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EDITORIAL:

Learning classmates' names will boost the Baylor experience



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No. 1 Baylor eyeing 11th NCATA title before switch to NCAA



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JULIANA VASQUEZ
Staff Writer

As deportations and protests persist in Minneapolis, Baylor students are joining the growing national conversation over immigration policy and its local impact.

On Jan. 24, U.S. citizen Alex Pretti was killed by federal agents while protesting, according to ABC News. Pretti is the second fatality that has occurred in Minneapolis at the hands of federal agents this month, sparking a new wave of dialogue regarding immigration policies and enforcement.

For students from border towns like Brownsville junior Rebeca Alanis, the increase in border patrol agents isn't new; however, the impact of current policies is showing up in

I think it's fair to say, whatever denomination of Christianity, the welcoming of the stranger and the immigrant is part of that creed.

PATRICK FLAVIN
CHAIR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

the businesses surrounding the area.

Alanis, who worked as a waitress at a local Mexican restaurant, said she went from serving eight tables to two or three, and that the businesses around the restaurant also suffered.

"Other businesses, more Mexican restaurants, had to start closing

because they didn't have enough staff, their owners got deported or they got detained," Alanis said.

Dr. Patrick Flavin, chair of the political science department, said immigration is an issue that affects a broad range of areas of students' lives.

"What's going on in Minnesota at the moment is an issue that's constantly on the news, on social media," Flavin said. "[It's] more direct to students if they have family or friends who are immigrants, especially if they're undocumented immigrants."

Discussions on campus are generally viewed through a highly partisan lens, Flavin said, which increases political polarization among students.

"How people view what happened is very much through the political or partisan lens almost immediately after each of the U.S. citizens were killed by ICE agents, and there were competing narratives about who was to blame," Flavin said.

Alanis noticed this divide on

IMMIGRATION >> A8

Texas honors BU student as Clinical Teacher of the Year

ABBY RATHBURN
Staff Writer

This year marked the seventh Baylor student honored as Clinical Teacher of the Year for the State of Texas in the last nine years.

Bella Howell, Class of 2025 graduate from Southlake, was honored as Clinical Teacher of the Year for the state of Texas for her student-teaching position during her senior year.

The distinction involved a drawn-out process of interviews but served as recognition of excellence in the teaching field. Newly married and recently moved to Georgia, Howell had a lot going on during the process.

"I just went back to teaching like normal, not thinking anything of it, and then I got that email, and I was like, 'Oh my gosh. This is crazy,'" Howell said.

As part of their degree plan, undergraduate students participate in a senior-year internship involving on-site work, gaining hands-on experience before entering the workforce.

"I just felt like I had a good understanding of classroom management," Howell said. "I had a good understanding of things I needed

to teach on the first day of school because I had seen that before. The school of ed at Baylor is incredible and prepares people so well to be able to be good teachers."

That sense of confidence and understanding reflects the Moody School of Education's broader mission to educate "individuals who improve society through leadership, teaching, research, and service within their professions and communities," according to their website.

Associate Director of Assessment and Professional Development Lisa Osborne said the School of Education's goal is to prepare students for the classroom after college.

"We do something called co-teaching where we really emphasize that from day one when they walk into that classroom, they are meeting the needs of students together every single day," Osborne said. "Because we've done that, I think it just means that our student teachers, our candidates, are just so much better equipped to do really excellent work."

Unlike many other institutions, the

TEACHER OF THE YEAR >> A8



ON A MISSION Abilene senior Trevor Cox (second from right) and his Beach Reach team in South Padre Island last spring break.

Beach Reach to minister during spring break

MAGGIE MEEGAN
Reporter

For most college students, the week of spring break is a time for them to relax and vacation with friends

and family.

But a group of Baylor students spend their spring breaks spreading the gospel and teaching other college-aged students about Christianity through Baptist

Student Ministries. Baylor students have the opportunity to spend their spring break week on a trip called Beach Reach.

MINISTRY >> A8

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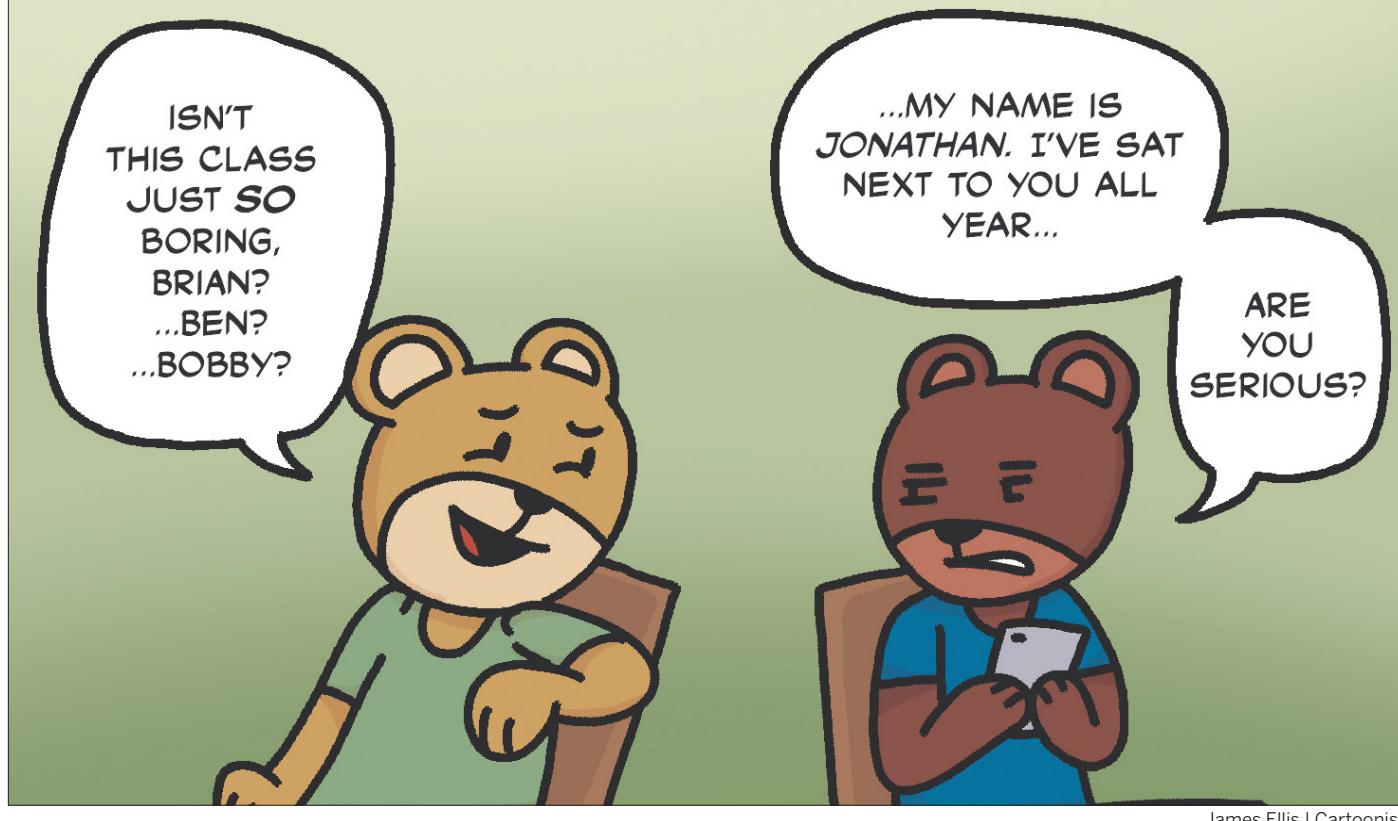
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James Ellis | Cartoonist

Take time to learn your classmates' names

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The semester is off to an unusual start: classes began on a Tuesday, a freeze moved 2 1/2 days online and, suddenly, the first week of February marks just the third and fourth days we've spent in person. Being surrounded by unfamiliar faces this late into the year is strange, but it also presents an unexpected opportunity to avoid the social awkwardness that usually settles in by now.

We've all been through the grind of fiddling through books on our own, with the sole goal of securing a decent grade in this class we don't particularly want to be in. Somewhere between lectures, homework, quizzes and deadlines, it seems that actually engaging with the people sitting next to us becomes optional — or something we actively avoid. By the end of the semester, we leave with a hopefully passing

grade and a handful of half-remembered faces, but few real connections, if any at all.

With the inconvenient beginning behind us, we have the opportunity to ditch the awkward "Sorry, what was your name again?" at the end of the semester and get it out of the way now with so much time to go.

Even if you never interact with

that person again or see them outside of the classroom, learning names is a fundamental exercise of the college experience, not just a social nicety.

A 2025 study by Lafayette College found that when professors learn students' names in the classroom, students "feel valued." The same is true when students interact. Central Michigan University summarized existing research later in the year, noting that when professors use students' names, engagement, interaction and student self-

confidence all increase.

"When instructors take the time to learn and correctly use student names, they demonstrate respect and genuine interest, which can help students feel valued and recognized as individuals," the Central Michigan Office of Curriculum and Instructional Support wrote.

If all this holds true for professors and students, it should be the same for student-to-student connections as well.

"Sharing the responsibility of knowing everyone's name can establish a sense of community within the classroom," the Lafayette College study wrote.

Look, learning names isn't rocket science; it simply means taking a moment to acknowledge somebody and actively listen during one conversation. Then, the rest gets easier. Remembering someone's name the next time you speak makes them feel seen —

something every college student hopes for on campus, especially during a semester that already feels disjointed.

Some of us on The Editorial Board struggle with remembering notes, names and definitions, but just like studying, repetition works. The more you use a name in conversation, the faster it sticks. And if you manage to open the door to that conversation, who knows, you walk away with a new friend rather than just another passerby from British Literature.

There are so many resources available to remember names, from Canvas' people tab to daily attendance and group work. New classes mean new people, and with everyone feeling a little less connected after a slow start to the year, learning names is a small, intentional step toward rebuilding community, unlocking personal growth and supporting our academic journeys.

My culture is not just a media trend

GISELLE LEE

Staff Writer

Suddenly, we have all entered a "very Chinese time in our lives."

If you're chronically online like me, you've probably heard that phrase before and seen hundreds of Chinese-related memes.

More importantly, you've most likely come across the viral

Adidas Tang jacket on your Instagram feed.

Unsurprisingly, Adidas

China skyrocketed

in popularity across

the world from social

media trends, causing young people to take international trips to secure the region-exclusive jackets.

Naturally, I had to get one for myself.

As someone born and raised in Hong Kong, I took great pride in the new piece of clothing that hung in my closet. Its unique blend of traditional design elements with modern fashion can also be attributed to the essence of my home, a city that celebrates the past and present. It was a jacket that allowed me to champion my upbringing authentically, both figuratively and literally.

Yet, the next week, my algorithm presented me with the harsh reality. The rise of the Adidas Tang jackets led to a new wave of fashion trends that leaned into the Chinese "aesthetic," rebranding Tang jackets inaccurately as a "Mandarin jacket" on Western fashion websites and selling them for profit without proper credit to the traditions that first made them famous.

Exploiting Asian-inspired designs is not new in Western fashion history, and neither is the impact of microaggression. This expands far beyond the clothes we wear and post about. After years of anti-Asian racism, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, transitioning to the sudden influx of content creators' acceptance of the Chinese lifestyle brought up mixed feelings for me. On one hand, I am relieved my identity as being Chinese isn't something I have to hide, though it remains uncomfortable and tiresome to keep critiquing without any change, especially in terms of embracing cultural diversity.

“

Cultures are not temporary means to use when desiring 15 seconds of fame.

The quiet grief of loving two places at once

MARISSA ESSENBURG

Sports Writer

Oftentimes, we take for granted that there are places where we belong. Places that hold

us, shape us and feel like home. Places where we are loved and able to love back. What we don't expect is the quiet grief that follows us out the door — the kind that settles in when leaving one place hurts and leaving another hurts too. The kind that makes you question why it hurts to go, and why it hurts to stay.

For many of us, that unexpected grief shows up as guilt for being sad to leave home and just as sad to leave school. College prepares us for change, independence and building something new, but I never expected it to prepare me for the moment when leaving both places feels equally heavy.

As A.A. Milne writes in "Winnie-the-Pooh," "How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

Growing up in a household where my siblings and I categorized our family members as characters from "Winnie-the-Pooh," the

book was bound to be quoted at some point in the day. It's a quote I could recite from age ix, but one I never truly understood until I felt the weight of what it meant to belong in a place other than where I was expected to.

Luck explains the depth of the sadness, but it doesn't erase the guilt that comes with it. Loving two places does not make leaving either one easier. Instead, it adds a quiet pressure to be grateful when what you really feel is grief.

From a young age, I was always leaving. Sleepaway camps filled my summers, sports carried me across the country and home became something I passed through more than stayed in. So when it came time for college, far from my parents and the city I had lived in my whole life, I thought I was prepared.

Or at least, that's what I told myself.

When I left the only home I'd ever known four years ago as a naive 18-year-old, I was sure I would find my place the moment I stepped on campus. I couldn't have been more wrong. I missed my mom, my friends and my home. I wanted to find my place, but I couldn't understand why it was taking so long.

What I didn't know then was how quickly time would slip away. It feels like yesterday that my parents drove off and left me at my dorm, not four years ago. These years redefined the girl I was into the woman I am now, in ways far greater than I ever thought possible.

What I came to understand even faster was the feeling that followed every time I went back and forth. That familiar pit in my stomach. The sadness of leaving home, paired with the guilt of feeling that same sadness when it was time to leave school. I loved my friends, my college house, this little town, but I also loved what awaited me two hours down the road.

The quiet question of why loving a place so deeply could make going back feel just as hard as leaving always lingered.

Psychologists call it ambivalence — the experience of holding mixed, even contradictory emotions at the same time. Joy for what's ahead and sadness for what you're leaving behind.

There is something undeniably special about home. Home is good for the soul, as many of us know it to be. And while it might be the house itself that holds the memories, more often than not, it's the people who give a place its meaning.

Home doesn't stay singular. It expands. What once lived in one place begins to exist in another, and suddenly, leaving feels heavier because there's more to miss. Missing "home" isn't a weakness, it's gratitude in disguise.

So instead of questioning why it hurts, maybe we should start asking what it meant. Loving two places at once doesn't make us ungrateful, it makes us human.

Cultures are not temporary means to use when desiring 15 seconds of fame. They are meant to be appreciated through proper education and open acknowledgment of their origins. I'm excited my culture is being viewed around the world in a more positive light now; however, claiming ownership over tradition and consuming cultural habits mindlessly is a step back from creating an inclusive, supportive global community.

There is more work to be done collectively, but I am optimistic that the trend of "being Chinese," when treated with more kindness and understanding, could build long-lasting influence in how we appreciate culture appropriately.

So if you see me wearing my wine-red-colored Adidas Tang jacket around campus, please ask me about it. I would love to tell you more.

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News

Global Friendship Program connects locals, students

GISELLE LEE
Staff Writer

In a progressively integrated global society with an increasing reliance on technology as a primary means of communication, it remains difficult to foster connection, especially for international students at Baylor.

There is a disparity between the global, surface-level understanding of U.S. culture and complete immersion in Waco. However, the Global Friendship Program assists international students in building relationships to facilitate a smooth transition to life in a foreign environment.

Katie Klingstedt, coordinator of International Programs for the International Student and Scholar Services team in the Center for Global Engagement, said the Waco community is eager to support international students.

"We just want students to have a chance to interact with more American and even Texan culture than they would get from going to their

class and their roommates," Klingstedt said. "Unless they make an intentional effort, they might not have much exposure to broader American culture, what life is like for someone who lives and works in a city in Texas, unrelated to Baylor."

Klingstedt noted that the program's mechanism matches international students with a family or a Baylor student, providing them with opportunities for additional exposure to life beyond Baylor through monthly meetups.

"International students get to see what public school is like or go to the high school football games of their host family's kid," Klingstedt said.

"They're seeing the other side of American culture that they wouldn't see just being at Baylor."

U.K. freshman Ebenezer Anene and South Africa freshman Myles Carlson participated in the semester-long program together during the fall semester.

Carlson agreed that Texas' unique culture was something

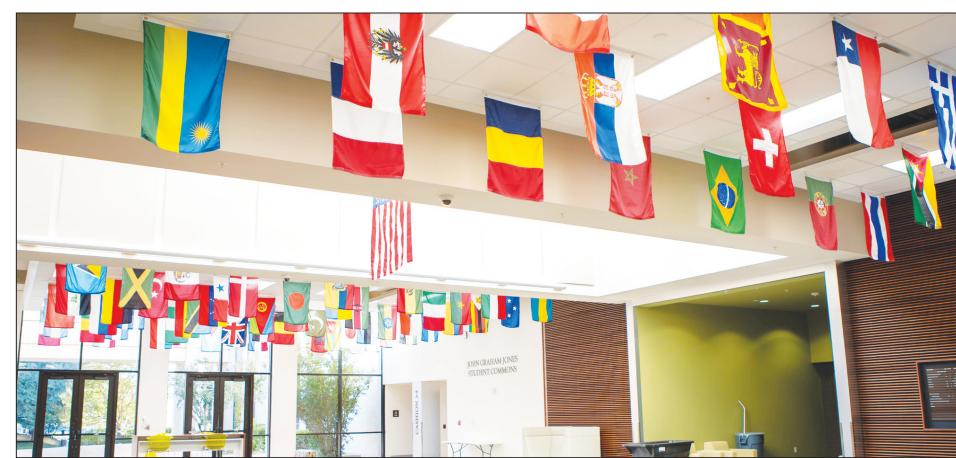
he had to adjust to on top of life in the U.S.

"The biggest culture shock for me was Texas itself because I've been to northern states, Minnesota and Wisconsin," Carlson said. "Texas is a whole different ball game. I had to learn a lot of new things compared to if I went to school in, like, Iowa."

Anene said he signed up for the program after hearing about it in a transitions course for international students and, along with Carlson, met with their host family four times, which included brunch, hiking and catching up over coffee.

"We talked about different things, from school to faith and everything in between," Anene said. "The family we had were genuinely really nice people, always checking up on us during the semester, calling to ask if we had anything they wanted us to pray for about us."

Carlson, who met up separately with their host family one more time during finals week, said they offered their home as a study spot if



Lariat file photo

CONNECTIONS International flags displayed in Cashion lobby highlight the countries Baylor international students travel from.

the Moody and Jones Libraries were too crowded.

"I asked if I could come over, and they said yes," Carlson said. "I hoped that this next semester we would still connect, even though we're technically not part of the friendship program anymore."

Anene and Carlson, despite being well-versed in American culture thanks to social media, praised the program for not just bringing them closer to

their host family, but also to each other, bonding over their shared love for the NBA.

Klingstedt shared that there are currently more hosts than international students signed up for the program, and hopes that the "low commitment, high reward" experience will attract both local and global Baylor students to participate.

"I think it can be very reciprocal," Klingstedt said. "It's a benefit for the

international student, they get off campus, they get to know American culture; it's just as much a benefit for the hosts, whether they're a Baylor student or from Waco, to get to learn and have a friend from somewhere totally different than them."

Students interested in participating in the program can sign up through the application found on the Center for Global Engagement's website.

Behind the scenes: History professor works on documentary

MAGGIE MEEGAN
Reporter



Professors don't just teach classes; many also conduct research outside of the classroom, like Dr. João Chaves, assistant professor of religion.

Chaves' research is more than just a pastime, though. It's won him awards like the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Dissertation Scholarship, according to the NABPRD website. More than that, it caught the attention of Netflix.

Chaves and his colleague Raimundo Barreto Jr. wrote an article that appeared in The Washington Post about a movement of specific streams of Christian nationalism in Brazil.

A filmmaker reached out to Chaves about researching for a documentary film covering the nationalism movement in Brazil.

"Through different means, including that piece, these documentary filmmakers kind of figured out what Raimundo and I were researching," Chaves said.

Chaves was a part of a research team focusing on the Brazilian aspect of the documentary film titled "Apocalypse In The Tropics," which is now streaming on Netflix.

Compared to the world of writing and publications, Chaves said he got to experience what it was like working with production crews and being a part of a story on streaming devices.

"It was very interesting to have a sip of that world and then seeing the documentary done ... it has to be in some ways kind of reimagined to communicate things differently," Chaves said.

After the fact, Chaves is still pushing himself out of his comfort zone by finding new ways to publish his work.

"I'm writing a short collection of poetry that I am

uncomfortable doing because it is not my area," Chaves said.

Chaves has been a professor at Baylor for three years and said he enjoyed the process of going through his PhD.

"For some people the PhD or the educational kind of track to be a teacher in my area or a scholar in my area is a means to an end in the sense that you struggle through it and then you get it," Chaves said. "But for me, the process itself was very enjoyable."

Inside the classroom, Chaves is greatly admired by his students in his church history course.

Katy senior Oliver Liu said he admires Chaves and has continued to build his relationship with him as a mentor and professor throughout his journey at Baylor.

"One thing I heard that I thought was really cool the other day was, 'To love is to pay attention,' and Dr. Chaves is a guy who pays attention," Liu said. "He is a great teacher, but also he's just super invested in our lives as students."

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PROGRAM OF EXPECTATION Baylor acrobatics and tumbling is heading into its final NCATA season hoping to win its 11th consecutive national title.

Lariat file photo

No. 1 Baylor A&T eyes more history

The Bears are looking for an 11th straight NCATA title before joining the NCAA next year

MARISSA ESENENBURG
Sports Writer

Eleven.

That's the new magic number for 10-time national champion Baylor acrobatics and tumbling, as the team chases one more national title and one final NCATA crown. This year, the dynasty isn't just defending a title — it's writing the last chapter of an era.

When No. 1 Baylor A&T takes the mat, the stakes stretch beyond another banner; it's a bridge between two eras, as A&T is set to become an NCAA championship sport in 2027.

The Bears enter 2026 chasing their final National Collegiate Acrobatics and Tumbling Association title, looking to close the era they built the same way they've spent the past decade living in it: at the top.

As Baylor begins its pursuit of an 11th straight title, head coach Felecia Mulkey said defending No. 10 does not change the Bears' mindset, as their focus remains fixed on the work in front of them.

"It doesn't feel any different than it usually does every year because we kind of start over," Mulkey said. "Our program has won 10, but this team hasn't won any. For us, it's one meet at a time, one day at a time, and we're developing every day."

The habits behind the team's decade of dominance remain at the center — details in practice, clean execution and a standard that does not reset just because the banners already hang in the rafters.

Baylor knows every opponent brings its best shot, but inside the program the emphasis stays on performance rather than the name on the other side.

"People have been getting closer, and that's what we want, but we are still raising the standard," Mulkey said. "We'll be introducing new acros, new pyramids this year. Our team event is silly with difficulty and we want everybody to try to chase us. It makes the sport as a whole better, and it is still happening. And they'll catch us one day, but it's not going to be this year."

With 47 programs actively competing in the 2026 season, acrobatics and tumbling has grown significantly as an NCAA Emerging Sport for Women, drawing more than 1,300 student-athletes across Divisions I, II and III.

Named the 93rd NCAA championship sport, the designation moves acrobatics and tumbling out of emerging status and paves the way for its first NCAA national title in spring 2027. For a program full of firsts, the Bears will add another: competing for a new crown come next spring.

"I'm excited for the young women that get to

experience acrobatics and tumbling and just for the trailblazers that came before," former Baylor A&T student-athlete Mariah Polk said. "There are some iconic people that came before that deserve to see this thing come to life."

Our team event is silly with difficulty and we want everybody to try to chase us. ... they'll catch us one day, but it's not going to be this year.

FELECIA MULKEY
HEAD COACH

Baylor, though, Mulkey has always treated the program like the championship contender it is.

"We weren't an NCAA sport until a few weeks ago, but we've always been treated like one here [at Baylor]," Mulkey said. "That's what makes this so special. For us, it's cool to get here, but we've felt special since day one."

That sense of distinction starts at the top with Mulkey, a coach athletes describe as both brilliant and inspiring.

"Baylor is really special to me, this coaching staff is special to me," senior base and tumbler Meredith Wells said. "Coach Fee is a great leader and someone I really look up to, not just in acro but just as a human being. While she's probably the smartest person I know, she's also an amazing person."

With one more black and red banner on the line for the Ferrell Center rafters this season, the Bears head into Friday's opener carrying sky-high expectations.

"I've been watching [this sport] since I was a kid, and now to be a part of it with one of the coaches that started it is incredible," junior top and tumbler Payton Washington said. "And to see where it's going to grow to, I'm excited for this season and all that is to come."

Entering its 15th season as a founding member varsity sport, Baylor A&T will take the mat at 6 p.m. Friday for its final season under the NCATA against No. 11 St. Leo in Florida.

Men's tennis freshman Anderson embraces home-state opportunity

JEFFREY COHEN
Sports Writer

Blake Anderson always had a connection to Baylor. The Prosper native spent many a summer making the two-hour drive down I-35 to attend the program's summer tennis camps.

"I've always wanted to come to Waco," said Anderson, a freshman from Walnut Grove High School. "Once I started talking to Mike [Woodson], I became really close to Mike, and I came to the program ... and the tennis camps in the summer."

Anderson's connection with the Bears and head coach Michael Woodson led him to don the green and gold going into last fall. The proximity has allowed his family to watch him compete.

"My parents are able to come to the matches, and my brother will come to a couple matches," Anderson said. "It's an awesome opportunity for me to be able to play here and my parents to be able to come."

Anderson is also able to represent his home state while playing for Baylor (4-1). He is one of two players on the team to hail from the Lone Star State alongside senior Arman Zamani of Frisco. He is also one of four Americans on the 10-man roster.

Like many Texans, Anderson takes

pride in representing his home state.

"There's not a lot of guys on the team that are from America," Anderson said. "Especially with Baylor being in Texas, it's pretty cool to be able to represent Texas and represent America on the team."

Anderson also appreciates his team's diversity, saying he enjoys learning more about his teammates and their cultures.

"I also love having the foreign guys on the team," Anderson said. "Learning about the different cultures and having a different culture on the team ... that makes us pretty unique."

One of the key influences on Anderson's time at Baylor has been his doubles partner, junior Connor Van Schalkwyk. The pair share a strong bond both on the court and in everyday life.

"I have a good partner in Connor, one of my best friends," Anderson said. "It's so awesome to go on the court as a freshman with him."

Woodson saw the connection right away. He said that the duo clicked the first time they practiced together in the fall. Their chemistry on the court has continued to grow throughout the early part of the spring.

"They've done a great job since the first practice we put them together," Woodson said. "They just happened to be together

on one of the morning sessions in Indian Wells, and they just have unbelievable chemistry, and you could see that even in a short amount of time."

The pair has proven to be a staple for the Bears. They have not lost a doubles set so far this spring, including a dominant 6-1 victory in Baylor's sweep over Tulsa on Friday.

Van Schalkwyk also serves as somewhat of a mentor to Anderson. Even though the junior is in his first year at Baylor, the Old Dominion transfer's experience in college tennis has helped Anderson grow early in his collegiate career.

"He leads me throughout the match and throughout Baylor," Anderson said. "He's been a good role model to me, and I'm excited to be able to play doubles with him."

Anderson has been credited with bringing energy to the Bears. Woodson said the team has become more energetic as the spring has progressed thanks to Anderson and his personality.

"He has incredible juice ... he's so energetic, he's so fired up," Woodson said. "He's in your face whether he's saying hello to you when you walk into class or if he's on the match court. I think that that lends itself really well to team tennis."



Caleb Garcia | Photographer
THE NEW GUY Freshman Blake Anderson jumps to serve during then-No. 16 Baylor men's tennis' 6-1 win over Wisconsin on Jan. 16 at the Hawkins Indoor Tennis Center.

Badenhorst welcomes 'Privilege' of Court One

JEFFREY COHEN
Sports Writer

Playing at Center Court is the dream of many aspiring tennis players. They hope one day to compete for a Grand Slam championship.

While it may not be on the grass at Wimbledon or under the lights of Arthur Ashe Stadium at the US Open, playing on Court One is seen as a privilege in college tennis.

It is a sign of leadership when tennis is played in a team environment. Junior Devin Badenhorst sees that his position is meant to set the tone for Baylor in every match.

"In college tennis, every spot is as important as can be, but you got to lead from the front," Badenhorst said. "That's when you go up against the best guys in the country week in, week out."

Those playing on Court One up the intensity because of the higher level of competition and the duty to be an example for their teammates.

Badenhorst just wanted to show up and play when he premiered on Court Three as a freshman. He realized the added responsibility that comes with being center stage.

"It has a lot of responsibility," Badenhorst said. "In my freshman year, I was playing [Court] Three singles, and I feel like I was just going and playing."

Head coach Michael Woodson said Badenhorst has grown since he played on Court Three. He has seen Badenhorst take on the roles that come with being the top player while continuing to become better as a tennis player.

He believes Badenhorst is the man to lead the Bears as they gear up to play four top-10 opponents in the next month and a half.



STEPPING INTO LEADERSHIP Junior Devin Badenhorst returns the ball during Baylor's win over Texas Tech on Sept. 14, 2025.

"Devin has really learned a lot over these past couple years, and he's ready for that challenge," Woodson said. "He's going to play the best players in the country over the next eight [to] nine matches."

Confidence is key for Badenhorst to compete at the highest level. It is also contagious coming

from Court One. If he can play with confidence and swagger, the rest of the team will follow suit and compete at their best.

"You have to have a guy that really believes in himself," Woodson said. "We all can follow [him] out onto the match court knowing he's going to compete with the best in the country

and he belongs there."

Woodson also said that Badenhorst still has plenty of room to grow in his skill, seeing his potential to be a pro. Badenhorst still has another season of eligibility before his time at Baylor is up.

"He really is just scratching the surface," Woodson said. "Devin has a very special future ahead of him, and I think we're just starting to begin to see what he's capable of."

The leader is the catalyst for the team's goals. Being prepared and ready to succeed every match is how players like Badenhorst help their team pursue its ultimate goal of a national championship.

"You got to be ready every week, and you got to recover well to get your body ready for every week," Badenhorst said. "I want to keep doing better for the team because we have goal set in mind, and all we want to do is to win a national championship."

Badenhorst also recognizes his appreciation goes beyond what court he plays on. He believes his emphasis on being a Bear contrasts with the motivations of other top players.

"It's such a privilege for me being in Waco, representing Baylor," Badenhorst said. "I feel like a lot of guys don't really see it in that way and see it as in they play for their country or their team."

Badenhorst's sentiment is shared among his teammates. They relish playing alongside each other and wearing the green and gold.

"It's a privilege for all the guys on the team," Badenhorst said. "We just see it as a privilege every time we step on [the] court and compete next to each other."



NEXT MAN UP Ryan Murphy will take on the interim gig after Mike McGraw announced his retirement last month. McGraw oversaw a period of historic success for the program.

Baylor men's golf welcomes new interim coach Murphy

MATT NEVAREZ
Reporter

A new chapter in Baylor men's golf has officially begun, as new interim head coach Ryan Murphy has stepped into a new role for the Bears after longtime head coach Mike McGraw announced his retirement in January.

McGraw's retirement marked an end to one of the most successful eras in program history. In 12 seasons in Waco, McGraw's Bears won 20 team titles, 13 individual titles and 11 All-American Selections. The Bears reached the NCAA Championships six times in McGraw's tenure, matching the amount the team appeared in before his arrival.

Here are some key moments from Murphy's introductory press conference Wednesday. Questions and answers have been lightly edited for length and clarity.

Q: How are you preparing for your first tournament? How are you preparing the boys?

Murphy: Well, you do what you can per the weather. We had a little cold snap with the ice coming in, but we try and get outdoors as much as possible. And when we do have the ice, we do what we can here with the Billy Golf Complex indoors. And so we try to take advantage of every day that we have, and we'll start to look at the golf course in the ways that we're able. We'll look at it online from an aerial. We'll start looking at the yardage book. And that's kind of the general process, if you will, in our preparation leading up to the golf tournament.

Q: How have your people, outside of your family and friends, helped you stay grounded as you transition into this new role?

Murphy: There's a lot going on right now. I've got a tight circle, my wife and some close friends, and they're obviously excited

for this, for me, for this opportunity. And Coach McGraw is a great source for that. He's a very grounded person, and he's never really made things bigger than they are. And he's true to that. He's not made this any bigger than it is. And so he's someone that I've leaned on significantly. Even though he's moved away from the program in a coaching capacity, I have him on speed dial. And so we talk regularly, and he's been wonderful in this transition.

Q: Do you feel any pressure at all to follow a legend like McGraw, at least in an interim role?

Murphy: I wouldn't use the word pressure. I feel responsible, for sure. That's probably the overriding feeling. I'm responsible to carry on the things that he did while he was here to make this program great, and then beyond that, build on it. He's a man that lived his life trying to make it better than he found it. Now, that's on me. I have to try and build on what he's created here and make it even better. But there's a lot of processes and systems and facilities that he was instrumental in putting in place here at Baylor, and I'm responsible for making sure those stay intact.

Q: McGraw had a voice multiple times last semester, and kind of the overall performance was not exactly what y'all wanted. So what are you trying to do this semester with still a possible chance of making the NCAA tournament at the end of the year?

Murphy: We're trying to improve ... The maturation of a golfer takes time. It takes a long time, and it happens in small, little increments. And so you try to improve each guy in those small, little increments on a regular basis. And hopefully, when you go compete, you add that all up, and it's hopefully better than it was last time or last semester. And so that's really it. That's all you can do.

Weekend watchlist

A&T season opener at No. 11 St. Leo (Thursday, 6 p.m.)

SB season opener vs No. 24 Mississippi State (Thursday, 6:30 p.m.)

MTEN at No. 4 TCU (Thursday, 5:30 p.m.)

WTEN vs Rice (Friday, 12 p.m., Hawkins Indoor Tennis Center)

MBB at No. 7 Iowa State (Saturday, 1 p.m., ESPN)

WBB vs Arizona State (Saturday, 5 p.m., Foster Pavilion)

WTEN vs No. 23 Washington (Sunday, 12 p.m., Hawkins Indoor)



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Love at first sip

Common Grounds launches Valentine's Day menu

ALEXANDRA BREWER

Staff Writer

February brings more than just deadlines and cold weather to campus. For Common Grounds, a new Valentine's lineup just dropped, complete with pink signage, seasonal drinks and heart-themed names.

One of the popular new drinks this year is the Chai Love You latte.

Oak Park, Ill., senior and Common Grounds shift lead Carina Scholtens said there are a variety of new drinks that are both fun to make and delicious to drink.

"The Chai that one's been fun for Scholtens said. "It's a chai chocolate and strawberry. Me and one of my coworkers made it the other day with strawberry cold foam, and it was very delicious."

Along with new drinks, several popular Valentine's options have returned. Scholtens said the XOXO remains a consistent favorite.

"I would say the XOXO is popular, but it's historically popular," she said. "That one's got white chocolate and raspberry."

Scholtens said the Valentine's menu changes the pace of work behind the counter.

"The menu is really fun to make," Scholtens said. "I have a lot of fun with the syrup combinations and just seeing what Common Grounds does with the menu every year has been really fun."

Scholtens said some customers stick with a classic favorite, while others ask baristas for recommendations — and the mix of returning drinks and new creations gives employees

plenty to suggest.

"I just really enjoy making it and having new suggestions to give to customers," Scholtens said.

Sacramento, Calif., junior and Common Grounds shift lead Ashley Kinney said customers often change their order after seeing the Valentine's menu.

"It feels like everyone's super excited," Kinney said. "Every time someone comes up to order, they have a drink in mind, and then they see our Valentine's menu, and they completely shift."

Kinney said customers frequently ask baristas for recommendations.

"They're like, 'I want to try something off of here,' and always ask for recommendations," she said.

For customers who prefer coffee, Kinney often suggests the Sweetheart Mocha.

"I think my favorite drink for coffee lovers, I would recommend the Sweetheart Mocha, because that one feels very Valentine's to me," she said.

For non-coffee drinkers, Kinney recommends the Strawberry Fields, a matcha drink that remained on the menu after last year's Valentine's season.

"It was on our Valentine's menu last year, and it was so popular that we just keep it year-round," Kinney said.

While a variety of drinks have been added this year, eight drinks are appearing on the Common Grounds menu for Valentine's Day.

"Usually, they're always a little overwhelmed," Kinney said. "People are always



Alyssa Meyers | Photographer

MATCHA MADNESS Strawberry Fields, a matcha with white chocolate and strawberry cold foam, is now offered on Common Grounds' sweetheart special menu until the end of February.

like, 'I don't know what to order.'

Other drinks offered on the specialty menu include a variety of flavors and combinations. The Ring by Spring, a wedding cake-flavored latte, is perfect for those who love a sweet coffee treat.

For those who want to venture outside the norms, The Nervous Breakup, a white chocolate mocha, with Common Grounds secret sauce

and extra espresso, is the ideal choice.

The Love Hurts A-Latte, a classic latte with strawberries and vanilla syrup, is a simple yet sophisticated pick. Aside from the 2-5-Flirt with toasted marshmallows, includes Dr Pepper with toasted marshmallows, topped with our strawberry cold foam. As Valentine's Day approaches, the seasonal menu offers customers a chance to try something different.

Arancia Gelato & Bakery brings viral desserts to Waco

CHLOE WILSON

Intern

Arancia Gelato & Bakery has drawn in locals and tourists alike with its homemade pastries, Italian-style gelato and impressive coffee creations.

Centered on their baked goods, Arancia introduces a beautiful blend of European traditions and modern melodies that has quickly drawn positive attention to this quaint Central Texas shop. Bakery manager Mohd Alhakim said the owners wanted a unique, different place in the Waco area that blended old and new.

The bakery held its grand opening on Nov. 7 and has since become a staple pastry and gelato shop.

"They wanted to find trendy [desserts] like the Dubai chocolate items," Alhakim said.

With authentic Italian and French cuisine, the owners were confident that this blend of conventional and creative would bring a diverse crowd of customers.

Opened with a mission to "bring joy through every bite," Arancia set out to provide a wide array of items from classic European pastries, like almond and chocolate croissants, to new creations such as gelato "noodles."

"Every time you come in, there's something fun to try," Arancia regular Olivia McFadden said. "The bakery's light-filled interior, colorful pastries and welcoming vibe have easily made it the perfect community core for those seeking a weekend study spot, all the way down to people who admire it for its aesthetically pleasing Instagram backdrop."

The menu offers a range of options, from six amazing gelato offerings, down to "the viral shelf," home to seven chocolate-inspired picks spotlighted on the company's Instagram and



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

JOYFUL GELATO Right off Bosque Boulevard, Arancia Gelato & Bakery operates with a mission to "bring joy through every bite."

TikTok platforms. The shop also spotlights their eclectic espressos, dazzling desserts and savory surprises.

One of the central focuses of their shop is the famously-enjoyed gelato flavors. Although

carrying conventional flavors like chocolate and vanilla bean, the pistachio and sea salt caramel flavors also procure a good amount of popularity.

"Many of the menu's offerings are geared towards the younger generations," Alhakim said. "We try to find anything unique or trendy — like the Dubai chocolate strawberry cups seen on TikTok — because they were very popular and, surprisingly, not a lot of people in the Waco area knew about them."

For many, the bakery is more than just a stop for treats; it's a creative gathering place. As the atmosphere brings as much life as the treats themselves, college students, families and individuals around Waco are welcome to enjoy cappuccinos, sweet gelato cups and quiche.

Whether you're after a perfect croissant or a scoop of something unexpected, there's a little something there for everyone — and it goes without saying that every bit of magic at this place is made with care.

Walking into Arancia feels like stepping into a local favorite rapidly becoming a cultural staple for the Waco area. With its combination

of classical technique and modern flair, the bakery embodies a growing trend in Texas towns: culinary creativity rooted in community.

Arancia's doors are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

HIDDEN GEM Arancia Gelato and Bakery's bright and welcoming interior makes it a perfect

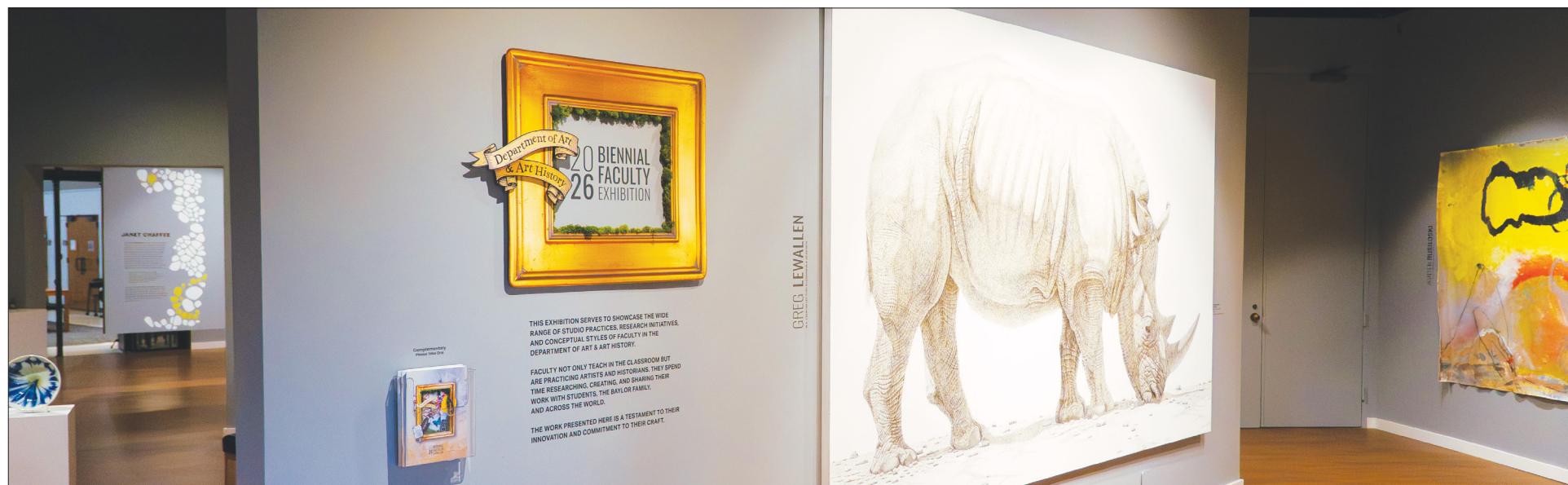
“ We try to find anything unique or trendy — like the Dubai chocolate strawberry cups seen on TikTok.

MOHD ALHAKIM
BAKERY MANAGER

Arts & Life

Professors paint with passion

Wildlife, weaving, personal artwork collide at Biennial Faculty Exhibition



Brady Harris | Photographer

PASSIONS AND PAINT The main entrance of this year's biennial faculty exhibit, where professors from the art and art history department can display their best work to the community.

CAMILLE KELLY

Reporter

At the Martin Museum of Art's Biennial Faculty Exhibition, professors from both the art and art history departments have the opportunity to take off the instructor hat and embrace being students of art again, sharing their personal artwork for guests and students to see on display until March 8.

Art senior lecturer Greg Lewallen spent over 125 hours working to complete his piece in the exhibition, a life-sized white rhinoceros drawing done completely in ballpoint pen. According to Lewallen, this drawing is the largest piece he has ever completed, a creation that spans 7 feet by 12 feet.

"The drawing starts with an idea, and being representational, I used reference photos I took of the rhinos at Cameron Park Zoo to ensure accuracy," Lewallen said. "I have never heard of anyone else having done a pen-and-ink scribble drawing of a life-sized rhino, and I wanted to do something unique."

Lewallen said his intent in this art piece was to draw attention to the endangered wild rhinoceros population.

"I think standing close, in front of this life-sized image, helps the viewer to better appreciate the importance of saving wild places in their environment so populations can thrive and recover," Lewallen said.

Lewallen said he, like the other professors participating in the exhibition, is excited by the opportunity to share his personal work with his students.

"They need to see that I actually might know

what I am talking about when I am with them in the drawing studio ... but I learn as much from them as they might from me," Lewallen said.

Assistant professor of art Tina Linville also finds value in sharing her work with her students, including textiles and fiber sculptures made with techniques similar to those she teaches in the Baylor fiber studio.

"Sharing my own work is a way to model curiosity and experimentation, and to show that artistic practice is an ongoing process," Linville said. "I hope it encourages students to explore how materials and processes might support the questions they want to ask in their own work."

The unique art pieces created by professors Linville, Lewallen and many more from the departments are currently on display at the Martin Museum of Art. Because the exhibition features so many different forms of art, Linville said she hopes students see that creative practice doesn't follow a single path.

"The exhibition reflects a range of approaches and perspectives, and I hope that variety helps students recognize space for their own interests, questions and ways of working," Linville said. "Ideally, they leave feeling encouraged and a little more confident in their own potential."



SHOWING OFF A group of photo art installations by H. Jennings Sheffield, a professor of art, located at the Biennial Faculty Art Exhibition at the Martin Museum of Art.

Brady Harris | Photographer

Baylor Wind Ensemble to debut 'A Night at the Movies'

STACIE BOYLS

Arts & Life Writer

The Baylor Wind Ensemble is traveling through the cinematic ages this week with its upcoming concert, "A Night at the Movies," a film-focused program set for 7:30 p.m. Friday in Jones Concert Hall. The free concert marks the first time in Baylor Wind Ensemble history that an entire program is dedicated to movie music.

"This is my 20th year at Baylor, and this will be the first time that we will do an entire evening of music featuring movie music," director Eric Wilson said. "We just decided that we would do an entire movie concert."

The program includes music from "West Side Story," "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves," "How to Train Your Dragon," "Wicked," "The Cowboys" and "Back to the Future" with an arrangement by Dallas senior Carson Iltis.

While movie music may feel lighthearted to audiences, Wilson emphasized the repertoire still presents serious artistic and technical demands, pushing the ensemble to perform at the highest level of musicality and technicality.

"It's challenging music," Wilson said. "It does provide artistic challenges for our students, not to mention the educational component that is a strong reason for doing a program like this."

For Keller junior Kennedy Surface, who plays French horn and is in her third year with the ensemble, the shift in programming feels refreshing and intentional.

"It's definitely incredibly different than anything we've ever done," Surface said. "I think that providing the musicians with the opportunity to rehearse and perform movie music is really important."



CINEMA The Baylor Wind Ensemble will take the stage Friday, where they will play many musical numbers from classic films.

Surface added that film music also creates a relatable and engaging arts environment for non-music majors and casual concertgoers.

"This is a really great way to do community outreach and to meet people where they are and play music that the community wants to hear," she said.

Despite the accessible theme, Surface and Wilson said the music itself presents new challenges for the ensemble and individual members, particularly Leonard Bernstein's Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story."

"It takes it to a whole other level," Surface said. "It's so complex and it's really difficult to put together, but the finished product is something that's really special and beautiful."

Wilson agreed, calling "West Side Story" "very much a professional level piece" and noting that it allows the ensemble to explore a wide range of color and intensity.

The concert also reflects real-world training for student musicians who may one day perform in professional orchestras or military bands.

"Often those groups will do pop concerts," Wilson said. "Movie music is one of the most profound ways to generate big audiences."

Surface predicts "How to Train Your Dragon" and "Robin Hood" will become a crowd favorite and generate a sense of nostalgia for audience members and ensemble members alike.

"For anyone feeling nostalgic, it's definitely going to be 'Robin Hood,'" Surface said. "That Disney intro we know and love, it's going to be shockingly nostalgic for a lot of people."

The concert will also feature live narration between pieces by Baylor faculty member Dr. Jacob Abell, adding context and storytelling throughout the evening.

With a Friday night time slot and free admission, both Wilson and Surface hope the concert draws a broader student crowd.

"I'm really excited for the opportunity to have more people listen to our concert and be able to be there physically," Surface said. "It's just cool."

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IMMIGRATION from A1

campus and was disheartened that Baylor seemed to embrace what she views as hateful language.

"I think it's really sad, especially here at Baylor, hearing some people be kind of proud about the fact that they voted for this," Alanis said. "It makes me sad just because our whole thing is Christian values."

Flavin said immigration is a political issue where religion is utilized in civil discourse. Flavin sees this dialogue playing out in Minneapolis, where church leaders are leading some of the peaceful protests.

"I think it's fair to say, whatever denomination of Christianity, the welcoming of the stranger and the immigrant is part of that creed," Flavin said.

Although Minneapolis is thousands of

miles away from Waco, Flavin said students are likely joining the discussion now because what's happening in Minnesota today could be happening in Waco tomorrow.

"What's happening in Minnesota could play out in other parts around the country, whether you're an immigrant or not," Flavin said. "I mean, the two people that were killed were U.S. citizens who were demonstrating."

As the discussion continues to unfold, Alanis said she hopes students view the issue with empathy.

"You have to view it with a sense of empathy because you don't know what someone's going through," Alanis said. "It isn't until you sit with someone one-on-one and really get to hear their perspective, you really don't know ... what it took for them to get here."

MINISTRY from A1

Throughout the week, students go to South Padre Island to preach to spring-breakers. Participating students offer different services from morning until night for those who aren't Christians, those finding Jesus or those hearing about the Christian faith for the first time.

Abilene senior Trevor Cox, who will complete his fourth Beach Reach trip this year, has learned from the ups and downs of the annual trip.

"It is so different being on a mission trip where you are evangelizing rather than just serving," Cox said.

Baylor students join multiple groups of students from different college campuses to create the outreach over spring break. Students are trained for going on the trip, possible scenarios to expect and what a lifetime of missions work might look like.

"It has greatly impacted how I view my own faith and defend my own faith," Cox said. "Just interacting with people on a day-to-

day basis, like every person I come in contact with is a soul that Jesus yearns for, and that is something not taken for granted to be able to partner with Jesus in that mission."

According to the Pew Research Center, there is a stabilization in claims of religious belief in adults living in the U.S. after decades of a steady decline. In the last five years across college campuses, there has been more word of mouth about religious revival, and data is starting to show an answer over time.

Dickinson sophomore Victoria Galvan, who is about to attend her second Beach Reach trip, has an optimistic perspective when it comes to Baylor students and vacationers being moved by God during the trip.

"I think moving is growing in a way that not only shares the gospel but also to kind of understand it deeper," Galvan said. "Seeing the love that was given to these people on the island

is fantastic."

Nacogdoches sophomore Cade Hinton is preparing to go on his second trip with BSM and reflected to give advice to anyone new to Beach Reach.

"The enemy is there because I feel like a lot of times we ignore the enemy in our lives, especially here on campus, where it is all very comfortable," Hinton said. "But the enemy usually goes where you feel isolated at times."

Beach Reach's goal is to bring together Baylor students who share a passion and a mission to make a difference not only on Baylor's campus, but also out in the world when they can step away from school.

"My freshman year, when I did Beach Reach for the first time, I was in a huge lack of community," Cox said. "I didn't have a lot of friends, I didn't really know where my place was and in Beach Reach I was introduced to a lot of BSM people, and that quickly became like my community."



Photo courtesy of Moody School of Education
EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION Bella Howell (left), Class of 2025, was honored as the Clinical Student Teacher of the Year for the state of Texas in January.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR from A1

School of Education's hands-on approach prepares future educators for real-world challenges. In difficult times, Howell learned to lean on her faith.

"It's that Christian aspect that just allows you to get through the hard things," Howell said. "Teaching sometimes is hard, and being able to rely on Christ to get me through gives me patience and kindness and all the things I need to be a good teacher. Baylor definitely taught me a lot of that."

Although her mother

was a teacher, Howell was unsure of her calling upon arrival on campus. In her first semester, she took business and education classes to learn more about both fields. But it didn't take her long before she found where she was meant to be.

"My first class that I took in the School of Education, it was the intro to education class, and as soon as I sat down in that class, I was like, 'This is where I am meant to be,'" Howell said.

What began as a moment of realization became a series

of experiences that affirmed her calling. During her senior year, Howell participated in a study abroad, another aspect of her undergraduate experience that prepared her for the honor.

"I did the London study abroad program, and it was the best experience," Howell said. "It was so much fun, and I have made lifelong friendships from it ... It was the same sort of thing. I went into the classroom every day, and they were so cute, and it was so fun, and I learned a lot from that too."



Novel 'The Mural' confronts spread of cultural debates over grief, memory

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