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Choose your own adventure: keep the phone away after class



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Homegrown senior trio leads No. 18 WBB into postseason push



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Shih-Pogrebnoy lineage turns passion into musical excellence

Baylor Eats launches new efforts to reduce food waste



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

WINGIN' IT According to Baylor Eats, Baylor dining operations produced about 360,000 pounds of food waste last year, with a majority coming from plate waste.

JOANA KAROSHI
Staff Writer

College dining halls produce large amounts of food waste each year, prompting universities to experiment with programs that reduce waste and donate surplus food.

Baylor dining operations produced about 360,000 pounds of food waste last year, according to Benton, Ark., junior Lochlan Walsh, a sustainability intern with Baylor Eats.

Baylor Eats has introduced several initiatives aimed at reducing that number, including a new program called Sic 'Em Sampling, developed in partnership with University Innovation Fellows, which allows students to taste food before adding it to their plates.

"We're trying to do this so that students can try something before they actually put it on their plate," Walsh said.

The sampling stations, located in dining halls across campus, are designed to reduce plate waste by allowing students to test unfamiliar menu items before committing to a full portion.

Walsh said Baylor Eats plans to measure the program's success through student feedback and by monitoring food waste trends over time.

Baylor Eats also tracks food waste in its dining halls using a digital system that allows kitchen staff to record discarded food and monitor patterns in waste production. According to Haleigh Dean, senior marketing director for Baylor Eats, staff input food waste data into a tablet system used in the kitchens. The system helps dining teams identify trends and adjust the quantities they prepare.

"It is an actual tablet where, in the back of the house, we have everything inputted so it provides us tracking," Dean said. "With all that tracking, we can see those trends and adjust our production beforehand."

Walsh said much of the waste in dining halls comes from plate waste after students have already served themselves. She added that waste-tracking efforts have confirmed that leftover food on students' plates accounts for a significant share

EATS INITIATIVE >> A8

BUPD urges students to lock, register scooters, e-bikes

CHRISTIAN WELLS
Staff Writer

As electric scooters and bicycles crowd bike racks and line sidewalks across campus, so do opportunities for theft — a problem campus police say has remained steady but preventable.

BUPD Assistant Chief Zackary McVey said reports of stolen scooters and bikes have not increased significantly over the past year as more students invest in the popular mode of transportation.

"I would honestly say it's probably stayed kind of steady across the board," McVey said. "With the amount of e-scooters that people have, they're becoming more and more available as prices come down. More people have them, which is making more of an opportunity, unfortunately, for them to be stolen."

McVey said there are no specific hotspots where e-scooter thefts occur, but rather that they are simply left around campus. Scooters and bikes are typically taken when they are left unlocked or improperly secured, often late at night.

"It's not necessarily places — it's how people are managing their scooters wherever they are," McVey said. "Scooter theft is almost always a crime of opportunity."

He said many cases involve students who leave their scooters unattended outside a dorm or classroom, even briefly.

"Even if it's, 'Oh, I'm just running in to ask a professor a question quick,' that right there is leaving it open to be stolen," McVey said.

To prevent theft, McVey recommends

LOCK IT UP >> A8



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

WORK IN PROGRESS Construction on the 124-year-old main courthouse and jail will cost almost \$54 million.

McLennan County \$50 million jail remodel green lit

EMMA FALK
Reporter

McLennan County is undertaking a \$50 million remodel of the former county jail into a new justice center that will include additional courtrooms and office space, aiming to reduce overcrowding and case backlogs. Construction is already underway, with completion expected by late 2026 to 2027.

The remodeling project comes as the county struggles with space shortages at the 124-year-old main courthouse, which has become increasingly strained as the local population continues to grow. Keith Vaughan, former Waco police officer and adjunct political science professor, said the rising number of cases has made delays unavoidable.

"We've grown considerably since I've started, so the case log has gotten longer, of course," Vaughan said.

Fort Worth sophomore Tierra Varela said population growth also affects how quickly cases move through the courts.

"With the population growth, that means evidently crime is going to grow, and wait times in the court can be a very big hassle," Varela said.

Additional courtrooms are expected to help handle the growing number of civil and criminal cases while also providing more space for legal records and court-related offices. Rather than building an entirely new facility, the county chose to remodel the existing jail, which is more cost-efficient and keeps necessary services located in downtown Waco near the current courthouse.

The project began Feb. 24, 2025 and is expected to be completed by Feb. 3, 2027, at the latest. The estimated cost of the renovation is \$53,934,465. Plans include adding new courtrooms, associated offices, district clerk offices, probation offices, hot checks and facility services.

These additions aren't just about improving the appearance of

JAIL REMODELING >> A8

Frontage road construction near H-E-B to continue until 2029



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

SLOW & STEADY Construction to I-35 has led to frontage roads being down to one lane, which has seriously increased the travel time for H-E-B ventures.

JOSH SIATKOWSKI
Staff Writer

As frontage road construction continues next to the popular Valley Mills H-E-B, students' visions of a traffic-free trip to the store might not materialize before graduation.

"Frontage road construction will remain ongoing through the entirety of the project timeline, which is scheduled to continue until mid-2029," said Jake Smith, public information officer for the Waco branch of TxDOT.

Smith said the construction near H-E-B is for underground utilities and infrastructure work.

"Once construction is complete, the frontage road will remain two lanes in each direction with a wider outside lane for improved bicycle access and new sidewalks," Smith said.

Over a year into the My35 Waco South Project and 10 years into the larger three-stage endeavor to upgrade the highway surrounding the city, Baylor students and other Wacoans are more than used to freeway backups. For over a decade, most of I-35 north and south of Waco has been under construction, adding

more lanes, repaved surfaces and more traffic to local commutes.

But it's more than just the highway that's being revamped. Frontage roads, bridges and sidewalks are all being worked on in the three-mile stretch just south of Baylor — and students are feeling the effects of it on their grocery trips.

Between Valley Mills Drive and Irving Lee Street — home to the campus's closest H-E-B — the southbound I-35 frontage road has been cut down to one lane since mid-2025. Its completion, alongside other parts of the project, like a new intersection at Valley Mills, will improve the driving experience in the area. But for now, traffic has swelled on the street where students make their final right turn into the H-E-B parking lot.

In the meantime, students are dealing with added backups when they head south to the store. Colleyville junior Matthew Page, who lives just south of Baylor's campus, said the construction has added a few minutes to what's usually a five-minute trip to H-E-B.

"I can't even think back to when they first appeared because they've

been there so long," Page said, referring to the traffic cones that have kept the right lane off-limits.

Some drivers have bypassed the backup and used the dirt path carved by construction vehicles to cut into the store's parking lot. Page, however, said he'll continue to go with the flow, especially now that the traffic light at Valley Mills is back in commission.

"It's been kind of bad, but I don't think it's necessarily gotten worse," Page said. "I think the light that was there, they started using again."

While the frontage road construction will continue through the larger project's 2029 completion date, Smith said updates will continue to be provided throughout the timeline. There is no cost breakdown for the specific construction between Valley Mills and Irving Lee, but the total My35 Waco South project is expected to cost \$250 million.

"Drivers can expect intermittent lane and driveway closures as work continues," Smith said via email. "You can learn more about lane closures and other traffic impacts by following us on X and Facebook @TxDOTWaco."

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

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EDITORIAL

Choose to be bold: Keep phones away after class

It's 3:15 p.m. on a Thursday, and the professor has finally uttered the words, "that's where we will end off today," after a particularly technical and draining class. The sound of rustling backpacks and closing laptops fills the room, and you are left with three options: talk with your professor about the course, connect with a classmate about weekend plans or gracefully glide out of the room with phone in hand and AirPods in, locking in on another universe.

And suddenly, less than one minute after the class is dismissed, the room is almost empty. Those remaining are just the professor, given that they also decline to reconnect with technology instantly, and the few students taking advantage of the opportunity to ask one-on-one questions.

In a choose-your-own-adventure-esque series of events, the go-to reaction for college students right now is to rely on their phones as a digital crutch. Some of it may be the desire to catch up on what's going on in their personal lives and the world. Other times, it comes down to avoiding conversations and connections with other people in the room.

No matter the reason, you are choosing to flip to a page that ends the adventure on purpose to prevent more reading.

Everyone on The Editorial Board has been in a position where dissociating and simply taking that time to shrivel away behind our phones is convenient and easy. Yet, we also recognize that by relying on this convenient hideout, we are missing out on valuable time that could be spent networking with professors or connecting with classmates.

While education is the primary focus of college, the experience is also about making friends and developing socially. In a New York Times article following the issuance of phone bans across primary education, students and teachers said students display this behavior to relieve boredom and satisfy an addictive craving for social connection and information from habitual places.

But isn't that what the people around campus are for? The contradictory nature of relying on technology to reaffirm the social connection when there are over 20,000 students on campus is problematic. In these 15-minute windows between classes, students would be far better off trying to connect with



James Ellis | Cartoonist

someone around them. While Baylor is fighting an "epidemic of loneliness" to spur conversation, these empty windows after class seem like the first issue to address. Because who knows, maybe someone you meet in one of these classes will become a longtime friend — or at least another professional connection.

Technology is prohibiting the human connection that college is built on, and unfortunately, change doesn't start until professors and other students engage in conversations outside the class block. Some professors are already doing this by having lunch

with students or simply opening the door to discussion about a passion in common with a student right after class ends.

Ask about your professor's weekend plans. Talk to the woman in line behind you at H-E-B. Keep your heart open to connecting face-to-face with your peers without the hindrance of your phone.

Sure, the protective shield of AirPods and a phone works when trying to hide out, but if you want to get the most out of the college experience, it's time to turn off the technology and choose a different path for your next adventure.

The beauty of suffering

ISABEL VORST
Intern

Suffering is something people aim to avoid at all costs, seeking the easy, comfortable life instead. However, suffering can be a beautiful and purifying thing, unveiling our desire for something deeper and drawing us into a beautiful intimacy with Christ.

Often, it is not until we are confronted by something deeply traumatic or painful that we are forced to consider the cold reality of this fallen world and reorder our values. Are we living a life that we will be content with when we pass? Are our pursuits worthwhile or merely empty?

Grappling with suffering unveils our desire for something deeper. It purges our hearts, cutting deep to the core of our longing: for a more perfect world, for truth and for the meaning of why we live, ache and die. When we face suffering, we are torn from the distractions that consume us — temporal worries of work, school, relationships, possessions and responsibilities.

Suffering can be extremely isolating. Often, it is impossible to convey the pain in our bodies or hearts to others, let alone understand and provide the love and comfort we ache for. A gaping wound remains in our souls, and that becomes painfully lonely. There is no one we can turn to who will truly understand.

Yet, to suffer is one of the deepest forms of communion with Christ. The isolating nature of it forces us to cry out to the only one who does understand — who has borne pain beyond measure on the cross and knows the deepest, inarticulate yearnings of our heart — and to close our eyes as he wraps us in the comfort of his tender embrace.

To suffer in the arms of Christ is a gift that the pleasantries of the world do not give us. It is an intimacy that a painless life does not often let us find.

The illusion of comfort the world force-feeds us is

deceptive — if we are satisfied with endlessly chasing material for a promise of an easy, fulfilling life, we are pulled away from the agony that is so integral to Christ's sacrifice. But when we embrace our pain and lift our eyes above, we are met with the most tender form of intimacy.

Luke 24:26 says, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

Suffering is an opportunity to participate in the beauty of the cross — to enter into the glory of God as we partake in the smallest portion of the pain that our King bore to save us.

To experience such pain is to more intimately behold our crucified God, and to be sanctified. As God's creation, we bear his image, and when we suffer, we bear the image of our suffering Savior.

When the things we have learned to depend on and care for most are wrenched away, it feels like we are dying. But when we experience immense hardship, we learn to surrender these things and discover we are more alive in him than we are in ourselves. Though our flesh fails us, our spirit remains victorious in Christ.

As we suffer, we see him more clearly. We see his pain through the intimate lens of our own and are flooded with love for what he did for us on the cross. We can more closely behold the heart-wrenchingly beautiful scene of our perfect savior, marred beyond any man, hanging on the cross and drawing the lost into his open arms.

To suffer well is to walk with Christ through the shadow of the valley of death, for he promises to be with us.

Psalm 56:8 says he collects our tears and keeps count of our sorrows. Why? Because he cares for us more than we can know.

Every person living in this fallen world will experience suffering, and it is up to us how to respond. When we choose to embrace suffering, we can see how it refines and conforms us to the image of Christ, making the pain of this world not only bearable but beautiful.

Isaiah 49:16 says he has written our names on his hands, and someday I know those gentle, nail-scarred hands will grasp mine, and I will be glad for each and every pain that drew me closer to my Savior.

Does college degree mean career ready?

CHRISTIAN WELLS
Staff Writer

At Baylor, alumni proudly wear class rings and display diplomas on the wall, but earning a degree does not mean they are ready for the workforce.

A bachelor's degree represents academic achievement. Career readiness requires applied skills, professional experience and an understanding of workplace expectations. The two are related, but they are not the same.

Employers continue to emphasize skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving. The National Association of Colleges and Employers reports that skills like these consistently rank among the most important for new hires.

Those abilities are not always developed through lectures and exams alone.

A national survey from the American Association of Colleges and Universities found that most employers still believe a college degree is worth the time and money and that higher education helps prepare graduates for success. They see gaps in preparation for specific skills — particularly oral communication — even as they value broad knowledge and applied learning.

Students can complete more than 120 credit hours and still feel unprepared to navigate a professional

setting. Writing a clear business email and participating in workplace meetings are skills often learned outside a college's coursework.

Internships, research positions and student leadership roles can help close that gap; however, access to those opportunities is not always equal.

When career-building experiences are optional rather than integrated into degree programs, preparation can depend on personal resources and connections.

Baylor's Career Center provides resume reviews, mock interviews and job fairs, but many students do not engage with those resources until graduation nears. By then, the time to build experience may be limited.

National data continues to show the long-term value of a college degree. Many statistics still report lower unemployment rates and higher average earnings for individuals with bachelor's degrees compared to those without them. Higher education remains a strong investment.

Still, employment outcomes depend on more than a diploma.

If universities want to strengthen their graduates' competitiveness, career preparation should be included in academic experiences from the first year onward. That could include required professional development courses, stronger partnerships with employers and expanded access to paid internships.

A degree opens doors. Whether students feel prepared to walk through them depends on how well education and career readiness are connected.



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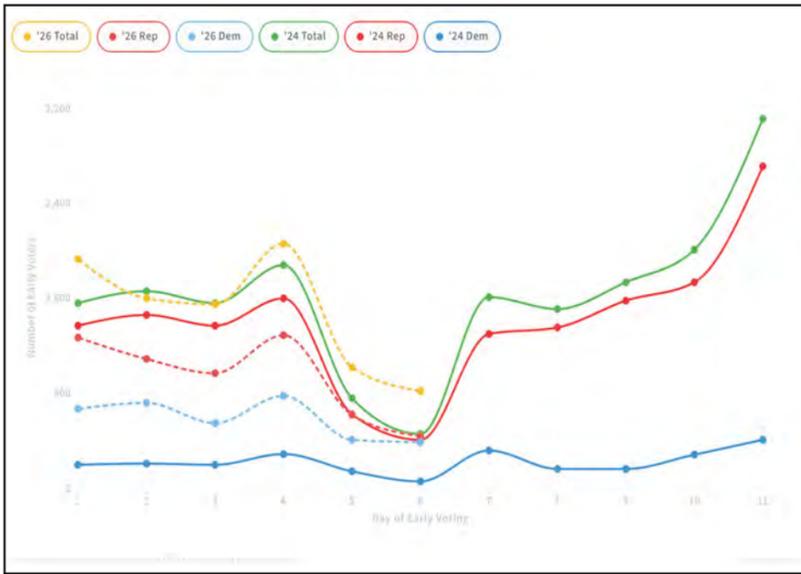
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Tolga Sahin | Intern

RACES Both Republicans and Democrats saw an increase in early voters from 2024 to 2026 in McLennan County. Dashed lines show the 2026 midterm turnout.



Tolga Sahin | Intern

ELECTIONS Between 2022 and 2026, Democratic early voting turnout increased 163%, and Republican turnout increased 39%.

Texas primary early voting surges

TOLGA SAHIN
Staff Writer

Early voting turnout for the 2026 Texas primary elections has surged to levels never before seen in a midterm cycle, with statewide total turnout on pace to more than double that of the 2022 primaries.

After the first week of the early voting period, more than 1.5 million Texans cast their ballots across both the Republican and Democratic primaries, a significant increase from approximately 700,000 early votes recorded at the same point in 2022. The Texas Secretary of State reported that turnout has consistently outpaced previous elections in almost all counties across Texas. Early voting will conclude Friday.

Dr. Patrick Flavin, chair of the political science department, said economic conditions are the primary driver of voter enthusiasm in midterm cycles.

“Political science research shows a pretty strong connection between how well or poorly the economy is doing and how well the incumbent president’s party does,” Flavin said. “Trump did better among voters who were concerned about the economy [in the 2024 presidential election].”

While both parties have increased their

turnout, the Democratic Party has contributed to the increase, adding approximately 500,000 voters in efforts to take back Texas since 1994. On the other hand, Republican Party voters have also shown up with 200,000 more voters than in 2022 despite holding majorities in legislatures and all statewide offices from governor to railroad commissioner.

Most of the heightened interest centers on the U.S. Senate race, currently held by Republican John Cornyn, which has a competitive field on both sides despite the incumbent.

On the Republican side, Attorney General Ken Paxton and Rep. Wesley Hunt challenge Cornyn after decades of holding the seat. According to public polling aggregators, Paxton has a small advantage over Cornyn, with Hunt trailing them. This three-way race is most likely to head to May 26 runoffs.

The Democratic primary for the Senate seat has generated national enthusiasm, with State Rep. James Talarico and Rep. Jasmine Crockett. The contest began with Baylor Alumnus and 2024 U.S. Senate Democratic Nominee Colin Allred.

Allred dropped out Dec. 8, 2025, and endorsed Crockett Feb. 2, 2026. Allred released a video accusing Talarico of racism shortly after, and the Talarico campaign released a statement in response.

“I described Congressman Allred’s method of campaigning as mediocre — but his life and service are not,” Talarico said. “I would never attack him on the basis of race.”

Talarico held a campaign event in Waco Monday night, where he pitched his candidacy to a crowd of local voters and volunteers.

“We won’t beat the politics of division with more division,” Talarico said. “We won’t win this race by shaming or ridiculing or alienating our neighbors.”

Several other high-profile races are also on the ballot. Gov. Greg Abbott is running for his third term, challenged by the Democratic frontrunner, State Rep. Gina Hinojosa. Public polling clearly points towards an Abbott and Hinojosa battle ahead of November.

In McLennan County, early voting followed the statewide trend, with turnout through the first six days of the 2026 primary outpacing the same period during the 2024 presidential primary. The county’s five early voting locations saw particularly heavy traffic during the final days of the early voting period, according to the McLennan County Elections Office.

Democratic participation drove much of the increase, with daily totals consistently exceeding 2024 levels. Republican turnout remained in line with the prior cycle, though still elevated for a midterm. Both parties saw growth consistent

with the county’s overall partisan composition. Baylor University’s nearest Election Day voting location will be the Mark and Paula Hurd Welcome Center, available March 3.

Dr. Mark Kelly, clinical associate professor at the department of economics, said the gap between wages and rising costs must be solved in the near future. According to recent public polling, the cost of living is the top issue for most voters.

“In recent years, inflation has been outpacing median and average wages, and that’s a problem,” Kelly said. “That is something that we need to figure out.”

Election Day voting is March 3. McLennan County will operate 39 vote centers, meaning registered voters may cast a ballot at any location regardless of their home precinct. Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m., and anyone in line by 7 p.m. will be permitted to vote.

Voters should bring an acceptable form of photo identification, which includes a Texas driver’s license, Texas personal identification card, Texas election identification certificate, U.S. passport or military identification card. A full list of qualifying IDs and polling locations is available on the McLennan County Elections Office website.

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Together all the way

In an era of uncertainty, Baylor's senior trio has chosen to grow together.



Darianna Littlepage-Buggs
Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

Bella Fontleroy
Alyssa Meyers | Photographer

Jana Van Gytenbeek
Brady Harris | Photographer

MARISSA ESSENBERG
Sports Writer

Loving the game isn't always loud. It shows up in early mornings, in rehab rooms, in hard conversations and harder losses.

Through adversity and heartache, through championships and the quiet grind no one sees, few have embodied that love in green and gold quite like Darianna Littlepage-Buggs, Bella Fontleroy and Jana Van Gytenbeek.

And even fewer have done it all together.

Three women. Three teammates. Three athletes with wildly different journeys who have carved their place into the Baylor women's basketball record books and the hearts of fans since the first time they pulled on a Baylor jersey.

Over four seasons of milestones, season highs and career-defining moments, they became the program's foundation in an era defined by constant change, anchoring one of just five Power 5 schools in the country with its entire 2022 recruiting class still intact.

Weeks before their final season began, they felt the weight of what it would mean.

"People say it all the time — 'last one, best one' — but really it is our last one here, all together," Fontleroy said at Big 12 Media Day. "It has to be the best one from all angles, from our leadership, our effort, to what we put on the court. This is the year to hold onto people really tight because we know that will translate to the court."

"For me, it's really just taking it all in, the joys and the challenges," Littlepage-Buggs said. "That's one thing I've come to love — the challenges, even when it's hard. It's definitely been a change, especially for me and Bella being the leaders now. People look up to us like we used to look up to our seniors. We want to give it our all, go out with a bang and make it memorable."

While all three arrived in Waco as former Gatorade Players of the Year from their respective states, it was Littlepage-Buggs and Fontleroy — both top-50 recruits — who were asked to grow up quickly, stepping into significant roles as true freshmen in head coach Nicki Colleen's first recruiting class.

Their decision to choose Baylor, however, meant more than immediate impact. At a time when Baylor was navigating transition, and Colleen was still laying her foundation, their commitment left a lasting impression on



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

FOUR FOR FOUR Graduate guard Jana Van Gytenbeek (left) and senior forwards Bella Fontleroy (right) and Darianna Littlepage-Buggs have played the past four years together in Waco.

their head coach.

"Buggs and Bella were both highly sought-after high school players who could've gone just about anywhere," Colleen said. "For them to choose Baylor when there were a lot of question marks, the biggest one being me, and to believe in what we could build together, that will forever be special to me when it comes to those two."

Van Gytenbeek's path looked different.

In 2022, after two seasons at Stanford and a national championship, she transferred to Baylor in search of a new beginning. A former five-star recruit and Colorado's all-time assists leader, she arrived in Waco with a vision for how her college career might unfold. Instead, her reality demanded something entirely different.

"God blessed me with another college experience, and I'm so happy that I chose Nicki and Baylor," Van Gytenbeek said. "I love Waco, and playing for her is my favorite thing in the

world. She's a coach you want to ride or die for. I'm just really grateful that's the way it played out."

For her younger teammates, Van Gytenbeek's growth into a steady presence has become something to lean on.

"She's one of the most unselfish people I've ever seen, always looking out for her teammates, positive no matter what," redshirt freshman Ines Goryanova said. "I've learned what it means to be a good teammate from her and look up to her a lot on and off the court."

Redshirt sophomore Taliah Scott, who transferred to Baylor from Auburn this offseason, echoed the same sentiment.

"She is a glue piece for us. The one who gets us in, calms us down and impacts the game in a variety of ways," Scott said. "When I feel like I waver, she's someone I look at and know, 'OK, that's my rock.'"

Fontleroy, a Missouri product and 1,000-point scorer during her time in Waco, has been the team's defensive captain. She has built her career on consistency, never missing a game in her four seasons and earning All-Defensive Team honors along the way. That steadiness has made her indispensable to the program.

"Bella is the cornerstone of our team," senior Kiersten Johnson said. "When Bella isn't playing well, none of us are. When Bella's doing great, we're all doing great."

For her teammates, Fontleroy sets the tone. For Colleen, she helped lay the foundation.

"Bella was one of my very first calls," Colleen said. "We talked about the doubts I'd face, and there was this parallel in proving people wrong together. She's impacted this program on and off the court, is an elite player on both sides and an incredible ambassador. I'm proud of her, and I'm proud of [those three]."

And then there's Littlepage-Buggs.

One of the fiercest players to ever wear a Baylor uniform, Littlepage-Buggs arrived as a McDonald's All-American and has since become one of the most decorated players in program history. A 1,000-point, 1,000-rebound force, she sits fifth all-time in boards and owns the Baylor record for career double-doubles.

Yet those around her say her greatest impact isn't just in the numbers — it's in the way she shows up every day.

"She's someone I never have to question," Colleen said. "Of every kid I've coached at any level, she's one of the most consistent humans in the way she shows up. It's hard to picture this program without Buggs because she's left such an imprint, not just on this program, but on my heart and everyone who comes in contact with her."

That imprint is already shaping the next wave of Bears.

"She has helped me so much, being new to all of this, more than she knows," freshman Marccayla Johnson said. "I'm learning to give myself grace, and Buggs has guided me through that. When she has confidence, so do I, because I've been watching this team, the OGs — Jana, Buggs and Bella — grow up in the game. It's meant so much to me to be here with them."

Once newcomers to the college game, and still with plenty of ball left to play, the trio will leave as a new standard, their legacy woven into the fabric of Baylor women's basketball.



Jake Schroeder | Photographer

BOOMSHAKALAKA Senior forward Darianna Littlepage-Buggs celebrates during a 74-60 win over Arizona on Feb. 21.



Jake Schroeder | Photographer

READY FOR LAUNCH Senior forward Bella Fontleroy lofts a 3-pointer during the Bears' win over Arizona on Feb. 21.



Mesha Mittanasala | Photographer

FLOOR GENERAL Graduate guard Jana Van Gytenbeek surveys the floor during an 83-67 loss to No. 17 TCU on Feb. 12.

Men's, women's basketball players to be added to NBA 2K

DYLAN FINK
Sports Writer

After 16 years of fans and players alike patiently waiting, college basketball has returned to the video game landscape.

NBA 2K26 has included 16 college basketball programs in its latest update, including Baylor, Texas and Kansas.

The Bears' high-level success on the men's and women's side opened up the opportunity to be included alongside blue-blood programs like Duke, UCLA, Kentucky and North Carolina.

"2K is building the definitive basketball universe, uniting the NBA, WNBA, and soon the collegiate ranks under one banner," said Zak Armitage, SVP and GM of 2K Sports, in a statement. "Authentically representing the most elite levels of the sport is an ambitious undertaking and one that we will continue to scale over time, beginning with our foundational college experience next year."

The journey to the addition of college basketball to sports video games is one that has been a long time coming.

Sixteen years that is.

The last officially licensed college basketball video game was EA Sports' NCAA Basketball 10, released in November 2009. The game featured a Baylor roster that, in real life, made the Elite Eight for the first time in the Scott Drew era.

Baylor fans were able to play as such green and gold legends as Quincy Acy, Ekpe Udoh, Tweety Carter and LaceDarius Dunn.

The game featured 325 men's Division I programs, but did not include women's teams.

College sports video game production halted in 2014, when a federal court ruled that the usage of player's name, image and likeness in a video game without financial compensation was a violation of federal antitrust laws. College sports games, including basketball and football, were off the table for over a decade.

In 2022, the beginning of the NIL era allowed college sports games to resume development.

While a full-fledged college

basketball game is still at least a year away, the addition of a handful of teams into the newest season of 2K for both the MyTeam and MyCareer modes may be enough to satisfy college basketball fans for the time being.

"We can't wait to share more details around the new college basketball experience available in early 2027," Armitage said. "Today we're excited for players to get a taste of the passion and competition of the collegiate level with a host of themed content in Season 5."

In late September, a large black truck with the 2K logo on the side could be seen sitting out front of Foster Pavilion.

Inside the truck were Baylor's men's and women's basketball teams, with each player taking turn going through face and body scans as game developers prepared to implement the Bears into the game.

"It's a great blessing and privilege to be included," Baylor men's head coach Scott Drew said. "It means our program's accomplished a lot to be rewarded with that."



Abby John | Roundup Photo Editor

BACK ONLINE Fifth-year guard Obi Agbim (right) and the Bears are headed to NBA 2K26 after 16 years of waiting for college basketball to return to the video landscape.

The addition of college teams does not represent a full-fledged game quite yet. The rosters of the 16 schools included in the game have been included as individual players in MyTeam, a game mode predicated on building a team by opening packs of cards.

Baylor fans can add to their personal NBA-centered rosters

any of the players off either of the men's or women's teams, but cannot compete against other programs in the Play Now mode.

The inclusion of the Bears alongside 15 other teams demonstrates a step towards the potential development of a standalone college basketball game in the future. For now, the college basketball world will be

satisfied with the opportunity to throw an alley-oop dunk to redshirt sophomore guard Cameron Carr from NBA Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson.

"I know our guys spend most of their time studying rather than playing video games," Drew said. "But it's nice for them to have the opportunity to see themselves on there."

'Spirits are alive' despite winless Round Rock Classic

JEFFREY COHEN
Sports Writer

"Their spirits are alive."

That was what head coach Mitch Thompson said about his team after they dropped three straight games at the Round Rock Classic.

While it was a disappointing road trip on the stat sheet, Baylor (5-3) is not wavering in confidence.

"We had a rough weekend, no doubt about it," freshman outfielder Brady Janusek said. "We know we're going to be good. We never had any doubts in the clubhouse."

Times like these show a team's true colors. Thompson understands that adversity is part of the game and necessary for the Bears to take another step early in the season.

"We all like playing it when it's all going good," Thompson said. "Sometimes we've got to get

through some of that and get a little tougher when it's not going good and get it turned back around."

Baylor was riding high through its first four games, outscoring its opponents 41-11. The lineup looked to be a juggernaut with redshirt junior infielder Travis Sanders leading off, redshirt senior first baseman Tyce Armstrong anchoring the middle with his historic three-grand slam performance and Janusek providing some new speed on the base paths.

Things took a turn over the weekend when the Bears faced one of the top hurlers in the country in Oregon State's Dax Whitney (7.0 IP, 0 R, 17 K) and a stout Southern Miss pitching staff.

Despite finishing 0-3 in Round Rock, the Bears remained competitive in every game, losing by a combined seven runs. They are still hopeful, knowing they can go toe-to-toe with top-25 teams even without hitting well.

"We're young, and we're going to make a few mistakes, but we're learning," Thompson

said. "We're talented, and they're coming around ... We've now played eight games, and we're in all the games."

The bats looked to make a statement and bounce back against Stephen F. Austin on Tuesday night.

"We faced some unreal competition this past weekend. Nothing like what we've seen before," Armstrong said. "It wasn't the best weekend, but we know what we can do, and we just wanted to drill on that today."

Baylor regained its confidence in the batter's box against the Lumberjacks. The Bears exploded for five runs in the first three innings behind a trio of home runs. They also tacked on a three-run fifth and the game-winning run in the eighth.

Armstrong, who went 1-for-11 in Round Rock, led the way for Baylor. He finished the night 3-for-4 with four runs driven in along with a pair of doubles and a home run.

"This weekend was not who we were," Janusek said. "It feels good to come out here and put up 10 or 11 hits and three home runs."

Janusek contributed to the Bears' offensive success with three base hits and runs, including his steal of home in the eighth inning to pull ahead 9-8.

Baylor's performance at the plate served as a much-needed boost before the Bruce Bolt College Classic. The upcoming weekend slate is a gauntlet for the Bears, who will face No. 25 Ole Miss (9-0), No. 3 Texas (8-0) and UTSA (7-1).

They look to find a similar rhythm on offense against a Longhorn staff that ranks second nationally in team ERA and a Rebels staff that stands at 13th.

"It feels good to feel the bat hit the ball and put some good swings on it," Janusek said. "Our confidence is up going into this weekend."

Baylor opens the weekend against Ole Miss at 3:05 p.m. Friday. The game will be streamed on D1Baseball.com and broadcast on Baylor Lariat Radio.

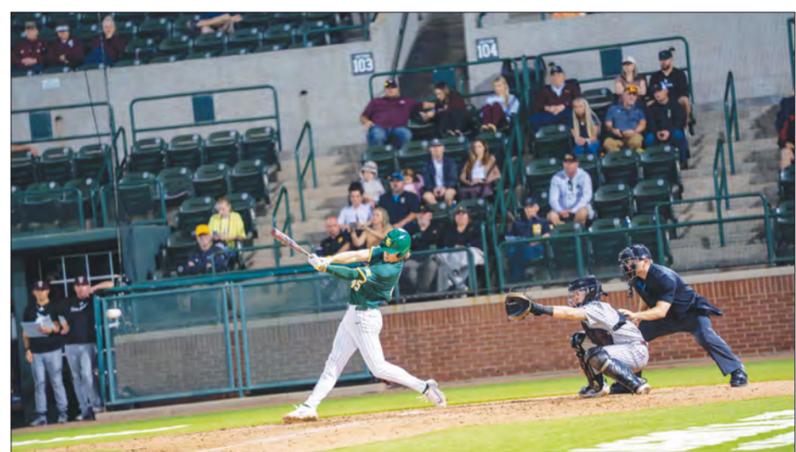
"
We're young, and we're going to make a few mistakes, but we're learning ... We're talented, and they're coming around.
"

MITCH THOMPSON
HEAD COACH



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

OVER THE HEDGE Redshirt senior first baseman Tyce Armstrong catches a foul ball during the Bears' 9-8 win over Stephen F. Austin on Tuesday.



Caleb Garcia | Photographer

SWINGIN' BIG Redshirt sophomore first baseman John Youens hits a home run at the Baylor vs. Texas State baseball game on Feb. 17 at Magnolia Field.

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How the Shih-Pogrebnoy family turned violin into profession

CAMILLE KELLY
Reporter

From performing professionally around the world to winning countless awards for violin pieces, the legacy of Patricia Shih, Nikita Pogrebnoy and their son Nicholas is one of adventure and accolades, taking them all across Europe, Asia and North America and eventually landing them in Waco.

After about 25 years of traveling the world with the Borealis String Quartet, the Pogrebnoy family decided to make their home in Waco, ultimately drawn here by their love for the university.

Shih is an associate professor of violin, Pogrebnoy is a part-time lecturer in instrumental studies and Nicholas himself is in his freshman year as a violin performance major, all at Baylor.

As much as they love performing, both Pogrebnoy and Shih said they get the most fulfillment from sharing the love of music with their students.

“One can say that the line between performing and teaching is not such an obvious one to discover,” Pogrebnoy said.

According to Shih, being a part of the Baylor community is what has made Waco feel like home to them.

“Having the opportunity to work with so many great students, to know that each one is so special — I would say it’s very individual,” Shih said. “When you see great artists in any kind of form, whether it’s a hairdresser, whether it’s a painter, a great sculpture — they all have their unique personalities that are strong, and that’s what makes it so special and so valuable. I want each of my students to bring out the best of themselves, rather than to be a replica of something else.”

This past fall, Nicholas won the 2026 Semper Pro Musica Competition at Baylor with his solo of “Carmen Fantasie,” which he will perform on May 21 at Carnegie Hall.

“I would say that it is incredibly special that I get to play in such an iconic place for a New York audience, which is very much



Photo courtesy of Nikita Pogrebnoy

VIRAL VIOLIN The Shih-Pogrebnoys have traveled the world performing in symphonies and orchestras; now they call Waco home.

different than what I usually play for,” Nicholas said. “I am very honored that Baylor offers this opportunity.”

Before he came to Baylor, Nicholas traveled the world with his parents as they performed with the Borealis String Quartet. Just like their son, both Shih and Pogrebnoy have been playing the violin from a young age. Shih made her Carnegie Hall debut as a soloist with an orchestra at 15, just three years ahead of Nicholas, who is 18.

Award-winning and acclaimed musicians Shih and Pogrebnoy began their professional careers as the violinist and violist when they co-founded the Borealis String Quartet in 2000. With the music group, both performed at the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver, Canada.

From there, touring with the quartet became their full-time careers, and their relationship “turned into something more than just quartet partners,” Shih said.

Their son Nicholas joined them on tour at just 3 months old.

“I was also told that I was quite a good audience member for being a few months old,” Nicholas said. “All that childhood has really impacted me, and I hope that I can use all the

experiences I’ve gained from my childhood in terms of musical insight and to better express it in the future.”

For his entire life, Nicholas has grown up surrounded by music. According to Shih, Nicholas has a passion for it that is all his own.

“In a way, you can say he had no choice, because he was born into it, but at the same time, we never pushed him into it,” Shih said. “It was something he wanted to do.”

Nicholas has often been the youngest in the room: the youngest finalist, the youngest to medal and the youngest to audition for the Waco Symphony Orchestra. For all of these experiences, Nicholas said he is extremely honored, although he knows it is only temporary.

“There will be a time when I am the oldest person in the room,” Nicholas said. “But it’s been a very nice to be part of the journey of expressing music. That’s the way I see it.”

By placing in the international violinist competition in Taiwan, Nicholas and his family became acquainted with the composer, who arranged a piece specifically for him that premiered in the orchestra in Vancouver, Canada, earlier this month.

Because Nicholas was competing at the

Baylor competition at the time, he did not get to participate, but he will be premiering the same piece on Baylor’s campus on March 24 at Roxy Grove Hall.

Now settled in Waco, a full house of musicians always practicing can be an earful. According to Shih, different styles of classical music played simultaneously usually create a lot of noise, but rehearsing a work that the family is playing together is fun. Shih also said their two cats seem to appreciate music the way they do.

According to Pogrebnoy, sharing a passion as a family is so rewarding.

“It’s also interesting that we share one common instrument between us, which is a violin,” Pogrebnoy said. “It makes it sort of like a continuous learning experience, not just for Nicholas, but for all of us.”

Nicholas said he loves music not only for its ability to convey emotion, but to express even greater emotions beyond human ones.

“The violin is so versatile,” Nicholas said. “I can think through it and communicate to my audiences in so many different ways, with so many emotions: love, passion, empathy, sadness, hope and there’s just so much to say, there’s never enough.”



Yakety Yak: Inside scoop on college anonymous phenomenon

STACIE BOYLS
Arts & Life Writer

From Sing beef to parking complaints, Yik Yak has once again found its footing on Baylor’s campus — delivering everything from lighthearted memes to anonymous drama.

The location-based social media app allows users to post short, anonymous messages visible to others within a five-mile radius. On Baylor’s campus, that has translated into a digital stream of inside jokes, event commentary and, at times, pointed criticism.

For Southlake senior Austin Smallwood, the app offers a front-row seat to campus culture.

“I definitely do feel more connected to campus,” Smallwood said. “There’s lots of drama I wouldn’t have realized was going on. For example, right now all the groups from Sing are beefing and it’s pretty funny to read through — especially not having seen any of the acts yet.”

Smallwood said he no longer posts frequently but checks the app occasionally. His favorite moments, he said, are hyper-specific posts about niche campus experiences that unexpectedly resonate with hundreds of students.

“You’ll see something really specific that happened, and somehow tons of people relate to it,” he said.

Still, the humor can become repetitive.

“I’d say the worst part is how repetitive some of the posts can be sometimes — like, all right bro, I got it the first time,” Smallwood said.

Highland Park, Ill., junior Annika Blom, had a different experience. She used Yik Yak during her freshman and sophomore years but deleted it in her junior year.

“Honestly, it was a pretty toxic app when I was on it,” Blom said. “A lot of talking bad about people, talking bad about things on campus — just generally negative energy.”

Blom acknowledged that the platform occasionally felt useful, particularly during major Baylor events, when students posted live reactions or shared attendance updates. After big sports wins, she said, the app is often filled with jokes and celebratory memes.

“I also enjoyed when I could relate to people about stuff,” Blom said. “Like knowing I was not the only student who didn’t get parking

this year.”

But the anonymity that fuels the humor can also intensify harm, she said.

“I have known multiple girls who have been badly talked about on this app, organizations being badly talked about,” Blom said. “People say things they would never say if their name was attached to it.”

Smallwood echoed the double-edged nature of anonymity.

“The biggest pro is that people post things they might not otherwise say,” he said. “You end up with some pretty funny posts that way. But the con is that some people take it too far.”

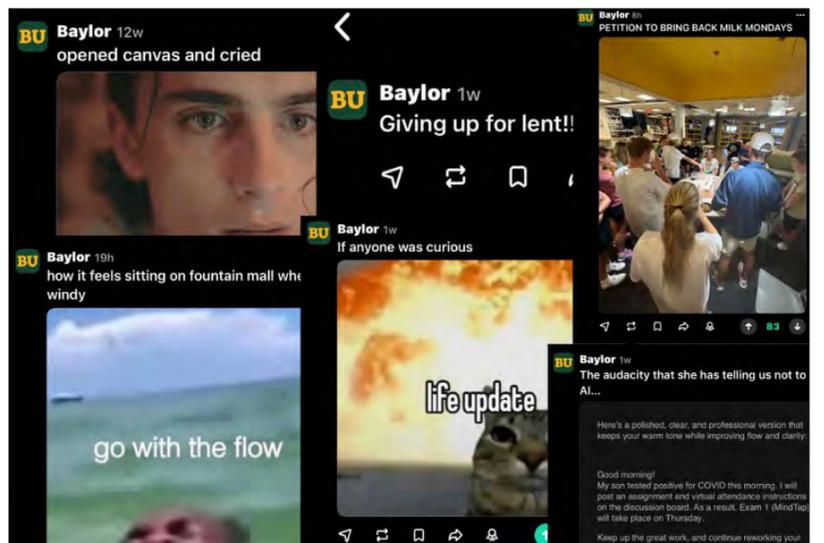
Blom added that while anonymity can provide an outlet for students who feel isolated, it can also encourage unhealthy dependence.

“I have known of people who would post multiple times a day about everything in their life,” she said. “I think that’s very unhealthy to rely on a social app like that.”

Not every student experiences Yik Yak directly. McKinney graduate student Katie Cox cannot download the app because she uses an Android device. Still, she encounters Baylor’s Yik Yak culture through reposted meme

“Honestly, it was a pretty toxic app when I was on it. A lot of talking bad about people, talking bad about things on campus — just generally negative energy.”

ANNIKA BLOM
HIGHLAND PARK, ILL., JUNIOR



Graphic by Kalena Reynolds | Arts & Life Editor

YIK YAK Users express true feelings on Yik Yak and provide context for their opinions on the platform’s content.

accounts on other platforms.

“I do get lots of laughs from the Yik Yak meme pages that have started circulating,” Cox said. “Especially the Baylor one — or even the Texas A&M one will pop up sometimes.”

Cox began at Baylor in 2020, when pandemic-era meme accounts surged in popularity. Various Baylor-specific meme accounts served as an online forum for relatable content, much of it stemming from Yik Yak.

“To see a sort of return to a similar era of shared life has been a bit cathartic,” Cox said. “It helps me stay up to date on whatever may be happening — whether it’s the latest Snowmageddon, ‘Milk Monday’ madness or one of the delivery robots flipped upside down again.”

For Cox, even secondhand exposure to Yik Yak content fosters connection.

“It’s nice to be able to relate to fellow students

through the crazy and mundane that is college life,” she said.

Still, she cautioned that anonymity does not guarantee invisibility.

“Our public image matters,” Cox said. “What you say or do can come back to you in good ways and bad. You can find anyone on this campus somehow.”

As Yik Yak continues to circulate through screenshots, meme pages and word of mouth, students describe it as a mirror of campus itself — sometimes funny, sometimes messy and often revealing.

Whether it strengthens connection or spreads toxicity, one thing remains clear: on a campus the size of Baylor, even anonymous voices rarely go unheard.



Arts & Life

COSTUMES WITH HEART

'Alice by Heart' costumes utilize bioplastics, upcycling, innovation to connect with audience

ALEXANDRA BREWER
Arts & Life Writer

"Alice by Heart" takes place in 1940s London during the Blitz and in a fractured version of Wonderland. The underground scenes stick close to historical reality, while Wonderland is wild, fractured and a little chaotic. The costumes reflect that shift, moving from realistic jackets and dresses to pieces stitched, layered or completely reimagined.

Some look like they came straight out of 1940s London, while others are completely fractured and strange, like Wonderland itself. Pieces get patched together, colors clash and



Photo courtesy of Savannah Ortiz

REIMAGINED Costumes from "Alice by Heart" are patched and historical, bringing a new interpretation of a classic story to life.

tiny details tell stories about each character's past fears and personality.

Sarah Mosher, the show's costume designer and an associate professor of costume design at Baylor, said the concept was inspired by that transition between worlds. She wanted the costumes to show how reality gradually breaks apart.

"For 'Alice by Heart,' the director was really interested in this idea that happened from the underground into Wonderland," Mosher said.

In the underground scenes, Mosher said the

team focused on historical accuracy. The 1940s silhouettes and textures anchor the characters in wartime reality. When Wonderland emerges, the costumes become more playful and fragmented, reflecting the chaos of that world.

One of the biggest design challenges was the Queen of Hearts. Mosher wanted the character to feel larger and more imposing with each appearance.

"I pitched the idea of having a crown that descends as a set piece that also lights up," Mosher said.

The crown functions as both a costume and a stage piece, scaling her presence without limiting her movement.

Mosher also incorporated bioplastics into some garments, a process she has been developing for years. She explained that the material is made from natural substances, such as algae or seaweed, which are melted down and shaped into costume pieces.

The bioplastic pieces were used for costumes such as the Jabberwocky and for the Knaves' headpieces.

Woodway junior and assistant costume designer Savannah Ortiz said the work began months before rehearsals. The team started meeting in September, although design ideas had been forming even earlier.

"The designer has been curating these ideas, probably since last year when the show got announced," Ortiz said.

Ortiz said the two-world structure shaped



Jake Schroeder | Photographer

UPCYCLED Several costumes from the production feature materials like seaweed and algae, which are melted down and repurposed.



Photo courtesy of Savannah Ortiz

WONDERLAND "Alice by Heart" performers bring a wonderland-style twist to 1940s London.

how costumes were sourced and built. Most of the 1940s clothing came from existing stock, while Wonderland pieces were built specifically for the show.

"Almost all of the realistic clothing was pulled," Ortiz said. "Almost all of the Wonderland stuff was built specifically for this show."

Ortiz also mentioned how budget constraints required creativity. Some materials were thrifted, donated pieces were repurposed, and when the team couldn't find red mittens for the lobsters, a community member knit them.

"We were very creative and resourceful,"

Ortiz said.

Riesel senior Eduardo Perez plays Harold Pudding and the Mad Hatter, and said the costumes changed how he approached his characters. Seeing the full outfits made the show feel more real.

"The first rehearsal where you actually get to do a run in your costume ... It just makes things so much more real," Perez said.

Perez said his Mad Hatter jacket reflects his character's fractured mental state.

"My Mad Hatter jacket is a collection of different coats stitched together, just to show how fractured my sense of self is even in Wonderland," Perez said.

Perez said subtle imperfections in his costume help him stay in character, reflecting the inner struggles of Harold Pudding, a veteran dealing with trauma.

"A lot of my costume elements are kind of askew, because I've lost that sense of self-care and grooming in the process of going through my shell shock," Perez said.

Perez described how those details create "idiosyncratic habits" — small, almost meaningless gestures that ground him in character.

"I'll notice if the buttons are undone, I, as my character, will be like, oh, I need to fix that," Perez said.

The show opened on Feb. 18 and runs through March 1. Tickets can be purchased here.

Black Student Union creates new team

CHLOE WILSON
Intern

Lift every voice and sing.

Those four words have become embedded in what is commonly known as the "Black National Anthem," a hymn of persistence, liberty and community. Those same ideals find themselves ever-present in Baylor's Freshman Action Team.

Beginning with the initiative to bring a voice to Black Baylor freshmen, the Black Student Union's subdivisional organization, Freshman Action Team, is open to all and encourages students to join, collaborate and, most importantly, build relationships with fellow peers that will translate outside of club meeting times.

F.A.T., as it is affectionately called, is a place where both the members and the leaders within the team can work in tandem to learn about discipline, networking and personal development.

F.A.T. sets itself up to support and guide first-year students toward success in their college community through mentoring, service and social events.

The leading forces of this organization — the executive board — host a driven and apt group of freshmen who focus on the well-being of their members and the impact the organization has on the entire Baylor institution.

Little Elm freshman Henry Obele, treasurer for the organization, was drawn into the team not only for its community engagement but also because it gave him the initiative to "step up" in his personal and professional life.

"I wanted to start building discipline and leadership early instead of waiting until junior or senior year," Obele said. "F.A.T. gave me the space to



Photo courtesy of Londyn Green

COMMUNITY The Freshman Action Team's executive board poses at Vintage Mio Records & Things in downtown Waco.

grow confidently while staying rooted in who I am."

As an organization specifically focused on the development and interactions within the freshman class, F.A.T. ensures that these Baylor newcomers have the space to engage with the institution in productive ways.

Additionally, the organization focuses on providing fun, unique events rooted in community outreach and relationship building.

Along with Obele, Keller freshman Akira Piquant has been heavily involved in planning and participating in the organization's events thus far, especially their recent "Pop the Balloon" event.

"So far, I've really enjoyed planning our kickoff event, where we hosted a 'Pop the Balloon' social," Piquant said. "The turnout was huge, and it came out even better than I expected. It was a great way to set the tone for the rest of our events this semester."

As the public relations chair for the board, Piquant's responsibilities lie in social media. Oftentimes, she is in charge of event promotion for F.A.T. and other multicultural organizations, as well as flyer creation.

Her dedication to this position is rooted in the continually growing relationships she's built with other members of the organization, namely those on the board with her.

"Working with my peers is always enjoyable," Piquant said. "I already knew most of the board members from last semester, so this semester we've been able to grow closer and get to know each other on a deeper level."

Houston freshman Duro Dina III, the standing president of F.A.T., also shares in the appreciation for their premiere event and, looking ahead, is excited for the powderpuff game in March.

In addition to his satisfaction with their events, Dina is also proud of the type of community being built within this organization, attributing most of its success to the fresh new energy brought by this latest freshman class.

"This freshman class is special on every level, and we're here to make lasting change across campus — not just in BSU or F.A.T., but throughout Baylor," Dina said. "We want to bring people together from all backgrounds, create a real community and be the group that convinces incoming freshmen to get involved and give our organization a chance."

As the semester continues to ramp up, Dina, Obele and Piquant — along with their peers on the executive board and within the organization — advise future students to step outside their comfort zones, learn how to act in the present and not be afraid to show their personalities.




**PODCASTS
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EATS INITIATIVE from A1

of dining hall waste.

In addition to reducing waste at the source, Baylor Eats has implemented several programs to manage food that would otherwise be discarded. Food that cannot be recovered is sent to composting facilities to reduce its environmental impact. Surplus food that remains safe to eat may also be donated through partnerships with Waco-area organizations.

Walsh said Baylor Eats also collects unopened or prepackaged food items from dining locations across campus and donates them to community partners such as the Salvation Army.

“Last semester, we recovered over 2,000 pounds of food,” Walsh said.

The food recovery initiative is also connected to efforts to address food insecurity among students. Walsh said as many as 11% of Baylor students

experience some form of food insecurity, making redistribution programs an important part of Baylor Eats’ sustainability efforts.

Baylor Eats also encourages students to provide feedback about dining options so staff can better match food production with student demand. Dean said students can submit feedback through surveys, focus groups, kiosks in dining halls and a text messaging system that sends comments directly to Baylor Eats leadership and executive chefs.

“The more that we serve what students are craving, the less it is going to be wasted,” Dean said.

Walsh said students can also help reduce food waste by being mindful of portion sizes and taking only what they expect to eat.

“Just [be] aware ... and [think] about how much you want to eat that day,” Walsh said.

LOCK IT UP from A1

students use solid metal U-locks rather than cable or chain locks. Chain locks can often be cut with bolt cutters, while U-locks require significantly heavier tools to break.

“The U-locks are the ones that we recommend,” McVey said. “They’re the hardest to defeat.”

He also emphasized that scooters and bikes should only be secured to designated bike racks. If a device is locked to a bench, light pole or other unauthorized structure, parking services may remove it.

Another key step in protecting property is registering scooters and bikes through Baylor Parking and Transportation. The process takes less than five minutes and requires students to provide identifying information, including the serial number and photos of the device.

“If you don’t register it with us, most people don’t just know the serial number of their scooter,” McVey said. “Registering it gives us the best chance to be able to get something back to its owner.”

When a scooter is reported stolen, officers enter its information into state and national databases. If another agency, such as the Waco Police Department, recovers the device and runs the serial number, it will appear as

stolen and can be returned to the owner.

Without that information, recovery becomes significantly more difficult. McVey encourages students to make their scooters uniquely identifiable, such as by placing a small paint mark underneath the footplate, to help officers distinguish between similar models.

If a scooter or bike is taken from campus property, students should contact BUPD to file a report. If the theft occurs off campus, the appropriate local law enforcement agency will take the case, though students can begin by contacting BUPD for guidance.

Fort Worth junior Tyler Cox said she experienced a bike theft her freshman year after leaving it unlocked outside her residence hall overnight.

“My first reaction when I saw my bike was missing was disbelief,” Cox said. “It had been locked to the bike rack securely in the inner courtyard of South Russell. The thought of my bike being stolen from within my own dorm was unsettling.”

Cox said she filed a report but had not registered her bike with Baylor’s Parking Service.

“I reported the theft to BUPD when I got home from class later that same day,” Cox said. “They

came to South Russell and asked me for details about the bike and told me they would keep an eye out. A day or so after that, they called to inform me that they had found the security camera footage of a man stealing the bike around 6 a.m. ... They explained that it was not likely that my bike would be found.”

Cox said if she could do anything differently, she would have purchased a U-lock because she knows they are much stronger. She warns her peers to always make sure their bike is securely locked, even in areas they think are safe.

E-scooters and bikes are attractive targets because they are easy to use immediately and blend in on a college campus where many students own similar models.

“You can jump on it and ride it down the street like you own it, and nobody’s going to think twice,” McVey said. “They’re so prevalent now that it just makes it easy.”

He said students who take the time to properly lock and register devices increase the chances of protecting their property.

“If you’re doing those two things, you’ve got a great chance of protecting your property and not getting it stolen,” McVey said.



Sam Gassaway | Photo Editor

WORKIN' The work done is scheduled to conclude by late 2026 or early 2027.

JAIL REMODELING from A1

the building, but also about addressing practical issues within the local justice system. When there aren’t enough courtrooms, judges or space for hearings, court backlogs occur. With more courtrooms, more cases can be heard simultaneously, which reduces delays, Vaughan said.

“I’m sure it’s frustrating for the victims because they want justice and they feel like they’re not getting it when their cases are delayed,” Vaughan said. “Witnesses can forget things or even disappear if they move off, and no one knows how to find them. There have been cases where a witness couldn’t be found, and that’s going to be a problem for the prosecutors. The longer a case is between when it has been committed and being prosecuted, the harder it’s going to be to prosecute.”

In addition to adding more courtroom space, newer and more modern courtrooms may also make cases easier to understand. Vaughan said updated layouts and technology can help juries follow evidence

more clearly.

“It would make it easier for the jury to do the guilty or innocence decision if they’re able to see things in a more orderly manner and help them understand a case,” Vaughan said.

He also noted that older courthouses often struggle to keep up with modern courtroom technology.

“With the technology the way it is nowadays, it is constantly evolving,” Vaughan said. “A lot of courthouses have older setups, and it’s not as easy for the jury to understand or see the illustrations in an old environment, especially with new technology like three-dimensional crime scene scanners.”

Overall, the jail remodeling project is intended to help the justice system better adjust to the area’s growing population. While the cost of the renovation is significant, county officials argue that updating older buildings can reduce long-term repair expenses and allow cases to move through the courts more efficiently.

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