

THE COLLEGIAN

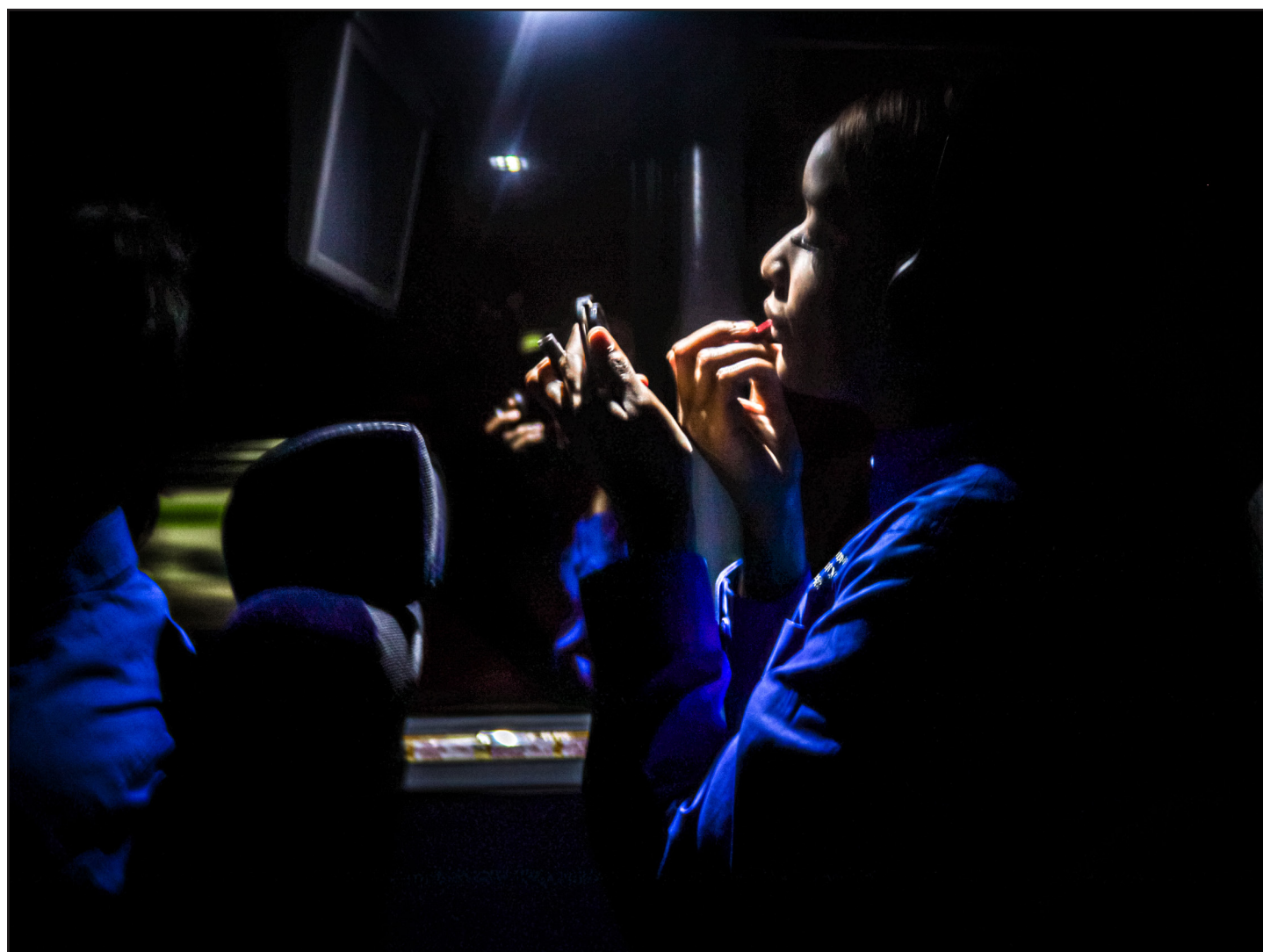
SERVING THE TARRANT COUNTY COLLEGE DISTRICT

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DISTRICT

TCC student leaders take Austin



Alex Hoben/The Collegian

NE SGA senate chair Olivia Reed does her makeup by the light of the bus in the early morning on the way to Austin.



Alex Hoben/The Collegian

South SGA president Karina Calderon, SE SGA secretary Xander Todd and SE SGA president Matthew Jewell clap during the student-led debrief after their sessions on Community College Day.

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On a crisp Thursday morning at 4:30 a.m., TCC student leaders gathered together to embark on a trip to Austin to question the representatives of their county, or at least the teams of those representatives, at the Texas State Capitol.

Community College Day is a chance for community college students across the state to take a trip to Austin to meet with Texas House and Senate members and ask about problems they see in their community and discuss possible solutions through legislation.

It's also an opportunity for the students to get an up-close look at what the legislative process is and learn what issues are the most important for the people serving them in their state government.

The journey started with a three-hour-long drive to Austin from TR Campus at 5 a.m.. On the way there, the students, most of which were SGA officers from across

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DISTRICT

Texas bans TikTok on campuses due to risk

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Due to a federally-mandated ban, students who use TikTok weigh in on the possible effects.

UT Austin, Texas A&M, UTA and others have already implemented this restriction at the beginning of their spring semester.

The restriction targets TikTok access on school provided WiFi and devices, an action pushed forward by the State Agencies letter sent on Dec. 7, 2022, by Gov. Greg Abbott explaining security risks regarding TikTok's data collection and requiring every state agency to implement the restriction on any state-issued device before Feb. 23, 2023.

The question then becomes what TCC will do in regards to this requirement, but until it is confirmed, NE student Colbie Ratcliff has expressed that she understands the reasoning behind it.

"I do know that they [TikTok] collect a lot of your data," Ratcliff said.

Along with Greg Abbott's letter to State Agencies, Congress had banned TikTok on federally-owned devices.

Many of the concerns prompting the restriction on TikTok include the collection of information and possible security risks. NE instructional associate Johnathan Adamson theorized that if TCC were to implement the restriction, one option would be a security software to block the TikTok URL.

“

I feel like colleges have good incentive to block said sites—since they take up so much bandwidth and network traffic.

Amber
NE student

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"You can configure your network to block your URL such that devices on the network can not detect it," said Adamson.

He explained that configuring would happen if they knew what IP address to block. In this case, he said the security software would block the IP, stopping it from being recognized by the browser and therefore inaccessible under the instructions of the security software.

Though a security software could block TikTok's URL, Adamson brought up the use of VPNs.

Through VPNs, he said URLs would become disguised to access the network and in turn would pass through to access. The way around that, he said, may be that a software would recognize heavy traffic through an unrecognized address, leading to the blocking of that VPN.

NE student Amber, who did not want to disclose her last name, explained that colleges would have reason to push for a restriction, but acknowledged that there were also other things that could've had the same attention.

"I feel like colleges have good incentive to block said sites—since they take up so much bandwidth and network traffic—but I would then feel like blocking far more sites is necessary," she said.

Amber said increasing security against possible safety issues with TikTok was more than likely due to legality and less about security.

"I'm not convinced that banning Tiktok is anything more than the university trying to protect itself from legal liability at the helm of Greg Abbott," she said. "It is then progressive, since the objective is to keep the college from being sued. There are a number of good reasons that they should have banned this and several other platforms a long time ago. Instead, they waited until they were under intense heat to do so."

DISTRICT

New food service scheduled for mid-spring

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TCC campuses will receive new food options by mid-semester from the vendor ECI Management Group.

Since the sudden closure of the food service options across the district during the winter break, students have been wondering when a stable option will be available. According to chief operating officer Susan Alanis, the previous food vendor Genuine Foods left due to not submitting new terms to their contract that the company initially wanted to renegotiate. Genuine Foods did not return calls seeking comment on the situation.

"They came to us just before winter break and expressed a need to renegotiate their contract because they were having difficulty meeting the financial terms," Alanis said. "So they didn't have specific terms to propose, and part of the pressure on the situation was that they were supposed to take over for ECI at the TR Campus."

Alanis said the district had to make a decision quickly to preserve the relationship with ECI and to consider what they could offer to the other campuses.

"They [Genuine Foods] basically didn't negotiate any further revised contracts when we told him we were gonna continue with

ECI at Trinity River to protect our trust," Alanis said.

In the initial bidding process where Genuine Foods was selected, ECI had also put in an offer that the school is now in negotiations with taking over the other campuses' food services.

"Sort of coffee shop grab and go," she said. "They're going to provide that at the other campuses. So we've reached an agreement with them. It won't happen until probably spring break."

Alanis said she believes that ECI will be a capable food vendor that she is excited about bringing across the district. In the meantime, though, students looking for on-campus food should look into the bookstores as well as the fresh vending available across the campus, she said.

"The Barnes and Noble bookstores all have a selection of grab-and-go stuff that we've asked them to ramp up quantities," Alanis said.

Regarding the food services on campus, Alanis said the plan is to transition the campuses over spring break to the grab-and-go menu that ECI would provide.

NE student Samuel Peters said he isn't too concerned about the food options but instead on how they will affect the gaming area in the cafeteria adjacent to the food service stand.

"I'm worried if a lesser-quality food place comes in, it'll stink up the place, and I wouldn't be able to use it anymore," he said.

NE student Margarette Meyers said while she got the email that the food services were closing down, it didn't settle in until she saw the gates in the NSTU building locked down outside the cafeteria.

"Even though I read the email, I guess it just didn't hit me as quickly, and I was like 'Oh, the gates are closed. Oh, goodness,'" Meyers said.

While she didn't use the food services frequently, Meyers said she cares more about the convenience it brings to students who can't leave campus for food. She also thinks the new food services would be a great way to give students jobs.

"I think it would be a great thing to have students work in the food service so that there can be more jobs," she said. "You never know who has talent here, who can actually cook and things like that."

Meyers said she would've preferred more sympathetic communication from administration about the closing of Genuine Foods' stands instead of an email with a series of links that were hard to follow. But she is interested to see what options the new service will provide in the future.

"Maybe desserts," she said. "That would be nice."

Pickleball

Students and staff gather to play the fun sport
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Club Rush

Clubs and organizations gather to try and recruit new members
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'Five Easy Hot Dogs'

Mac DeMarco's new album is an existential journey
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TikTok ban on Texas colleges

The new ban on the short-form media app may be pointless
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'Cowtown' culture

A presentation on the history of vaqueros and their impact
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College (continued from page 1)



Alex Hoben/The Collegian

SE SGA senate chair Jamea Johnson, SE SGA treasurer John McGee and Connect SGA vice president Anthony Guevara relax in the back of the bus as the sun rises.

the district, discussed the questions they would address later that day and what they thought the day would bring. TR peer leader Sunny Whiddon said she was excited to take part in the trip but also anxious.

"I'm scared I'm going to mess up or say the wrong words in front of them," she said. "I'm scared I'm going to say something silly and they're going to be upset at me. But also this guy actually represents me, and I want him to know and see who is in his district."

Whiddon said that as a young queer individual, she has a unique perspective that deserves to be heard. She planned to ask questions regarding public transportation, city infrastructure and queer topics. NE SGA parliamentarian Abiskar Thapaliya shared Whiddon's sentiment.



I had five questions. I got the answers to maybe two of them.

Grace Kadia-Riccardi
TR SGA vice president



"I'm just excited to be here," he said. "It's 6:04 in the morning, January 26 and everything's dark. We're on the highway, excited to be in Austin, meet new people, ready to have fun."

The event itself included meetings throughout the day with representatives or their teams, as well as a rally in front of the Capitol to kick things off. There, students from community colleges around the state all stood together.

NE student development services director Cara Walker, who was one of the advisers for the event, said it was vice chancellor emeritus Bill Lace who coordinated across the campuses to bring this trip to fruition.

"It happens every other year during the Texas legislative session," she said. "So I've been a couple times before this. It's always

great to see students to be able to interact with our government officials. So we all coordinate together all the student activities offices and the directors of student development services to gather student leaders to be a part of this."

Walker said she loved seeing the interaction between all the campuses and that seeing the students at the rally with the other community colleges was a proud moment for her.

But many students on the trip didn't actually meet with the person they were scheduled to meet with but rather varying members of their staff.

TR SGA vice president Grace Kadia-Riccardi also couldn't meet with her representative, Sen. Kelly Hancock. She said she was incredibly prepared for this meeting but was instead met with a wall.

"I was really excited to meet with the representative, Mr. Hancock himself," Kadia-Riccardi said. "I was really thinking that I was going to press him with all these questions that I had about specific inconsistencies with his bills. So when I went to his office, I heard him behind the little wall and I was like 'OK, cool. We're actually gonna meet him.' A lot of people hadn't been meeting him."

Instead, she said she met with his policy adviser, who would not answer the questions posed to him because he didn't want to speak on Hancock's behalf.

"I had five questions. I got the answers to maybe two of them," she said.

She said what discouraged her the most was the feeling of disrespect she got from the staff and the experience as a whole.

"These are the people that are sitting in our government right now, and they're not supporting community college students," Kadia-Riccardi said. "So it just doesn't make sense to me."

Some students did get to meet their representatives, though. Whiddon said while his representative was a genuinely funny guy, the conversation focused more on specific bills rather than change. However, the overall experience was incredibly fun.

"I was expecting to be more bored, to be honest," she said. "I was expecting that it would be boring on the way in and out. But I got to meet cool people today as well as seeing the Capitol and meeting the representative. It's really awesome."



Alex Hoben/The Collegian

SE SGA president Matthew Jewell, treasurer Xander Todd and parliamentarian Anita Aiguokhian take a selfie before the bus departs TR Campus at 5 a.m..



Joel Solis/The Collegian

NE SGA historian Angel Vargas and TR peer leader Sunny Whiddon look through the folder given to members of the trip which included maps and assignments.



Joel Solis/The Collegian

Rep. Salman Bhojani meets with TCC SGA members in a Q&A meeting to discuss the students thoughts on current presing topics and how to get more involved.



Joel Solis/The Collegian

Chancellor Elva LeBlanc and NE SGA president Ethan Thomas stand outside waiting to begin the student rally. A complementary breakfast was provided.