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the panamerican

Volume 70, No. 16

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High cost for your calling

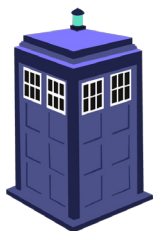
Enrollment Cap Rule hinders affordability

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**ONLINE
CONTENT**
panamericanonline.com

Whovians Unite



RGV Doctor Who fans
come together

National Award



Professor wins
economics award

WAC Honors



Boga, Beguelin
receive awards

APAC Signing



Students, staff sign
APAC beam

Blog Spot



Favorite TV
cliffhangers



By May Ortega
The Pan American

In August 2013, Viviana Villalon found herself in Austin, belting out Maroon 5's "Love Somebody" on her ukulele for recording artists Jennifer Lopez, Keith Urban and Harry Connick Jr. on *American Idol* in hopes of receiving a golden ticket to Hollywood.

According to Villalon, after her first song, Lopez found the

20-year-old's deep singing voice exciting, but the other judges thought otherwise.

Determined to get a 'yes' from each judge, Villalon put her ukulele aside and sang Bruno Mars' "Marry You" to display her true vocal abilities.

"(Urban) said, 'Oh you do have range. That's really cool, I do want to see you in Hollywood.' So, then I got all three yeses," the communica-

tion studies student said with a smile.

THE START

Villalon recalled one day in kindergarten when she was asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, to which she responded "a musician."

At 5 years old, Villalon was enrolled in violin classes, opening the door to musical involvement. The Mission native con-

tinued with the violin for about 10 years, then traded it for singing when she joined choir at Ann Richards Middle School in Mission.

At age 11, Villalon would sit at home and watch hopefuls take a shot at fame before then-judges Paula Abdul, Simon Cowell and Randy Jackson. After 13 seasons, Villalon said she

is still a loyal *American Idol* fan.

As she grew up, Villalon constantly sang around her house and with friends, whether they were songs by her favorite artists, Jason Mraz and John Mayer, or by Lady Gaga.

At the end of her sixth grade year, a young Villalon was given some inspiration by her teacher.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



A MESSAGE TO THE SCARED AND UNDECLARED

Andrew Vera
News Editor

Fumbling through the threshold of teenage life into adult life can be scary and overwhelming, especially when trying to declare a major in college. At that point in your life, the question remains: are you old enough to know what you want to do with the rest of your life?

A former employee of *The Pan American* recently posted an article to social media that listed majors such as psychology, history and mass media as "foolish majors to avoid." While the article never mentioned that these majors wouldn't earn you a decent living, it's hard to not realize that it is subtly written between the lines.

In today's economy, it can be assumed that there are a great deal of students who choose majors, not for the love or excitement of the field, but for the amount of money that it will eventually make them. In a world where instant gratification

reigns supreme, so many students may not take into consideration the time they will spend doing that job.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics states that the average American spends nearly one third of their day at work. If you aren't doing what you love or aren't happy doing whatever it is you're doing, that seems to be an awful waste of one third of your life.

Realizing that there are sometimes pressures from family to make "good money" and do better than they did can help make sense of someone choosing money over happiness. Recently, *USA Today* ranked the McAllen MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) as the poorest area in the U.S. This statistic alone is enough to make you understand why someone would choose a career solely for the money, but it still isn't enough.

There is this strange notion running rampant that money is greater

than or equal to happiness, but the facts don't add up. If that were true, only rich people would be happy and the rest of us would be horribly unhappy. That is not the case here. Doing what you love to do on a daily basis, however, is one of the things that will make a person happiest in life, no matter the monetary compensation.

People who work in the field of psychology or history or mass media are probably doing exactly what they want to do, and loving every minute of it. These people get to wake up every day and go do what makes them happiest, and that kind of luxury has no price tag on it.

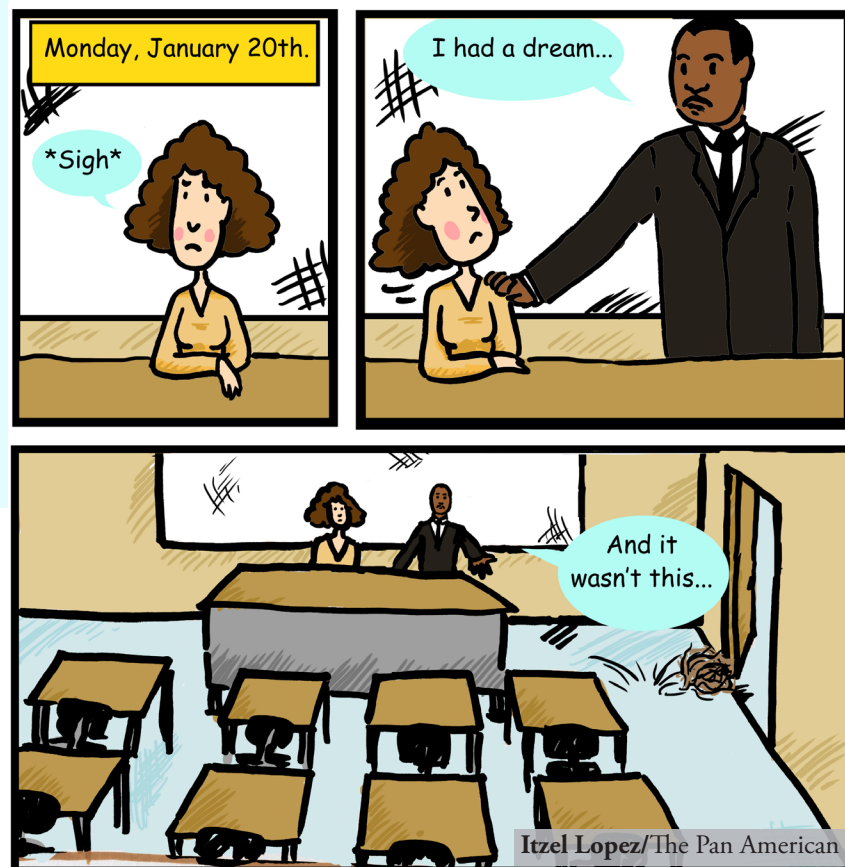
So, to students who are majoring in undeclared -pick what makes you most happy- not what will make you the most money. Choose something that is for you, because at the end of the day, you are the only one living your life. Make it a happy one.

“

Doing what you love to do on a daily basis, however, is one of the things that will make a person happiest in life...

”

CARTOON



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Vol. 70, No. 16



#UTPA

Tweet at and follow us
@ThePan American

We got this! Just write us the check already! #UTPA #6thFan

-@Edgarrrambo

This guy in my American Heritage II lecture has a tattoo of TEXAS on his left hand. I hope he is at least a history major. lol. #utpa

-@kassie_placi2

I propose #UTPA make a building filled with nothing but #SleepingPods. Rested students = better quality work = better reputation/ranking.

-@OxfordChique

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



UTPA engineering majors, (left to right) Jorge Treviño, Daniel Vargas and Andres Diaz start up the poker tournament Jan. 21 at 3 p.m. in the Student Union game room. The first place tournament winner is awarded 25 Bronc Bucks, second place is given 20 and third place is awarded 15. The tournament ended at 7p.m.

Michelle Garcia/The Pan American

Behind the scenes of Project South Texas

Stages in developing the new university

By Melinda Garza
The Pan American

A new name, new school. Creating a new university, especially when it means integrating two existing schools, is a complicated undertaking that requires deadlines, stakeholders, and incorporating resources to have the new university ready by fall 2015. Senate Bill 24, which joins UTPA with the University of Texas at Brownsville, was approved in June 2013.

A total of 50 committees, working groups and more than 400 faculty, students, staff and administrators are fully involved in the planning of the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. The first task was selecting UT-RGV as the official name of the merging schools in December 2013.

"This is the most exciting and fascinating project in higher education in the country today," said Julio Leon, special advisor to the executive vice chancellor for academic affairs of the Uni-

versity of Texas System. "It will truly transform the Rio Grande Valley, and I am very proud to be a part of this fantastic endeavor."

There are currently 600 tasks, both operational and academic, that must be accomplished, including combining and creating new programs, incorporating the new school of medicine, forming the new administration and organizational structure and selecting the new president by late spring or early summer in 2014.

In order to successfully have a single institution prepared to enroll students by fall 2015, the UT System Board of Regents was divided into four major teams. Three teams are involved at the system level, to primarily take charge of the medical school, and the final team is at the campus level, called the New University Transition Team (NUTT).

NUTT is in charge of how the new university is going to look after combining the resources from the two univer-

sities. It oversees 15 administration working groups, 14 academic working groups and one students-only working group; all of which help create and organize the new university and develop a plan for implementation.

Unlike UTPA and UTB, UT - RGV will have access to funds

In the November meeting, Shine talked about the history of medical education in the UT System, the relationship between science and health programs in the new institution, the process for finding the dean of the medical school and a potential approach to a new curriculum, funding and new

“ This is the most exciting and fascinating project in higher education in the country today.

- Julio Leon

Special advisor for Project South Texas

from the Permanent University Fund (PUF), a \$14 billion fund that is supported by revenues from West Texas oil fields.

Kenneth Shine, special advisor to the UT Chancellor, visited UTPA and UTB Nov. 20 and spoke with members of the Academic Working Groups about his strategy for the new medical school.

facilities.

"The medical school will have such an impact to the community," said UT System Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa in an engagement meeting Jan. 14. "And if we could be a part of educating more doctors, that's already an immediate value that we're seeing today."

According to spokeswoman

for the UT System Karen Adler, the new school of medicine will become part of the new university once the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) accredits it. The medical school is expected to enroll its first class in fall 2016. Initially, there will be 50 students per class, but that number is expected to grow over time, according to Adler.

"It's too soon to say how many faculty members there will be. The faculty will be comprised of faculty in the areas of basic science and clinical instruction as well as practicing physicians who will supervise students in their clinical years," Adler said.

In a November meeting, the UT Board of Regents agreed on a budget to finance expenses for transition planning. NUTT was then created as a consulting group to offer support to the working groups.

"The board of regents and I are very concerned with affordability," Cigarroa said. "What we're trying to do is expand excellence, but not put that burden on the students. Comparatively speaking, our tuition has been one of the lowest in the state of Texas. And what we're trying to do is find new resources."

President of the Education

Trust Kati Haycock is one of the leading experts in attempts to close the achievement gap of students of color and those of low-income. Achievement gaps exist when one group of students surpasses another group and the dissimilarity between their academic scores is larger than the margin of error. Haycock held a presentation to the working groups Nov. 25 and discussed the correlation between colleges in terms of graduation rates.

Haycock then spoke about better-performing institutions, such as California State University and Florida State University and what they were doing in order to support and keep track of the graduation rate of minority students.

According to a Project South Texas Status update, Leon said he received positive feedback from faculty with interests to further explore other university concepts.

"UT-RGV is going to be marvelous," University President Robert Nelsen said in the engagement meeting. "It really is, and we will all be very proud of it."



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***Coffee**

The high cost of



By Ashley Hernandez
and Claudia Lemus
The Pan American

Changing majors for university students in Texas now comes at a higher price due to the excess-hour fee charged under the Enrollment Cap Rule (ECR).

Since fall 2013, undergraduate students enrolled in more than 30 hours beyond the minimum required for their degree plan are charged a fee of \$351 per semester credit hour, in addition to their standard tuition rates. Such fees could

mean up to \$4,000 in excess hour tuition charges per semester, according to a bulletin post by the University Academic Advising Center.

While the increase in the fee charges have recently occurred, the ECR has limited UTPA's affordable tuition since it was enforced by the state of Texas in 2006.

AFFORDABILITY

Breaking the status quo, UTPA was recently featured in Affordable College Online's ranking of "Online Colleges in Texas That

Win on Affordability." Having ranked fifth out of 49, the University has been recognized as an institution that offers online degree programs at prices lower than other post-secondary competitors, such as Sul Ross State University and University of Houston-Downtown. In comparison, The University of Texas of the Permian Basin ranked sixth and The University of Texas at Tyler ranked 19th.

In addition, UTPA boasts an annual tuition that is approximately \$3,000 less than Texas State University and Texas A&M University and \$5,000 less than the University of Texas at Dallas.

Each year, UTPA awards scholarships through the UTPA Excellence and Departmental Scholarship program, which consists of more than 100 available departmental scholarships. The application opened in early September 2013 and closed Jan. 15.

The accessibility to scholarships, work-study and internship opportunities makes UTPA affordable, according to Kaitylnn Lavalley, a biology major at UTPA.

"I know of many people on financial aid and there are scholarship, internship and employment opportunities on campus for students," the 19-year-old said. "I am very blessed to already have a job on campus with the agro-

ecology lab, aiding my living expenses and savings for next year."

Jael Garcia, associate director for Student Financial Services, commented that the University accommodates students by providing higher education that is both affordable and accessible.

"Our tuition is relatively low," Garcia said. "And it is commonly known that the Federal Pell Grant does not cover all of the student expenses and the majority have to pay out of their own pocket. However, at the University, we have students who are able to pay their tuition and fees with just their Federal Grant and they don't have to worry about loans and such."

Janette Vasquez, who is working toward a Master's degree in information technology, lives at home and commented on the deciding factors that led her to choose UTPA.

"I chose UTPA because tuition is lower," the 25-year-old said. "There's plenty of financial aid, tuition isn't too high and, as a local student, I don't have to waste (money) on living costs or an apartment."

Tuition and fees at UTPA are estimated at \$5,034 per semester, an affordable institution in comparison to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's, whose tuition and fees are \$6,594 per se-

mester, according to affordablecollegeonline.com

CHEAP WITH LIMITATIONS

However, with such affordable tuition available to students, many have found it easy to change their majors midway through their education, thus prolonging graduation. As a result, they have accumulated excess hours and cost the state further expenses in financial aid.

In a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, 59 percent of students enrolled full time in a four-year institution aiming to obtain a Bachelor's degree graduated within six years.

In an effort to help students graduate on time, the ECR was created to encourage undergraduate students that attend public colleges and universities to complete their degree programs in a four-year period, according to the Undergraduate Academic Policies and Procedures Information.

However, for senior political science major Andrew Coward, the ECR is anything but encouraging.

"The Enrollment Cap Rule has me in an uncomfortable state of mind," Coward said. "I now have new loan debts I have to pay for when I graduate because my financial aid is no longer enough to cover my tuition."

Hours per semester	Regular student	Excess credit hours student
1-5	\$773	\$2,528
6-8	\$1,377	\$4,185
9-11	\$1,982	\$5,843
12	\$2,586	\$6,798
15	\$3,067	\$8,332

finding a calling

According to the political science major, his tuition for the spring semester exceeds what he was charged in spring 2012, despite the fact that he is now registered for one hour less.

"I am paying more now that I am registered for 12 hours than what I paid last year

when I took 13," Coward said. "It's crazy."

According to the ECR, some students with accumulated excess-credit hours may have acquired them while taking dual-enrollment in high school, through remedial courses, or while studying in private or out-of-state-institutions. However, students with such excess hours are exempt from the ECR fees. Other exemptions include:

1. Any hours earned 10 or more years before a student's enrollment under the Academic Fresh Start Program (a program that allows Texas residents who apply for admission or readmission into Texas public colleges to begin a new course of study with a clear academic record);

2. Hours from a previous Bachelor's degree;

3. Hours earned via credit-by-exams or any similar methods that did not require registration for a course.

However, students not exempt from the ECR fees are those who exceeded their hours by taking classes that did not count toward their degree or those who changed majors.

means transitioning from being a full-time to a part-time student. But, unlike Coward, her fees are not from changing her major, but rather from dual-enrollment she earned in high school.

her excessive tuition, Carrillo will contact the Registrar's Office to have them review her bill and appeal her charges.

The general studies major recommends other students in this situation do the same.

"No matter what, if something doesn't seem right, do not do just nothing about it," Carrillo said. "It's our education on the line. It's worth the effort, the time and the worry."

" I am paying more now that I am registered for 12 hours than what I paid last year when I took 13...it's crazy.

- Andrew Coward
Senior political science major

This is the case for Coward, who changed his mind multiple times.

"I changed my major twice," he said. "But while I studied at South Texas College, not UTPA."

According to the ECR, Coward's change of major in another institution does not exempt him from being subject to the charges because STC, like UTPA, is a public Texas institution.

Despite his new debt as a result of the higher tuition, Coward believes he will manage to complete his education on time.

This may not be the case, however, for students from low-income backgrounds.

"These higher tuition rates may push low-income students out and take away their opportunity of obtaining a higher education," the political science major said.

For senior general studies major Olivia Carrillo, higher tuition

Although Carrillo's dual-credit earned hours make her exempt from the excess-hour fees and she will seek to correct the charges with the UTPA registrar, she can do little to avoid the financial worry until then.

"I graduated as a junior from high school and have been a full-time student since I started at UTPA," Carrillo said. "But now, even though I work, if I am not able to get these charges corrected and clarified, I will not be able to afford it."

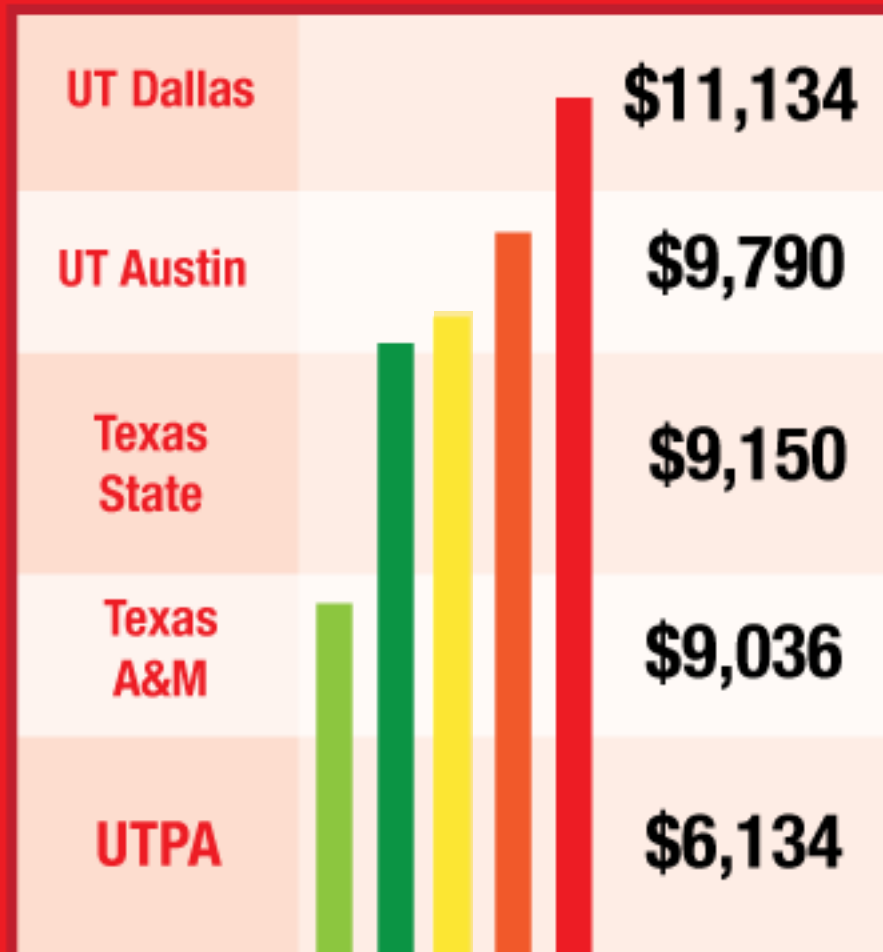
Despite plans to graduate in fall 2014, Carrillo's goal may be delayed due to the new financial hardships the ECR charges may present.

"My parents don't earn enough to help me pay for school," Carrillo said. "With my job, I can barely cover my books and expenses. I don't know how I would graduate if the charges are final."

In an effort to correct



Base tuition cost per year



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE NEXT AMERICAN IDOL?

"I told my choir teacher that I really wanted to audition," Villalon said. "And she said, 'Well, you can.' And she wrote in my yearbook saying, 'Keep on singing. I expect to see you on *American Idol*.' So, that stuck with me."

But Villalon did not receive the OK for Hollywood on her first try.

In 2012, Villalon decided to

ing for classes and posting YouTube videos of her vocal skills on her own channel. In December 2013, the Bronc performed at the University's Winterfest, an annual event UTPA hosts at the end of the fall semester.

Come Season 13 of the popular TV show - which once gave rise to pop star Kelly Clarkson - kicked off by adding Lopez and

wants, and if he allows it to happen, awesome. And if not, then maybe this isn't the direction I should be taking with my life," she said. "I walked in there like I had been preparing for it my entire life. It all came down to that moment."

Villalon entered the judging room, ukulele in hand, and sang two songs that she believed would show her personality. Even though she performed Maroon 5 and Bruno Mars, Villalon said she had debated singing Miley Cyrus' "We Can't Stop" on her ukulele moments before entering the room.

"J-Lo was really excited as soon as I sang that first song, and she said, 'Oh my God, you sing like a guy, but you don't sing like a guy. That's pretty cool,'" Villalon said with a laugh. "And I didn't know to feel complimented or offended."

She won Lopez over with "Love Somebody," but Urban and Connick Jr. were not convinced.

"Keith Urban said he was concerned about my range because I have a deeper voice for a girl," Villalon explained.

Performing "Marry You" got the ukulele player one step closer to Hollywood as

well as a golden ticket, symbolizing each contestant's success. The moment she was approved by all three judges, Villalon exited the room to give the good news to her parents, sister, brother-in-law, niece and nephews.

"I ran out with my golden ticket, super excited," she said. "My family had Silly String. It was awesome."

HOLLYWOOD BOUND

Once the results were broadcast Jan. 15, Villalon said her phone exploded with calls, texts and social media alerts from family, friends and total strangers.

"It was kind of an overnight thing," she explained. "My Facebook page probably had 200 likes before *American Idol*. Now, it has about 2,300. I'm shocked."

Villalon said it has been challenging to concentrate in her classes lately, since support has been pouring in all around her.

"There's a lot of fans and



Jon Nutt/The Pan American

Viviana Villalon, a communication studies major at UTPA, poses for a picture after a long day of recording Jan. 20. She was recently accepted to compete in the new season of *American Idol*. She travelled to Hollywood in August 2013 to audition for the singing competition.

that's incredible. I almost cried yesterday because all of these people are telling me beautiful things and they don't even know me," she said. "Strangers are sending me their addresses from Michigan, asking me to send them my autograph. I'm like, 'What? Is this real life?'"

Whether Villalon is crowned the next American idol or not, she still plans on completing her education and graduating in May 2015 with a Bachelor's Degree in communication studies.

"I think it's because my parents supported going to school and how important it is to have a degree," she said. "My dad graduated from UTPA also. It's important. I gotta finish school."

I mean, I'm a junior already, so I gotta finish."

Although Villalon said she is grateful for having made it to Hollywood, she also sees her success as a way to represent her roots.

"I think it's incredible to have the opportunity to represent the (Rio Grande) Valley," she said. "There's so much talent here and I feel like we don't always get the opportunity to show it, so at this point, I feel incredibly blessed. I just want to make the Valley proud, no matter the outcome."

Viewers can continue watching Villalon's journey during the show's "Hollywood Week" in February.

“When God gives you something you're truly passionate about, you can't ignore it. You have to chase your dream.”

- Viviana Villalon
UTPA student

follow her teacher's words and travelled to Austin, the show's only audition stop in Texas. Although she did not make it to Hollywood, the junior did not let that crush her dreams of becoming the next American idol.

"When God gives you something you're truly passionate about, you can't ignore it," she said. "You have to chase your dream."

After her first attempt, Villalon spent her days study-

Connick Jr. to the trio of judges.

The 13th season also brought a second chance for Villalon. Once again, she headed to Austin, like 3,000 other Texan hopefuls, still seeking that elusive golden ticket to Hollywood.

SHOW TIME

After waiting her turn for about seven hours, it was time for Villalon, or contestant 20515 as she was known, to shine.

"I prayed about it beforehand and I said, 'If this is what God

THE BRITISH ARE COMING

UTPA welcomes new club on campus

By Jaelyn McClenahan
The Pan American

When 23-year-old UTPA student Jannesa Campbell heard that a Study Abroad trip to England, scheduled for July 10-24, 2014, was not getting enough attention, she came up with the idea of the British Culture Guild to peak students' interest in English literature, culture and travel.

The British Culture Guild is a new club on campus that discusses and reviews the culture, travel and literature of England. Campbell, the club's president, created it to stimulate interest in England in hopes of obtaining a large enough number of students to sign up for the Study Abroad trip in the upcoming summer.

"I believe that the Study Abroad program is vital because it increases cultural awareness and broadens the mind," said Campbell, "There

were already people interested in British things, such as *Harry Potter*, *Doctor Who* and Shakespeare, so I thought it'd be a good idea to get a bunch of people together to show interest in not only British literature and art, but actually going to England, should the opportunity arise again."

In order for a Study Abroad trip to be approved, there must be a sufficient amount of students signed up for each offered class. Lack of interest leads to lack of students signing up, therefore there is a possibility of trips being disapproved.

UTPA's Study Abroad program took 183 students to 13 countries last summer, such as France, Morocco and China. On average, there are about eight to 12 trips planned each year. Study Abroad is used as a way to expand students' oppor-

tunities for education and culture, according to Sandra Hansmann, the director for the office of international programs.

"We do everything that we possibly can to get our students to where they want to go," Hansmann said, "There have only been less than a handful of times we have had to cancel trips. It is very rare that we do because we really want our students to experience all the opportunities and possibilities that come with Study Abroad."

NOT JUST A CUP OF TEA

The British Culture Guild formed last semester when Campbell realized she had the opportunity to help broaden the minds of individuals with a culture different from their own. For this upcoming semester, the club will hold meetings to discuss various topics, such as

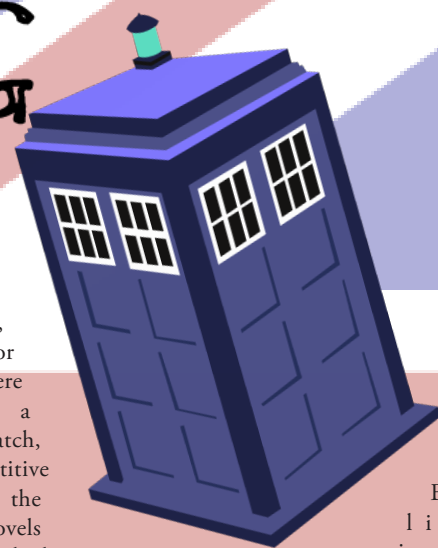
Lord of the Rings and *Sherlock*, as well as participate in mini-lectures by the club's advisor Caroline Miles, an England native and UTPA English professor.

"Way before I began taking classes at UTPA, I was involved with the Anime Club at Texas State Technical College, and there were always things we wanted to do that were more interactive than just watching anime," said Campbell, a Harlingen resident. "That's what we want to do here. We don't just want to watch popular shows...but discuss them more in-depth and learn more about the culture rather than just watching BBC America."

As a way to shake things up, the British Culture Guild plans to involve all of UTPA and the community as a whole in their upcoming costume event themed around the infamous

piece of English literature, *Harry Potter*. For the event, there are plans for a Quidditch match, the competitive sport played in the *Harry Potter* novels and movies in which players must shoot four balls through six makeshift rings, as well as a wand-making station. The Guild plans on creating an obstacle course for the Quidditch match, similar to one used in *Harry Potter*, minus the flying broomsticks.

"This club goes beyond just the cliché things that we all expect, like them drinking cups of tea because that's what a lot of people expect, but more into the similarities and differences between the U.S. and the U.K. cultures," said Campbell, an



English major.

For those

interested in participating in the British Culture Guild, meetings will be held in ARHU 341 Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m.

As of now, the trip to England has neither been approved nor disapproved by the Office of International Programs. There is still time to apply for the trip. The registration deadline is March 21, 2014.

TENNIS TAKES A WAC

UTPA TEAMS STRUGGLE WITH SEASON RULE CHANGE

By Kristela Garza
The Pan American

The spring marks the end of the fall tournament season for both the men's and women's tennis teams. With the new season came a flood of new rules from the Western Athletic Conference. Piled on top of new competition, this might change the game for UTPA tennis.

The new point format affects what is referred to as "match protocol," or scoring system. According to Head Men's Coach Brandon Stokes, when a match reaches a score of 40/40, the return server chooses the side he/she wants to return from and the next point wins the game.

This is a change from the old rule, when the returning server had to win by two points. This allowed for more of an opportunity for the other player to defend and serve in return, thus expanding the length of the match.

This change is a quick one, but according to Stokes, his team is ready.

"The rule changes are only in place for the first six weeks of our spring season. Then, we go back to the more traditional scoring format," Stokes said. "We train with the new scoring format so we are used to it. It is the no-ad scoring format in singles, which means there is more pressure on every point to compete at our best...it goes quickly."

Just as the men's team trained for the new rule, the women's team is set to combat the change as well, according to Head Coach Stephanie Vallejos. She recognizes that players will have to adjust on the court.

According to Vallejos, one of the bigger rule changes is that when called for, instead of a full third set being played, a match-tie breaker will be put in place.

"The new format for women's tennis will speed up the overall length the players are on court," Vallejos said. "It definitely puts pressure on the players to start strong from the first point. Momentum from the second set might become a bigger factor heading into tie-breakers for the third set."

Though the coaches train

their players accordingly, student-athlete Alejandro Sanoja is definitely not happy with the rule change; he maintains that it alters the heart of the game for him and his fellow teammates.

"The new rules affect the players...it's causing the game to be completely different from what the players like to play, from what the players are looking forward to," said Sanoja, a sophomore from mission. "When the new rules came through it was almost as if they were announcing another sport completely different from tennis. The reasons why they are doing these changes

"I feel very confident about the upcoming season," Beguelin said. "I think that we have practiced hard as a team during the fall semester. Even though we are a young team, I think that we are ready for the season. We pushed each other hard on and off the courts last semester and there is a great team spirit which will definitely help us during tough matches."

are also not strong enough reasons to change the game."

Currently, the green court athletes are making adjustments for the new season, still forging forward. The new rules come at a time when UTPA comes face to face with new conference rivals.

Though the spring season has already started and the first WAC match took place Feb. 28 against Grand Canyon University, the Broncos will then play the rest of the conference season finally ending their first year with the WAC as they face off against Laredo Community College on Mar. 4.

The WAC brings new foes for the Broncos and with that comes a lot of unknown variables. But despite this, according to Wanda Beguelin, senior, the teams are chomping at the bit to compete.



Wanda Beguelin

Jon Nutt/The Pan American

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STRONG SHOWING AT TEXAS A&M 12-TEAM INVITATIONAL

UTPA track and field's first spring invitational

By Marco Torres
The Pan American

The Bronc track and field team recorded 10 top-five finishes at its first spring invitational in the 12-Team Texas A&M Invitational at the Gilliam Indoor Track and Field Stadium Jan. 17.

Head Coach Xavier Richardson was pleased to see that the first indoor competition went well.

"We had some great performances already from each of the event groups," Richardson said. "We had some promising results and we are off to a good start."

Long-distance runner Martin Casse got the Broncs off on the right foot by winning the one-mile run with a time of 4:11.73, marking the second fastest time in program history. He finished six seconds ahead of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's Paul Hansel.

"Martin Casse running away with the men's mile and leading off the men's distance medley relay in strong fashion were both great performances," Richardson said. "He's showing that he is an awesome talent with plenty more to come. He's going to be a force to be reckoned with."

In the men's weight throws, senior Jesus Alvarez from Mission finished fourth with a toss of 16.65 while freshman Javier Carretero, from Montijo, Spain, finished fifth.

Alvarez also took part in the shot put where he placed third after a throw of 14.5 meters. Senior Barclay Scott Bann finished in fifth with a throw of 14.14 meters.

Senior Dijan Johnson had a record-setting day and finished in third place in the 400-meter

dash, posting a program record of 48.31. Johnson's second record came in the 200 meter dash with a time of 21.28 in second place.

The previous record in the 400-meter was held by J.B. Pruitt with a time of 48.67 seconds in 1994. The record for the 200-meter dash was Derek Sanders with 21.99 seconds in 1991.

"Dijan Johnson broke two school records en route two top-three places in the 200-meter and 400-meter dashes is certainly noteworthy," Richardson said. "He and Casse have certainly announced their season arrival in great fashion and will be strong contributors."

In the women's weight throw, Jasmine Davison had a third-place finish with a mark of 16.8 meters, while teammate Erika Anderson took

fifth place with a throw of 15.75 meters. Davison would go on and take fifth place in the shot put with a throw of 12.68 meters.

Other notable performances came from the women's one-mile run when Rebekah Rodriguez finished in seventh with a time of 5:18.61. The women's 4x400-meter relay team took 10th place while the men's 4x400 came in seventh. Finally Leocajuan Williams had a triple jump length of 11.69 meters, well enough for sixth place.

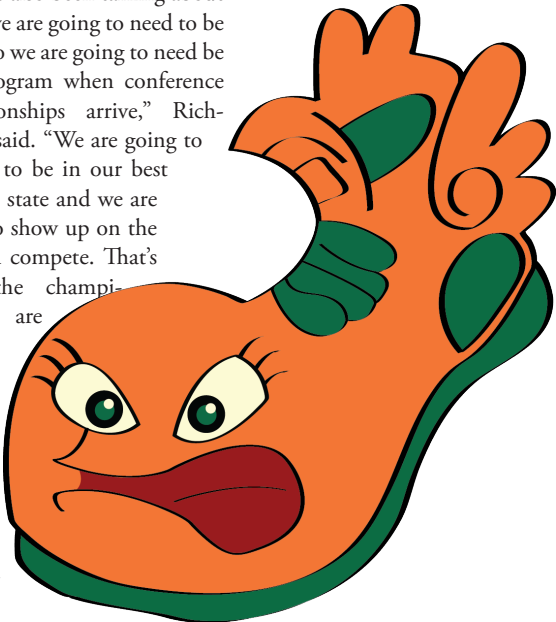
With a little over a month left till the Western Athletic Conference Championships, Richardson is satisfied with how the Broncs performed and competed but knows that there is still work to be done.

"We have been talking about

mental preparation since the first team meeting in the fall. We have also been talking about where we are going to need to be and who we are going to need be as a program when conference championships arrive," Richardson said. "We are going to prepare to be in our best physical state and we are going to show up on the day and compete. That's what the championships are about."

The Broncs are back in action Jan. 31 when they travel to

Lubbock for the Masked Raider Open, hosted by Texas Tech.



WEEKLY UPDATES

MEN'S BASKETBALL

■ Won first Western Athletic Conference game 78-66 against University of Missouri-Kansas City Kangaroos in Kansas City, Mo. Jan. 16

■ Won against Chicago State University Cougars 84-61 in Chicago Jan. 18

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

■ Won 65-50 over UMKC Kangaroos Jan. 16 at UTPA Field House

■ Won 66-44 against Chicago State University Cougars Jan. 18

■ *Jan. 25 New Mexico State University, 7 p.m. at UTPA Field House

MEN'S TENNIS

■ Opened spring season with a 0-7 loss against No. 12 Texas A&M Aggies Jan. 19 at the George P. Mitchell Tennis Center

■ *Jan. 24 University of Maryland Baltimore County, 2 p.m. at Orville Cox Tennis Court

WOMEN'S TENNIS

■ Started spring season 1-6 against No. 19 Baylor Bears Jan. 18 at the Hawkins Indoor Tennis Center

■ *Jan. 24 University of Maryland Baltimore County, 10 a.m. at Orville Cox Tennis Court

TRACK AND FIELD

■ Recorded 10 top-five finishes Jan. 17 at the 12- Team Texas A&M Invitational at the Gilliam Indoor Track and Field Stadium

*Denotes home game

BASEBALL WEEKEND

■ *Jan. 24 Green vs White World Series Game 1, 9 a.m. at Edinburg Baseball Stadium

■ *Jan. 25 Green vs White World Series Game 2, 9 a.m. at Edinburg Baseball Stadium

■ *Jan. 25 Alumni Game, 1 p.m. at Edinburg Baseball Stadium

■ *Jan. 26 Green vs White World Series Game 3, 9 a.m. at Edinburg Baseball Stadium

*Denotes home game

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