

MASS SHOOTINGS heighten debate

JULIA VEGARA
Staff Writer

A gunman opened fire into a crowd of people attending a performance by country musician Jason Aldean on Oct. 1, resulting in the death of 59 and injuring over 500 — Making the Las Vegas shooting the deadliest in modern U.S. history.

On Nov. 5, a gunman opened fire at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, resulting in the death of 26 and injuring about 20 others, making the Sutherland Springs shooting the deadliest in modern Texas history.

These two deadly shootings of 2017 disrupted the nation and heightened the debate over gun control.

Following the Las Vegas shooting, Hillary Clinton took to Twitter to voice her opinion and said, “Our grief isn’t enough. We can and must put politics aside, stand up to the NRA, and work together to try to stop this from happening again.”

After the Sutherland Springs shooting, US Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) released a statement that said, “As long as our nation chooses to flood the county with dangerous weapons and consciously let those weapons fall into the hands of dangerous people, these killings will not abate.”

However, when questioned by a

reporter if he would consider “extreme vetting for people trying to buy a gun” during a press release, US President Donald J. Trump said that it would not have made a difference and could have caused even more deaths in the



Sutherland Springs shooting.

“You might not have had that very brave person who happened to have a gun or a rifle in his truck go out and shoot him and hit him and neutralize him,” Trump said to the reporter. “And I can only say this — if he didn’t have a gun, instead of having 26

dead, you would have had hundreds more dead.”

The recent mass shooting have not only increased gun control debates on a national level, but also increased debates locally on Baylor’s campus.

Austin sophomore Jake Bridges, President of Baylor Democrats said that unfortunately, he is not surprised by the recent mass shootings because the U.S. has seen so many of them.

“I’m really just disappointed with people’s inaction at this point,” Bridges said. “I think we can do a lot better as a country.”

Although he believes something should be done regarding gun control laws, Bridges said he believes that it is not feasible to take away the guns that citizens already own because he does not believe it would not hold up constitutionally. Instead, Bridges wants to look at what solutions can be done without violating anybody’s rights.

Bridges said not looking to get rid of

citizens’ Second Amendment rights, but he does believe it should be restricted.

Bridges said he personally believes the selling of assault rifles should end because they are not needed for self-defense or hunting.

“Even a less extreme



chairman for Baylor College Republicans and member of the College Republicans State Board of Texas, said the individuals responsible for the mass shootings would have been able to get their hands on guns whether or not there were stricter gun laws in place.

“Even if we completely ban the sale of guns, there’s so many that it will be incredibly easy to get them,” Soo said.

The outlawing of guns is comparable to the outlawing of marijuana and other illegal drugs, Soo said. For decades, certain drugs have been outlawed, but people are still able to go out on the street and obtain them.

Soo said the gunman in the Sutherland Springs shooting was able to obtain a gun even though he

should not have been able to, which means the background checks and gun law restrictions that are already in place failed.

“There’s always going to be people who fall through the cracks,” Soo said. “If you want something bad enough, it’ll happen.”

Soo said guns are also necessary for a citizen to protect oneself and that a lot of individuals forget that the man responsible for the Sutherland Springs shooting was stopped by citizens who had carried guns.

“It’s a tool that can be used responsibly or not responsibly,” Soo said. “It’s the person behind the tool that should be held responsible, not the tool itself.”

While Soo said he believes the majority of citizens are firm believers in the Second Amendment rights, Bridges

measures would just be stronger background checks,” Bridges said. “Just make sure people who are buying weapons, especially higher caliber ones, are properly vetted.”

Portland, Ore. senior Eric Soo,

COLLEGE CORRUPTION

Crookedness, dishonesty run rampant despite NCAA rules

BEN EVERETT
Sports Writer

In late September, the FBI arrested 10 men on charges of conspiracy to commit bribery, four of whom were assistant coaches at college basketball programs, as a part of an ongoing investigation into the bribery involved with recruiting.

Arizona assistant coach Book Richardson, Oklahoma State associate head coach Lamont Evans, Auburn assistant coach Chuck Persons and USC assistant coach Tony Bland were all fired by their respective universities following arrest.

Additionally, Hall of Fame head coach Rick Pitino was fired by Louisville amid reports that he knew about a payment scheme towards recruits.

U.S. Attorney Joon H. Kim revealed the information in a Sept. 26 press conference, saying the arrested men were exploiting student-athletes.

“For the 10 charged men, the madness of college basketball went well beyond the Big Dance in March,” Kim told ESPN. “Month after month, the defendants exploited the hoop dreams of student-athletes around the country, allegedly treating them as little more than opportunities to enrich themselves through bribery and fraud schemes.”

The sudden arrests came as a surprise to many, but scandal in sports is nothing new, and Baylor fans know that all too well.

The sexual assault scandal that ravaged the Baylor football program still has and will continue to have lingering effects even though the university replaced its president, athletic director and football staff.

While it may seem far off now, the infamous murder cover-up involving the Baylor men’s basketball program and head coach Dave Bliss was only 14 years ago. Patrick Dennehy, a Baylor basketball player, was murdered by teammate Carlton Dotson, but Bliss told players to portray Dennehy as a drug dealer in order to hide the fact that Bliss was paying Dennehy’s tuition.

Looking to avoid further scandal, Baylor vice president and director of athletics Mack Rhoades were quick to self-examine.

“When the indictment was announced, we had our compliance office conduct an internal review,” Rhoades told the Waco-Tribune Herald. “We took all the names implicated and made sure they didn’t appear in any of our database systems. We didn’t find anything. As of this date, we haven’t received



Photo Illustration by Will Barksdale | Multimedia Journalist

any subpoena or inquiry from the FBI. We certainly have great faith in how Scott and his staff conduct the program.”

The Jerry Sandusky trial at Penn State involving the football staff covering up Sandusky’s sexual assault of young boys, Terrelle Pryor and his teammates at Ohio State exchanging championship rings and autographs for tattoos and Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush receiving thousands of dollars in benefits at USC are some of the more notable scandals to happen in the past decade in college football.

College basketball’s past is just as deeply rooted in

scandal as football’s. Ranging from players at Boston College fixing games in return for money to Derrick Rose having someone else take the SAT for him so that he would be eligible to play in college.

While college sports is a multi-billion-dollar business, the ones who create the revenue, the athletes, are not permitted to be paid per NCAA rules. This dynamic, according to Marc Edelman of Forbes, gives rise to an underground market of illegal activity.

“In the absence of free markets for college athletes’ services,” Edelman wrote, “Darker and more dubious

markets emerge that are an ideal breeding ground for unscrupulous individuals to engage in schemes to defraud college athletes and exploit their labor.”

In college, if teams want to gain the upper hand, they need to recruit well. Some coaches have given into the assumption that paying recruits is the only way to compete with already established programs.

While there may be potential changes made regarding NCAA rules, such as sharing revenue with players, the reality is college sports will always be susceptible to scandal and the recent FBI findings are only the latest chapter.

ADDRESSING THE G GAP

Female-led organizations take steps toward gender equality in politics

DIDI MARTINEZ

Digital Managing Editor

Underrepresented at the polls and in office, Texas women are taking a stand against the lack of political participation in the state.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, a research organization that looks at public policy as it effects women today, Texas is among the worst states when it comes to political participation. In the think tank's state report card, the Lone Star State was given an "F" for criteria such as female voter registration, political representation and election turnout.

The institute's report card is conducted every few years, with the most recent edition showing numbers from 2015, which indicates a disparity among women elected into office. Organizations such as The League of Women Voters are hoping to make a dent in these figures.

"It's harder to imagine doing something if you don't see people that look like you doing it," said Dr. Ivy Hamerly, senior lecturer in the political science department and leader of the league's Waco chapter. "And so if women have grown up thinking that a representative looks like a man it might be harder to picture what it might be like to do that. With the right kind of encouragement and mentoring and support I think all kinds of citizens might be great representatives."

At the state level, women only make up to 20.4 percent of the Texas Legislature, with a total count of 37, according to National Conference of State Legislatures. But even locally, Hamerly said it comes down to a matter of education.

"It's just a matter of whether they end up finding that kind of

support that they [citizens] need, so they know the ins and outs of how to file for candidacy, how to raise funds, how to craft their message, how to organize their campaign," Hamerly said. "I think you average citizen doesn't know that information."

With about 75 members, the Waco chapter underwent a brief hiatus and has since restarted under Hamerly's leadership.

"We're just starting with who we know and starting to make contact with networks that are all across the city so we can pull in people who share our goals," Hamerly said.

Avoiding ties to specific candidates or parties, The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization, but this doesn't mean that group misses an opportunity to have their voice heard in public policy.

"One big issue that we work on is women's health," said Elaine Wiant, Texas' League of Women Voters president. "If women can't control their

own lives, then it's very difficult to do anything else."

While the report card only polls the average voter registration and voter turnout numbers for 2010 and 2012,

a look at the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 data confirms a much larger gap in registration and turnout than that of men. So despite scoring higher in both categories as a gender, a greater percentage of female voters are just not making it to the end of the voting process.

Organizations focused on addressing the gender gap in politics is not a new concept. Austin-based groups like Annie's List, who backs women with largely Democratic agendas and The Texas Federation of Republican Women, who supports Republican women running for office, are both party-oriented operations seeking to increase representation.

"I think women just have to step up to the plate in the same way that men do," Wiant said. "Women have to be just as assertive and say, 'I'm here, I'm going to do it.'"

impacts foster children's **education**

different students, some with advanced learning levels and some who would qualify for special education programs. With such a wide range of educational development, students with emotional or mental issues stemming from abuse or neglect can fly under the radar if the teacher isn't prepared.

"In some disciplinary programs, we have a 'safe space' in a corner of the room," McFarland said. "It's a place for the kids to either compose themselves or just step away from the stress of the class. I've had an emotional girl this semester who's cried a couple of times, and I ask her if she wants to go to the safe space. She nods, and then will come back to participate after breathing and composing herself a bit ... It's all about the choices the kids make. I believe they are in control of their actions when they walk in the classroom and I will do my best to support them academically, but no matter their background, students thrive in a community of high expectations."

Many schools across the country implement the idea of "alternative punishment" to avoid a negative connotation with education and discipline. Places such as these "safe spaces" and meditation rooms are starting to make their way into schools, but however encouraging the academic environment may be, if their home life is in a state of turmoil, it adds a hurdle on their road to success.

A 2014 study from the U.S. Census Bureau on "The Impact of Family Structure, Mobility and Employment on a Child's Well Being" indicated a strong negative correlation between familial structure changes and negative academic and familial engagement. This means that children who experience a change in their home life have a harder time engaging in academic activities. For children in the K-12 school system, this could mean a drop in grades, social deficits and acting out. For children without any parental guidance, or for those in foster families they don't yet trust, this is especially important to avoid.

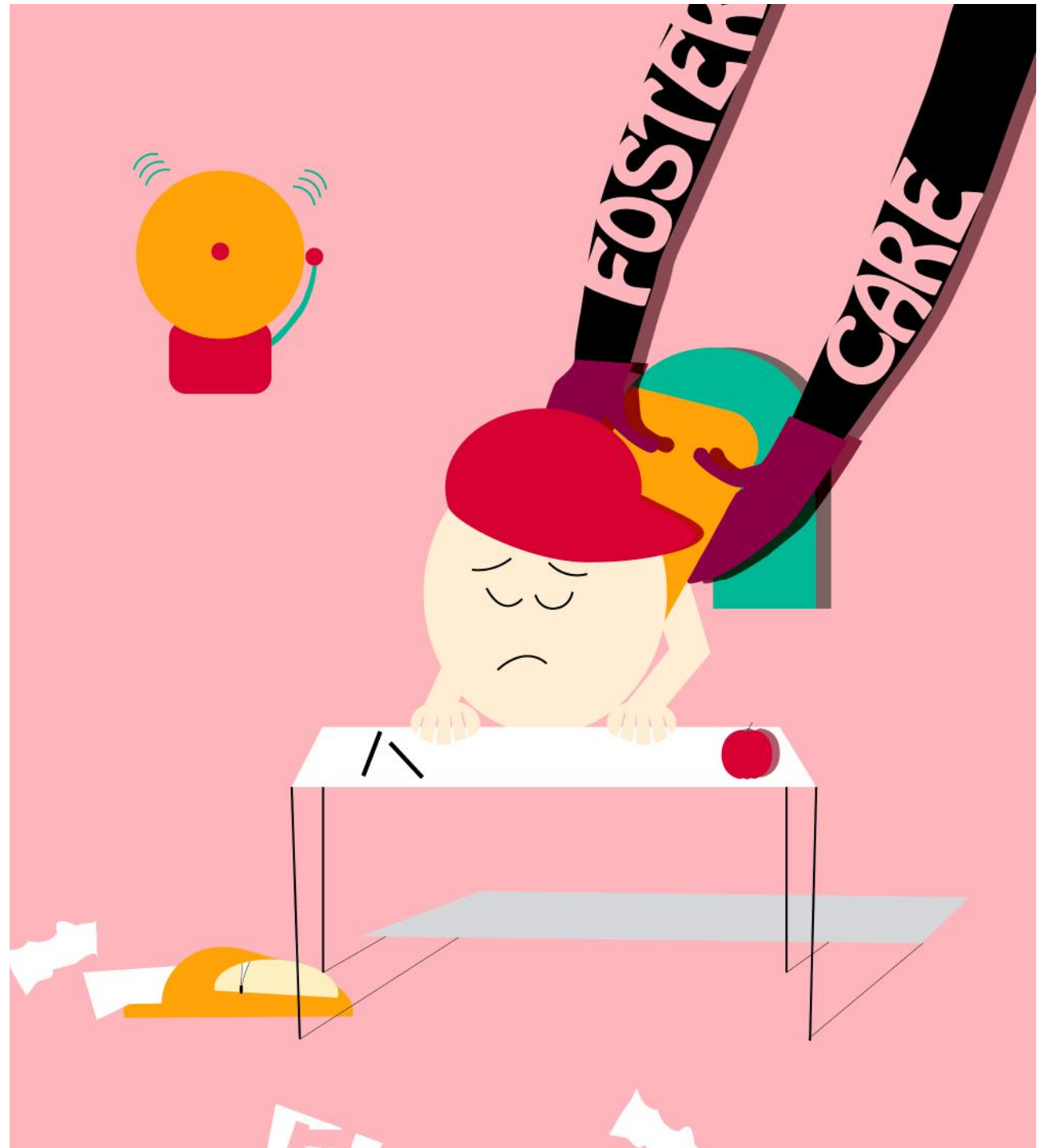
While foster care and education may not be at the forefront of Waco citizen's minds, the turbulence of foster children's lives and the lack of funding for Waco schools has larger implications on the quality of education students, especially those in the foster care in Waco are receiving.

How you can help

If you know a child suffering from abuse or neglect, call the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400

If you are interested in supporting efforts to improve Waco ISD, visit their website at www.wacoisd.org for information about the ways you can get involved.

If you are interested in fostering, supporting foster care families, or adoption visit the DFPS website at www.dfps.state.tx.us for more information.



Meredith Wagner | Social Media Editor

Turbulent foster care life negatively

MOLLY ATCHISON
Print Managing Editor

In low-income communities, the risk of losing students due to movements within the foster system is a concern for many educators.

According to the Department of Family and Protective Services, in McLennan County alone, 199 children under the age of 17 are in the foster system as of Sept. 2017. With the City of Waco reporting nearly 53,740 students in McLennan County's education system in 2016, the DFPS numbers may seem insignificant. But in reality, these statistics indicate a correlation between home transience and educational success.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System (AFCARS), a child in the foster care system will spend an average of 19 months in the system before exiting into another care facility. These facilities can include the home of a relative, a long-term foster family, a group home or supervised independent living. However, this does not mean they have found a permanent home, this simply means they have been placed somewhere meant to be a sustainable living environment.

Children in foster care average 2.8 different living arrangements, or placements during their first foster care stay, according to National Work Group research. This means that a foster care child will spend an average of one and a half years in foster care before being placed into a



Liesje Powers | Multimedia Editor



Liesje Powers | Multimedia Editor

home. Within this time, they can change living arrangements more than twice, and are forced to change schools accordingly.

In Waco, education is an area of concern already. According to the comprehensive biannual Texas Education Agency report on academic standards, six Waco schools have received a "needs improvement" status from the state, and five are in imminent danger of closing because of consistently not meeting standards. With so many schools already underfunded and underperforming, those 199 Waco foster care children are at an even higher risk of being undereducated.

With a school system in the midst of reform, students in Waco are already experiencing difficulties in their educational lives, as well as at home. Baylor education majors learn to work with students from varying backgrounds and different experiences by assisting in Waco classrooms.

Phoenix junior Anna McFarland and Katy junior Abby Graeflin are elementary education majors who spent the semester working in Waco schools, where they have learned to address students with different backgrounds.

"We take certain classes that incorporate child development and teach us about certain symptoms that we have to look for," Graeflin said. "We have always been taught to create relationships with all of the children so we notices those types of symptoms ... we also try to create relationships with the parents so we can let them know what is happening."

McFarland worked in a third grade classroom with a variety of



Rewon Shimray | Cartoonist

know instruction, people who know kids and know how to teach. Teachers who are committed. They take a no-excuse approach to teaching kids.”

From the outside looking in, it’s simple to label Indian Spring as troubled and worth a potential shutdown so they can rebuild from the ground up, but those who work with these students each day see another side of them.

Angela Kusler is one of the two counselors at Indian Spring,

and her daily schedule consists of working with the students on their social skills such as with academic and behavior needs.

“My schedule is different from day to day,

depending on the needs of the students and staff,” Kusler said. “If new students come in, I prepare their schedule for them, show them around the school and take them to their class. If a student is having a problem at school or home, the counselors or social worker try to help the students.”

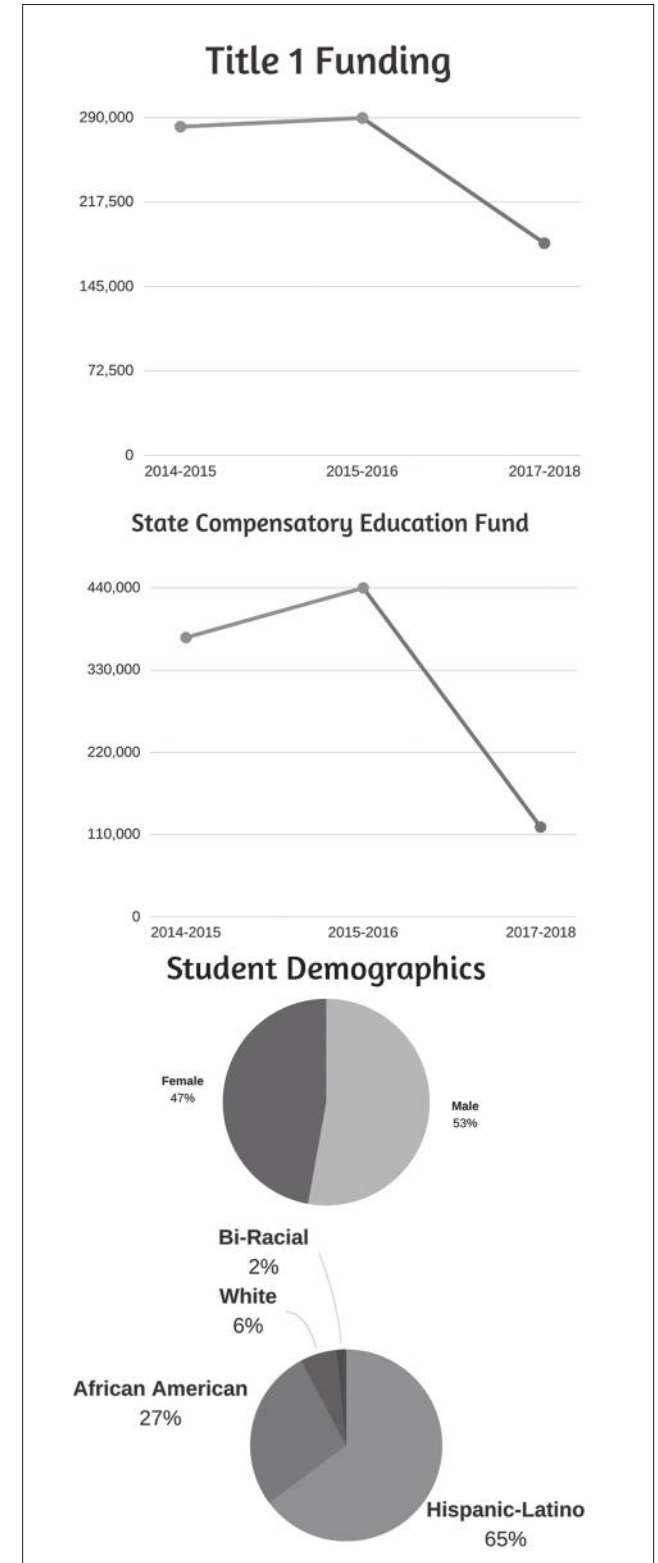
Kusler is in her twenty ninth year working in public education, with six spent as a teacher and 23 as a counselor. She has been at Indian Spring for four years

and has seen students struggle academically. However, she tries to remain positive about their improvement.

“Indian Spring Middle School has struggled

“
 I feel that our students have a higher mobility rate than the greater Waco area and the state and this affects their academic skills.”

ANGELA KUSLER | COUNSELOR



Jessica Hubble | Multimedia Journalist

Data from the Waco Independent School District Campus Improvement Plans

EDUCATION UNDER FIRE

Middle school struggles to meet state standards

SAVANNAH COOPER
Staff Writer

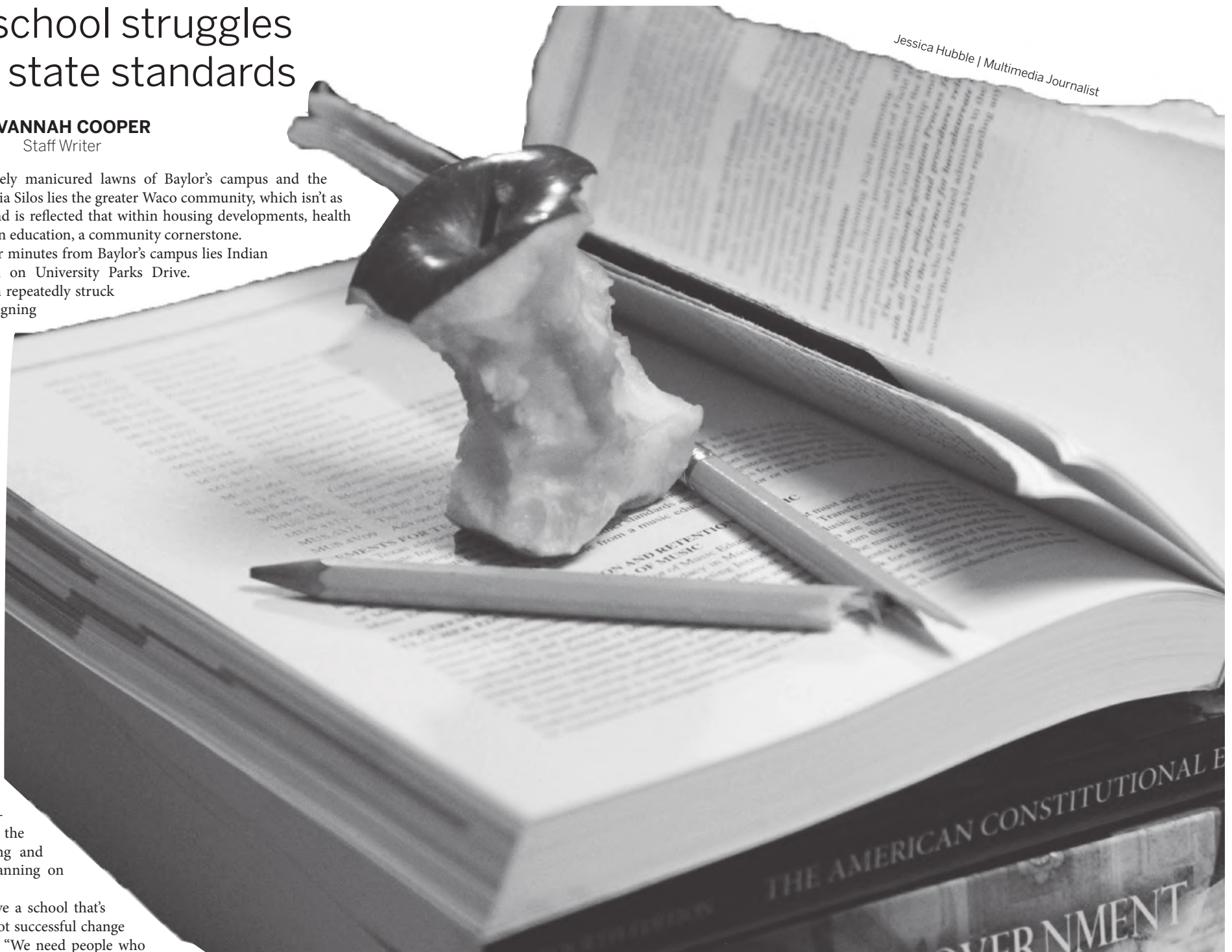
Beyond the pristinely manicured lawns of Baylor's campus and the shadows of the Magnolia Silos lies the greater Waco community, which isn't as financially fortunate and is reflected that within housing developments, health care facilities and within education, a community cornerstone.

Located exactly four minutes from Baylor's campus lies Indian Spring Middle School on University Parks Drive. Indian Spring has been repeatedly struck by setbacks, from resigning principals to failing to meet statewide testing standards year after year.

The demographics of Indian Spring also play a role in its current conditions, because the vast majority of students are racial minorities. According to Start Class by Graphiq, the total school population is 579 where 389 of those students, or 67.2 percent, are Hispanic, 26.9 percent are black and 3.5 percent are white.

Then Waco Independent School District Superintendent Bonny Cain spoke to the Waco Tribune-Herald in 2014 about the status of Indian Spring and how the district is planning on helping.

"Whenever you have a school that's really struggling and not successful change is in order," Cain said. "We need people who



Waco children struggle with homelessness, food insecurity

BROOKE HILL
Staff Writer

The first thought that comes to mind when thinking about homeless individuals in Waco is not a child.

However, the reality is that there are children in this community that do not have a place to call home or enough food to keep them healthy.

Waco Independent School District estimates about 1,200 of its students per year are homeless, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

In spring 2016, the Sanctuary House, a short term emergency housing program for homeless families in the Waco ISD opened in an attempt to help the problem.

The house is a collaborative effort between Waco ISD's Homeless Outreach, the Waco Housing Authority, the local Salvation Army and Junior League of Waco.

The Waco Family Abuse Center typically houses around 250 homeless children a year. About 60 percent of those children are under the age of five, according to Kathy Reid, executive director for the Waco Family Abuse center.

Domestic violence is the single largest cause of homelessness for women and children Reid said.

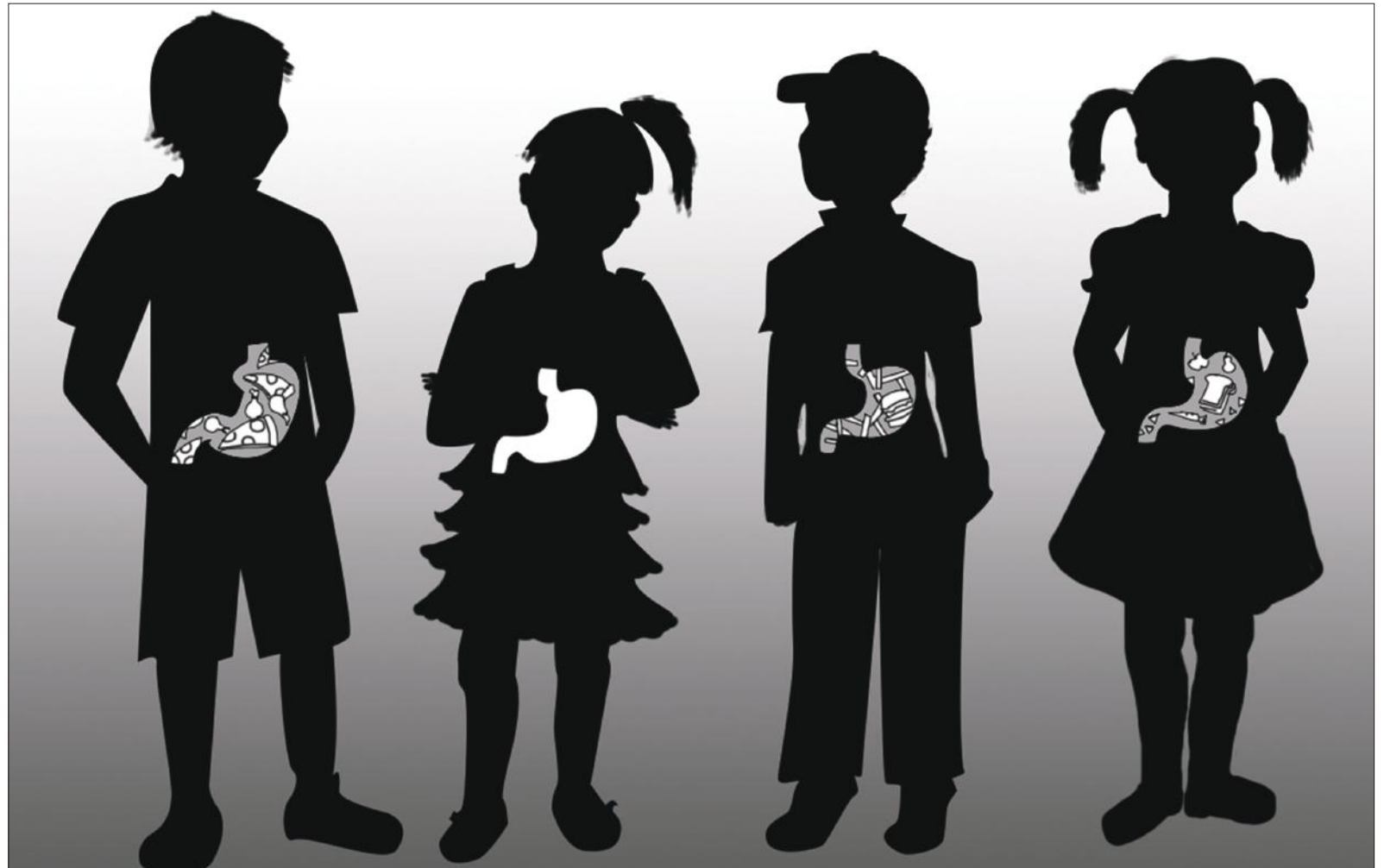
The center provides shelter and food for the women and children who stay there. They even provide a homework lab for after school help, activities and field trips.

"Everything we try to do is either therapeutic or educational, so that kids, whether they're here for three or four days or whether they're here for six months, they find that their education is enhanced and that they're healing, we hope, and building some resiliency from whatever the situation was that they came from before they came here," Reid said.

Reid said the center's numbers have remained steady for last four or five years, and that it is always at 80 to 100 percent capacity.

"I think Waco is like every other community," Reid said. "We've got extremely high rates of domestic violence, and so we have lots and lots of families that come here and need a safe place to go."

The Family Abuse Center also serves 21,000 to 23,000 meals a year to homeless women and children while they are working to get back on their feet.



Rewon Shimray | Cartoonist

"Food is a huge big main thing for us. Many of our families come from food instability and really aren't sure where they're going to get food or how they're going to eat," Reid said.

Homelessness isn't the only problem some Waco children may be facing.

About 20 percent of residents in McLennan county are considered food insecure, according to Map the Meal Gap. Twenty-six percent of children in McLennan county are food insecure, meaning that one in four children in Waco has a lack of access to three healthy meals a day seven days a week.

Erin Nolen is the assistant director of research for

Texas Hunger Initiative, and her job is solely to look at statistics regarding meal programs with children so that Texas Hunger Initiative can understand how to improve their programs. Texas Hunger Initiative is a capacity-building, collaborative project dedicated to developing and implementing strategies to end hunger through policy, education, research, community organizing and community development.

"I think as Waco has continued to grow, there's been more considered effort to consider that especially since we have a high low income population," Nolen said. "There's a lot more to be done, especially looking at the root causes of poverty too."

Nolen said she's hopeful that food insecurity will be less of a problem in Waco as the community continues to come together to form places such as the Jubilee Market and the Gospel Cafe.

"I think Waco's a special place," Nolen said. "I love Waco, and with Baylor there's been a lot of concern and effort to really look at how we can be solving hunger issues here in Waco. There's a lot of efforts but we still have food insecurity as an issue. We've seen a little bit of a decline, which is good, but still got a ways to go especially just in maximizing services we have currently and then also addressing more economic roots of it but it's also just really complicated."



Baylee VerSteeg | Multimedia Journalist

FRESH Jubilee Market features many options of fresh produce for customers looking to incorporate a healthy diet into their lifestyle.

Waco Homelessness and Hunger Statistics

1,200 homeless students

20% of residents are food insecure

26% of children are food insecure

1 in 4 children has lack of access to 3 healthy meals a day
7 days a week



Jessica Hubble | Multimedia Journalist



Baylee VerSteeg | Multimedia Journalist

JUBILEE Jubilee clerk Dianna Castillo checks out Waco resident William Horn. Jubilee Market is a food market funded and run by Mission Waco. It was started to help alleviate the North Waco food desert.



Baylee VerSteeg | Multimedia Journalist

STOCKING Jubilee clerk Dianna Castillo restocks shelves. The market is a non-profit grocery store that caters to low income residents.

actually realized what he had done. Natalie said at the end of the day, he said he wanted to get help for a psychological problem. While she said she agreed he needed help, she said she didn't think that was enough.

"You still need to be punished for what you did," Natalie said to her assailant. "Yes, you need help, but you also need to face the consequences of what you did."

Natalie said she felt very embarrassed after the assault and began to blame herself, but the more she thought about it, the more she realized she was just an innocent ride home. It turned into something much bigger than she originally thought when she reported to Title IX.

She reported the assault at the end of November 2016 but the process was not complete until May 2017.

Natalie said when she went to read Title IX's final report, she was under the impression that she would be reading more of her assailant's confession. Instead, she said she found out that his apology and confession were "all a big charade."

According to Natalie, the assailant's arguments in the final report were misogynistic and sexist. He told Title IX that he only pretended to confess because he wanted her to feel better and not do anything to harm herself, Natalie said. Furthermore, Natalie said the assailant accused her of trying to cover up an alleged infidelity using Title IX procedures.

"It was actually very impossible to believe that [his confession] was faked because it seemed so real when he was confessing. He was crying, he was so apologetic. I just could not fathom how someone can act so well," Natalie said.

Once the report was complete, Natalie said a judge was brought in to rule on the case. She said the accused and the accuser have the opportunity to speak with the judge privately. According to Natalie, reaching the point of actually speaking to the judge kept extending and extending. She said she was supposed to meet with the judge in February but didn't meet her until after spring break. The final decision didn't come until May: the assailant was to be suspended for two years.

"The biggest problem here was that although I was happy with the decision, he never ended up facing it," Natalie said. "Because Title IX took so long to get to my case and do something about it, he had enough time to apply for transfer."

Because Baylor doesn't put notations on transcripts, Natalie said the assailant left Baylor "look[ing] like he's clean."

"He never ended up facing the punishment ... he doesn't deserve an education for the next two years, that was his punishment," Natalie said. "Except he is getting that education and so my frustration here was the loopholes that exist in the Title IX system where they can just let perpetrators transfer away from their problems."

Natalie said she spent eight to nine life-consuming months in the Title IX process only for the assailant to transfer away. She said she believes the Title IX office is trying to do their job but that some of the policies in existence are not beneficial.

"What's the point of going through this entire process if they're just going to transfer away, you know? And now you're making another campus unsafe," Natalie said.

The assailant is now at a "pretty good" school starting a new life and continuing his education, Natalie said. She has been in counseling and therapy. Furthermore, she had to live at the same apartment for the remainder of the lease in May. She said she slept in her roommate's room for three weeks following the assault.

"It just sucks personally for me because I walk through campus every day and I still feel like I lost. Even though I won on paper, I still feel lost because I tried to do the right thing," Natalie said. "[I] lost so many

friendships in the process, so many relationships in the process because trying to do the right thing. At the end of the day, although I might have won on paper I still feel lost because he just transferred away."

While Natalie said she would always be mad about this loophole in Title IX policy, she said she is in a better place this semester.

Looking to the Future

As one of Pepper Hamilton's 105 Recommendations, Baylor completed the update to its Title IX policy in January 2017. The "Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Interpersonal Violence Policy" was created as a result of intensive multi-disciplinary efforts, according to an external report confirming the structural completion of all 105 recommendations.

The new policy includes clear amnesty provisions as well as guidelines concerning the time frame of investigations and resolutions.

According to the policy, "The University will seek to complete the investigation and resolution process in approximately 60 calendar days following the notice of the investigation. In some instances, that may be the same date as the date of the report; in other instances, based on information gathered in the initial assessment, that may be at a later date."

Tucker told the Lariat in March that the updated policy ensures Baylor is implementing best practices and "new developments in the field." She said the university "has been learning from [its] students who have gone through the process and provided [Baylor] with feedback."

Tucker said the new policy streamlines the timeline while maintaining an equitable notification and participation process for both the alleged victim and the accused. The old process outlined that any reports prior to January 2017 "had two levels of appeal that went all the way to the president of the university," Tucker said.

With the new policy, Title IX investigators who neutrally collect evidence and information from both sides and have "been looking at the information from the beginning ... will write a rationale to determine if the respondent is responsible for a policy violation," Tucker said.

Previously, an external adjudicator would come in to make the final evaluation, but Tucker said "They would almost have to start from scratch and try to catch up. They haven't seen the witnesses or had any dialogue, they only knew what was on paper."

Because external adjudicators would not have the context that investigators had, Tucker said they often had to call people back which would in turn create delays. Tucker said investigators are trained to write the rational, which both parties get to see. She noted there were "several checks" built into this process.

Ultimately, Tucker said she wants students to "know our hearts and know that this office isn't just about me, Kristan Tucker - this is a bigger picture, and this is a campus initiative. Our hearts are for the people here at Baylor."

As for informing students about campus resources, Baylor said it has "allocated significant resources in its communication efforts to raise awareness regarding Title IX-related issues and the work of the Title IX Office. During the first week of the fall semester for the past two years, the Title IX Office has organized the 'It's On Us BU' campus event for all incoming freshmen and transfer students to learn about sexual assault, consent and bystander intervention," the university said in a statement.

Furthermore, Baylor said, "As mandated by law, Title IX posters are located in various high-traffic locations across campus and specifically in every bathroom stall on campus. The University also has taken out periodic advertisements in the Baylor Lariat to increase awareness of the

Title IX Office. Additionally, annual Title IX-related training is now part of Baylor's ongoing educational efforts for students, faculty and staff."

Baylor's campus climate survey was conducted this past spring in accordance with Pepper Hamilton's 105 Recommendations. The survey was given in order to assess "the effectiveness of campus procedures" and "identify challenges in the current campus climate."

Results from the Social Climate Survey were released at the beginning of November and indicated that 73 percent of Baylor students "strongly agreed or agreed that if they experienced sexual misconduct, they would know where to go for help on campus."

Baylor said the university "is firmly committed to ongoing efforts to increase awareness until 100 percent of Baylor students are knowledgeable of where to go for assistance and what resources are available on campus."

As Baylor continues its institutional efforts to adequately respond to reports of interpersonal violence, the university is also partnering with members of the community such as the Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children and the Waco Police Department. Sgt. Patrick Swanton of the Waco Police Department said in September that he encourages victims of sexual assault to report when they are comfortable. Swanton said he understands why some survivors don't, but that the police would "like to see those offenders in jail."

"The initiatives and commitment of us going forward as an institution are still very much taking place with our key partners across campus and even those in the community, so we even have contacts in the Advocacy Center [and] in the Family Abuse Center," Kristan Tucker told the Lariat after this year's "It's On Us BU" event.

Dr. Martha Lou Scott, associate vice president for student life, said in September that Baylor and the Waco Advocacy Center have had an informal working relationship in the past but decided to formalize it this year through a memo of understanding.

Scott said the purpose of the memo of understanding was to "commit [the relationship] to writing so that students knew [Baylor was] going to support them going to a place where they could get extraordinary care."

Baylor recently inaugurated its 15th president and first female president Dr. Linda Livingstone. In her inauguration speech, Livingstone said she accepted her calling to Baylor because of institutional difficulties, not in spite of them.

"Every crisis is an opportunity to learn and to rebuild and I truly believe that God wanted me to assume that task at this particular point in Baylor's history," Livingstone said.

Livingstone recently reorganized the President's Council and created a University Council that gives academic leadership a larger voice.

Throughout her presidency, Livingstone has also expressed her commitment to Baylor's Christian calling and academic excellence.

Students, like Hardy, said they are waiting to see what will come of Livingstone's administration going forward. They acknowledged it's a new administration and said they are waiting to see tangible changes for students.

In commemoration of her 100th day in office, Livingstone told the Lariat she understands that trust is an earned process and is built over time.

"It's a day-to-day effort of seeking to do the right thing and being honest about what we're doing and being honest when we have failings and then learning from moving forward," Livingstone said.

The university has stated that they will not comment on individuals' experiences with Title IX due to legal reasons.

**Indicates name change for anonymity of sexual assault victims.*

event with three of her guy friends. She said she had a panic attack and ended up canceling on them last minute. She ran out of the chapter room and threw up “because [she] was so nervous about being in the car with three people, even though they were three guys who could not hurt a fly, but it didn’t matter.”

Hardy reached out to the Title IX office for the second time, this time to receive academic accommodations. This was after Crawford resigned on Oct. 3, 2016, and Kristan Tucker was appointed as the new Title IX coordinator two days later.

Hardy said the department approved of her request but that it was “too hard of a system” because she had to go back to Robinson Tower to confirm what she had previously stated in her email, (her request for academic accommodations).

Later that same semester, Hardy said she “realized it was time for [her] to stand up and speak out.”

Hardy began with one of the first Student Senate bills she wrote and proposed. In the bill, Hardy wrote there had been “little promotion of [the Title IX department’s] new services and improvements.” According to the bill, updating information and promoting changes and new resources available to students “could lead to more victims receiving help they need” and “could mend the relationship between those who received inadequate care and the Title IX department.”

Hardy said she felt optimistic at the time she promoted the bill and said she was saying to Baylor, “Hey, you guys are doing great things, please tell more students about it.”

Hardy presented the bill wearing the clothes she was assaulted in, which she said was horrible.

“It’s so weird how ... I could have been wearing my favorite sweatshirt or like a favorite pair of jeans and somehow, it’s not comfortable anymore,” Hardy said.

Within a week of the bill passing in Student Senate, Hardy said she was contacted by the director of student life and the Title IX department. She said she was “pretty much chastised” for not getting enough faculty approval prior to proposing her bill. Hardy acknowledged that she didn’t because she didn’t want to go to Robinson Tower again because she had some bad memories there.

Hardy’s first interaction with Kristan Tucker occurred after her bill proposal.

“I walked in and felt very attacked. It felt very much like they were the victims in this situation, like I had somehow given them bad PR and they were there to try to stop it,” Hardy said.

Hardy said she gave Tucker her suggestions and it seemed like Tucker “pushed aside all of them.”

The weird part, Hardy said, was that Tucker said she heard Hardy had mentioned the Title IX office in a couple articles. Hardy said Tucker then pulled out a couple copies of the Lariat hat she had been quoted in and also mentioned that she had read Hardy’s



Meredith Wagner | Social Media Editor

personal blog.

“I wanted to scream because [Tucker had] time to sit and read my blog, but [she] didn’t have time to go call a girl and ask her if she’s OK? To get the proper counseling? That drove me insane,” Hardy said.

Hardy said she was really disheartened after this, so much so that she gave up.

“I’ve given up going through Baylor’s system. I run my own sexual assault support group on Friday nights and we have probably seven or eight girls in it. Our email list has 25, but it rotates in and out,” Hardy said.

Hardy said she would recommend sexual assault survivors seek out Waco’s Advocacy Center or Family Abuse Center.

“All I can do is try to fight it from the outside and help the girls who come to me,” Hardy said. “Another thing, too, is once I started coming out with my story, I realized the statistics of one in four, those are real.”

Hardy said one area of improvement she would like to see is in training and education. At the beginning of the school year, Hardy wrote a column

titled “Intervention is not enough.”

Hardy said she believes Baylor is teaching intervention and pretending that Baylor students don’t have sex or pretending that people who are raping students are also Baylor students. She said she believes topics like what is consent, how to ask, how to receive, how to take it when somebody says no are questions training should cover.

“I’m a religion major and I love Jesus. People think that loving Jesus and talking about sex are two different things,” Hardy said. “But I think it’s really important to talk about it and to discuss because it does happen to everyone ... it’s girls in my sorority, it’s girls walking down the street, it’s girls with purity rings like me.”

Hardy also said she would like to see response time from the Title IX office be no greater than two business days. She said she believes even two days can be hard for some girls because “once you’re ready to talk, you’re ready to talk then.”

“I love Baylor. I love the students, I love my classes, I love the teachers. I can’t stand the administration...”

Hardy said. “But it’s one of those things where I consider dropping out probably once a week. And then I think of all the classes I’m taking that I love and all the girls I have to protect. And it makes it all go away.”

Losing the Fight

Natalie’s* story begins in November 2016, approximately one month after former Title IX coordinator Patty Crawford left her position.

“It was just my roommate and I coming home from a party and this acquaintance of ours offered to drive us home. We drove home and he was supposed to leave, but he didn’t,” Natalie said.

She said her roommate went to sleep and as Natalie got ready for bed, she said he insisted that he stay for them to hang out and go hot-tubbing. Natalie said she refused but he kept insisting, and that is how the night got started.

“I am not going to go in too much detail about the actual night... anyone who reads it can put two and two together,” Natalie said. “The next morning, after that happened, I drove him home because I just wanted him out of my apartment.”

Natalie said she was in a really miserable condition the following day, she said she still felt very intoxicated. Everything was spinning and she had bruises.

It took Natalie about three and a half weeks to report the assault to the Title IX office, she said. Natalie said she used those weeks to research the reporting process to see what she might be getting herself into.

During those weeks, Natalie said a group of people – mutual friends including the assailant and herself – gathered for an informal meeting to pick apart every single detail of the night. There were so many discrepancies between stories, Natalie said, but the two meetings were ultimately helpful.

Following a friend’s suggestion and her own research on Texas state laws, Natalie said she decided to record the meetings.

“We kept debating our story ... Everybody I guess came to the consensus, like, ‘Hey, dude. That was not OK. Like, she didn’t give you consent; you don’t understand what consent was,’” Natalie said. “I think that was the big problem there. I don’t think to this date he understands what consent is.”

The recordings, one of which contained her assailant’s confession, were used as evidence in the Title IX investigation.

“It was honestly very shocking because he confessed to his assault. He went on and on about how sorry he was, how ashamed he was and how he would do anything to get me back on my feet and stuff like that. Very apologetic,” Natalie said.

While Natalie said she was skeptical at first, she said she thought that perhaps there was a chance he

and Patty Crawford, then-Title IX coordinator, about what some of her options were.

April said Crawford offered a no-contact order against the assailant, but at the time, April didn't think it necessary. However, April would soon find there weren't many places she could go without the risk of him being there.

April noted one particular incident where she saw the assailant in a crowd at one of her sorority's events and made a beeline to her car. She sat in her vehicle and sobbed for 20 minutes before she could leave. April said she felt terrified because she didn't believe she was protected by the police and the assailant was still present in her life. She decided she wanted the no-contact order after all.

When she returned to the Title IX office, April said her case worker claimed she was never offered one, despite Crawford and her mom being present when April said it was offered to her.

"She said it wasn't available to me," April said. "And she said, 'We all have to be around people we don't like sometimes. You just need to surround yourself with positivity and we just need to teach you better coping mechanisms.'"

April said at this point, the victim didn't want to report; she just wanted to be left alone. There is only so much the Title IX office can do if a victim doesn't report, April acknowledged, but she said she believes there were still some steps the office could have taken -- for example, informing the assailant he was on notice or being watched.

Meanwhile, the assailant left Baylor with no marks on his record. April said he maintained a leadership position in his organization and is currently interning at a law firm in preparation for law school.

"I felt totally betrayed by my university and by an office that promised to protect me, that promised to take care of victims, that promised to make it so I could finish school," April said. "I felt betrayed by law enforcement that promised to protect and serve ... Even though I wasn't the rape victim, I was still a victim and the other witness was still a victim because it was a traumatic experience caused by this one person acting out of extreme selfishness and disregard for other people's humanity."

By the end of the semester, April said she was barely getting by. She said she didn't leave her house except for classes or work, she would eat one granola bar per day and she experienced night terrors that would leave her waking up with pain in her jaw from clenching it so tightly or by screaming so loudly it scared her friends.

"That doesn't even say what the case was

like for my friend, whose experiences, while not mine to share, have been far worse," April said.

April said she felt she was completely ignored by Baylor and applied for an emergency transfer to a public Texas university.

April noted she had well passed the transfer deadline, but after listening to her story, the woman on the other end of the phone took her contact information and said she would try to see what she could do. April said it was the first time since the incident that she felt someone actually listened to her. A couple weeks later, she said she received her acceptance to the university.

"I still think about it almost every day. I still replay that night. I still wish I could change things or wish I could have done something different[ly]. And through all of that, it was heartbreaking. Not just because of my personal experience or how Title IX handled it, but I had made Waco my home," April said. "That was my safe place. That was where I could go to my parents' house in another city every once in a while and couldn't wait to get back home."

Although April said she was able to maintain her major in the transfer, she will be graduating a year later than intended.

The victim left Baylor without finishing her education at the university.

"Title IX is there to help; it is there to help students be successful. It is there to help them finish their education, and it felt like I had been lied to that they were there to help me, that they were [there] to help give me resources and protect me and help me get through this," April said. "I was totally shut out. While I know the whole Title IX staff is completely different, I wanted to share the damage that can be done by not handling things well, by not hiring people who are qualified or well-trained or competent when it comes to sensitivity training and how important the jobs of the people who work in Title IX are and how important it is they do them well."

From the Outside In

San Antonio senior Paige Hardy is a journalism and religion double major. She has given her life to Christ and wears a purity ring as a testament to her commitment to wait until marriage.

"I thought this didn't happen to girls like me," Hardy said.

Hardy said she was sexually assaulted during her freshman year at Baylor. A few days later, she went to a community leader asking for the chaplain on call. Because it was spring break, she was informed the chaplain on call was Dr.

Burt Burleson. Burleson seems like a great guy, Hardy said, but not exactly the guy she wanted to talk to about her sexual assault.

When her community leader asked her if there was anything she could do for her, Hardy said she just started crying. She hadn't cried since it happened, she said. Her community leader called her higher-up, and Hardy said they just sat while she told her entire story.

Notes were taken, Hardy said, and it took about one week for the Title IX Department to reach out to her after she reported the assault to residence hall staff.

"I would say that was easily the loneliest week of my life," Hardy said.

When Hardy got an appointment to meet with the Title IX department, she said she rode her bike to Robinson Tower.

"It's a 19-minute walk from Collins. [I] had to go under the overpass, which there are tons of homeless people there, and since [the incident] I've been diagnosed with PTSD. So you know, wasn't the greatest experience to try to get over there," Hardy said.

She went to the Title IX office specifically to seek out a Christian counselor. Her caseworker said she would send her a list of counselors on and off campus, which Hardy said she felt "really good" about at the time.

Hardy said she received an email 20 days later asking if she would like to come in and discuss finding a counselor.

"In the course of those 20 days, it was too late. I'd tried to go to the Counseling Center and they rescheduled me for two weeks out ... I had [a] space of panic, just having to walk around on campus at night for 27 days and having to just sit in my dorm room with the weight of it all," Hardy said. "I don't think people understand the amount of guilt you feel. Even though you know inherently it's not your fault, it's like you can hear his voice in the back of your head saying that you said yes ... There's this sense of guilt you feel of, 'What if I didn't say 'no' loud enough? What if I didn't push him enough off me? What if I could have done more to stop it? Why didn't I call the police afterward?'"

On the 20th day, when someone from Title IX finally reached out to her about counseling, Hardy said she just didn't respond because at that point, she said she believed she wasn't going to get anything out of it.

"[I] spent the next few months just kind of retreating into myself and falling into a really deep state of both denial and depression," Hardy said.

Hardy recalled the following spring semester when she had planned to attend a sorority date



Baylee VerSteege | Multimedia Editor

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IX

Sexual assault survivors share testimonies, experiences with Title IX

PHOEBE SUY
Staff Writer

Some statistics at Baylor are easily seen. For instance, it doesn't take long walking around campus to realize there are a disproportionate number of female students. Baylor's Office of Institutional Research and Testing reports there are 2,361 more female than male students. However, what is not readily seen, is how many students are sexually assaulted and the weight some students carry as a result of sexual harassment or violence.

Several Title IX lawsuits hit Baylor in the aftermath of its sexual assault scandal in 2016, some of which have resulted in settlements, while others continue in contentious litigation. While most survivors of sexual violence won't ever make headlines, their stories still matter. An integral part of being a caring Christian community is bearing one another's burdens - rejoicing when others rejoice, yes, but also mourning when they mourn.

This is the story of three women who witnessed or experienced sexual assault at Baylor before and after the release of Pepper Hamilton's investigation and the 105 Recommendations, which according to Baylor have recently been structurally implemented.

Before the End

In spring 2016, what would be her last semester at Baylor, April* said she and another individual witnessed the sexual assault of a friend of hers. The assailant was sober and the victim was black-out drunk, she said.

When they came upon what was happening, the other witness was hit and injured by the assailant and she was left trapped with the assailant between her and the exit.

"For my own sake, I'm not going to go into the details of how horrible that feeling was, or terrifying, or slow-motion," April said. "But I can still remember it clear as day. That day was horrible, but the next day was worse."

April said she and the other witness decided to report the incident to an off-campus police department since her friend did not remember what happened at first.

"We were a wreck," April said. "I had panic attacks, which I would become very comfortable having panic attacks consistently in the following months."

Because April and the other witness were reporting without the victim, she said the person behind the counter refused to call an officer to talk to them. However, when the individual was informed a witness had been injured, April said an

officer was called.

She said she believes the officer they spoke with was not properly trained in trauma or, if he was, he disregarded it.

"We were retelling our story and at one point in time, he was spending more time being critical of us and less so listening about the story or trying to understand the facts," April said. "He more so took the time to pinpoint how we should have done things differently, not considering how adrenaline affects you or how when you become focused on helping your friend, that's your main goal."

April said it seemed the officer was more focused on being critical of them than actually listening to their accounts. He made fun of them, she said, and it seemed like he thought they were wasting his time. She said she ultimately filed a complaint against that officer.

"I automatically felt like the police was no longer on my side," April said. "You're supposed to be able to look to them as a pillar and they really let us down."

Moving forward, April said she knew her resources and decided that since the incident involved at least one Baylor student, she could report it to Title IX. She said the caseworker who took her statement took notes. Later, April said she returned to the Title IX office to speak with her caseworker

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