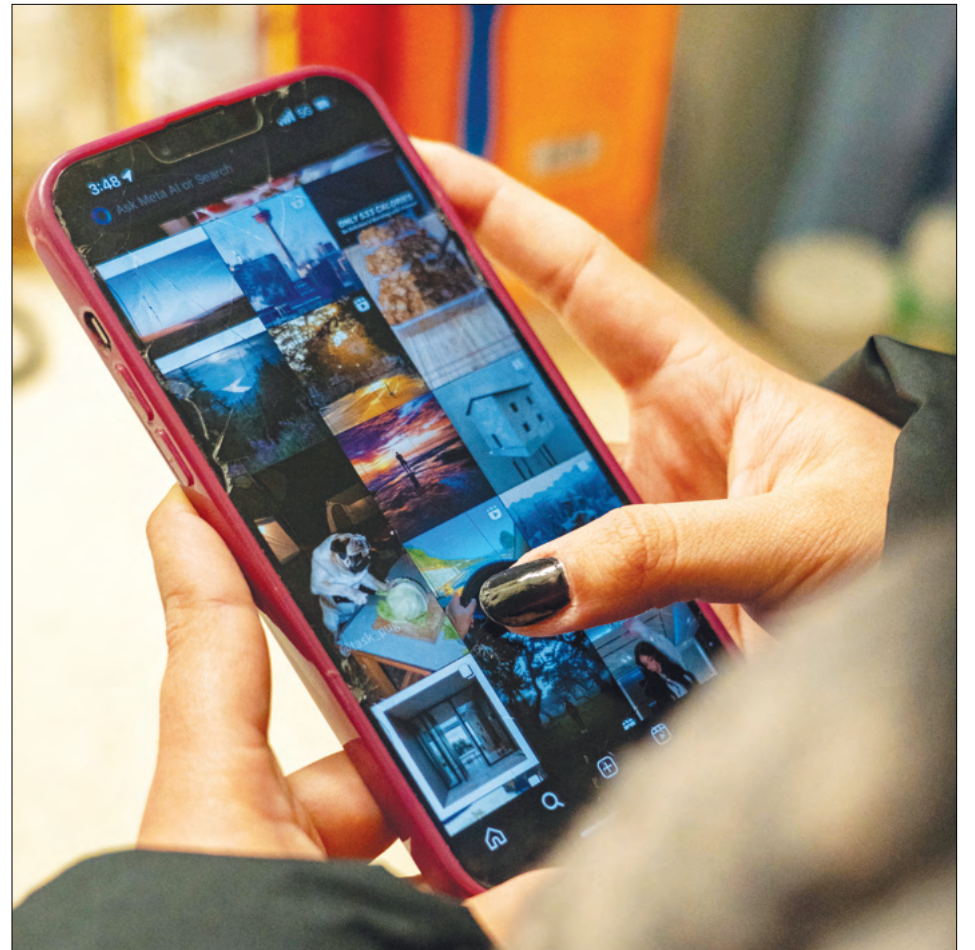
Despite all this, Rivera laughs off AI scammers.

"Those usually get banned really quickly — you can really tell — but for me, I barely get any of those," he said. "Everything is so real, people talking, telling you about something ... It's not dead. If anything, it's the most alive it's been."



Policymakers need to look at TikTok as a systemic social media issue and create effective measures that protect children online.

**DR. JASON NAGATA |**  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT UC  
SAN FRANCISCO



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**SCROLLER'S SATISFACTION** As social media apps continue to evolve and introduce new features, there is a trend of declining customer satisfaction with these updates.

## Baylor, MCC teach classes on cybersecurity



Brady Harris | Photographer

**A COLLABORATION** Baylor and McLennan Community College have joined forces to offer education on cybersecurity to foster community and workforce development.

**JAMES LAIRD**  
Reporter

The Central Texas Cyber Range is a joint initiative between Baylor and McLennan Community College focused on cybersecurity education, workforce development, research and community engagement.

The cyber range serves as a "hub for hands-on training, cybersecurity simulations, research and industry partnerships, helping to strengthen the cybersecurity talent pipeline in Texas and beyond," according to Dr. Pablo Rivas, executive director of the Central Texas Cyber Program and assistant professor of computer science at Baylor.

"You can study videos on YouTube all you want or go to training, but if you're not in a place where the actual physical thing is, you don't get the same experience," Rivas said. "We believe that that is an important aspect of education."

Rivas said that with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the cyber range has grown a lot, building a strong infrastructure to help students grow in their cybersecurity skills. Rivas believes that the cyber range enhances Baylor's position as a leader in cyber security and research.

"We are probably one of the few places in Texas and in the country where you can actually have the infrastructure to do cybersecurity education," Rivas said. "We are certified by the NSA as a center of academic excellence, and we are really one of a kind here at Baylor."

Dr. Jeremy McCormick, director of training

and associate professor of computer information systems at McLennan Community College, said he believes the cyber range has brought Baylor and McLennan's cyber teams closer, allowing them to collaborate.

"For [the collaboration], I think it's had a good impact," McCormick said. "I know it also is a great place for grad students on the Baylor side to develop a lot of research. So I think it has had a positive impact on both of our institutions."

McCormick said he thinks growth will happen organically at the cyber range. Baylor has added a degree in cybersecurity, and McCormick projects that it will bring in many more students who are using the cyber range. McCormick hopes that the cyber range will continue to prepare students for the future.

"I would like to see the range help them to develop skills that then they can put into place in the industry, so that when they go into their first job in cyber, they're not surprised by the tasks they're having to do," McCormick said.

Rivas said he hopes to see the cyber range grow into a "premier cybersecurity research and training center" not only in Texas, but also nationally. Rivas said that the cyber range already has an impact on a broader cybersecurity ecosystem.

"Our community engagement initiatives help raise awareness of cybersecurity threats and best practices," Rivas said. "Additionally, through partnerships with companies and institutions we contribute to workforce development efforts, helping address the national shortage of cybersecurity professionals."

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**News**

# Baylor University Press publishes ‘books for good’

**SYDNEY KERBOW**  
Reporter

Since 1897, Baylor University Press has grown from a small, Baylor-focused publisher into a key player in academic publishing, especially in the areas of religion and theology. As Baylor itself strives to be a leader in faith-based education, BUP publishes works that help tackle important issues for both the church and society, according to Cade Jarrell, Assistant Director of Acquisitions for BUP.

“We exist with one foot in the Baylor world and one foot in the larger world of academic publishing,” Jarrell said. “It is our hope to serve both spheres, bridging excellence in our industry and prestigious service to our leadership while playing a role in furthering Baylor’s missional life as an R1 institution.”

Here are some recent releases from BUP.

**“Dietrich Bonhoeffer—The Last Eight Days: The Untold Story of the Journey to Flossenbürg” by Rev. Dr. John McCabe**

This work tells the story of German theologian Eberhard Bethge and his search for details regarding his friend Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s final days in 1945. For decades, the main account came from British agent Captain Payne Best’s 1950 book, “The Venlo Incident.” John McCabe revisits these original accounts to correct myths, add depth and provide a richer understanding of Bonhoeffer’s resistance. His layered approach brings new perspectives to Bonhoeffer’s legacy, offering a fuller appreciation of his final week and lasting influence.

McCabe is a research associate at the Von Hügel Institute at St. Edmund’s College in England. “Dietrich Bonhoeffer — The Last Eight Days” is McCabe’s first publication. McCabe said he was grateful for the staff and the associate director of production at BUP Jenny Hunt, as she helped guide him through the whole process.

“I was brilliantly guided, as it turns out, by the — at times frustrating — peer review process, which provided input in a non-directive way,” Dr. McCabe said. “That was initially, and then I was very skillfully led and helped through the copy editing process by [Associate Director Jenny Hunt].”

**“I Grew Up in the Church: How American Evangelical Women Tell Their Stories” by Dr. Bethany Ober Mannon**

Bethany Ober Mannon’s work explores how women from different backgrounds have shaped and challenged American

evangelicalism. Through personal stories, it examines how women push back against conservative politics, gender roles and racism in faith-based communities.

As a professor of English at Appalachian State University specializing in feminist and religious rhetoric, Mannon said she was excited and honored to work with BUP. She praised BUP for its supportive and engaged editorial process, which helped shape her book into its best form.

“The biggest difference [between BUP and other publishing companies] has been their interest in helping me build my ideas, which plays out in prompt, insightful, personal communication. I had proposed the book to three other presses; and when Baylor reached out to me, I was considering one other,” Dr. Mannon said. “The difference was night and day, though. The other press had a very hands-off, almost uninterested attitude, and I didn’t think they would invest in helping me strengthen the book ... Baylor is driven by publishing books for good.”

**“Kingdoms of This World: How Empires Have Made and Remade Religions” by Dr. Philip Jenkins**

This work covers the imperial histories of multiple global religions, such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and others. It examines how faiths inherited institutions, art and ideas from past empires and how their global centers still reflect old imperial maps. The book also looks at the impact of empire collapses on

religion, showing how history continues to shape faith today.

Philip Jenkins is a professor of history at Baylor. He has written three other books under BUP and has had 30 books published in total.

“As a faculty member here, I like to support the [Baylor University Press,] but also because it is a well-recognized one in areas in which I publish, especially in the history of Christianity generally,” Jenkins said. “I have also had very good dealings with the editors and other staff here, so it was a natural segue. Once you work with an editor, you naturally generate momentum for any future projects.”



It is our hope to serve both spheres, bridging excellence in our industry and prestigious service to our leadership while playing a role in furthering Baylor’s missional life as an R1 institution.

**CADE JARRELL | ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ACQUISITIONS FOR BUPD**



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

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# Creating change in pediatric psychology

*Dr. Christine Limbers, director of Psy.D. graduate program, leads highly-cited research regarding interventions for children with chronic health conditions.*

**MACKENZIE GRIZZARD**  
Staff Writer

Dr. Christine Limbers is the director of the Psy.D. graduate program and leads Baylor's pediatric psychology laboratory. She is one of Baylor's premier research faculty, appearing for the second year in a row on Stanford University's database of the most-cited researchers in the world.

"There is lots of different research that goes in within the lab," Limbers said. "It all sort of ties back to trying to enhance [the] health and well-being of children and their families."

The pediatric psychology lab focuses specifically on the "development and validation of outcome measures and evidence-based pediatric interventions for children with chronic health conditions," according to the website.

Despite the emphasis on children's health within the lab, Limbers and her researchers also focus on family dynamics, stress measures, chronic illness and obesity.

"Several of my doctoral students in my lab have helped develop patient-reported outcome measures such as

tools that assess emotional eating in children and adolescence," Limbers said. "You can see some of the work we've done is looking at how family systems are impacted by a child having a chronic health condition."

Limbers worked in research labs at Arizona State, Texas A&M and Duke before arriving at Baylor in 2010.

"I really liked that Baylor was a Christian university, and that was something I found that was really unique and aligned with my values," Limbers said. "I also liked that Baylor at the time was having an increased focus on research, so it was a really exciting time to be at Baylor."

Within clinical programs, Limbers completed her APA-accredited internship at Duke University, which affirmed her goal of working in pediatric research, she said.

"I had the opportunity to work both in inpatient and outpatient with children who were hospitalized with various chronic health conditions such as cancer, sickle cell disease [and] epilepsy," Limbers said. "Having that sort of hands-on experience of conducting assessments and therapy with those population really

solidified wanting to pursue research in the area of pediatric psychology."

Within the classroom, Limbers also takes a clinical approach similar to the pediatric lab.

"Typically in my classes, students will read from a textbook and journal articles, but then we'll also watch demonstrations of a particular assessment being administered or of a particular therapy technique," Limbers said.

Limbers also works closely with a number of graduate students. Brook Park, Ohio third-year graduate student Tatum Zeleznik has worked with Limbers in the pediatric psychology lab for three years.

"Dr. Limbers takes a very flexible response to the lab, [and] she's very responsive to our own needs and wants, in terms of either designing our own research study like I did in my first and second year, or even helping out with other studies to get more publications or going to conferences," Zeleznik said.

For the past three years, Zeleznik has been working on her dissertation, which focuses on measuring parent stress of children with chronic health conditions, specifically



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**GROUNDBREAKING** Dr. Christine Limbers, one of Baylor's premier research faculty, is the director of the Psy.D. graduate program and appears for the second year in a row on Stanford University's database of the most-cited researchers in the world.

autism, using what she calls a pediatric inventory.

"It's been validated and used with parents of children with different chronic health conditions," Zeleznik said. "Dr. Limbers did a study for fathers of children with type 1 diabetes and other things like cystic fibrosis, but it hasn't been validated for parents

of children with autism. So basically, we're going to be administering it to a bunch of parents of kids with autism to see if it's a sufficiently reliable and valid measure to use with that population."

Throughout her time at the lab, Zeleznik has appreciated the opportunity to work closely with Limbers and

have new experiences in a research capacity.

"So overall, it's a great experience," Zeleznik said. "She really is the best mentor I think any of us could ask for in terms of her responsiveness, flexibility and willingness to help and support us in the types of research endeavors we want to pursue."



Associated Press

**BIG MOVES** President Donald Trump speaks at the Future Investment Initiative (FII) Institute summit in Miami Beach, Fla., Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025.

## Trump order bolsters missile defense in U.S.

**SYDNEY KERBOW**  
Reporter

On Jan. 27, President Trump signed an executive order to develop and deploy a new, next-generation missile defense system aimed at protecting the U.S. from ballistic, hypersonic and cruise missile threats.

The initiative, often referred to as "The Iron Dome for America," builds on past efforts to protect the country but takes a more aggressive approach than previous strategies, such as Reagan's "Star Wars" program, which was canceled before reaching its goals.

The order responds to growing global threats such as development of advanced missile technologies by China, Russia and other "near-peer adversaries," which have heightened the need for a comprehensive shield. The order emphasizes the importance of protecting U.S. citizens with critical infrastructure while maintaining a "secure second-strike capability," ensuring that the U.S. can respond to any attack.

Maj. Jeffery Thompson Jr., a Baylor military science professor, provided insight into the challenges of creating a system like "The Iron Dome."

"Budget is the greatest challenge," Thompson said. "Being an air defense

artillery officer, I understand the amount of resources required to maintain a missile defense weapons system and specifically for forward-deployed organizations. Homeland defense will require an extensive network of sensors and shooters to be in place in strategic locations. Those weapon systems are more than likely the most expensive weapon systems within Department of Defense artillery."

It marks a significant shift in the U.S. missile defense strategy, calling for the accelerated deployment of various technologies, — space-based interceptors, a new layer of missile-tracking satellites and non-kinetic capabilities like cyber defense.

Thompson expressed confidence in the system's feasibility.

"There is no absolute in any technology," Thompson said. "However, our current missile defense system, I believe, really leads the world in defense efforts. Partner nations help us extend our operational reach beyond our homeland's natural borders. Homeland defense starts with the recognition of the threat and working to protect our homeland from the furthest points possible."

Cypress senior Emily Craig shared her mixed feelings on

**MISSILES >> B7**

## Local artists sound alarm after changes to federal arts grants

**COLE GEE**  
Staff Writer

Whether you're a painter from the Italian Renaissance or a modern day playwright from Texas, one thing remains true in the art world — that money makes the world go 'round.

For many artists and organizations today, their benefactor isn't a rich nobleman but the National Endowment for the Arts. The NEA is an organization that provides financial grants to artists to help support creative endeavors and education. The work NEA does goes far beyond just financial support; they're also a resource and education center on the importance of the arts for the public.

With recent changes to the board and grant applications due to anti-DEI sentiment, many artists are worried about the direction the organization — and art in general — is taking across the country.

The new requirements for the NEA grants now have strict rules against promoting "DEI" and "gender ideology." This has also led to the cancellation of its "Challenge America" program for the 2026 fiscal year. The program would have offered \$2.8 million to "underserved groups and communities that may have limited access to the arts relative to geography, ethnicity, economic status and/or disability."

These moves paint a picture of a new national art world under the new Trump Administration. Trump instead encourages artists to apply for the America250 grants, which look to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the country's founding.

The programs in Waco that rely directly on NEA grant funding may have no choice but to adapt for the future. In the case of Waco Civic Theatre, that means uplifting local Waco voices and sticking true to their core values.

"When it comes to the recent decisions, I think it's throwing a lot of theaters through a loop because we have all been working really hard to focus on this important issue of diversity, equity and inclusion so that the same stories are not always told in the exact same way," Kelly MacGregor, executive director of the Waco Civic Theatre, said. "We are using members of our community, marginalized groups and people who haven't historically had a voice and now are supported in sharing that voice."

MacGregor joined the Waco Civic Theatre in 2023 after the theater



Brady Harris | Photographer

**FIGHTING FOR THE ARTS** The entrance of the Waco Civic Theatre, located at the corner of Bosque and Lake Air Drive.

experienced a turbulent time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theater has slowly returned to its storytelling roots.

"In this particular organization, all we do is storytelling," MacGregor said. "We share event after event all year round and we just tell stories. We tell stories of the human race and of the human condition. So it's just so important because it helps us connect to one another as people."

When it comes to funding, many local theaters rely on grants and community donations to survive. The recent changes to grant applications puts an already vulnerable art program in even more jeopardy.

"Theaters in general, community theaters, nonprofit theaters like we are rely on grants in order to maintain our operations," MacGregor said. "Your ticket sales should really be less than 25% of your operating budget, so you do rely on grants from the government, you do rely on grants from local foundations, you rely on donors, sponsors and individuals to give towards the local community theater nonprofit."

One of these local foundations is Creative Waco, a local nonprofit dedicated to uplifting Waco's creative voices. The organization is run in part by CEO Fiona Bond, and many of the organization's various projects are funded by NEA grants. Currently, Waco is the only small Texas city with a population under 500,000 to receive an NEA grant for a total of \$250,000.

They used this money to help fund the dozens of murals that

are throughout downtown Waco, which were completed by local high school students.

"The main portfolio of grants that we've had from the NEA supports our art apprenticeship program," Bond said. "[This] consists of high school students where 80% of them are the first in their families to consider postgrad school education."

Many of these ultra-talented artists would not even know their true potential without the programs funded by Creative Waco's NEA grants. Many organization leaders like Bond believe it's more important than ever to stay true to their values.

"The reality is that we don't stop doing the right thing just because that's not what is being funded," Bond said. "So we don't change the nature of the arts because of the lens through which the funding is shown. So we will go on doing what we believe is important. Our core values as an organization will not change no matter how the funding scenario and the funding portfolio changes."

Bond and many creative organizations across the country take offense to the idea of limiting artistic freedom to get funding. She said the impact of the arts goes far beyond what you see on a stage or art gallery.

"The arts have a unique capacity for connecting us as humans for dismantling some of the things that divide us, while also creating opportunities for people who would not otherwise have opportunities and a voice for people who would not otherwise have a voice," Bond said.



# Pickleball pandemonium brings 12 new courts to campus

**JOSH SIATKOWSKI**  
Staff Writer

As pickleball tops the charts as one of the fastest-growing sports in America for the third year in a row, it's easy to see the craze here on campus.

It started off with some freshly painted lines on the McLean Tennis Courts between Penland Dining Hall and the Marrs-McLean Gym. Then it evolved into a trio of pickleball courts at the McLane Student Life Center. Latest on the list of pickleball's imperial conquests are the Paul and Jill Underwood Pickleball Courts.

The new 12-court facility will replace the four eastern courts of the McLean Tennis Courts. Donated by Baylor alumni Paul Underwood and his wife, Dr. Jill Underwood — a lecturer in the Baylor School of Education — they'll act as a home base for both the competitive and casual sides of Baylor's Pickleball Club. If completed on time, the new courts are set to host a regional tournament for club teams across Texas on March 29.

Although construction began over Christmas break with completion expected



Mary Thurmond | Photo Editor

**A NEW ERA** Half of the Penland tennis courts have been closed since last semester for renovation, but are finally open to the public and featuring 12 new pickleball courts.

before the spring semester, weather and staffing issues have continually caused setbacks.

Underwood, who is the coach of Baylor's competitive club pickleball team, is doubly responsible for the courts opening. As suggested by the fact that he's the courts' namesake, the renovation is being funded by a donation from the Underwood family. But beyond the monetary gifts, Underwood had an impact in growing the sport on campus.

A retired restaurant owner

in Brownwood, Underwood recently moved back to Waco. He quickly became one of the millions of retirees, students and everyday Americans who fell in love with the trendy younger brother of tennis. In the fall of 2023, he decided he didn't just want to play — he wanted to coach.

"I knew [pickleball] was just starting to take off," Underwood said. "I wondered what Baylor had going as far as pickleball. Back then it was just a social club."

Seeing the recent growth

in competitive pickleball at colleges, however, Underwood wanted to take Baylor pickleball to the next level.

"I went down on an August afternoon two years ago ... and [the club] said, 'Who's this old guy just coming up to our table?' I introduced myself and told them what I saw was happening in collegiate pickleball. I asked, 'Would you allow me to start and run a competitive team?'"

San Diego junior Brady Small, president and founder

of the Baylor Pickleball Club, was receptive to the idea. He wanted the new club to enter the competitive landscape someday.

"I'd wanted to start something similar, but I didn't have the resources to go about running a competitive side," Small said.

As the club took shape, Underwood handled the competitive tournament team, and Small was in charge of the casual club practices. The competitive team practiced more rigorously and attended tournaments that were either organized by Underwood or by one of the many growing collegiate pickleball organizations, like Dynamic Universal Pickleball Rankings.

But as the competitive team continued its success, becoming a recognized club sport in 2024 and attending the DUPR national tournament last November, new challenges arose within the club.

Because of rapid growth and different practicing styles, it became harder to integrate the more casual side — the 100 plus students who show up twice a week for some relaxing hitting — with the competitive side.

"We can't have competitive and casual play at the same time because when they're training for tournaments it's hard to combine the social aspect of the club where they're just playing, having fun and playing random games," Small said.

This disconnect — and the prospect of reuniting the clubs — was the reasoning behind the creation of the Underwood Courts.

"The beauty about the facility is that it's going to be the big uniter because the team has basically operated separately. The club has struggled because they didn't really have enough courts, but now they will," Underwood said.

The courts are designed so that the competitive team and the casual club members can practice together. Four courts will be used for the competitive team, and the remaining eight will be reserved for the casual side.

Underwood sees the facility as not just a win for the club but a great amenity for the entire Baylor community.

"I didn't really do it just for our group," Underwood said. "It's really something for the whole campus."

# What explains the downward trend in Baptist students on campus?

**MACKENZIE GRIZZARD**  
Staff Writer

In 1844, the Texas Baptist Education Society petitioned the Texas Congress to charter a Baptist university. 180 years later, Baptists are slowly becoming a minority.

The percentage continues to drop every year, hitting 17.3% in 2024, according to the Baylor Office of Institutional Research — a decline from 26.5% in 2018.

Dr. Barry Hankins is a resident scholar of religion and American culture in Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion. Authoring several books on the history of American Baptists, Hankins explains what might be causing the drop of Baptist students.

"Over the past 40 to 50 years, denominational identity has been weakening in America," Hankins said. "People wouldn't necessarily move to a city and say, 'Well, I'm Baptist, so I need to find a Baptist church.'"

Hankins cites Baylor 2012, the university's 10-year vision and strategic plan launched in 2002 as the "shift" in Baptist identity on campus.

"When [Baylor 2012] started in 2002, the Baylor administration [and] Board of Regents really began to rebrand Baylor," Hankins said. "So Baylor was no longer touting itself as much as a Baptist university as it was a Christian university."

This shift in not just denominational identity, but Baylor's overall identity could possibly be contributing to Baptist student numbers falling, Hankins said.

"In the '80s and '90s, if you were a Baptist growing up in Texas, you knew of Baylor as a Baptist institution," Hankins said. "If you were Baptist, you wanted to be a part of that."

This new branding of the university has contributed to its primary Baptist identity beginning to phase out, Hankins said.

"Baylor is a Christian university, and it comes out of Baptist tradition," Hankins said. "But it's much more common — almost exclusively — [that] you hear Baylor being branded as a Christian university and not more narrowly as a Baptist university."

Similarly, Hankins explains that Baylor's R1 status and increased emphasis on research on campus could account for denominational shifts over time.

"Baylor's got this increased emphasis on research and academics and new programs and scientific laboratories," Hankins said. "So the Baptist component kind of becomes just another broad part of Baylor's thing."

Baylor's official website says that its R1 status "affirms that the world needs a preeminent research university that is unambiguously Christian."

"The biggest difference in Baylor academically in the past 30 years is the amount of research that takes place, the number of scientists we have with active laboratories, and the number of people in history, philosophy, English, sociology, political science and religion that publish books and articles regularly," Hankins said. "And this is all required of faculty at Baylor to get tenure."

This emphasis on Christian research is one of Baylor's core components, and what many campus labs do their best to emulate, according to Dr. Christine Limbers, who leads Baylor's pediatric psychology lab.

"From a Christian perspective, [we] try to create science or develop science or research



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**BAPTIST DECLINE** In recent years, the percentage of Baptist students on campus has declined, dropping to 17.3% in 2024 compared to 26.5% in 2018.

that's going to enhance the lives and wellbeing of children and their families," Limbers said. "I think that's very much rooted in being a Christian university."

While Baylor's changing academic landscape is an important component to the university's declining Baptist numbers, Hankins explains that it might relate to Baylor's national and international reach.

"We have a bigger pool of students coming from places that were never dominated by Southern Baptists," Hankins said. "You have

this sort of recruiting emphasis now that Baylor is much more national — it's going after high-ranking students and it has the added value of being a Christian university."

Regardless, Hankins insists that Baylor students are just as "devoutly religious" as they were 30 or 40 years ago, he said.

"It's not that Baylor students are less religious than they used to be," Hankins said. "It's just that when they're asked to explain how they're religious, being Baptist is not at the top of that list anymore."

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# Anti-choking device saves life on campus

**ELLIOTT NACE**  
Staff Writer

A Baylor faculty member continued choking at East Village Dining Hall on Oct. 4 after the Heimlich maneuver proved to be ineffective. His life was saved, however, by the dining hall staff's administration of LifeVac, a choking rescue device that has been installed across Baylor's eateries.

According to Dr. Karen Humphrey, senior director of environmental health and safety, the specific training of dining hall staff to use LifeVac ahead of the Fall 2024 semester anticipated a severe choking incident such as this. LifeVac, which has saved over 3,000 lives, prompted the American Red Cross

to create procedures regarding choking rescue devices.

"Three Chartwells employees saw [the faculty member's] distress and immediately went into action," she said via email. "The Heimlich maneuver was initiated while the LifeVac device was being retrieved. Upon returning to the scene with the LifeVac, it was clear that the basic Heimlich maneuver had not been successful. At this point, the LifeVac was used successfully."

Humphrey said that these staff members were commended for their action in a private ceremony held at East Village on Nov. 21.

The incentive to stock campus with LifeVac devices began after Brent Jones, campus safety manager, became aware of the product.

"I almost choked to death at a restaurant, and I was very fortunate that the folks there were able to save me," Jones said. "And from that point I began looking at the different options that were available out there for the university to use as well as my own use. So I bought my

family the LifeVac so that we would have that extra edge ... and the EHS director at the time, I brought it to him and said, 'We really need to look at this because if we save one life, it's well worth the investment.'"

Humphrey explained that the Heimlich maneuver has shortcomings which can render it unreliable in certain choking incidents.

"With the Heimlich maneuver, you've got to make sure that you get the positioning right," she said. "You've got to make sure that you have enough strength to be able to do the thrust enough where [someone] can, on their own, be able to get [food] out. Well, what if they don't have enough air in their lungs at the time? What if the person can't get a good reach-around?"

Jones also mentioned how different body types and sizes can make a successful performance of the Heimlich maneuver more difficult.

"None of [the people in the restaurant] were big enough to do the Heimlich on me," Jones said.

LifeVac's value, according to Humphrey, is its ease of use and its effectiveness in a wider range of choking situations.

"Basically, you just put it on the mouth, suction it down and then pop it out," she said. "It creates its own suction here, and is not dependent on the strength of the person, on their ability to reach around on anything ... So it's a much simpler device and much more effective."

Humphrey added that Baylor is the first college campus to save someone's life with LifeVac.

"Hopefully as word of that gets out, then more college campuses will be looking at us and saying, 'Hey, this is a great device to have,' and hopefully it'll get even wider use."



**BREATHE OUT** Brent Jones, campus safety manager, holds up a LifeVac choking rescue device.

“What if they don't have enough air in their lungs at the time? What if the person can't reach around?”

**KAREN HUMPHREY | SENIOR DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**



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# ‘Spirit in the Dark’ highlights Black figures

**SYDNEY KERBOW**  
Reporter

On a cold Wednesday evening, Dr. Eric Williams captivated an eager audience at the Mayborn Museum with a lecture on his Smithsonian exhibition, “Spirit in the Dark: Religion in Black Music, Activism and Popular Culture.”

As the director of the office of Black church studies at Duke University Divinity School, Williams brought a wealth of knowledge and passion to his discussion, blending history, theology and cultural critique.

Williams opened with the significance of the Johnson Publishing Company archive, which was acquired by Smithsonian in 2019 by major philanthropic organizations.

“This is the first exhibition that was culled out of all of these billions of images and files that [were] turned over,” Williams said, referencing the wealth of material sourced from “Negro Digest,” “Ebony” and “Jet” magazines.

The exhibition showcases 37 framed photographs from the archive and 25 objects from the museum’s collection.

One of the central themes of “Spirit in the Dark” is the blending of the sacred and the secular in Black artistic expression. Williams illustrated this with an image of Marvin Gaye.

“Marvin Gaye was one of the architects of the Motown style, and in his music he often fused what many perceive as the sacred and the secular,” Williams said.

He pointed out the theological symbolism in Gaye’s attire, emphasizing that “the crowns signify that everything that they did was under God.”

Another portion of the exhibit explores the role of Black religious leaders in social activism. One of these who Williams highlighted was Mahalia Jackson.

“She led worship in church, but she also

led in seasons of protest,” Williams said.

Williams recalled how Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would call on Jackson for encouragement during civil rights demonstrations. Similarly, Malcolm X’s presence in the exhibit underscores his dual role as both a political and religious figure.

“Though we talk about [Malcom X] within the context of protest, he also is providing service to a religious community on a regular basis,” Williams said.

In the section on suffering and hope, Williams reflected on James Baldwin’s literary contributions.

“Baldwin — through his pen — helps us to understand the complexity of the ‘color conundrum,’ as he calls it, in America,” Williams said.

He highlighted Maya Angelou’s creative process, revealing how her writing was deeply influenced by religious traditions.

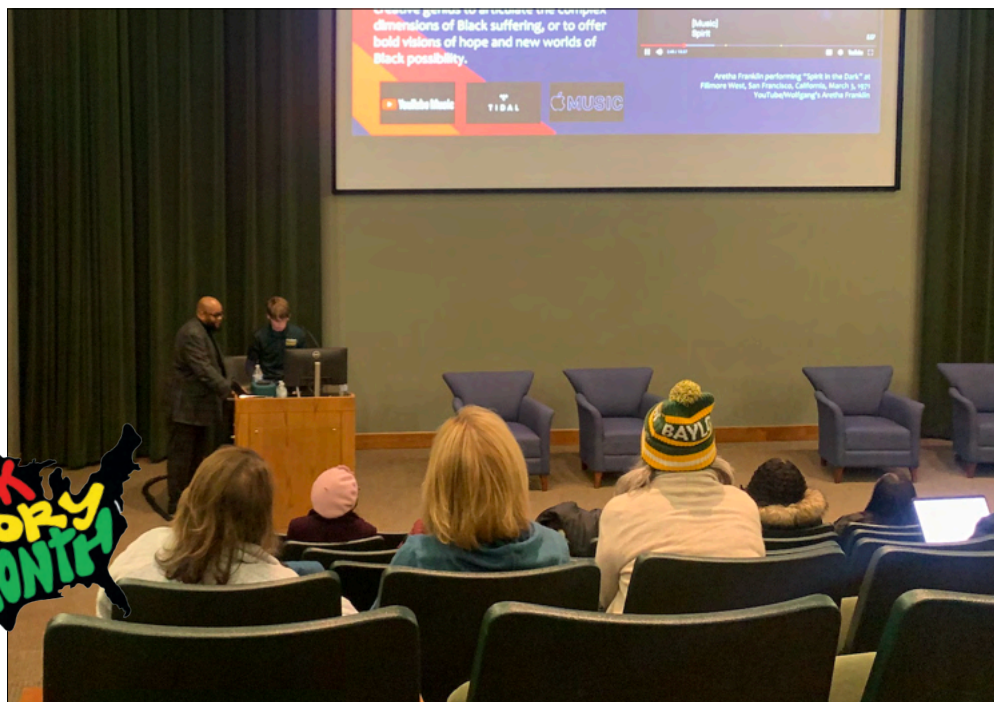
“She has her Bible, she has her dictionary, she even has her cigarettes on the bed with her,” Williams said.

One artifact in the exhibition is Little Richard’s personal Bible, which Williams described as a testament to the musician’s lifelong spiritual struggle.

“Even when the drugs were in control of him ... he had some hope that God could rescue him from the danger in which he often found himself,” Williams said.

The lecture resonated with attendees like Houston sophomore Hailey Ward, who reflected on the impact of “Spirit in the Dark.”

“I thought it was just a brilliant way to showcase different Black lives throughout America,” Ward said. “It was really interesting seeing how [Williams] put together such an amazing showcase of work and art.”



Sydney Kerbow | Reporter

**SACRED SPIRITS** Dr. Eric Williams, director of the office of Black church studies at Duke University Divinity School, gave a lecture on his Smithsonian exhibit which highlights social, religious and political Black figures throughout American history.



“I thought it was just a brilliant way to showcase different Black lives throughout America. It was really interesting seeing how [Williams] put together such an amazing showcase of work and art.”

**HAILEY WARD | HOUSTON SOPHOMORE**

**MAHALIA JACKSON**

A popular 1960’s gospel superstar, Jackson described her music as “the songs in which I could talk to God and that my people could understand.”

**JAMES BALDWIN**

The son of a minister, Baldwin was a child preacher, novelist and essayist. His writings provided insight on the Black Pentecostal experience.

**LITTLE RICHARD**

A former rock and roll icon, Richard became an evangelist, choosing to return to the church and give up show business following a successful music career.

**MAYA ANGELOU**

A memoirist, poet and civil rights activist, Angelou was praised for her novel, “I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings.”

Source: National Museum of African American History & Culture

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# Waco man arrested after report of financial scam

**BLAKE HOLLINGSWORTH**  
Staff Writer

Adrian Alberto Monjaras was arrested after a report was made that he was attempting to collect \$45,000 from an elderly woman, according to Waco PD Public Information Officer Cierra Shipley.

Monjaras was taken into custody on Feb. 10, where officers responded to a reported financial scam, according to the affidavit. A family member had called 9-1-1 after suspecting Monjaras was trying to take money from 86-year-old Mary Cisneros.

Officers arrived to find Monjaras in a gray sedan.

As he attempted to leave the scene, Monjaras told officers he was there to pick up a package containing approximately \$45,000 in cash, according to Officer Jonathan Alexander.

"I then contacted Cisneros where she told me that two to three years ago, her computer stopped working when she was paying bills online," Alexander said.

Cisneros' bank, Sunflower Bank, then called to notify her that her bank account was compromised.

She later informed police that she had been manipulated over several years by individuals claiming to be with the U.S. Department of Treasury, the affidavit said. She was

told her identity had been stolen and that providing money would help her obtain a new identity.

Additionally, the scammers convinced Cisneros to max out credit cards, withdraw \$35,000 from her Roth IRA and take \$8,000 from another investment account under the guise of protecting her funds, according to Alexander. She was also persuaded to apply for a \$100,000 home equity loan and consider selling her home.

"The unknown suspects told Cisneros that if she provided \$50,000 in U.S. currency, they would help her get a new identity and provide a down payment on a new home for her," the affidavit said.

However, a family member intervened and called the police before she could hand over the money.

After officers read Monjaras his Miranda rights, he admitted he knew the package he was collecting contained money, Alexander said. Monjaras claimed to work for a company called "Drone Masters," which facilitates financial transactions for Ukraine. He then stated he previously lived in Ukraine and had received cash payments from a man named "John" for similar transactions, according to Alexander.

Monjaras has not yet been charged with a crime. The investigation is ongoing, and Waco



Photo courtesy of Waco PD  
**ADRIAN ALBERTO MONJARAS** was arrested by Waco PD after a report was made about a possible financial scam.

PD urges residents to remain vigilant against financial scams targeting elderly individuals, saying that anyone with information on similar incidents should contact law enforcement.

# Gold Standard Award recipient inspires others through faith

**RYAN OTTESON**  
Reporter

Dr. Justin Adeyemi, lecturer in the department of health, human performance and recreation, received Baylor's Gold Standard Award for most outstanding lecturer last fall.

The Gold Standard Award is an honor that faculty in the Robbins College receive if they have received the Pure Gold Award previously and are considered to be outstanding staff. Five are chosen from the Pure Gold Award recipients: outstanding staff, outstanding lecturer, outstanding clinical faculty, outstanding tenure-track faculty and outstanding tenured faculty.

He uses a flipped classroom, which he said he found benefits his students the most. Adeyemi assigns videos to watch before class along with guided notes, which — in a way — replaces the lecture.

"When they come to class I try to engage them by asking questions and then giving them

case studies to help them connect the dots on that content — so I have found that generally works well," Adeyemi said.

One of his anatomy students, Crockett sophomore Aubrey Baker, said that he gives out supplemental instruction sheets and goes into more depth after students learn basic material outside of class.

"I feel really prepared in that way for his tests because I'm learning the material as I go and studying it as I go because of the flipped classroom," Baker said.

The anatomy class is a larger one, which Adeyemi said is a little bit more challenging to manage and to get students involved. He said he has been trying to get a new software approved to help him moderate his larger class, but for now he uses tools like a random name generator to get students to participate in class.

Adeyemi said he also finds it important to incorporate his faith into his teaching. He teaches anatomy and kinesiology and said

he feels as though science and God do not contradict each other. Before coming to Baylor, he said he actually considered working in a church and doing full time ministry. He also gives his classes optional devotionals to do for extra credit.

"[Adeyemi] talked about his faith on the first day of school, and he was just like 'Oh, I'll give you all these devotionals, and they're not actually assignments. They're extra credit, and they're yours if you want to do them,'" Baker said.

Adeyemi acknowledged that he knows even at Baylor, not everyone is a Christian, so he sees an opportunity to share the gospel through his teaching.

"I know a lot of students taking my human anatomy course," he said. "A lot of them have taken some biology courses where they talk about evolution and things that maybe sometimes steer people away from the faith, and so the devotionals I created in this class are meant to hopefully steer them back towards the faith."

“The devotionals I created in this class are meant to hopefully steer them back towards the faith.”

**DR. JUSTIN ADEYEMI | LECTURER IN ROBBINS COLLEGE**

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**News**

**WINNING STREAK** from A1

the scale put on display during Sing can only succeed if every member recognizes the importance of both leadership and collaboration.

“You can have someone in a leadership position telling you to do X, Y and Z, but none of it matters unless the individual takes it upon themselves to do those things,” she said. “I

think that’s something that’s not only great in the sense of Sing, but it’s also a quality that you can easily apply to other areas of life, whether it be academically, spiritually or socially. Having that individual discipline and knowing when you need to do things, time management — it all falls into the same umbrella.”

**POLAR BEARS**



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**FOUNTAIN MALL FREEZE** Icicles formed on the fountain as students walked to class in 20-degree weather on Thursday.

**EVERGREEN** from A1

treatment because it is an expensive process, and the rugby field was prioritized because loosening the soil would help prevent injuries during sporting events.

Everett said another issue they have been addressing is irrigation. Those issues have contributed to certain patches of grass and dirt flooding over when it rains. Doug Nesmith, lab coordinator for the department of environmental science, said soil compaction is part of the issue.

“The problem with things like the Fountain Mall is that it is high traffic,” Nesmith said. “And so it gets a lot of compaction, and a lot of compaction means that you have low infiltration rates. So water hits, and it runs off when you don’t have anything there to slow down the rainfall intensity.”

Nesmith added that part of the low infiltration is caused by replacing organic landscape with new buildings.

“Any new construction takes away permeable surface and covers it with impermeable surface. So when we take out a grassy area to build [the Paul L. Foster Success Center], you took away an area that

was covered with trees and grass and you put concrete and sidewalks, and you’re going to have more runoff,” Nesmith said. “That’s the problem with success and growth and all that — it’s got to go somewhere, but you have fewer trees, you have fewer squirrels, you have fewer birds, fewer green spaces.”

When Everett first surveyed campus, he said one of the things he noticed was the lack of color around campus. To rectify this, his team has planted tulips around campus which have begun blooming just in time for graduation photos.

“It’s just going to be a sea of color,” Everett said. “It’s going to be absolutely gorgeous ... They’re coming up right now.”

Everett said he hopes to extend the five-year plan to 25 years. He and his team also plan to replace some hedges and bushes, clean up Waco Creek and “do something with the riverwalk” — a topic which he is meeting with student government to discuss in the coming weeks.

“I want to do a lot on this campus, and I think Baylor does too,” Everett said. “This campus is so beautiful. It’s just missing the touches.”

**MISSILES** from B1

the order.

“I appreciate the efforts President Trump is making to protect our nation from threats,” Craig said. “However, this executive order could make citizens feel like our country has a target on its back by encouraging other nations to develop more advanced weaponry.”

The plan raises concerns about military spending and the potential for escalating

global arms races. Thompson said the race to develop better defense systems is “never-ending.”

“Our defense system will likely cause our adversaries to continue their efforts to expand their offensive and defensive capabilities,” Thompson said. “Those requirements expand beyond military power into economical and diplomatic capabilities to maintain progress.”

**NOSTALGIA** from A1

Sing chairs.

“You [Sing chairs] are the example, so you can’t ever expect [Sing members] to do something that you don’t do yourself,” Cho said. “You’re always under a spotlight, so there comes that pressure. You’re the leader, so you want to know the dance is perfect. You want to know everything so they feel comfortable coming to you for advice.”

Geiman said she uses the hard work of fellow Sing members

as motivation.

“I want to try hard because my friends have been working for nine months on this act,” Geiman said. “It almost teaches you selflessness, because you’re not doing it for you; you’re doing it for your sisters or your friends.”

This Sing season is seniors’ final chances to showcase their character to the broader Baylor community. Sigma Chi, for example, has been working to reestablish its Sing culture,

aiming to recapture past success.

“Sigma Chi was a powerhouse in Sing in the ‘70s,” Cho said. “We want to bring that same culture back into our fraternity, and I’m excited to come back later, years down the road, and see what this small, little fire can do.”

Zeta, on the other hand, hopes to deliver a performance that stands out from its past few performances, opting to showcase a theatrical plot.

“We want to really sell the

story and make it easily digestible across all audiences, viewers, as well as the judges,” Williams said. “We really leaned into the edge of musical theater and having really distinguishable characters.”

As seniors prepare to enjoy Sing one last time, they urge underclassmen to continually participate in the tradition.

“You get to show these videos to your children and grandkids,” Cho said. “It’s permanently etched

in history, and I think that’s super cool. No matter what, I’ll be able to watch and relive those moments with my brothers.”

Williams said the competition’s results shouldn’t discourage members from returning.

“No matter what the outcome is, and no matter what your feelings are about it, do it again,” Williams said. “Having joy for the process and tradition for the sake of experience and memories is really important.”

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## 'Performing for the partnership' BYX, KXA Sing chairs reflect on 2024 pairing

SHANE MEAD  
Staff Writer

Every year, Greek organizations participate in Baylor's All-University Sing. However, only a few — usually just one or two — choose to pair up.

Though a rare occurrence in this school tradition, past participants who have partnered said they wouldn't want it any other way.

Baylor alumnus George Schroeder, a former Sing chair of Beta Upsilon Chi recalled when his group partnered with Kappa Chi Alpha for last year's showcase. He said the partnership was essential and provided him with learning opportunities that come with being in a leadership position.

"The partnership with KXA elevated our performance to a degree that we would not have been able to achieve without them," Schroeder said. "That speaks to KXA for sure, but more importantly, that speaks to the potential that you have when you partner with somebody. We were able to double our population on the stage, and that's really important."

KXA's Sing chair that year, alumnae Kora Strickland, had participated in Sing since her sophomore year. However, she said her senior year — when her sorority partnered with BYX — was the most memorable.

"There's something truly special about pairing," Strickland said. "Being able to connect with a different organization in that standpoint is always super freeing. It made people want to go to practice."

A large part of why so many members of both BYX and KXA looked forward to practices was because of how close the two organizations became. Schroeder said they rehearsed as many as six times per week, creating opportunities to build friendships.

"My biggest worry was, 'Are these people going to get along?' 'What's going to happen?'" Strickland said. "But I would walk into the SUB and I would see these big groups of both KXAs and BYXs sitting together and hanging out."

One moment that stood out to Strickland was when she played music during practice. The BYX members always enjoyed her rock playlists, so one day, she decided to play something for the KXA members — Disney princess songs.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**THE DREAM TEAM** BYX's and KXA's act, "Dream On!," followed the adventures of a young girl, which took her through both peaceful dreamscapes and unsettling nightmares. The act featured songs like "Wildest Dreams" and "Friends on the Other Side," sung as a solo by Schroeder (front left).

"The girls were singing along, but then, all of a sudden, the guys come up from the bleachers and start dancing around with the girls to the Disney Princess songs," Strickland said. "It was amazing."

Strickland said KXA enjoyed their 2024 partnership so much that they dropped Sing this year because the sorority wasn't pairing.

"[KXA] had to drop due to numbers, just because people didn't want to do Sing again because we weren't pairing with a fraternity," she said. "A lot of members actually got really upset that we weren't pairing again. Pairing makes a huge impact on how people interpret Sing."

On BYX's side, Schroeder's experience in Sing may not have even happened at all if the partnership between his fraternity and KXA

didn't happen.

"We were in the boat where if we didn't partner with someone, we were probably just not going to do it," he said. "Being able to partner literally allowed us to perform in Sing because we probably would have voted not to otherwise."

That's exactly why Schroeder says he recommends more organizations pairing in the future, as it can give them the same opportunity BYX had. But he also wants to preface any partnerships with advice as a former Sing chair.

"You have to be prepared to learn, to make sacrifices, to find compromises and to work well with all kinds of different personalities," Schroeder said. "That's

fundamental to partnering. Because guess what? You just went from a situation where your group of four to five Sing chairs on average are now 10."

Schroeder said that shared visions between a few Sing chairs in one organization might not be the same as those shared by Sing chairs of another, and a way to reconcile that must be found.

"We're not performing for the fraternity; we're performing for the partnership," he said.

Though partnerships are rare, the bonds they create bring so much joy, according to two of the Sing chairs from the 2024 partnership.

This year, Pi Beta Phi and Phi Kappa Chi — two groups who have partnered in the past — are the only pairing on the playbill.

## A day in the life of a Sing performer

BELLA WHITMORE  
Intern

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be a part of Sing? What would your schedule look like? To give you an idea, here are some testimonies from 2025 Sing participants of different sororities and fraternities sharing what their daily routines look like.

### 8 A.M.

Klein senior Christina Hartmann, president of Tri Delta and Royal, Ark. sophomore Izzy Shelton, Zeta Tau Alpha president, are waking up for the day while Houston junior Oliver Liu, president of Phi Kappa Chi, attends his data communications class.

"The class is a technical deep dive into computer networking principles," Liu said. "As a computer science major, this demanding but engaging class is foundational to my education and career."

### 9 - 10 A.M.

Shelton and Hartmann attend their first class of the day, while Liu is off to his second class.

### 10 - 11 A.M.

Shelton is wrapping up her day of classes, while Hartmann and Liu are still in a lecture.

"I have a nice two-hour break where I get to come home and make lunch after class," Shelton said. "This is when I usually start my homework or start studying for any exams I have."

### 11 A.M. - 12 P.M.

Liu gets to catch up with friends on his lunch break.

"I have a nice midday break that I usually spend with friends," Liu said. "Sometimes, I use this time to catch up on homework, but ideally, it's a moment to relax before the second half of the day."

### 12 - 1 P.M.

Liu is off to his third class of the day and Hartmann attends her last lecture.



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**GIVING IT 110%** Sing performers like these from Tau Kappa Epsilon often sacrifice free time to perfect their act.

### 1 - 3 P.M.

That's a wrap on classes for Hartmann, while Liu gets a change from his computer science course load by attending his Great Texts class. Hartmann goes off to her afternoon meeting.

### 4 - 5 P.M.

Liu caps off his academic day meeting with his pastor. Hartmann hangs out with her roommates and completes her homework. Shelton sets off for her late afternoon class.

### 5 - 7 P.M.

New member small groups in the chapter room are underway for Hartmann. Liu conducts his chapter meeting and Shelton studies for her upcoming LSAT test.

"I am a double major as well as a double minor," Shelton said. "Also, with being in the middle of studying for the LSAT, I definitely have a lot on my plate academically."

### 8 - 11 P.M.

Sing practice begins for everyone! Each group is allotted a different time slot for practicing and completing their dress rehearsal in Waco Hall.

With their busy schedules, Sing participants are often juggling other commitments, even at rehearsal.

Houston senior Noah Falk, Tau Kappa Epsilon Sing chair, commented on his commitment.

"On a usual day, I'll watch the recordings of our most recent practice and take notes on what I think can be improved upon," Falk said. "I also send out reminders about practice times, general questions and other important notices... Sing takes a lot of work, preparation and sacrifice from everyone. I think it's important to respect everyone's time and attention."

Hartmann said she is amazed at the commitment her sorority sisters have to their roles in the show.

"Even at Sing practice, almost all of our members are doing homework on the side of the room if their dance isn't being rehearsed," Hartmann said. "Sometimes they leave Sing practice to go to an intramural game or come to practice in business formal clothing because they are coming from Student Government. I am consistently impressed by the buy-in to Sing and being able to sacrifice so much time and sleep to dance with 200 other girls every night."

## What to Do in Waco: Feb. 21 - 27

OLIVIA TURNER  
Arts & Life Editor

All-University Sing may be the center of attention for Baylor this weekend, but what about events outside the Bubble? If you weren't able to get opening weekend tickets for this treasured showcase, here are some Waco happenings to keep you entertained.

**THE PRICE IS RIGHT LIVE | FEB. 21 | 6:30 - 9:30 P.M. | EXTRACO EVENTS CENTER, 4601 BOSQUE BLVD | \$35-\$55 TICKETS**

It's the longest-running game show in television history. It's network television's No. 1 daytime series. It's "The Price Is Right," and it's coming to Waco on Friday night. If you're feeling lucky, head to the Extraco Events Center for a chance to watch the show live, win luxurious prizes and maybe even spin the wheel! Tickets can be purchased on Extraco Event Center's website.

**OPENING NIGHT AT THE MOVIES: WACO FAMILY & FAITH FILM FESTIVAL | FEB. 21 | 7-9:30 P.M. | LEE LOCKWOOD LIBRARY AND MUSEUM BEARD AUDITORIUM, 2801 W WACO DR | \$5-\$200 TICKETS**

Support local creatives by attending this film festival returning to Waco for its sixth year. Here, view a variety of short films, feature films and animations. A reception will be held prior to the screenings. Purchase your tickets at Waco Family and Faith Film Festival's website.

No Sing tickets? Don't let your weekend waste away. Scan here for upcoming Waco events!





# Turkey Lurkeys and traditions

*You don't have to be in Greek Life to be on stage. Sing Alliance welcomes students from all corners of campus — even freshmen and graduate students*

**JANAY BOYD**  
Reporter

Among the groups participating in Baylor's Broadway-style competition is Sing Alliance, an organization that puts the "All University" in "All-University Sing," according to the group's president, Fort Worth junior Audrie Liles.

Unlike other groups, Sing Alliance welcomes students from all corners of campus. They are the only group in All-University Sing which allows freshmen to participate, and they also welcome seniors and even graduate students to join. Another key distinction? There are no auditions.

"If you want to be in Sing and you want to be a part of Sing Alliance, all you have to do is sign up," Liles said. "You don't have to be able to sing, you don't have to be able to dance. We want to work with you and build up your confidence in those skills, and just let everyone get a chance to actually be a part of Sing."

For many students, the thought of performing can be intimidating, but Liles emphasizes that Sing Alliance is about inclusion and growth.

"I think a lot of people, they get scared," Liles said. "They're like, 'Oh, I can't sing,' or 'Oh, I can't dance.' We got you. That's what we're here for."

Beyond the performances, Sing Alliance fosters a close-



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**HEY, SING ALLIANCE!** The group's 2025 act, "It's All in the Cards," is full of Baylor students passionate about performing, regardless of if they're in a Greek organization.

knit community. The group creates connections through "family groups," where members meet every Sunday to play games, eat candy and simply spend time together. According to Liles, this tradition helps participants form friendships beyond their usual social circles.

That sense of belonging is what makes Sing Alliance so special, according to Rutigliano, Italy senior Rita Dicarlo, the group's

administration chair.

"It's so worth doing, and you get a sense of community and just a sense of belonging that you don't really get anywhere else on campus," Dicarlo said. "Even though it takes time, the rewards of it don't even measure up to what you have to actually put in."

Sing groups must follow a strict set of rules, including a requirement that songs cannot be repeated within four years, making it challenging to

develop new themes. Despite these constraints, Sing Alliance prides itself on upholding traditions, Dicarlo said.

The group has a signature call-and-response to get everyone's attention during rehearsals, a tradition of splitting partners in half to watch each other perform and their signature dance move — the "Turkey Lurkey." Liles said the group also incorporates choreography each year that only past Sing Alliance

members would recognize.

"This is also a tradition that's been going on for so long that it feels like you get to be part of something that's so significant, that went on before you and will continue after you," Dicarlo said. "You get to give your contribution, then step out of the path to leave space for others."

Sing Alliance takes pride in doing everything themselves — from designing and painting their own backdrop

to choreographing the entire routine. Liles and two assistants are responsible for all the choreography, making it a hands-on experience, she said.

As with any Sing group, time commitment is a major factor, especially during the six weeks of preparation leading up to the show. Dicarlo said she believes managing that commitment comes down to careful planning.

"I hate to sound like a college advisor, but time management is key," she said. "You're juggling a lot, and you have to figure out what ball is glass and what ball is plastic because you cannot drop a glass ball."

Despite the long hours, both Liles and Dicarlo agree that the experience is well worth it. For Dicarlo, the best moment comes just after a performance, when everyone is still running on adrenaline. For Liles, it's during audio tech rehearsals or in Roxy Grove.

Through long rehearsals, signature traditions and a strong sense of camaraderie, Sing Alliance provides students with an opportunity to connect and participate, regardless of their background or skill level. While each performance lasts a mere seven minutes, the experience fosters lasting friendships and memories.

## How do judges score the acts?

**30 points**

### Entertainment Value

An overall estimation of the act. Audience response and the general showmanship of performers are two major contributing factors in this category.

**20 points**

### Musical Quality

This category looks at music rendered by participating group members and not the performances offered by the professionals in the pit band. This category is included to evaluate the quality of singing done by soloists, ensembles, and large groups.

**20 points**

### Choreography

Any movement, whether dance or otherwise, designed to enhance the presentation.

**15 points**

### Creativity

Costuming, backdrops, props, special effects and lighting design.

**15 points**

### Theme Development

How well the group conveyed the stated theme to the audience and how well supporting elements (lights, dance, song selection, set design and costumes) assisted.

Source: Baylor Student Activities



Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**PRETTY IN PINK** Zeta Tau Alpha took their act, "Music Box Breakout," to the stage Thursday night for the first time. With 171 women participating, choreographing the act came down to passion, teamwork and time management.

## ZTA Sing chairs share privilege of choreographing 171-woman show

**EMMA REED**  
Intern

Creativity, passion and talent are at the heart of Sing. For this year's showcase, Seattle senior Reagan Christensen and Houston junior Camille Burton, of Zeta Tau Alpha Sing chairs, have taken the lead — working and collaborating to choreograph what they feel is a standout performance.

Christensen's dance journey began long before she became a Sing choreographer. She grew up dancing and explored a variety of styles throughout her childhood. Although she took a break from dance during college, her passion reignited when she attended Pigskin — where the top acts from the previous year's Sing competition are showcased — as a freshman.

"I knew I was going to be in Sing after watching it for the first time my first year at Baylor," Christensen said.

With a foundation in classical ballet, Christensen initially focused on technique but later branched out into other styles, she said. This diverse training has allowed her to take a versatile approach to choreography, adapting to the specific needs of her dancers. Whether working with those with a ballet background or others more familiar with contemporary styles, Christensen said she strives to meet her dancers where they are.

One of her key approaches to choreography is building personal connections with the dancers, she said.

"Learning who the girls are individually, knowing their names, makes it a lot easier for them to come up to you and ask questions," she said.

This bond creates an environment where dancers feel safe and comfortable seeking help and guidance, which helps them perform at their best, she said.

The choreography process begins as early as May, shortly after Sing concludes. The group first considers visuals and formations before developing the storyline. Over the summer, the sorority selects songs, finalizes the theme and submits for approval. Christensen said that if a particular theme has made it to Pigskin, that theme can't be used for another five years. Otherwise, themes can only be recycled every four years.

Though she's keeping this year's performance details under wraps, Christensen said she is excited about what's in store for this year's performance. She described it as being "something that people are not expecting."

Burton's path to becoming a Sing choreographer was inspired by her lifelong love of dance and her family's dance legacy. Having danced competitively for years, she continued her journey at Baylor. However, it was her sister's role as a Sing chair in 2022 and 2023 that truly sparked her interest in getting involved, she said.

"I had been living vicariously through her," Burton said, recalling how she had watched and been part of her sister's leadership. When the opportunity arose to choreograph, she didn't hesitate to step into the role.

For Burton, building personal connections with the dancers is just as important as the technical aspects of choreography. Like Christensen, Burton works hard to foster an environment where

dancers feel supported and motivated to do their best. One of the ways they accomplish this is through "Sing Hours." This extra time ensures that every dancer has the opportunity to perfect their movements and be fully prepared for the performance, Burton said.

"People contact us to come over to the room or our homes and practice to get the extra time in and really learn the choreography as best as they can," she said.

Creating a Sing performance is no easy task, especially with the tight four-week timeline. But for both Christensen and Burton, the pressure is part of the challenge as it is all about time management.

One of the biggest challenges they face is the sheer number of dancers involved. With 171 members in Zeta's Sing performance, ensuring that everyone is in sync and ready to perform requires careful planning. Christensen and Burton see this as an opportunity to bring out the best in every dancer. By creating a supportive and organized environment, they said they ensure that each individual feels confident and ready to perform.

For both choreographers, the most rewarding part of Sing is the relationships they've formed with their dancers.

"No matter what happens, it has been a privilege to be with all 171 of us," Burton said.

Christensen added that the bonds formed during late-night rehearsals and shared experiences are what make the Sing process so special.


"At the end of it, I would not have known any of these sophomore girls if I had not done this," she said.



# azzurro

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**TAU KAPPA EPSILON**  
“SING for the Fences!”

This act hit it out of the park! The rich vs. scrappy kids theme was clear. I followed along with the player who switched sides, and the underdogs won — kinda like last year when TKE made it to Pigskin! “Don’t Fear The Reaper” had me giggling, especially when the coach started hitting the two bats together like the iconic SNL sketch, “More Cowbell.” The spotlight made me crane my head to see that final home run — however, I could have used a little more volume on the solos and some more work on the choreography.

**SIGMA CHI**  
“Careful What You Wish For”

With Sigma Chi, some songs made all my wishes come true, and others lacked energy. I loved “Toxic” and “Freedom,” as they were great song picks and the first soloist was a saving grace. I felt like there was a missed opportunity to use Christina Aguilera’s “Genie In a Bottle.” But that backdrop? It swept me away to Arabian nights! Meanwhile, the genie lamp looked 2D. Equally flat at times were some of the vocals. Overall, the theme was a little confusing as I couldn’t tell which were the genies until they were trapped into the bottle once again.



ALL ABOARD! Chi Omega may have just booked a ticket to Pigskin with their sharp choreography and creative theme and props. Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**ALPHA CHI OMEGA**  
“Let Them Eat Cake!”

The act opens with Dolly Parton’s “Jolene” on an eerie, blue and back lit stage. That lighting helped to nail the theme’s central conflict home, giving that clear red vs. blue at the outset. The vocals were phenomenal, with angelic harmonies during the singing battle between Marie Antoinette and her subject. As for Antoinette herself? Her solo was chilling — she nailed each and every riff. But some of the costumes were schoolgirlish, leaving me to wonder if they were meant to look that way or not, and the cake looked boxy — nothing to start a revolution over.

**CHI OMEGA**  
“Back on Track”

These costumes were absolutely darling, and their choreography was sharp as a tack. The choice to use chugging moves was genius in driving the train theme home. There was a working light bulb on the train prop, as well — a round of applause for Chi O’s fantastic set with a nearly photographic backdrop. It derailed at some points, though. I couldn’t hear a thing from the caboose soloists, and it felt pitchy at times. But, the chorus was strong! At the end of the day, this act truly had that wow factor that took me from my seat and out for a ride!

**BEST CHOREO**



OLIVIA TURNER  
Arts & Life Editor

**DELTA TAU DELTA**  
“Rumble in Rome”

I could tell Delt has so much fun. Their choreography wasn’t always clean, but it was dynamic with moonwalks and pushups. The scene was set to a Rome that looked a bit like a coloring book, but I got the point. The costumes were a mix of tunics paired with shorts and sneakers and true Roman gladiator costumes like Paul Mescal. The songs reflected the strife of the theme with lyrics like “Mama, I’m in fear for my life” from Styx and “Livin la Vida Loca” in the ring. I give Delt kudos for their humor and their element of surprise with the lions with the ringlets!

**DELTA DELTA DELTA**  
“When Pigs Fly”

I honestly am having some trouble finding critiques for this act. It’s giving “Animal Farm,” but in a “all animals are actually equal” way. This is the most balanced act yet with impressive and organized choreo, colorful and moody lighting, clever song choices and eye-catching costumes and set. I was especially blown away (kind of like the pig) by the use of Elton John’s “Goodbye Yellow Brick Road” into “I’m Still Standing” after a near disaster crash. Perhaps pigs shouldn’t fly in the end, but watching them try was sure entertaining!

**BEST THEME**

**ALPHA PHI**  
“Escaping Ivy Manor”

The curtain opened to a dark, smoky stage with ladies in white holding candles against a haunted manor backdrop. Spooky, right? Well, that’s about as creepy as this act gets. I found it difficult pinpointing who the ghosts were — turns out they were the nicely-dressed women in white. While the costumes didn’t wow and the vocals were pitchy at points, APhi made excellent use of lights to create an eerie setting with different blues and purples. The playlist came through with escape-themed hits like “Smooth Criminal” by Michael Jackson and “Break Free” by Ariana Grande.

**ZETA TAU ALPHA**  
“Music Box Breakout”

Ooo la la! This was another “try to escape” theme, but with a twist — an evil mother accompanied by “Mother Knows Best” from “Tangled.” I found ZTA’s ballet choreo to be quite mechanical compared to the softness usually associated with ballerinas, but this was justifiable considering they were music box dolls, after all. Their costumes were plain pink leotards and tutus, but I give kudos for the real ballet flats. There were several strong soloists, especially the evil toy keeper. It’s not every day you see a ballerina “set fire to the rain!” Way to close it out, ZTA!

**PHI GAMMA DELTA**  
“Friendships Bring Color to Life”

This may just rival Theta for the sweetest act of them all. Despite the limited color, FIJI embraced out-of-the-box thinking to create a performance that both entertained, introduced a new tone and tackled a sensitive topic: male loneliness. In this act, FIJI showed that “it just takes some time,” that your “true colors” are beautiful and that sometimes, it just takes a friend to put color in your life. The choreography was certainly simplistic, but the costumes were very interesting indeed! They looked like suits made of paper. Thanks for this thoughtful and creative act, FIJI!

**ALPHA DELTA PI**  
“The Diamond Salon”

This act was so 80s in the best way, from the scrunchies, the neon, glow-in-the-dark parachute rompers, and the slightly tacky and colorful salon backdrop. They checked every box in terms of costumes, sets and props, making the act playful and easy to follow. The hair-tastrophe had my hand over my mouth after the big reveal as Sabrina Carpenter’s “Please, Please, Please” was sung, begging for it to be fixed. But during the Rick Roll, the performance was off key, and the choreo seemed to go in slow-mo. However, everything else made for a finished product that was luscious and smooth, with just the right amount of shine!

**KAPPA SIGMA**  
“Back in Black”

Kappa Sigma took over the funny factor and totally abducted my attention. For this alien theme, the little green guys were quite literally... guys painted green. It was funny though, so I can’t even say anything about it. I loved the hip-hop choreography, which added something new and fresh to the night! Additionally, the use of half-stage lighting to show the FBI hopelessly searching for the aliens was a great touch, and the red police lights on the side of the stage were that extra little detail that sent this act out of this world!

**SING ALLIANCE**  
“It’s All in the Cards”

Sing Alliance had a phenomenal — even show-stopping — show opener with “The Greatest Show”! Part of the magic of the act was in the costuming; you could tell the performers were cards without them literally having to wear cards, and the sparkly bells added that perfect pop. The theme was super creative, but it was a little “tricky” to follow. I could tell there was magic in the air, but what kind? Nevertheless, the playlist was iconic! It featured a few mashups such as “The Greatest Show” and “Do You Believe in Magic?” by The Lovin’ Spoonful.

**KAPPA KAPPA GAMMA**  
“Sweet Letter O’Mine”

Signed, sealed, delivered! Kappa’s act really brought it home. Speaking of letters, I give them an A+ on backdrop and props! Their vocals were as crisp as a new envelope, highlighting hits like “Sweet Child O Mine” and “Hard Times” when the mail got lost. Speaking of lost — I must admit they lost me in the middle as far as theme goes. I wasn’t sure what had happened to the letters, but I found my way at the end, just like they did! The blue, pink and green lighting to make the coordinated costumes’ colors was very aesthetic as well.



FLIPPIN’ OUT Kappa Omega Tau may have dressed as flightless birds, but their act soared with comedy and charm. Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**BEST PLAYLIST**

**BETA UPSILON CHI**  
“Gone Fishin’”

This act had me hooked the entire time with clever lyricism and constant comedy. This theme is niche but true — the battle between fishin’ and girlfriends. This knee-slapping concept saw the guys ignoring the ladies in favor of fish and throwing tantrums when the line slipped, expressed through dramatic and emotional choreography. The backdrop was straight out of “Where the Crawdads Sing,” and the khaki bucket hats and fishing vests were the vibe. They took the chance to use just about every fishing song there is, and when there were no more, clever lyricism created tracks like “Never Gonna Fish Again.” Or is it “Careless Fishper”?

**ALPHA TAU OMEGA**  
“Underneath the Tree”

It sure feels like Christmas with these freezing temps we’ve been having, and it looks like it too with this Christmas-themed act. The set whisked me away to a winter wonderland. Nutcrackers were dressed to the nines with waistcoats and caps, just like in the story. ATO’s footwork, arm work and jumps looked truly Broadway with jazz influences. This act was set to “Run Rudolph Run” and “Larger Than Life” prime choices for a nutcracker takeover! I give Christmas cookie points to the use of red and white striped candy canes to create a street style tap routine which stood out.

**KAPPA OMEGA TAU**  
“Night at the Exhibit”

**BEST COSTUMES**

If they ever make a live-action “Happy Feet,” they should cast these KOTs. This act was filled with slipping and sliding, waddling and huddling that was uncannily penguin-like. Costumes didn’t miss the mark either; the KOTs were decked out in black and white suits and bowler hats with orange dress shoes for flippers. The playlist could have used another iconic hit or two, but what the act lacked in famous songs it made up for in set and props. The zookeepers had their penguin snatchers and their buckets of fish to herd the penguins throughout the act. Crows went wild for this one!

**KAPPA ALPHA THETA**  
“It Takes Two”

This act was sweet and unexpected! I admire the originality of Theta’s theme. The resolution to their dropping candy sales to create a healthy candy was something I didn’t get a taste of until the soloist sang about “no more red 40” to John Lennon’s “Imagine.” Look out boys, Theta’s got jokes, too! I loved the pink and green of the costumes and the mix of the two to make the third flavor at the end! Though detailed, it took me a minute to figure out that the backdrop was a candy lab. Overall, this act was flavorful and fun with coordinated choreography that brought all the flavors together!

**Who’s got a shot at Pigskin?**

(Based on opening night performances)

#1

ALPHA  
TAU  
OMEGA

#2

DELTA  
DELTA  
DELTA

#3

KAPPA  
OMEGA  
TAU

KAPPA  
ALPHA  
THETA

ALPHA  
CHI  
OMEGA

CHI  
OMEGA

KAPPA  
KAPPA  
GAMMA

PI PHI  
CHI



# Turn back time with these 5 iconic Sing acts

**KALENA REYNOLDS**  
Staff Writer

On April 25, 1953, Baylor held its first-ever All-University Sing, which included eight clubs that each sang three songs. Now, Sing has now become an integral part of Baylor tradition.

In no particular order, here is a look at the five most iconic Sing acts we've seen so far.

## “SGT. PEPPER’S MAKE YOUR OWN KIND OF MUSIC DOWN BY THE BANDSTAND SMILING SINGING BAND” (1973)

In 1973, Phi Kappa Alpha broke a multi-year win streak after a performance titled “Sgt. Pepper’s Make Your Own Kind of Music Down by the Bandstand Smiling Singing Band.” According to the 1973 Roundup Yearbook, the group received a standing ovation every night for their homemade music, which was accompanied by drums. Aside from the unique aspect of the performance, this year’s Sing marked the first time 18 groups entered the competition. There was an elimination round, and after that, 13 clubs were chosen to perform in the Thursday, Friday and Saturday Sings.

In a Lariat article, 1975 alumnae Barby Williams said, “The act was based off the 1967 Beatles album, ‘Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band,’ and Phi Kappa Alpha dressed like a band just as the Beatles had on the album cover. What made the act stand out at the time was it had a band on stage with members playing Beatles music with the drums and trumpet. “Instead of crisp movements, Phi Kappa Alpha’s choreography was also more lively.”

## “PAPA TIKI’S, BALLIAMO!” (2024)

After a 48-year hiatus, Tau Kappa Epsilon made its comeback to Sing in 2024 with a memorable performance titled “Papa Tiki’s Balliamo!” The members dressed up as robbers and pizza boys and performed a high-energy and well-developed choreographed routine that showcased the group’s hard work.

Boston senior and TKE assistant Pigskin chair Will Obar said in a Lariat article that unity was an important aspect of the group and that every member was on the same page.

“Energy was probably our biggest thing and really just having a smile on our face and being happy to be there, which is something we talk about a lot,” Obar said. “I’m just happy to be here; that was pretty huge for us.”

This performance represented an iconic underdog moment in Sing that ultimately proved the power of hard work and dedication, making for a memorable and enjoyable performance from TKE, which went on to perform in the



Photo courtesy of Baylor Roundup

**DRUMMER BOY** This Beatles-inspired act stood out from the crowd with its live music: a stage of Phi Kappa Alphas playing drums.



Photo courtesy of Baylor Roundup

**BOUJEE AT THE BALL** Kappa Kappa Gamma and Kappa Sigma join forces to perform their 2003 act “On the Bayou Ball.” This showcase stood out for its phenomenal choreography and choral arrangements.

2024 Pigskin Revue.

## “MAN OR MATHLETE” (2023)

In 2023, “Man Or Mathlete,” performed by Beta Theta Pi, brought a fresh and new outlook to Sing. The act featured a man trying to win over a woman, first as a mathlete and then as an athlete. The performance included a spin-off of the song “Man or Muppet” by Jason Segel from “The Muppets,” changing the lyrics to fit their title.

## “ON THE BAYOU BALL” (2003)

In 2003, the Kappas joined forces for a vocally outstanding Sing act titled “On the Bayou Ball.” The show included a variety of high-energy dance numbers and opened with a beautiful choral arrangement performed by the Kappa Kappa Gammas that ultimately set the tone of the performance.

As the performance went on and the Kappa Sigmas meshed into the stage, the vocal chops and the choreography showcased this group’s true talent. As far as vocals go, this Sing performance remains unmatched.

## “BASEMENT FULL OF BLUES” (1984)

In 1984, Sigma Chi won first place at Sing for their “Basement Full of Blues” performance, which undoubtedly resonated with the true spirit of Sing. The act opened with an emotional piano ballad and would later feature dueling pianos and spin-off on a Meat Loaf song. The crowd loved the “Blues Brothers”-inspired act so much that Sigma Chi ended up performing the routine at halftime of a Dallas Mavericks game.

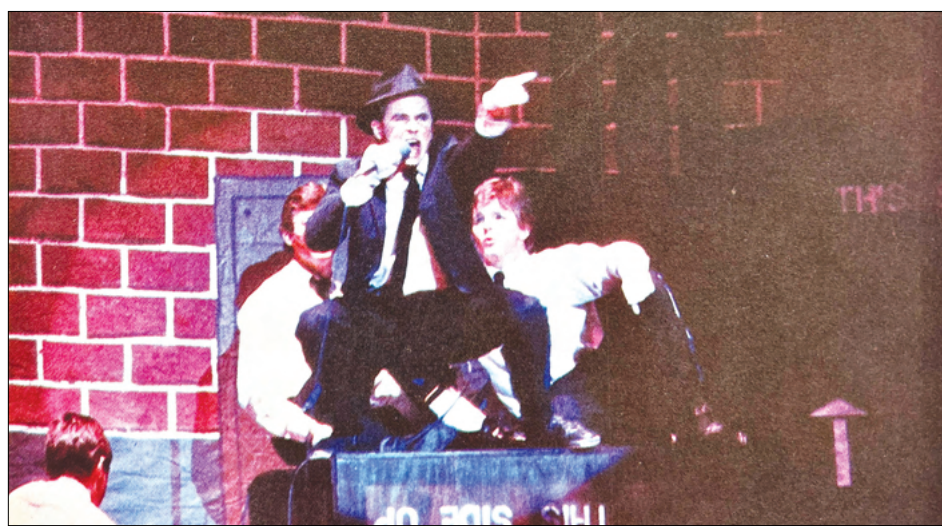


Photo courtesy of Baylor Roundup

**STAGE TO SPORTS ARENA** “Basement Full of Blues,” performed by Sigma Chi, was such a hit that they were able to perform the act at a Dallas Mavs game in 1986.



Lariat File Photo

**JOCKS AND NERDS** Two identities battle to impress a girl in Beta Theta Phi’s 2023 performance, “Man or Mathlete,” which is based off Jason Segel’s song in “The Muppets.”

# Lights, camera, inspiration: Film festival returns to Waco

**JANAY BOYD**  
Reporter

The annual Waco Family & Faith International Film Festival is back with a diverse lineup of films from 22 filmmakers. This festival, held for six years now, celebrates creativity and storytelling in all its forms.

“I think it is very important to celebrate and show off these smaller filmmakers because of how stale the movie industry is getting,” said Philadelphia senior Josh Joseph, who is planning on attending the festival. “These independent filmmakers ... can truly express themselves and their ideas.”

One of the films being featured at the festival is “Over the Shelter,” a 13-minute hybrid short film directed by Ian Cardinali. The film explores the “overview effect,” a cognitive shift that occurs when someone sees Earth from space, and the emotional framework that comes with such an experience, Cardinali said.

According to Cardinali’s website, the film follows an astronaut attempting to explain to her son what it feels like to view Earth from space. As she describes the experience, her words merge with the child’s imagination, resulting in an intimate exploration of existential questions.

The concept of the story is inspired by “The Overview Effect,” a book by Frank White.

“I managed to talk to Frank White, and I mentioned whether the rational aspect of an adult is a limitation in explaining this,

explaining and communicating to convey his experience, and he said ‘probably, yes,’” Cardinali said. “So perhaps the freedom of a child in his fantasy is key to communicating this aspect, and that’s where the idea of an adult speaking to a child, and a child trying to blend his imagination into conveying his experience.”

Cardinali emphasized the theme of interconnectedness, a concept also explored in White’s book. He said that while our connection to Earth is constant and often transactional, the challenge lies in finding a way to truly portray that relationship.

“Obviously when you have an experience like the overview effect — which I never had, so this is purely speculative — but I imagined that once you see it, it’s like a crystal-clear proof of that experience and that it had always been in the back of your mind,” Cardinali said.

Cardinali hopes audiences experience the film rather than analyze it.

“Rather than understand, I would like [the audience] to feel something,” Cardinali said. “It’s also a very visual film and graphic film, so it’s also to be lived as an experience. And perhaps give a glimpse, a very tiny glimpse of the overview effect experience.”

For Cardinali, having “Over the Shelter” included in the festival is both an honor and a motivation to continue his work.

“Although I have never been to a film festival, if I have spare time, I would be interested in seeing what could potentially revolutionize the movie industry,” he said. “If anything, I like movies that are art first, entertainment second.”

The festival will take place from Thursday to Saturday. Tickets for the festival range from \$5 to \$200 depending on additional event access, such as the “Champions Award” reception and a dance concert.



Photo courtesy of Waco Family & Faith International Film Festival



# From graffiti to graphic design

## Will Suarez illustrates his road to success



Mary Thurmond | Photo Editor

**COLORS OF THE WIND** “1,000 Hopes for Waco” on 2nd St. and Jackson Ave., a project in which Suarez was the lead designer, depicts origami and paper planes taking flight.

**KALENA REYNOLDS**  
Staff Writer

Most 13-year-olds are just starting to develop their sense of self, but Waco artist Will Suarez was experimenting with the inner workings of his creativity and learning how to graffiti. Now, years later, he is a multi-talented artist working with companies such as Sendero Provisions Co. and Creative Waco.

Growing up in Waco, Suarez’s connection to the city’s art scene began in middle school, when classmates would pay him to paint or draw their names.

“I guess ever since then, the business side of it kind of clicked where I was like, ‘I can kind of make a living doing this if I try hard enough or just pursue it more.’” Suarez said. “As I got older, I continued to

do freelance work, and I learned Photoshop on my own before I went to school.”

While Suarez majored in graphic design at South Texas College, he said his inspiration for creating has always stemmed from music. He has a strong love for packaging design and album artwork, which led to freelance work for independent artists.

Suarez has done extensive freelance work with Sony Music and Warner Music Group and has been nominated for a Grammy in the packaging design category.

In addition to graphic design, Suarez has mentored within Creative Waco’s “Artprenticeship” program, collaborating with young artists to create multiple murals around Waco.

Stefanie Wheat-Johnson, Artprenticeship program director for Creative Waco, said Suarez has been heavily involved in the program ever since its development and has been enthusiastic about integrating art into the community.

“He was one of our first mentors in the program,” Wheat-Johnson said. “The process that we have with our apprenticeship is really centered on community engagement and allowing our chance to have sort of a real-life, hands-on experience creating large-scale murals, and also getting that chance to see artists in their community who work in some sort of professional creative sphere.”

Suarez helped create murals at Cameron Park Zoo, Waco Family Medicine—Martin Luther King,

Jr. and one on University Parks Drive near Bicycle World. While he spearheaded these murals, he worked alongside high school students, showcasing the creation process to them.

Aside from public art, Suarez has worked directly with Sendero Provisions Co., starting as an art director and later becoming creative director.

Suarez said he has been grateful to pursue multiple areas of his artistic career. However, he notes that the early days of working for Sendero were highly deterministic for his career.

“My very first day with Sendero was the day that kind of changed everything,” Suarez said. “We did a collaboration with Ariat, and it was due the next morning. The CEO, was like, ‘You want to stay up

all night with me and finish?’ and I was like, ‘Sure.’ And we stayed up literally until 6 a.m., and at 8 a.m. we had a presentation for Ariat to complete, which got rolled out last year.”

While Suarez has had many successful artistic ventures, he said assisting the CEO of Sendero with the Ariat project “opened up a lot of doors for success and their guidance.”

“I get friends from literally everywhere who are like, ‘Oh, I saw this Sendero hat in Colorado or in L.A’ or wherever,” Suarez said. “Or my kids, it’s pretty funny, we go to the store, we go to Dallas, we’ll go to the mall, and they’ll see it at, you know, the storefront at Zoomies, or at The Buckle. And they’re like, ‘My dad made that.’”

Considering Suarez’s lengthy resume, he said that one of his main philosophies in life is to treat every project — no matter the size or importance — with the same amount of care.



“I’ve always been taught to treat people with kindness... I mean, that’s literally what’s gotten me this far.”

**WILL SUAREZ | GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

“I’ve always been taught to treat people with kindness,” Suarez said. “I mean, that’s literally what’s gotten me this far, whether it was a CEO of a big corporation or the janitor like anyone and everyone that I came in contact with, I’ve always used that same philosophy of treat them with kindness, give my best work, regardless of if it’s some small little restaurant that wanted me to do something for them or some big chain that wanted when me to do stuff with them.”

## Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market to relocate in March, sparking debate

**SHANE MEAD**  
Staff Writer

On March 1, the Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market will leave its temporary home at 500 Washington Ave. and move to the Bridge Street Plaza in East Waco, a change announced in August 2024.

The Waco Downtown Farmers Market first opened in 2011 on grounds that are now home to the newly built Riverfront Lofts. When construction on University Parks Dr. began in 2017, the farmer’s market was forced to temporarily relocate to the parking lot in front of the McLennan County Courthouse. The change proved effective since most government buildings are closed on Saturdays, providing ample space for the market to thrive and plenty of parking for attendees.

According to Broken Grain Baking Co. owner Ephraim Glueck, the relocation has sparked debate over the last five months, with some vendors even creating petitions.

Despite concerns, staff and board members, like Saturday Market Manager Rachel Velasco, are enthusiastic about the change, saying it opens up opportunities for what the Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market can provide and what attendees will experience.

“They can expect all of the same great farmer’s market vendors that they know and love, but they’ll also see new vendor space faces out there because we have room to add some new vendors,” Velasco said. “Plus, there’s a stage, so we’ll have more music activities, more musicians and

more performances by other groups that want to come out and be part of the market.”

But actually, they might not get to see all of the same vendors, Glueck said. Though he hasn’t actively investigated, he said several vendors he spoke with are unhappy, and some longtime participants are leaving due to concerns over limited parking.



“What I fear, and what everyone I talked to fears, is that the customers just aren’t going to come because they physically can’t unless they walk there.”

**EPHRAIM GLUECK | OWNER OF BROKEN GRAIN BAKING CO.**

“The stage is a positive, but if you don’t give people a place to park their car, they’re never going to know that

there’s a stage there because they’re not going to be showing up,” he said. “What I fear, and what everyone I talked to fears, is that the customers just aren’t going to come because they physically can’t unless they walk there.”

Glueck’s concerns stem from his experience at the Wednesday night farmer’s market, which already takes place at the new location.

“I had to go park in somebody’s yard and just hope they didn’t call the cops on me,” Glueck said. “There’s no place to park. And I had to walk two blocks to get to the market.”

Though some vendors have decided to no longer continue with the Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market, Velasco says plenty are staying because of the potential of the new location.

“They’ve walked over at the plaza,” she said. “They’ve seen it. They see the potential. They see the space. I think everybody is really excited.”

Even with the potential parking complications, many vendors are staying for what Glueck says is the real purpose of the market. His space at the Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market isn’t going anywhere, he said.

“You can talk to the real people who really matter, who you’re really serving,” Glueck said. “There’s no middleman, no barrier between you and them. That’s been the biggest asset of having access to a market like this.”

Market attendees have shared mixed reactions, ranging from excitement over the new space to



Photo courtesy of Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market

**TO MARKET, TO MARKET** The Waco Downtown Farmer’s Market has called 500 Washington Ave. its temporary home since 2017.

resistance to change, but the overall response has been “overwhelmingly positive,” Velasco said.

Both Velasco and Glueck at least agree on one thing: don’t knock it until you try it.

“We know we can’t please everyone, but we do hope that everybody comes and gives us a chance and sees what the market experience can be like in this new space,” Velasco said. “I think everyone is going to be pleasantly surprised at just how much of a community space

this really is.”

Glueck gave similar thoughts, but through his lens as a vendor, he said an informed decision can only be made after experiencing the new location.

“The fact is, you don’t know until you try it,” he said. “I’m happy to give it a try. As long as the customers are there, the vendors will follow. In terms of the grounds, I think it’s going to be a win. If they can figure out the parking, I think it’s going to be amazing.”



# All University Sing

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### ALPHA CHI OMEGA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### TAU KAPPA EPSILON

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### CHI OMEGA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### SIGMA CHI

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### SING ALLIANCE

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### ALPHA DELTA PI

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### KAPPA KAPPA GAMMA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### KAPPA SIGMA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### DELTA TAU DELTA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### DELTA DELTA DELTA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### ALPHA TAU OMEGA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### KAPPA ALPHA THETA

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### BETA UPSILON CHI

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### KAPPA OMEGA TAU

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### ALPHA PHI

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### FIJI

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



### PI BETA PHI/PHI KAPPA CHI

- COSTUMES
- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
- CREATIVITY



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- THEME DEVELOPMENT
- CHOREOGRAPHY
- SOUNDTRACK
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Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

**BACK AT IT** Redshirt junior guard Langston Love fights through contact while rising to the rim for a layup during Baylor men's basketball's 91-76 win over UCF on Feb. 8 at Foster Pavilion. In four games since returning from a lingering ankle injury, Love has started three contests and is averaging 14.3 points and 3.8 rebounds per game.

# Love is in the air

## Redshirt junior guard bounces back from series of injuries

**JACKSON POSEY**  
Sports Writer

Once again, Langston Love sat on the trainer's table, wincing.

It was the encore to a setlist he never wanted to play.



Over the past four seasons, Love has taken a personal odyssey through injury purgatory. The redshirt junior guard entered February branded with an unfortunate distinction: missing more career games (63) than he'd played (62).

"I tried to come back earlier, just wasn't quite ready yet," Love said earlier this month after his latest return from the injured list. "It's just a blessing from God just to be back on the floor."

Thanks to a torn ACL in a scrimmage against Texas A&M, the former blue-chip recruit's freshman season was over before it began. His next go-round was cut short by an eye injury against Oklahoma State on Feb. 27, 2023; the combo guard only

played five more minutes the rest of the 2022-23 season.

Love spent a chunk of 2023-24 dealing with nagging ankle issues. After being helped off the court against Texas Tech on Feb. 6, 2024, he re-aggravated the injury two weeks later in his return against BYU. He came back for the team's regular-season finale, but the ankle flared up again in practice. It needed surgery. He couldn't catch a break.

"It's a blessing to be here with all that I was going through with the rehab and this long journey of being back," Love said in December. "I think they said it was 270 days [of recovery], and it was an unexpected 270 days. So it's a blessing to be able to step foot out there again."

This season brought similar injury luck. Initially, Love was medically cleared for the opener against Gonzaga, but a setback forced him to miss the Bears' first four games. To call it disappointing would be an understatement.

"He's a big factor that we were missing during the season," freshman wing VJ Edgcombe said after Love dropped 16 points and six rebounds in the Bear's 91-76 win over UCF on Feb. 8. "I'm glad to have him back; the team is glad to have him back. I'm pretty sure the fans are glad to have him back, too."

Injuries plagued the team all season long. Head coach Scott Drew made sure to "knock on wood" before the opener so that the team would stay healthy. Apparently, the wood was hollow.

Baylor has only played five games with its full eight-man rotation. After a loss to No. 6 Tennessee in the Bahamas, the Bears dominated buy games against New Orleans (91-60) and Arlington Baptist (107-53) and blew out a pair of Big 12 opponents, Utah and UCF, by 25 points apiece at the Foster Pavilion.

And that was it. Those eight players have already combined to miss 29 games, and with starting center Josh Ojianwuna sidelined for the season with a knee injury, that number will only continue to climb. "Obviously [the injuries are] really

frustrating for us," Drew said after Ojianwuna went down. "We finally got eight together ... and you have this happen."

Love's return to the fold couldn't have come at a better time. He has helped fill in some of Ojianwuna's missing production on the boards and on defense, where he has often been tasked with taking on much taller assignments. When big man Norchad Omier sits, Love becomes the Bears' de facto power forward.

"We're going to hit first, give our best effort," Love said. "Especially with that lineup, we're playing fast."

Since returning from injury, Love has been thrown to the wolves, averaging 34 minutes per contest, including 41 in an overtime win against West Virginia. His first three games back marked the first time in his career he's strung together three straight 15-point performances. And his defense has been invaluable.

"He can play multiple positions, you can play him 1-4," Drew said. "We have some smaller guards who don't have that capability

to really provide that inside defense that Langston can give you, that toughness he can give you."

Love figures to play a major role the rest of this season for a shorthanded Baylor team desperate for his defensive versatility and toughness. He has another year of eligibility remaining, which he could spend in Waco. But for now, after a half-dozen dead ends and over 270 days of recovery, he is just glad to be out of the training room and back on the court.

"It's just a blessing from God to be back on the floor," Love said. "Just to persevere through all that and just know that he had a plan for me the whole time."

Baylor (16-10, 8-7 Big 12) will be back in action against Colorado (10-16, 1-14) at 3 p.m. Saturday at the CU Events Center in Boulder, Colo.

Langston Love (left)  
Kassidy Tsikitas | Photo Editor

Scott Drew (right)  
Mary Thurmond | Photo Editor

“He’s a big factor that we were missing. I’m glad to have him back; the team is glad to have him back. I’m pretty sure the fans are glad to have him back, too.”

**VJ EDGECOMBE | FRESHMAN WING**







Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

**LIGHTNING THE QUEEN** Freshman sprinter Royaltee Brown amps up the speed during the women's 60-meter dash. Brown won her first collegiate preliminary race.

# Young Royaltee: Sprinter has need for speed

**KALENA REYNOLDS**  
Staff Writer

For freshman sprinter Royaltee Brown, integrating into the track program at Baylor has meant reworking her routine to compete against upperclassmen. Brown tweaked her form and made sure she prioritized confidence.

"I was nervous," Brown said. "It was way different coming from high school... [In] college, everybody is a state winner, everybody's fast, and it's just like a dog is going to be a dog. So if you want to [win], you've got to go get it. And that's what I did."

Head coach Michael Ford said college track is a big transition for all athletes, and it requires a high level of physical stamina and mental toughness to rise with the pressure of competition.

"It's a big transition because even in college, everyone's fast, and so for us, it was just trying to make sure technique-wise, as she mentioned earlier about her technique, it's just making an adjustment," Ford said. "We brought her to practice by herself, to kind of focus on some things that she was doing technically wrong in her blocks."

Ford said that the biggest thing they worked on with Brown was her patience, which correlated with her technical improvements and her ability to work through drills on a continuous basis.

"I can see her maturity after meet one to meet five, where she's actually being a little bit more patient and thinking about the technique part," Ford said. "In college, it's about getting stronger, and she'll do that as she gets older and she gets more conditioned in the weight room. So for me right now, my goal is for her to make sure she scores at the conference meet and be one of the freshmen that could possibly make nationals."

Aside from her goals, Brown said that having older teammates who are well-versed in college athletics has been a significant factor in her early success. Ultimately, their leadership helped integrate her into the program.

"Coach Ford is the coach, and he's going to coach me regardless," Brown said. "But having teammates step in here and know how stuff goes [tell you], 'You fix this, this and that,' [helps] me develop as a runner too."

At her first meet, Brown came in first place in the 60 meter preliminary round. Since then, she has worked on improving her

performance to help her in the long-term.

"My block start was horrible in high school," Brown said. "I would just run. My track record until I got to high school was just me running off of natural talent. I barely practiced. When I got here, I had to practice and adjust and learn a lot of new things, such as my start, getting my knees up, pumping my arms when I'm tired [and] being patient."

Before Brown came to Baylor, Ford had her at the top of his prospect list due to her potential.

"I always think about any athletes that we bring in, there's a fit component to it, and we got along really well on her visit," Ford said. "I saw the talent and we made some tweaks here and there. I thought she would run fast, and she's doing that right now."

Brown set a goal to win an NCAA Championship title as an individual and a team.

"Just having a title, like having an NCAA title, is something big to me," Brown said. "I just want to develop [and] get better than where I was the year before. This is my main goal."

Baylor track and field will be back in action at the Big 12 Indoor Championship on Feb. 28 at the Sports Performance Center in Lubbock.

# Haywood soars to new heights, sets program record

**JULIA KONESKY**  
Reporter

During the final day of the Charlie Thomas Invitational at the Fasken Indoor Track in College Station, sophomore pole vaulter Molly Haywood became the first Baylor woman to clear 15 feet in indoor program history.

"I've been training so much over the last couple of months, so to actually see all that hard work come together was a really cool moment," Haywood said.

Training during the offseason can be challenging for elite track and field athletes. The season begins in September and typically ends in late June. For those who qualify for USA championships or international meets, competition can extend through the following September, leaving little time for rest or individual training.

"Regarding training, a lot of people go short to long or long to short, but I'm kind of in the middle," head coach Michael Ford said. "I think that you need to have speed and endurance, so making sure the team is really fit for the season [is important] since we're one of the few sports that has a longer season."

The dynamic of an athlete in each track and field event forces competitors to balance a team and individual approach. The team trains and travels together year-round, yet each athlete competes head-to-head in their events.

"They've done a great job this year encouraging one another, being there for each other at the meets, and sitting with each other," Ford said. "But when it's time to compete, they're ready to go, and they just want the best for Baylor track and field."

The Bears were in Lubbock on Saturday for the Jarvis Scott Open, where Haywood won the women's pole vault after soaring 4.52 meters. Every time Haywood goes into a meet, she tries to maintain the same mentality to stay consistent.



Photo courtesy of Baylor Athletics

**POLE POSITION** Sophomore pole vaulter Molly Haywood became the first Baylor woman to clear 15 feet in indoor program history during the final day of the Charlie Thomas Invitational on Feb. 8 at the Fasken Indoor Track in College Station.

"I just want to go out there and try and do what I do every week, not treat it like anything different than normal," Haywood said. "So just trying to focus on the cues I've been working on in practice and just go execute what I've been working on."

As Haywood continues to break program records early in her career, she has her sights set on a legacy beyond Baylor.

"I'd love to go pro with pole vault, so [I'm] trying to stay consistent with the upper heights so that I have the opportunity to potentially

travel to different countries and go to bigger meets like the Olympics and Olympic Trials," Haywood said.

Haywood will compete in pole vault at the Big 12 Indoor Championship on Feb. 28 at the Sports Performance Center in Lubbock.



# Acro & tumbling team carries winning ways into 2025

**AIDAN O'CONNOR**  
Sports Writer

Since head coach Felecia Mulkey arrived in 2015, No. 1 Baylor acrobatics and tumbling has known nothing but success, winning a national championship in every season under her leadership.

Expectations remain sky-high for Baylor (2-0), but with Mulkey at the helm, the team embraces the pressure and believes they have what it takes to continue building on their dynasty.

"The sport has evolved so much since we've gotten here," Mulkey said. "Baylor has evolved." "Our philosophy has remained the same, but the sport has evolved because of the athletes that are coming in and their influence on it."

Mulkey's success in Waco stems from her ability to maintain a steadfast philosophy while adapting her coaching approach over time. She tailors her leadership style to match both the needs of her athletes and the phase of life she's in as a coach.

"I'm in the mom phase of coaching," Mulkey said. "I started out in the big sister phase of coaching. I went into the cool aunt phase of coaching, and now I'm in the mom age of coaching era, and I'm rocking the mom era."

This phase has shaped Mulkey into a wise authority figure who focuses on guiding and developing her athletes' maturity. It demands more from everyone on the team, pushing them to rise to

Baylor's elite standard. "I will point out with Mary Hardin-Baylor's young program, we went into that meet 16 points ahead of them," Mulkey said. "We only came out in execution three points more than they came out. So everybody sees this 20-point victory. What I see is a lack of execution on our part. And we have to improve that because we need to go in

spot," senior Mariah Polk said. "This team is really unique, it's special, and I'm just excited for us to put all of our pieces together."

Coming into the season, there were concerns after the team lost some key contributors like bases Bayley Humphrey and Riley Chimwala. However, Polk and the Bears proved they were up to the challenge, winning their first two meets and extending the program's winning streak to 40 straight competitions.

"I don't think we even think about the national championship until we're at the national championship," Polk said. "I think something we focus on the most is beating ourselves every week. I feel like our biggest competition comes within the four walls of the gym. You've got the best athletes in the country right there standing next to you. So, I feel like our biggest competition is each other."

With the opportunity to win a 10th straight national championship, the pressure is on for Baylor. But with Mulkey's philosophy guiding the program, the Bears remain calm, focused, and determined to stay on top. The "mom era" is in full swing, and the team has no hesitation about rising to the challenge.

The Bears will be back in action against No. 4 Oregon at 6 p.m. Saturday at the Matthew Knight arena in Eugene, Ore.

**“** We're ready to showcase what we are capable of doing, and so many people have stepped up to the plate [and] have challenged for their spot.

**MARIAH POLK |**  
**ACROBATICS AND TUMBLING**

16 points up, and we need to come out 30 points up because our execution needs to be that good."

For Mulkey, there is no resting on the laurels of a win but a proactive look at what needs to be improved. Her hope is for the team to continue to grow and reach the Baylor standard. That outlook has become ingrained in the program, and the players have fully embraced it.

"We're ready to showcase what we are capable of doing, and so many people have stepped up to the plate [and] have challenged for their



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**TAKING OFF** Sophomore top and tumbler Payton Washington takes flight in a Feb. 15 meet against Long Island University. The Bears defeated the Sharks by a score 278-236 and advance to 2-0 on the season that could become the team's tenth straight national championship.

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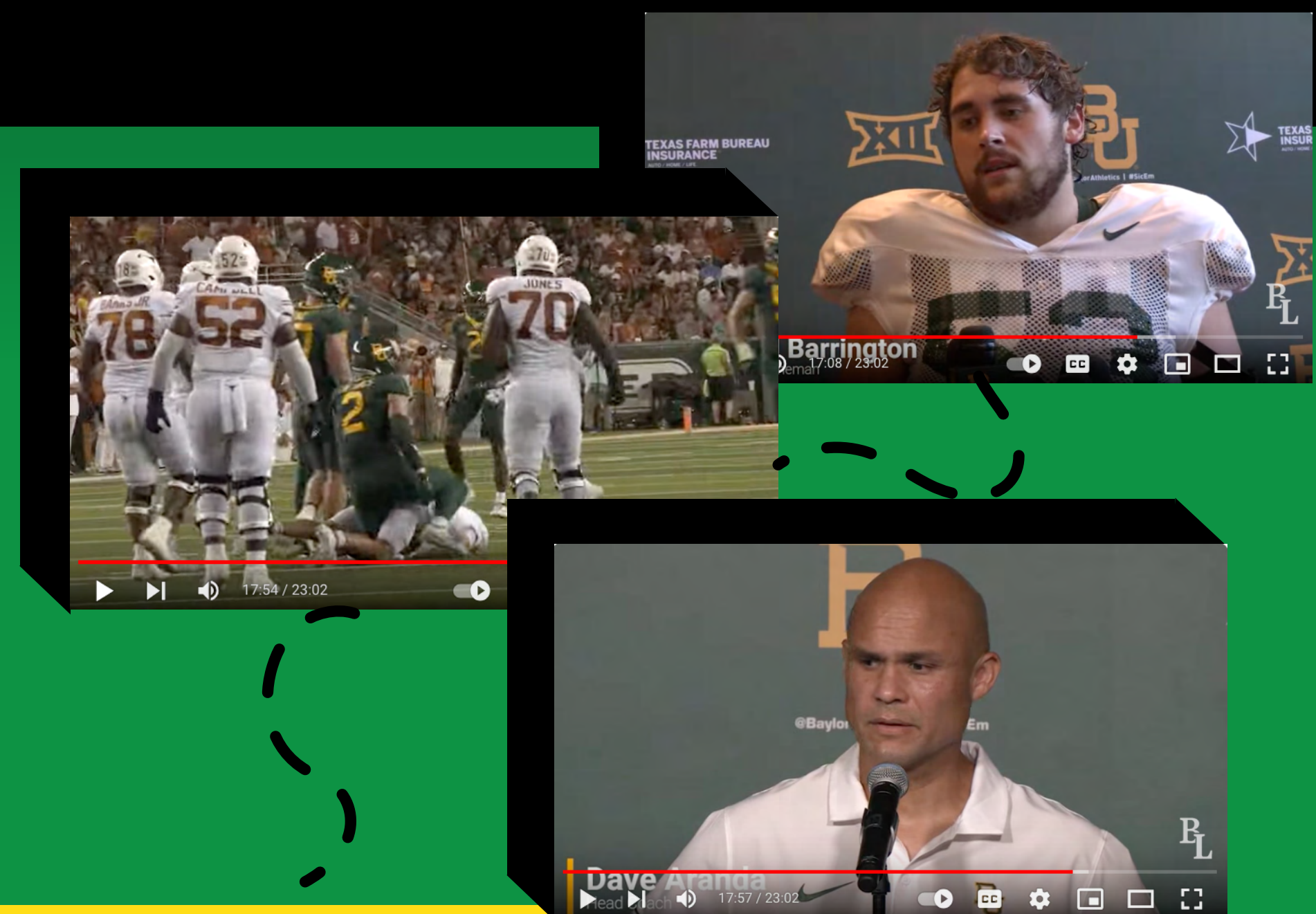
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Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

**FLIPPIN' SIDES** Redshirt senior outfielder Enzo Apodaca trots around the bases during baseball's 12-4 win over Youngstown State Saturday at Baylor Ballpark. Apodaca transferred from Gonzaga to Baylor prior to the 2024 season and has accumulated 119 total bases, 25 extra base hits, 52 runs and 48 runs batted in wearing the green and gold.

# Baseball set for first-ever battle with Gonzaga

**FOSTER NICHOLAS**  
Sports Editor

For just the third time since 2013, Baylor baseball is off to a 4-0 start. The team looks to keep its winning ways going against Gonzaga for a three-game weekend series at Baylor Ballpark.

Head coach Mitch Thompson's Bears sit seventh in the nation in batting average (.396) and recorded top-five marks in the Big 12 with a team ERA of 2.36 with 46 strikeouts in one week.

"We've played like we're capable of," Thompson said. "We've had a bunch of guys get out there as well.

It's been a good 4-0 start to the season, but it's time to move on and keep getting better and keep working [with] the end of year in mind."

With a high-quality weekend behind them, Thompson will stick with the same rotation for the team's clash with the Bulldogs (1-2). Junior left-handed pitcher Ethan Calder, who struck out 13 batters in the season opener and won Big 12 Co-Pitcher of the Week, will start Friday. Seniors, left-handed pitcher Bryson Bales and right-handed pitcher Cole Stasio, will take the mound on Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

"We've put in the work, and we're

all expecting the results," Bales said. "We just go day by day and each guy does his own job. And at that point, everyone should do pretty good."

The green and gold have backed up a pitching staff that has allowed an average of 2.75 runs per game, with 11 runs of their own. Six Bears are hitting .350 or better, four of which have a batting average of at least .500.

"The biggest thing for us is just getting the lineup hot, especially getting all the freshmen's feet wet," Bales said. "These wins are very crucial, especially for our record down the road. This is make or break for 30 wins, 29 wins. And every one of them counts from here on."

Gonzaga heads to Waco for its first-ever battle with the Bears on the diamond after dropping a three-game series against UC Davis to open the season. Redshirt senior right fielder Enzo Apodaca, who transferred from the Bulldogs to Baylor before the 2024 season, owns a .300 career batting average with the two programs and is looking forward to clashing with the team he started with.

"I respect that program a lot," Apodaca said. "I know they're blue-collar and gritty. I expect them to play their best as well, but they're a great program... I'm excited to go see the guys that I know and I'm close with over there."

With highs in the 30s and 40s this weekend, the Bears expect to play all three games and have no intention of delaying, moving, or canceling any contests. Instead, Thompson has prepared his team with a "business-like" mentality to overcome the freezing temperatures.

"We'll have to be tough this weekend," Thompson said. "Friday and Saturday are going to be cold... But we're going to play, and we're going to get this on, and we'll just have to wear enough clothes and get warm when we're in the dugout."

The first pitch for the series opener against Gonzaga is scheduled for 3 p.m. Friday at Baylor Ballpark.

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Mary Thurmond | Photo Editor

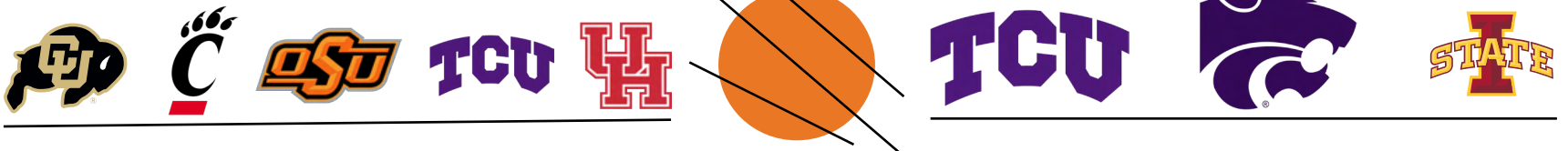


Jackson Posey | Satirist

1. Anonymous
2. He's got hops
3. Greek letter "theta"
4. "Just Don't It"
5. FBI Advertisement
6. West Virginia's Manliest Destiny
7. Lights out
8. Presidential Perspective
9. "Every night is girls' night" - Ken
10. "I'll remember that one Vine?"
11. Like a good neighbor, it isn't there
12. Rule 1, Section 22, Article 10

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