

# A Million Miles Among Us



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# A letter from the editor

**GAVIN PUGH**  
Editor-in-Chief

Dear Reader,

As you flip through these pages, you will see many faces. Some of them you may recognize: They are our fellow classmates and faculty members. Some of them you may not recognize: They are the people you pass on the sidewalk.



**Pugh**

The Lariat's goal in writing this semester's feature issue was not to spark any sort of political commentary or debate. It was not to be controversial, ironic or feign intelligence.

Rather, as we began crafting this paper, we wanted to highlight the diversity of the city that surrounds us. Mingling in and around the so-called Baylor bubble, we have found there to be people with incredible stories. Some of them come from half way around the world — born in cultures many of us Americans will never encounter. Others

come from places which are a little closer, such as Central and Southern American countries.

For those of us who have been fortunate enough to travel, we know how much other cultures can change our own perspectives: whether it be how we go about our routines to how we interact

with other people on a daily basis. The lessons learned while abroad are the types of lessons you carry with you for the rest of your life.

I've been fortunate enough. My parents took me to Europe and Central America several times before I left for college. My fiancée is an immigrant herself, and I have lived in her home country of Finland for months at a time.

This being said, I understand some of us haven't had the chance to visit a different country. Maybe money was an issue, or internships took precedent over study abroad opportunities.

But as some of us know the impact traveling can have on our personal perspectives, we also know we can gain that same perspective anywhere — no matter what city, country or continent we find ourselves in.

On the other hand, as diverse as our community has become, we realize that we have more in common with our foreign brothers and sisters than we previously thought.

All of us were once children. All of us wish to be loved, to feel joy and to connect with others. All of us.

All of us are here in Waco. Some hail from nearby cities: Dallas, Houston or Austin. Others come from other states: California, Colorado or Minnesota. Still others come from farther places. And as we continue to learn more about one another, so the gaps between us will shrink. The distances we've traveled to get here become irrelevant despite how far we've come. The miles shouldn't separate us, but instead should add to our collective whole: a million miles among us.

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# It's better when we're together

Better Together BU advocates for refugees, aims to foster acceptance, diversity at Baylor

**MEGAN RULE**  
Staff Writer

Better Together BU is a Baylor group that is all about inclusiveness, so when the Syrian refugee crisis became a worldwide issue, the club began to advocate for refugees and educate the Baylor campus.

"The name is the organization because we are better together," said Humble senior Memona Niazi, former Better Together BU co-leader. "That's why the refugee crisis is a big thing. The issue is you're excluding people, and you're saying, 'We are not better together. I am better on my own.'"

Plano sophomore Wafa Demashkiah, co-leader of Better Together BU, got involved with the club after an on-campus prayer service in December 2015. Soon after, Baylor got attention for holding the prayer service for Muslims. Because of the vigil, Better Together started a group at Baylor, and Demashkiah got involved.

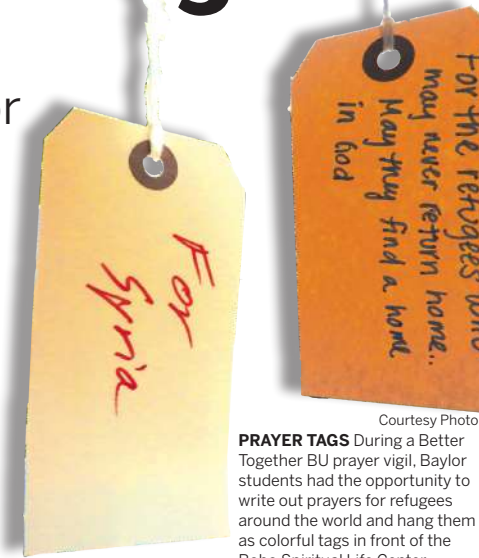
"For me, I wanted to use Better Together to educate people," Demashkiah said. "I think a lot of where the stigma people have against immigrants comes from [is] lack of education- people don't know what exactly is going on. That was my focus- was just to educate people and show the real issue."

Medford, Ore., senior Micah Furlong, former co-leader of Better Together BU and Bears Care, said the entire Bible is the story of refugees. Furlong said people survived only due to the toleration and kindness of those surrounding them. Furlong said even Jesus was a refugee who fled the babies being slain under Herod's rule. Furlong paraphrased Exodus 22:21, saying, "Be kind to the stranger, for you were once strangers in a strange land." For people seeking to be faithful to the Christian Scripture, advocating for refugees is the only option, Furlong said.

"Immigration and diversity are key ways for Baylor to become more Christ-like," Furlong wrote in an email to the Lariat. "Compassion cannot be developed in a bubble."

Throughout the past year, Better Together BU has been active on and around campus to spread its message and support refugees. In November, there was a concert at Common Grounds to raise money for refugees. Better Together BU partnered with Bears Care to have a band at Common Grounds that performed for free, but there was a \$4 entry fee for people to come in and listen. People who came to support also made donations, and Better Together BU members wore shirts that said, "We Support Refugees."

Niazi said they also wore the shirts to class the day of the concert, and it was interesting to see the way people looked at her



Courtesy Photo

**PRAYER TAGS** During a Better Together BU prayer vigil, Baylor students had the opportunity to write out prayers for refugees around the world and hang them as colorful tags in front of the Bobo Spiritual Life Center.



Courtesy Photo

**CAMPUS GATHERING** Better Together BU partnered with the Baylor Democrats to hold a prayer vigil for refugees on March 22 in front of the Bobo Spiritual Life Center. The organization focuses on giving students the opportunity to share their cultures in a safe space, as well as bringing positive awareness to issues involving the current global refugee crisis.

differently. Niazi also said when someone wears a shirt like that, it's making a political statement and opening that person up for dialogue.

"I am a first generation American, and I am passionate," Niazi said. "I invite people to talk to me about it because I want to open their minds to this, too. The efforts with the concert were to create awareness so people know who the refugees are, what this is and how you can help."

Last semester, Better Together BU also got an opportunity to be the first to see a new exhibit at the Mayborn Museum Complex that displayed all different types of religions. The organization got the opportunity to go through and see the exhibit then sleep at the Mayborn Museum for a lock-in. The group also watched a movie about three different women: one was Jewish, one was Christian and one was Muslim. The movie placed an emphasis on the importance of understanding the others. Niazi said this was important for Better Together BU because a big misunderstanding is that all refugees are Muslim, when there are, in fact, refugees of all religions.

Demashkiah said because of everything happening in the news, this semester has focused a lot more on immigration through various speakers' visits to bring attention to these issues to campus. There was also a prayer vigil in March that aimed to bring positive awareness to the Baylor sanctuary petition and immigration issues in the United States.

"Immigration was always a thing we focused on, but this year it was major, as most of our event revolved around it," Demashkiah said. "You really can't get away from it, with Trump in the news and all that. So we decided this is what we need to speak on."

# Deeply rooted

## Ballet Folklórico shows love for Hispanic heritage through dance

**KAITLYN DEHAVEN**  
A&L Editor

El Folklorico las Estrellas de Waco is a nonprofit organization that focuses on keeping Hispanic culture alive through the art of dance.

Mary Lou Pesina, the director of el Folklorico las Estrellas de Waco, shared that the company was originally created in fall 1998 to encourage the appreciation of Hispanic culture. The dancers' ages range from 7 to as old as their feet can keep dancing, Mary Lou Pesina said. The dancers all share a passion for dancing and keeping Hispanic culture alive, and they perform authentic dances from each of the states of Mexico.

"We have tried to keep our dances and costumes as original as possible to reflect the true music and dances from each state," Mary Lou said.

Alicia Pesina, instructor of Ballet Folklórico and daughter of Mary Lou, has been leading the Folklorico since 1998. She said that the entire company works together on a volunteer

basis, and the company is a labor of love for their country and their heritage.

"Keeping our culture alive and showing everyone that we should never be embarrassed or ashamed of where our ancestors came from is my goal," Alicia said. "In a time where we are chastised for our heritage, where many of our friends and their family feel threatened, I just want to show that we are not afraid of our Mexican roots."

McGregor resident Nichole Jaimen has husband really liked it," Jaimen



four children who all participate in the Folklorico as dancers. Jaimen said that this is their second year dancing, and the children have had fun and built their confidence in dancing, while also getting to learn more about their father's heritage. "The reason we got involved is because our cousin's daughters perform at a Folklorico in Fort Worth, and we became really interested in it. My husband really liked it," Jaimen

really likes the tradition and his culture; he takes pride in it."

Jaimen also shared that the children have a wide variety of opportunities to perform throughout the year, sometimes multiple times in one weekend, which gives the siblings a lot of bonding time.

"They're so funny — sometimes they get along and sometimes they don't," Jaimen said. "But whenever they're at practices and dances, they're really supportive of each other, and their sibling bond is strong."

The passion the dancers have for showing appreciation for their culture and sharing authentic Hispanic culture through dancing and costumes is powerful, and the group continues to travel and show others the vitality of their company any chance they have.

Alicia said one of the organization's goals is to stay as authentic and true to Hispanic culture as possible, and that is what keeps her motivated.

"This is where my passion is derived from," Alicia said. "I love my heritage, I love my beautiful culture and I love expressing it in the form of Ballet Folklórico."



Courtesy Art



# Students find second home in Waco

**DIDI MARTINEZ**  
Digital Managing Editor

Salvador, Brazil, freshman Joao Moraes was playing the violin in his room when his father gave him an ultimatum: learn English or say goodbye to music lessons.

"I started learning English when I was 12," Moraes said. "I didn't want to learn English at all. But my father pushed me to learn English just to get a better job and stuff."

Moraes, whose full name is Joao Pedro Costa Grillo Moraes, said he went to a three-hour class twice a week for four and a half years to learn English. Chewing on a slice of dining hall pizza while wearing a Baylor pullover, Moraes admits he had never heard of the university until his sophomore year of high school. At the suggestion of his academic counselor, he explored the possibility of moving to Waco.

"I was thinking of applying to an Ivy League college," Moraes said, "but then [my academic counselor] talked to me and said, 'I realize that your faith is very important to you, so why don't you consider a Christian school?' And I was like, 'Yes, why not?'"

Nearly three years later, Moraes has found home in North Russell Hall as part of the Baylor & Beyond LLC, where he lives alongside other international students and globally-minded individuals. It was at the front desk of North Russell that he met his friend and community leader junior Jess Schurz, who would exchange stories with him about their first football game and classes.

Schurz was born overseas in South Africa and moved to Zambia at age 8. Her American parents are pastors and run a Bible school in Africa. With extended family and friends an ocean away, Schurz said she came back to the United States every summer, but her freshman year of college was the first time she lived within the country. Immediately, she was able to point out ways the United States differed from Zambia.

"One of the main things I noticed is just how distracted we are in America," Schurz said. "There is a lot more that competes for our attention. [In Zambia] there's less distractions. It's a more peaceful atmosphere; it's a slower pace."

Back in Zambia, people run on what she jokes is "Zambian time" — where being late 30 minutes to an hour is the norm.

By growing up in another country, Schurz



Illustration by Didi Martinez | Digital Managing Editor

Baylor University attracts students from all over the world. Pictured from left to right are Salvador, Brazil, freshman Joao Moraes with his girlfriend, Jemima, junior Jess Schurz who was born in South Africa but grew up in Zambia and Beijing, China, freshman Savina Chen.

is able to better understand her international peers as a community leader and see the initial discomfort that comes with starting something new.

"I think our job toward them is the same as our American residents in that we want them to find a home at Baylor," Schurz said. "I think it's just asking more questions, being more open-minded, being more sensitive. Just because the adjustment is so much bigger."

For freshman Savina Chen, getting to know people was one of the biggest obstacles she had to face. This past fall, Chen packed two bags full

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*"One of the main things I noticed is just how distracted we are in America."*

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Jess Schurz | South Africa Junior

of belongings and made the trip from Beijing, China, to Texas. She lived out her first semester at Heritage House in North Village, where she said it was hard to connect with her roommates.

"Because I did not grow up here, I sometimes found it a little bit hard to have the same topic as them," Chen said. "Because they are so friendly, sometimes we ate at Penland or something

together. But if you talk for a long time, maybe you will feel embarrassed because ... no same topic."

In Fall 2016, Baylor had a total enrollment of 283 undergrad students from China, six undergrad students from Brazil and seven undergrad students from South Africa.

Gradually, Chen said she was able to make friends through her classes and organizations. Most notably, she said, are her friends from the Asian Ministry InterVarsity who helped her discern a relationship with God.

"In China, we do not know something about God," said Chen, who grew up as an atheist. "It means nothing because in my country they taught me we need to believe in science. At first, I thought that religion or the Bible is ridiculous because there are some things that are contrast to science. I just thought, 'It can't happen. It's not the real thing,' but when I studied for a long time, I think my mind changed a little bit and then changed more and more."

With so much newness around her, Chen said she often finds herself missing aspects of her life back home.

"I really miss the food because it's so different," Chen said. "I do not like the food in here, and sometimes I try to make the Chinese food, but my roommate, she really does not like that. She cannot bear the smell or something else because it's so different."

# Waco schools support immigrant students

**KALYN STORY**  
Staff Writer

Waco Independent School District (Waco ISD) is made up of almost 90 percent students of color, 57 percent of which are Hispanic students.

In 2014, the Waco Tribune-Herald reported that Waco ISD had a 14 percent increase in the number of non-English-speaking students since the 2009-10 school year. This was almost double the state's non-English-speaking residents growth, which had a 7.5 percent increase within the same time.

Of the non-English-speaking students currently enrolled in Waco ISD, 99 percent speak Spanish. The district had 13,125 non-English-speaking students enroll between the 2009-10 school year and 2013-14 school year, with the majority of those students entering preschool.

Bruce Gietzen, director of communications



Waco ISD had a 14 percent increase in the number of non-English-speaking students from 2009 to 2014.

for Waco ISD, said the district knows that non-English-speaking students and their families and students who are immigrants can need specific resources. Gietzen said the school does its best to provide them with what they need or get them in touch with organizations in and around Waco which can help them.

"We love all our students and wish we could provide everything they need," Gietzen said. "We do have outreach programs, but for more serious matters we do our best to connect students and their families to outside resources like Mission Waco, Greater Waco Legal Services and Lone Star Legal Aid."

Greater Waco Legal Services founder Kent McKeever served as the attorney-director of Mission Waco Legal Services from 2012-16 before opening Greater Waco Legal Services earlier this year.

"We started Greater Waco Legal Services because of the unmet legal needs in the greater

Of the non-English-speaking students currently enrolled in Waco ISD, 99 percent speak Spanish.

Waco-McLennan County area," McKeever said. "After four and a half years working at Mission Waco running the legal services program, we knew that we needed to expand our services to meet the high demand in our community. The best structure for us to build our capacity was as an independent nonprofit, through which we can focus our structure on growing legal service delivery for our community."

Greater Waco Legal Services offers direct representation, monthly free legal advice clinics, relational referrals, social services support, community legal empowerment workshops, and policy advocacy, McKeever said.

McKeever said they have seen a recent increase in immigration cases, saying that about 90 percent of current clients are immigration-related cases. However, over the past four and a half years, McKeever estimated clients breaking down to about 60 percent immigration, 30 percent housing (landlord-tenant, property tax and title issues, etc.), and 10 percent legal barriers to employment and miscellaneous.

McKeever said immigration law is an extremely complicated area of law. In his experience, he said it is a rare occasion when a person can successfully navigate the immigration process entirely on their own.

"Students and their families need to have an advocate – someone who won't take advantage of them – someone who will shoot straight with them and someone they can trust to have their backs when necessary," McKeever said.

immigration legal services while charging fees to the immigrant families. Some have even messed up the cases and lives of clients, McKeever said.

"It is important that Greater Waco Legal Services is here to provide a competent, affordable resource to our immigrant community. It is also vital that immigrants and their families know their rights and how to enforce them, as well as prepare themselves for the worst case scenarios if something bad happens," McKeever said. "An educated and empowered community can make a huge difference in times like these."

Lone Star Legal Services is another legal resource Waco ISD suggests students and families with immigration law concerns contact.

Lone Star Legal Aid is a nonprofit law firm that provides free civil legal help to low-income families. The firm is based out of Houston but has 12 remote branches, including one in Waco, according to its website.

Waco ISD's website also lists Baylor Law School's free Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) clinic as a resource they suggest students who qualify utilize.

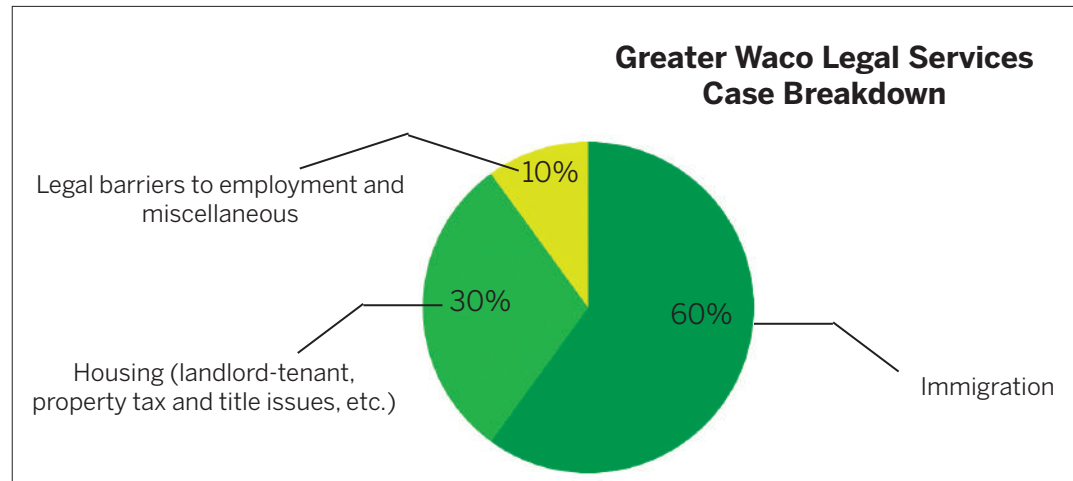
The Law School's clinic helps people who were brought to the United States illegally as a child to apply for DACA cards, which allow them to stay in the United States for a two year period without fear of deportation and get a worker authorization.

Links to all of these resources and others can be found on Waco ISD's outreach website.

## 13,125

Non-English-speaking students enrolled in Waco ISD between the 2009-10 school year and 2013-14 school year.

Specifically, McKeever said Waco ISD students and their families need access to an experienced immigration lawyer, so they will not be tempted to consult with the "notaries" or "immigration consultants" in the Waco area, terms that have no legal definition. McKeever said he has seen some "notaries" and "consultants" break the law by providing



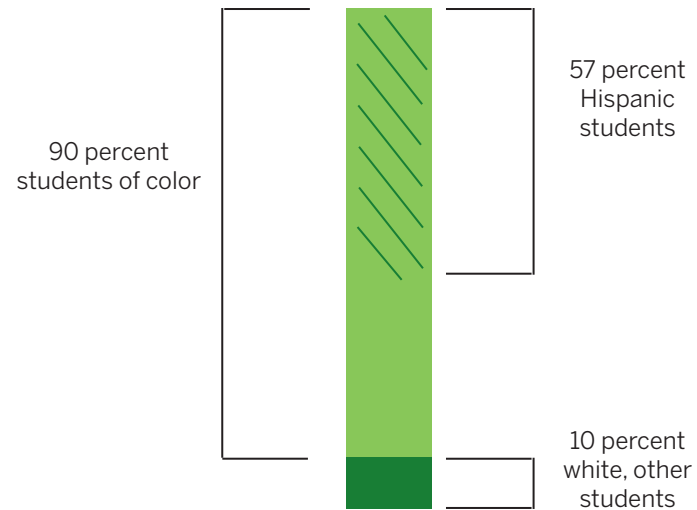
Graphics by McKenna Middleton | News Editor



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

**ELEMENTARY** West Avenue Elementary School consists of 34.9 percent African-American students, 61.3 percent Hispanic students and 3.8 percent white and other students.

### Waco ISD Demographic Composition



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

**MIDDLE** Indian Spring consists of 31 percent African-American students, 63 percent Hispanic students and 6 percent white and other students.

### Resources Recommended by Waco ISD

- **Lone Star Legal Aid**  
<http://www.lonestarlegal.org/Waco.pl>
- **Free DACA Immigration Clinic**  
<http://www.wacoisd.org/cms/one.aspx?portalId=428&pageId=111466>
- **Greater Waco Legal Services**  
<http://www.greaterwacolegalservices.org/>

Graphics by McKenna Middleton | News Editor



# Where to stand on holy grounds



Penelope Shirey | Lariat Photographer



Penelope Shirey | Lariat Photographer

## Religious centers discuss their stance on immigration

**KRISTINA VALDEZ**  
Copy Editor

Several religious communities around Waco have had to figure out where they stand on recent controversial topics such as immigration and sanctuary church status.

The Lariat reached out to The Islamic Center of Waco, First United Methodist Church of Waco, University Baptist Church, First Baptist Church Waco and St. Louis Catholic Church about these topics. Some revealed their approach on immigration, their views on recent travel bans and how their faith aligns with their views while others declined to comment.

Jay Netherton, director of communication of First Baptist Church Waco, located on 500 Webster Ave., sent an email statement on behalf of the community at First Baptist. Netherton first thanked The Lariat for reaching out for an interview, then he expressed the church's support of the Hispanic community in Waco.

"We love and deeply care about our Hispanic brothers and sisters," Netherton wrote.

Netherton described the church's role in hosting "an information/educational event" for the Hispanic community about rights and current immigration status. In the short email, Netherton also expressed that First Baptist has no current stance or comment on the "sanctuary issue."

Bill Al, alumnus of Baylor and head of the personal training division of the Baylor Wellness Department, spoke on behalf of The Islamic Center of Waco, located at 2725 Benton Drive. Al spoke about the Muslim community in Waco as well as its stance on immigration and sanctuary church status.

The Islamic Church of Waco was founded in 1987 by Al Siddiq, father of Bill Al, for the approximately 300 Muslims living in Waco. Bill Al said the center's relationship with the community is great.

"We are involved in the Greater Waco Interfaith Conference," Al said. "It's a conference of a lot of Christian churches, Jewish synagogues here and various other religions. We all get together, we do multiple events. We do Meals on Wheels, we sponsor Habitat for Humanity—we are involved quite a bit."

Al said much of the general

population does not know about the Islamic Center despite its involvement in the community.

"My father has spoken to over 62 churches since 9/11," Al said. "We've engaged in multiple discussions with the Baylor clergy. Baylor religion classes—the world religion courses, actually, bring their students out here to the mosque several times throughout the semester to get a feel for what a mosque is."

Al said he has seen how the immigration and travel bans have effected personal friends who aren't Muslim. Al said that, at first, they were worried about backlash after President Trump took office. However, the Islamic Center of Waco received an outpouring of support in the form of flowers and cards after the first travel ban. Cards are still hanging on the wall of the main wall of the Islamic Center of Waco.

"It was beautiful," Al said. "A lot of the local communities coming together to say they support us. A lot of the churches, synagogues, the Hispanic community—we got a lot of outpouring from them."

Al said the Islamic Center of Waco would not be a sanctuary for undocumented immigrants facing

deportation. Al described it as a "political thing" that the center is staying out of. Al said he hopes that in the future more Muslims get involved in their communities to change perceptions and attitudes.

Father John Guzaldo, pastor at St. Louis Catholic Church of Waco, located on 2001 N 25th Street, spoke about the "general fear" and tension among his congregation of many undocumented immigrants.

"There are members of our youth group who are always living in fear that their parents will be deported," Guzaldo said.

Guzaldo said St. Louis Catholic Church tells members who are undocumented to follow the process of documentation and to not get in trouble with the law. However, Guzaldo said some people practicing the Catholic faith who came from South America and Central America are not interested in becoming legalized citizens.

"They like living in Mexico," Guzaldo said. "They come up here to make money and go back—or they send money."

For those living in a fear of deportation, Guzaldo said they try to alleviate fear through prayer and closeness for God. St. Louis Catholic Church also offers English classes for anyone wanting to learn the laws of the United States.

Guzaldo said although the entire Bible is welcoming of the foreigner, there is no easy answer for immigration.

"If I was poor and lived in Guatemala, I would try to get over here," Guzaldo said.

St. Louis Catholic Church is not a sanctuary church, but Guzaldo said decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis. Guzaldo went on to say that the most difficult task churches face is how to handle, not only immigration, but illegal immigration.

"I visited a man in prison who was being deported because [he] committed felonies," Guzaldo said. "I asked him, 'What are you going to do when you get home?' and he said, 'I'll be back.' The question is, how do we minister to them? If you come back here, make sure you behave yourself."

St. Louis Catholic Church has mass in both English and Spanish. Father Guzaldo said that it is ultimately that it is celebrations that bring people together.

Toph Whissman, the community pastor of University Baptist Church, located on 1701 Dutton Ave., spoke on behalf of University Baptist Church and declined to comment on these issues.

Molly Simpson and Brandon Frenzel, associate pastors at First United Methodist Church of Waco, located on 1409 Cobbs Drive, spoke on behalf of First United Methodist about their congregation and their roles as pastors over recent months.

"As pastors, this is an age-old dilemma of a pastors, we find ourselves, sometimes, disappointed in our parishioners—in our congregation," Frenzel said. "Sometimes, culture and comfort and politics almost inform theology, and we really hope that it is the other way around."

First United Methodist Church's response to President Donald Trump's executive orders on immigration follow the response of the United Methodist Bishops of the State of Texas in an open letter to other Methodist churches in Texas, clarify this letter a bit more and its relationship to FUMC.

"Accordingly, we call upon President Trump, Governor Abbott and the leaders of our nation and state to seek a more compassionate response to immigrants and refugees," the letter stated.

Within the last couple of months, both Simpson and Frenzel said they have found themselves becoming better facilitators during controversial conversations about topics such as immigration and how they offer scripture rather than handing out their perspectives.

"I find scripture much more compelling than some person's argument for or against something," Simpson said.

Simpson and Frenzel spoke about the Bible's many narratives of hospitality and how the simplicity of these stories does not equip us with all the answers to complicated social issues. Simpson said how these hospitality narratives are "foundational" to recognizing that we all children of God. Brandon went on to explain that when Jesus said love your neighbor, he meant everyone.

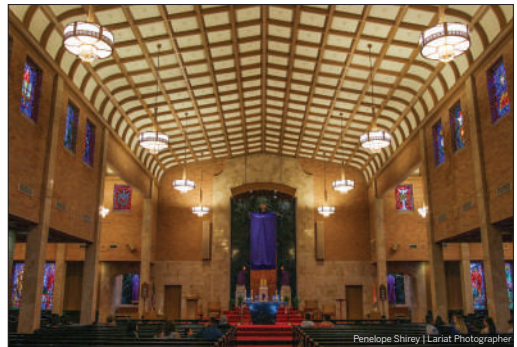
"For us, in a sense, the Gospel is radical," Frenzel said. "There is nothing commonplace about it. It's radical love; it's radical grace. We believe that we offer grace and hope to all people."

Frenzel explained how complicated their role as pastors is because they are trying to speak to everyone. Both pastors have seen how their congregation has become more aware of how diverse the political views are among each other.

"Several months ago, I think they would have all thought, 'We all think the same thing, we all feel the same and we would all vote the same way,'" Simpson said.

First United Methodist Church is not a sanctuary church, but Frenzel and Simpson said the situation as not risen for a decision to be made about sanctuary church status. Simpson said it would be on a case-by-case basis, and it is a decision that would have to include the entire church. Simpson and Frenzel went on to agree on their hopes for the future.

"Our city, our nation and our world will look more like the kingdom of God," Simpson said. "It is a big ask and it takes a lot of work."



Penelope Shirey | Lariat Photographer



Jessica Hubble | Lariat Photographer

(Far left) The building of St. Louis Catholic Church stands tall. (Top left) A Sunday church service is held at First United Methodist Waco. (Top right) Stained glass windows line the chapel of St. Louis Catholic Church. (Bottom right) Light shines through the windows at First Baptist Church.



# A different perspective

## Couple shares their experiences, lives as immigrants in Waco

**RYLEE SEAVERS**  
Staff Writer

On March 30, 2011, Hope and Naz Mustakim were abruptly woken from sleep at 7 a.m. by four armed federal agents.

They were told that Naz's green card had been revoked, and he was being taken into custody. He was held at a detention center in South Texas for 10 months and was not eligible for bail.

Naz moved to the United States from Singapore with his family when he was 13. He has always been a legal permanent resident, but on March 30, some bad decisions he had made as a teenager—and already paid the price for—caused a new set of problems.

Hope detailed on their website, "Free Naz," that as a young adult, Naz struggled with substance abuse and received treatment at Mission Waco's Manna House. In 2007, he faced trial for his substance abuse arrests and was advised to plead guilty, not knowing that it would lead to his detainment four years later. The plea violated the terms of his green card and was classified as an aggravated felony under immigration court, making him subject to immediate deportation.

"It was traumatic to have your spouse just yanked away from you so unexpectedly," Hope said. "You're woken up from sleep, and they are taken away."

Fast forward to 2017, and Naz has been free for five years. The Mustakims live in an "intentionally diverse Christian community" in Waco at a time of high racial tension throughout the nation.

Hope said the diversity in Waco crosses racial, familial and socioeconomic lines. All of these have been woven into a varied community filled with people who have all been shaped by their unique experiences, she said.

"That's what we find makes Waco so endearing and so charming and special is not that it's perfect or fancy or glamorous but that it's got heart and soul," Hope said.

Hope moved to Texas in 2007, and Naz grew up in a Muslim family but converted to Christianity when he was 26. Naz said that the hardest part about moving to the United States was fitting in with his classmates. The prominence of sports in American culture was difficult for him to adjust to, but "the food was OK," he said.

Now, Naz works as the food services coordinator for the Family Abuse Center, and Hope is heavily involved with the Waco Immigrants Alliance, which seeks to make Waco a welcoming community for immigrants, and serves on the board of Grassroots Leadership in Austin. Through their own experiences

with immigration, they said they have realized the importance of standing in solidarity with others and have had countless opportunities to do so recently.

"As soon as it was announced, we went to [Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport]," Hope said of the first travel ban announced by the White House on Jan. 27.

Hope said they could not let their Muslim brothers and sisters believe that there was not a single Christian family that would stand with them and say, "this is wrong."

"I still have a heart for those Muslim people and [know] what it is that they are going through, because I was one of them," Naz said.

Hope said there is an unmistakable feeling when you are standing with other people that you are on the right side of history. Much of the Mustakims' family is Muslim, so they said they know that being a Muslim does not make a person a terrorist, rather it makes them peaceful, hospitable and kind.

"Even Christianity can be spun in a way that is violent, and historically we've seen that, so it's just the same way we can pick apart the Quran is the same way we can do the Bible," Hope said.

Naz's Muslim background serves as a bridge, they said. When they went to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport to protest, many of the Muslim women recognized their last name.

The United States is seen as a melting pot, which has always been seen as a strength, Hope said. Communities that highlight people's differences and uniqueness are communities that thrive, she said, because it doesn't benefit anyone if everyone is the same.

Hope encouraged students who are feeling isolated during this time to find a place where they feel safe and to share their story. Sometimes, hearing that there are actual people affected by these policies is the only thing that can change a person's perspective, she said.

"They are not alone because it's always hard when you think that you are isolated, that you are the only one that is affected," Naz said, "but there are other people that are affected [and] even those who are not directly affected by the ban, we are standing with them."

Hope said there are 92 verses in the Bible that address the "foreigner," "alien" or the "sojourner."

"For Waco to not be welcoming, it implies such negative sense, atmosphere, so it's important for Waco to be welcoming because, for us, that's what makes Waco—to be able to accept other people who are different from us," Naz said.



Courtesy Art

# Baylor Law helps immigrants in need

**KALYN STORY**  
Staff Writer

In 2012, then-President Barack Obama signed an executive order called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, known as DACA.



**Hernández**

It meant that children who were brought to America illegally could apply for a DACA card that allowed them to stay in the United States for a two-year period and get a worker authorization.

In response to this policy change, Baylor Law School professor Laura Hernández, with the help of a student, started the Baylor Law School Immigration Clinic.

“We knew there would be lots and lots of people in the Waco area who would qualify for a DACA card, but we also knew the application can be daunting and complicated,” Hernández said. “We didn’t want anyone who qualified for

this to not receive it because they didn’t know how to apply.”

The clinic assisted Waco-area residents in applying for DACA cards, and in 2012, it assisted with over 300 applications.

In 2012, The Pew Hispanic Center estimated that the deferment program could affect 1.7 million unauthorized immigrants throughout the United States and immediately affects more than 150,000 unauthorized immigrants in Texas.

The clinic operates every other academic quarter and in 2014 added assistance for people applying to renew their DACA cards as well as apply for new ones.

The student who approached Hernández with the idea for the clinic is Baylor alumna Anali Gatlin.

Gatlin said that being the daughter of a South American immigrant influenced her opinions on immigration and has kept immigration issues close to her heart as she grew up.

“My mom felt like a foreigner for a long time after she came here,” Gatlin said. “I saw her struggles and could only imagine the struggles of children of undocumented immigrants.”

Gatlin said that although she didn’t originally plan on going to law school, she has always had a heart for service and helping people.

After graduating from Baylor in 2007 with a degree in anthropology, Spanish and gender studies, Gatlin worked with Habitat for Humanity

in Waco and worked as a director of a homeless ministry in Chicago.

In 2012, Gatlin returned to Waco to attend Baylor Law School. She carried her heart for immigrants with her, and when President Obama signed DACA, she said she knew she wanted to help people gain access to resources available to them.

“There weren’t a lot of opportunities for law students here to have direct experience working with immigration law, so I thought this would be a great opportunity to help the community and help the law students,” Gatlin said.

Gatlin also attributed her passion for helping immigrants to growing up in a small, bilingual church in Waco.

“I grew up hearing the stories of struggles of immigrants,” Gatlin said. “I feel it is my responsibility as a Christian to help those in my community and Baylor’s as well, as a Christian university, to help the immigrants in our community. That is exactly what Baylor is doing through this clinic.”

Hernández said students in the clinic can gain direct experience by working with the clients under her supervision.

She said many law students, as well as

undergraduate students from a wide range of majors, help with the project.

“It is a great opportunity for everyone involved,” Hernández said. “We have Spanish majors helping translate, social work students seeing the kind of work they can go into in the real world, as well as many other majors volunteering.”

Hernández stressed that DACA depends on who is president, and she does not know what the future of DACA will look like under President Donald Trump.

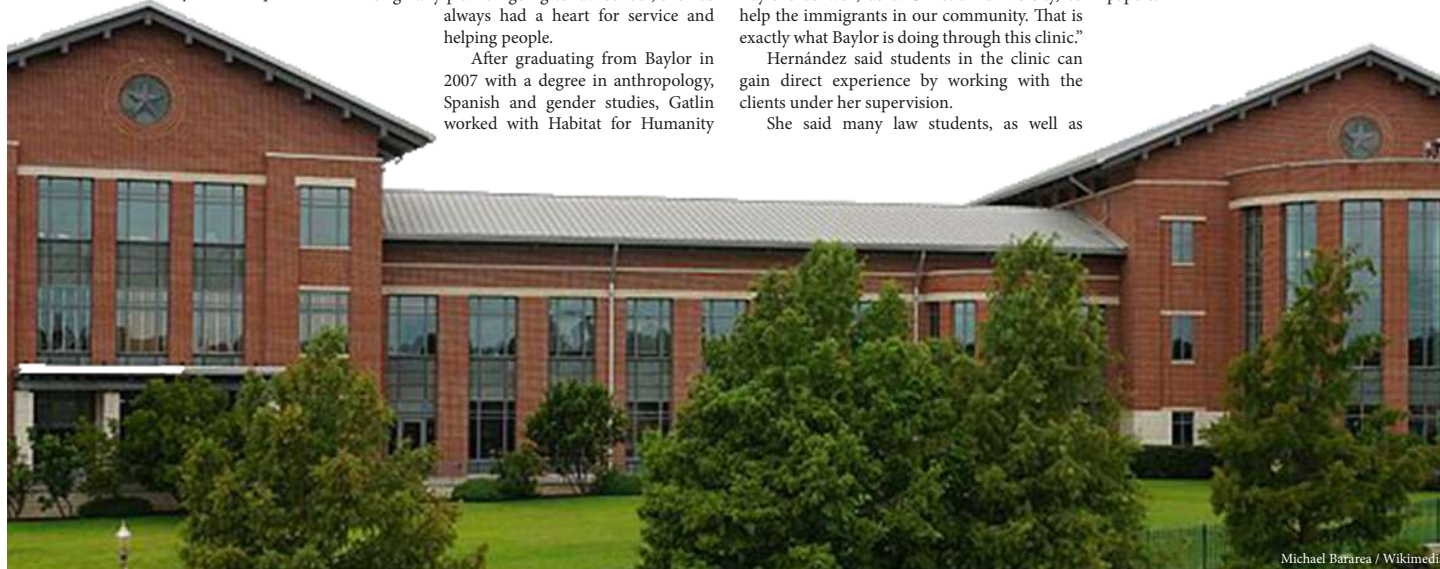
Hernández said the clinic is still aiding people in the renewal of their DACA applications but advises immigrants to not start new applications.

“President Obama promised not to share the applicant’s information with immigration enforcement, but we don’t know what President Trump is going to do,” Hernández said. “Trump hasn’t specifically said anything about this executive order, and he kind of does things his own way which is kind of scary, so I don’t know what is going to happen.”

Hernández said if Trump gets rid of the DACA program, she would like to start a clinic helping immigrants with their naturalization papers.



**Gatlin**



Michael Bararea / Wikimedia





Liesje Powers | Photo editor

# Serving culture one plate at a time

**GENESIS LARIN**  
Assistant News Editor

One of the simplest ways to share one's culture with others is through food. Waco is home to many small businesses that have flourished using traditional and authentic recipes, including Taqueria Zacatecas, also known as Taco Z.

Jose and Griselda Ramirez are the owners of Taqueria Zacatecas and are proud to have seen their restaurant grow and gain success over the 22 years since its opening.

"[The business] wasn't something I really wanted. It just fell in my hands. My husband's sister had three food trucks, but they were not doing well, so she sold them, and we bought one," Griselda Ramirez said. "And that's how we started. She told us more or less how to run things, and we just went for it."

Griselda was born and raised in Zacatecas, Mexico. The city is the eighth largest state in Mexico and is largely an agricultural city with a population size of about 1.5 million, according to the Houston Institute for Culture. Griselda came to the United States after acquiring a visa. As Griselda and her husband opened their business, they decided to use recipes from Zacatecas and sell snacks from Mexico to keep an authentic taste.

"[The recipes] ... we got from [Zacatecas], and we use them here," Ramirez said.

Ramirez said their business initially started with the food truck, but as their clientele and the demand for their food grew, larger space and more employees were needed.

"We first started in a truck, but it got hard carrying the ingredients to and from. It was a lot of work," Ramirez said. "We only opened at nights and during weekends, but as more people started coming, we had to extend the hours."



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

**EGG, BACON AND POTATO** Taco Z offers breakfast in addition to lunch and dinner entrees.

There are currently 17 employees staffed, Ramirez said. Despite the growth in staff, both Jose and Griselda continue to go in early in the morning to prepare and marinate the meat. Ramirez said the time and care that both she and her husband place on the quality of their food as well as the consistency of their flavors is what keeps customers coming back.

"No, we haven't changed anything. I think it is because of our client base because there are some people who will come, and when they come back 5 years later they say [the food] still tastes the same. That's why they come back," Ramirez said. "My husband and I cook everything. Everyone helps in serving and cutting the meat and vegetables, but cooking and preparing the meat is done by us"

When asked about how the political climate has affected her business, Ramirez said that she is most worried about the increase in tariffs on imported goods from Mexico.

"I'm not sure if the changes to the border will change the price of goods coming from Mexico, which would cause our prices to go up and hurt our customers," Ramirez said. "People probably come here because the food is so affordable."

Houston junior Bassey Ubokudom said he eats at Taco Z once every two weeks. The low price and good tasting food is what Ubokudom said draws appeal to the restaurant.

"They are exposing people to new culture," Ubokudom said. "It broadens our horizons. It helps us understand new cultures."

Ramirez said she and her husband will continue to work hard to satisfy customers regardless of politics.

"You keep working hard for them," Ramirez said.

Ramirez also expressed the importance of immigrants to the community and the country.

"I think that by working, one can achieve success. This is the land of opportunities when one puts forth effort. I, like many others, work hard, but those same people help you succeed because they keep coming back," Ramirez said.

Ramirez said she doesn't know what the future will hold for her business, but she and her husband plan on working as long as they are able.

"We never thought [our business] would work out like this. Time is letting the business unfold," Ramirez said. "We always keep working. You have to keep moving forward."

*\*The quotations of Griselda Ramirez have been translated from Spanish to English by the reporter.*

# Mission Waco service offers migrants help

**MEGAN RULE**  
Staff Writer

The Waco legal community gets a chance to give back to the city through the Greater Waco Legal Services, an independent nonprofit that provides legal services and representation to those who are unable to afford the services of a private attorney.

"It came out of a desire to really serve the community and really address these gaps in access to justice that plague our entire nation and all of our communities," Kent McKeever, executive director of Greater Waco Legal Services, said. "Just to really dig in deep to a community and really listen and bend to the needs of a community is how it started."

Greater Waco Legal Services was born in January of 2017 as an offspring of Mission Waco Legal Services.

The legal services section of Mission Waco was founded in 2012, and in January the new part of this branch was established by McKeever and five volunteer attorneys on the Greater Waco Legal Services Board as an outgrowth of Mission Waco and an opportunity to grow the program and to provide more legal services for the community.

"All of our clients from Mission Waco Legal Services transferred with us, so we've been continuing to represent former clients as well as meet with a growing number of immigration clients," McKeever said. "In our current context, there's a lot of justifiable anxiety and concern, so we've been meeting with a lot more immigrant individuals and families to address their situation and provide further legal services if we can."

Mainly, Greater Waco Legal Services provides legal advice clinics, consultations, legal representation and practice for immigrant clients, McKeever said.

Greater Waco Legal Services also provides advocacy for legal barriers to employment such as driver license issues and criminal record histories that prevent people from finding steady employment.

McKeever said a vast majority of clients are immigrant clients, and there has been a significant increase in the request for information and services with recent political events.

There is a fee waiver, according to the website, for those who cannot pay the nominal fee. More information can be found online about how to schedule a consultation appointment and the details of receiving services.

"I hope to say the city has benefited from competent legal representation and really growing the access to the justice system for low income individuals and families," McKeever said. "Also I think that the legal community has another place to give back to the community and serve us with their legal skills, and I think that has been an important piece."

McKeever said the process usually starts by determining if consultation is needed for a client, then assessing their needs and providing services if necessary.

Michelle Tuegel, criminal defense attorney, partner with the law firm Hunt and Tuegel and member of the Greater Waco Legal Services board, said as a board member she serves, advises and assists McKeever with the legal clinic work.

Tuegel also said a lot of the work she is doing now with the clinic is immigration-based as that is a high need right now.

"The legal clinic helps people with small problems that are big in their lives," Tuegel said. "We do things that a lot of lawyers wouldn't even take a phone call for. Kent is working it out for people who can't afford an attorney. I'm happy to help as much as I can."

Tuegel said she believes the immigrants are a part of the community, and she enjoys helping McKeever with his work as it creates a bridge.

Many people are afraid to talk to someone in the legal process, but Greater Waco Legal Services allows individuals and families to come out of the shadows and consult with an attorney to get information, Tuegel said.

Clients that use the clinic typically have complex issues, and Greater Waco Legal Services allows people who aren't citizens to figure out a way of legally getting through the system, Tuegel said.

"Our immigrant community is vital to the prosperity of Waco," McKeever said. "I think that they provide a labor force that is essential to our economy, and the immigrant community also provides a cultural piece and an aspect of diversity that is a beautiful piece of who we are as Waco."



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

**GOOD PRICES, GOOD FOOD** Jubilee Market is part of Mission Waco and serves as an outlet for Waco citizens living in a "food desert," where they lack the ability to buy fresh, healthy foods.



Liesje Powers | Photo Editor

**A SAFE HAVEN** Mission Waco's Center for Urban Ministries is only a short drive from the new office for Greater Waco Legal Services and is a branch of Mission Waco's outreach program.



# Caribbean students talk life in America

**JOY MOTON**  
Staff Writer

Every year, thousands of people leave the clear water and sandy beaches of the Caribbean islands to enter America.

Houston junior Darnelle DesVignes is from Trinidad and Tobago, an island off the coast of Venezuela. DesVignes said the Caribbean is just a melting pot of different cultures.

“Their festivals, food, clothes, music is all a collaboration of different cultures,” DesVignes said.

DesVignes described Trinidad and Tobago as a place where people are more focused on their similarities than their differences. Coming to America was a culture shock for her because America was described as a big melting pot and, coming from another melting pot, she said she thought it would be the same.

“In Trinidad, we have people who are Chinese, black, Spanish, French, Indian, and we don’t categorize ourselves into different categories—you are just Trinidadian,” DesVignes said. “In America, you are black or you’re white. There’s no mixing of different cultures—there’s just separation.”

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*“There is no cookie cutter layout for what an American should look like, believe in or act upon.”*

Darnelle DesVignes | Houston Junior, originally from Trinidad and Tobago

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New York junior Elissa Arthur, originally from Trinidad and Tobago, is a community leader in North Russell Hall. She said being a community leader at Baylor has good and bad to it. A downside has been dealing with people who do not understand what it means to be Trinidadian. She said it can be hard to explain a culture people have not been very exposed to.

“I’ve struggled so much with expressing my culture and struggling with making people



Photos courtesy of Shane Stanislaus

**TROPICAL LIVING** Residents of the Caribbean, which includes Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, live life in a tropical setting due to living on an island.

understand who I am as a Trinidadian that I’ve kind of molded my events to show who I am,” Arthur said.

Last year, Arthur hosted events where she taught her residents how to cook jerk chicken and hosted a game where she spoke in an accent and residents had to figure out what she was saying.

“I think that allowed the other community leaders on my staff and residents to say, ‘Oh being Trinidadian is cool, I want to learn about Elissa’s culture.’ It also exposed them to who I was, so it made me easier to understand,” Arthur said.

Baylor Alumna and Miss Green and Gold 2017 Amanda Plummer is from Jamaica and appreciates the way people from the country are family oriented and respectful of each other. Although she has family that is still in Jamaica,

she said she tries to view both sides of the spectrum where immigration is concerned.

“I understand the side of wanting to come here for freedom and having better opportunities than the country that you currently reside in, but I also understand the side of people coming illegally and all the negative things that happen with that,” Plummer said.

Plummer said there is nothing wrong with people wanting to emigrate to another country until they go about it the wrong way. Plummer believes that immigration is an issue because it is not being dealt with correctly.

“The issue is not that people are or that we need to get them out, it’s the process of how it’s done, and if we do want them to leave, that process needs to be correct too,” Plummer said.

Plummer said America is seen as land of the free, but people also do not realize the amount

of chaos that comes with that freedom.

“When you have so many people without rules and so many people from different cultures coming to this place where they feel like they can do what they want, then it calls for this melting pot of craziness,” Plummer said.

DesVignes said immigration is a good thing because it has the power to unify and diversify a country at the same time. She said preventing it would take away the concept of America as the melting pot.

“There is no cookie cutter layout for what an American should look like, believe in or act upon. There is no blueprint of what America should look like. Immigration reform looks like removing the bans and walls that separate us from other countries so that we may hear and see their struggles and identify them as our own,” DesVignes said.

# A look across the sea

## African students reflect on experience with immigration policy

**JOY MOTON**  
Staff Writer

Baylor is home to a diverse group of students from the various countries of Africa. Though traveling from the same continent, each student's experience at Baylor has been different and has affected their views on global immigration as well as diversity at Baylor.

Onose Aigbe is from Nigeria and said America is very different from her country. She described a society where everyone is expected to bow down to elders and use their right hand for everything. Everyone is more in tune with each other, Aigbe said.

Aigbe said she appreciates the various people she has met at Baylor as well as others from various states she has lived in. She said she came to America for the quality and stability of the education. Aigbe said she would be hurt if immigration were prohibited.

"If immigration were taken away as a whole, I would feel hurt. I feel that it's kind of selfish since America was built on people from different countries," Aigbe said.

Berachah Kwarteng-Siaw is from Ghana and proud of the fact that his country was the first African country to gain independence.

Kwarteng-Siaw said he thinks America is what it is now because of immigration. He believes that

the different cultures that make up America is what makes it so great.

Kwarteng-Siaw said that being from Ghana, there were many people who saw coming to America as an opportunity to give themselves a better life. Even though people are willing to do almost anything to gain that

*"If immigration were taken away as a whole, I would feel hurt. I feel that it's kind of selfish since America was built on people from different countries."*

Onose Aigbe  
Houston sophomore

opportunity, Kwarteng-Siaw said he feels that everyone should not be afforded that chance.

"Some people won't survive here, while others would be a nuisance to society. So, the best bet I feel is to do what's being done right now where there is a background check on people wanting to come into this country

to see if they will survive or benefit it," Kwarteng-Siaw said.

Charlz Bizong Jr. from Cameroon said he believes America is a great place to immigrate to because he has seen what people will go through to have the opportunity to live in America. He said that while it is a great place to immigrate to, people tend to forget that it is an opportunity.

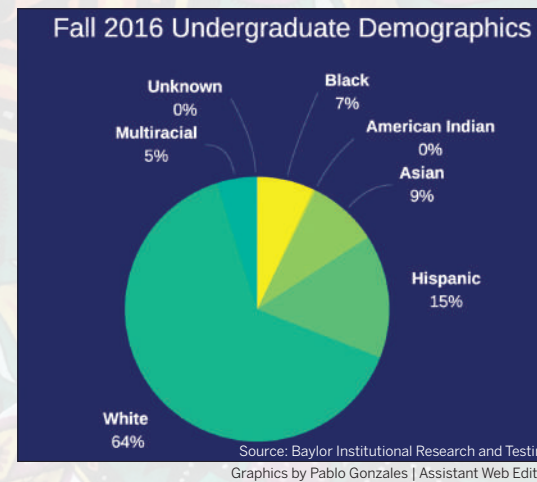
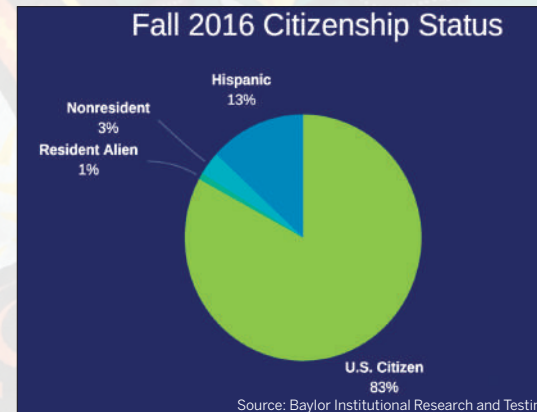
"I feel like as Americans, we don't understand the privilege we have to be here. We tend to feel like we deserve to be here, thus squandering the privilege," Bizong said.

Kwarteng-Siaw said he thinks the president's immigration reform is an overreaction out of fear of radical Islamic terrorists.

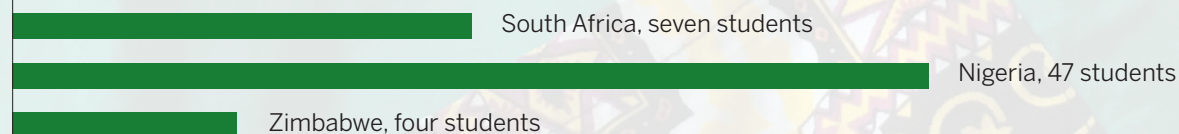
"Obviously, not all of the Muslims in the countries that are banned are radical," Kwarteng-Siaw said. "In banning all of them, he's depriving them of an opportunity to better their lives. In addition, there are radical Islamic terrorists all of the world, so banning these countries wouldn't particularly solve this problem."

Kwarteng-Siaw said he hopes the president's ban will be rejected, and the government can seek better solutions to enact change.

"An actual bipartisan committee can come together, sit down and discuss sensible ways to protect the people of the United States of America from the radical Islamic terrorists," Kwarteng-Siaw said



### Most represented African countries among undergraduate population



Source: Baylor Institutional Research and Testing





Cover art by Joshua Kim | Cartoonist