

ISLAND WAVES

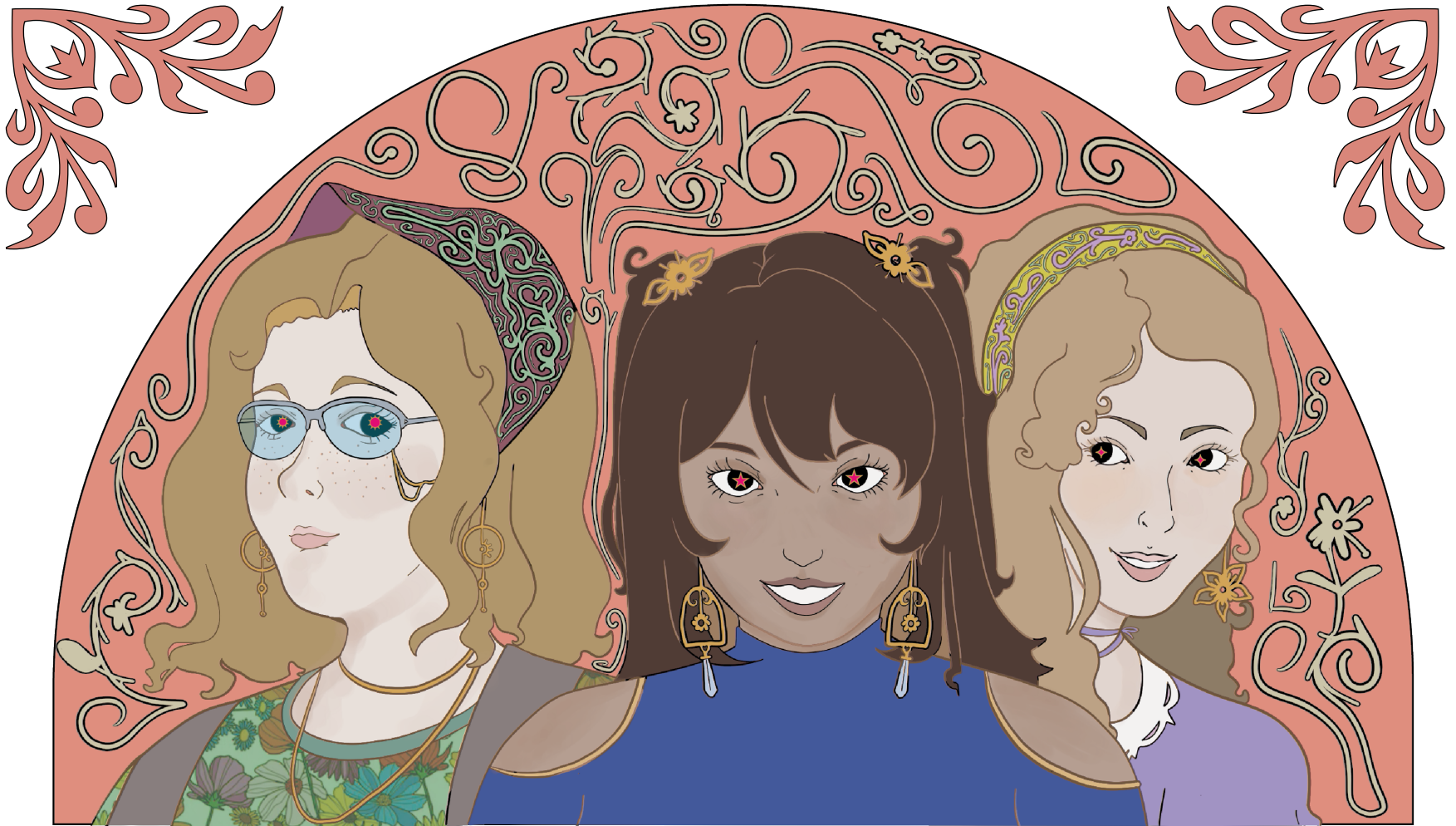
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WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH EDITION

Recognizing and Celebrating Women's Her-story

Chloe Tilley | Managing Editor

On March 1, 2023, the office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) hosted the kickoff to Women's History Month, called the Women's Herstory Celebration. The event invited fellow Islanders, faculty, staff, and Coastal Bend community members to celebrate the accomplishments of women from all backgrounds who have made history.



Islander Feminists Officers set up goodie bags while tabling to write letters to women in the TAMU-CC community. Photo by Lillian Crane.

Women's History Month began as a celebration in Santa Rosa, California during the early 1980s. The organizers of this event designated the day of March 8, International Women's Day. The movement extended throughout the country as other groups started their own Women's History Week celebrations in consecutive years. Women's History Week eventually became the full month of March to focus on educating people about the accomplishments women of all backgrounds have made worldwide.

The Women's Herstory Celebration included tabling from fellow Islander organizations, such as the Islander Feminists, the Mary and Jeff Bell Library, Islander Cultural Alliance (ICA), Gamma Phi Beta, and other fraternities and sororities.

The Islander Feminists, an intersectional organization on the Island University, were giving out free stickers and resources to the community. The club also organized a letter-making activity to invite students to write empowering letters to their fellow Islanders.

The Mary and Jeff Bell Library tabled at this event as well and offered books to be checked out. These books centered around food recipes and the narratives of women, offering a chance for students to broaden their cultural palates and perspectives.

ICA handed out programs and lists of Women's History Month events happening for the remainder of the month. At ICA's tabling, the volunteers provided an activity on intersectionality, which invited Islanders to use thread to connect all of the aspects of their identities.



ICA members explain to a guest at the event how the intersectionality board works to show diversity on campus. Photo by Lillian Crane.

Gamma Phi Beta was managed by Islander Abigail Preng, a freshman at TAMU-CC. Preng expresses why she was open to volunteering to table at the Women's Herstory Celebration: "I'm big on supporting women in my community, and that's also why I joined this sorority. Our philanthropy is building strong girls, so I'm all about supporting women [and] building up women, you know, we gotta look out for each other," Preng said. Preng also explains why Women's History Month matters to her: "It's important mainly because I am very big on believing in building up women. The women in my life have impacted me so much, and we wouldn't even be here without them."

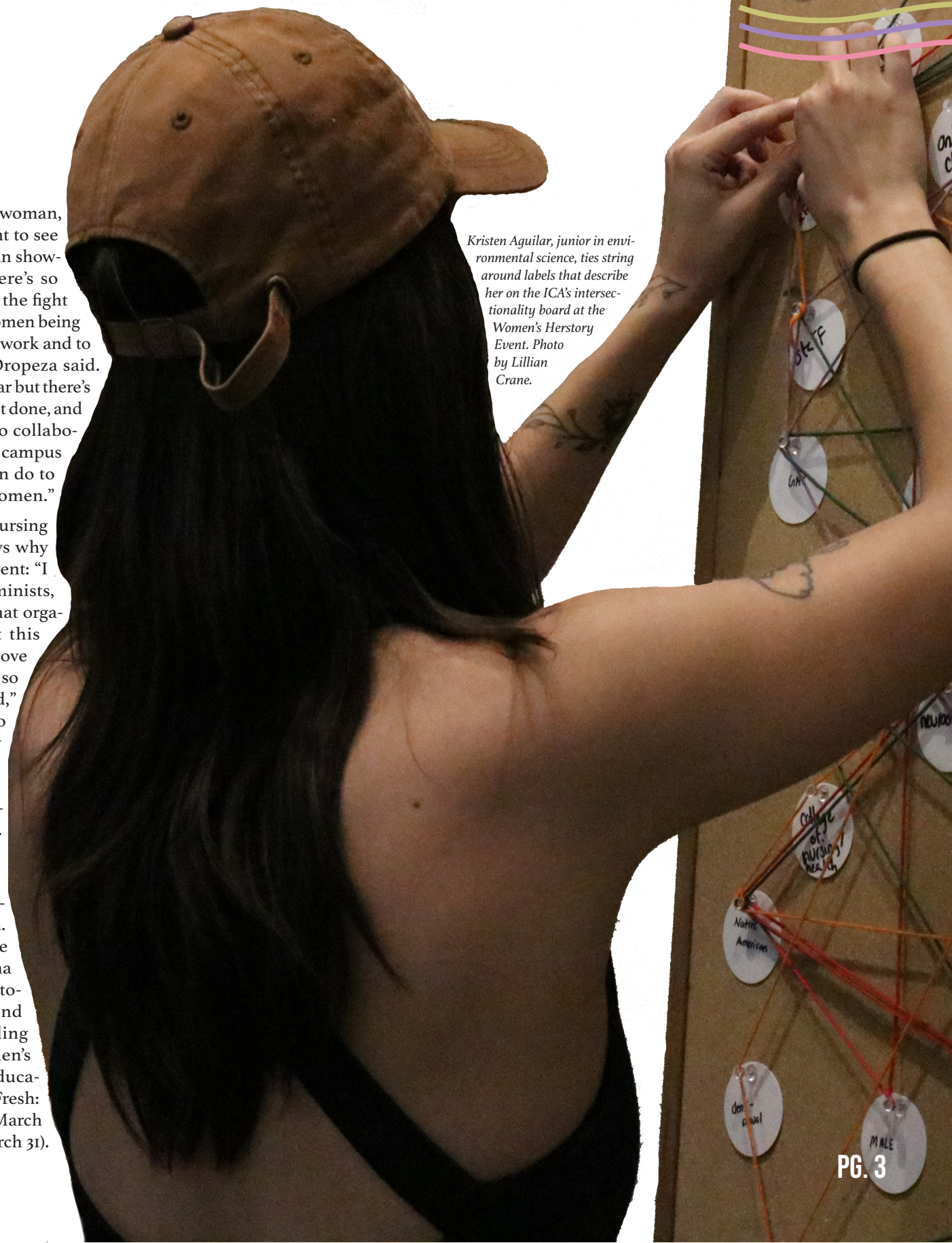
Sofia Rodriguez Oropeza, a specialist of the DEIB office, reveals why Women's History Month is important to her: "For me,

it's personal because I am a woman, but I think it's very important to see the different ways that one can showcase that womanhood. There's so much that has been done in the fight for equality with respect to women being able to vote and to be able to work and to be able to own property," Oropeza said. "And so for me, we've come so far but there's so much more that needs to get done, and this is a great opportunity to collaborate with different offices on campus to know exactly what we can do to improve the livelihood of women."

Julie Sagredo, a junior nursing major at TAMU-CC, conveys why she wanted to attend this event: "I am part of the Islander Feminists, and I am the treasurer for that organization, so I heard about this event through them. I just love women and there's free food, so I love those things combined," Sagredo said. She has also attended Women's History Month kickoffs beforehand and keeps coming back because it caters to her interests of women and feminism.

The DEIB office and ICA will host more events throughout March to celebrate Women's History Month. These events will include Birder Talk (March 23), Latina Histories are Women's Histories (March 23), Painting and Mocktails (March 27), Spilling the Tea: The State of Women's Mental Health in Higher Education (March 28), Fat, Funky, Fresh: Queer Feminists Open Mic (March 28), and The Pilant Girls (March 31).

Kristen Aguilar, junior in environmental science, ties string around labels that describe her on the ICA's intersectionality board at the Women's Herstory Event. Photo by Lillian Crane.



Women Continue to Shape Art Museum of South Texas' Permanent Collection

Alexis Deleon | Contributor

The Art Museum of South Texas' (AMST) inception can be traced all the way back to 1936 when a group of passionate professionals stood behind a mission to operate educational facilities and an art museum which would advance the awareness, knowledge, appreciation, and enjoyment of the visual arts for residents and visitors of South Texas.

On Oct. 4, 1972, AMST opened at its current location on the Corpus Christi Bay. It was tenacious Patsy Singer who sought out and eventually secured world-renowned architect Philip Johnson, to design the original structure. In fact, AMST has a long list of strong, determined women who have made and continue to make the museum what it is today.

Corpus Christi, in fact, is brimming with talented women in leadership roles, as local artists, and entrepreneurs within the art scene. AMST recently added 10 new works of art to the permanent collection. Among the works of art, three are by female artists, one of them being a local Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi professor of art, Jennifer Garza-Cuen. Garza-Cuen's photographs "Amtrak Waiting Room, Reno, NV" and "Untitled, European, Corpus Christi, TX".

According to AMST curator of exhibitions, Deborah Fullerton, AMST has been conducting a study of its holdings and exhibiting, on a rotating basis, as many as 20 permanent collection exhibitions a year. This allows the registrar and curatorial interns staff to review the conditions, categorization, and acquisition information to help determine the peaks and valleys of the permanent collection. Fullerton, along with AMST director Sara Sells Morgan, utilized this study's findings to determine the next best selections to advocate for the collection in order to grow a more robust collection.

"In the case of Jennifer Garza-Cuen," Fullerton explains, "the work had been exhibited in previous exhibitions, so we were able to see the work for a period and remembered them when it was time to decide what to go after to benefit the collection. We have followed this artist's career for many years, and this work seemed to represent her artistic qualities so memorably."



Jennifer Garza-Cuen, American, b. 1972 *Amtrak Untitled, European, Corpus Christi, TX*, 2016 Gift of the 2023 Collections Committee



Jennifer Garza-Cuen, American, b. 1972 *Amtrak Waiting Room, Reno, NV*, 2016 Gift of the 2023 Collections Committee

“..... [We] were struck by the stature and impact of the myriad of materials handled in such a strong and significant way.”

The final work of art brought into the permanent collection is “Shotgun Girl,” a mixed media sculpture by artist Karin Broker.

Fullerton continues, “with respect to Karin, we visited her studio on a Collector’s Club trip, and had firsthand experience with her talking about this series. Sara and I went up to see the exhibition ‘Karin Broker my circus’ at McClain Gallery and were struck by the stature and impact of the myriad of materials handled in such a strong and significant way. Her craftsmanship led Sara to realize that the porcelain inclusion and craftsmanship may be a good fit for the Windgate Foundation funding, and when she approached the Foundation, they agreed.”

“Shotgun Girl” can be seen on view currently at the Art Museum of South Texas as part of the exhibition “Karin Broker: My Small Circus.” The exhibition will remain on view through April 9.

It seems, in the case of AMST’s permanent collection, there are no typical years. The collection ebbs and flows, much like the tides of the Corpus Christi Bay, but now with greater intention. AMST believes fine art comes from all perspectives, and having a range of perspectives adds depth. Fifty years after opening the doors to the current AMST location, the Museum continues to celebrate the remarkable women who made a community dream a cultural reality.

The Art Museum of South Texas is always free to TAMU-CC students. Islanders are encouraged to walk the galleries of their museum and experience new worlds created by a variety of artists both living and deceased.



Karin Broker, b. 1950 Shotgun Girl, 2021 Shotguns, porcelain, glass, button, wire, steel base. Purchased with funds from the Windgate Foundation

Female Leaders of the Coastal Bend Speak to TAMUCC Students

Brianna Sandoval | Interim Editor-in-Chief

On March 1, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students and the Coastal Bend were invited to gather at the Lonestar Anchor Ballroom with five local female leaders.

The panelists included Coretta Graham Esq., President of the Corpus Christi Black Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Lisa Perez, Vice President of Student Support and Dean of Students, Danice Obregon Esq. Chief Public Defender for Nueces County, Frances Wilson, Director of the Purple Door, and Nancy Vera, President of the Corpus Christi Federation of Teachers. Throughout the night, each panelist answered questions provided by students of Dr. Diana Ivy's Gender Communication class and Dr. Shane Gleason's Women and Politics class.

It was here that each of these leaders discussed their experiences working in their fields and the different interactions they would face in these roles.

"I got my doctorate and you would be amazed by how people view me now," shared Dr. Perez as she gave an example of pushback and backlash that she faced in her career.



Dr. Diana Ivy reading questions asked by students from the courses Gender Communication and Women and Politics. Photo courtesy of Brianna Sandoval

She discussed that while she had previous experience in her field, she did what she needed to do so that she could get others to see her differently and to be respected in her field. She shared that this was hard to cope with at the time, but pushed through to receive her doctorate degree.

"I had to bring my voice to the table for those students who looked like me, came from the same sort of background I come from, and sometimes you have to play that game and let your pride get out of the way," Dr. Perez said.

The five panelists not only discussed their pushbacks but also discussed the opportunities they've had in their leadership. In addition, Dr. Ivy added during the panel her hopes for students to not be discouraged when going into the workforce.

"Sometimes as college students, we may not see sexism, right, but it is in the workforce, and it is in these different positions. So I want you to be optimistic and open-minded and embrace, you know, what's coming to you," Dr. Ivy said.

Nancy Vera, an alumni of TAMU-CC and President of the Corpus Christi Federation of Teachers, was glad to be a part of the panel of women and speak with students who want to find themselves amongst the panelists.

"It's refreshing to speak to you, students, who are eager to absorb and to find themselves in our experiences. That's so important," Vera said.

She embraces the fact that TAMU-CC has instructors who care about their students and invited local women of the community in these leadership positions to talk about their experiences to them. When it comes to the students, Vera hopes that they acknowledge the difficulties they may face, but encourages them to keep moving forward.

"I hope they know that it's still difficult out there but they need to get involved. They need to speak up and speak out when they see an injustice," Vera said.

After the panel, attendees and panelists were then invited to mingle with one another to discuss their concerns, or what they took away from the panel. Lianna Hinojosa, a freshman pre-law major, was one of the many who was in attendance for the panel.

After speaking with Dr. Gleason, Hinojosa thought it would be good to attend the panel to gain more insight about becoming a female lawyer.

"I'm not sure where I want to go to law school. I thought that being able to speak to these lawyers and these women in positions of leadership would give me the opportunity to have some more perspective on where I want to go in terms of my education," said Hinojosa.

Hinojosa felt the biggest thing she took from the panel was the realization that everyone is human, and that they all face struggles. "The struggles that you face, don't make you any less professional," Hinojosa said.

When individuals, especially women, are put into positions of power, they still have to face challenges to get to the position they're in now. However, there are leaders nationally and locally that have worked hard and overcame challenges to be a role model to the next generation of female leaders.

Students eat and mingle with panelists after the discussion.



Students eat and mingle with panelists after the discussion. Photo Courtesy of Brianna Sandoval

Roda Colo Created RC Clay Designs To Empower Women

Gabriella Ruiz | Sports Editor

Aside from being a small business owner, Roda H. Colo is a wife, mother, artist, and a graduate student here at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi working on her Masters in Special Education and teaching certification.

Colo was inspired by her mother to be the best version of herself, as she taught her to study and work hard to achieve her goals. By learning valuable lessons on how to help people, she learned how to be optimistic about the future.



Roda Colo reaches over to show a customer one of her items for sale. Photo by Lillian Crane.

Colo obtained her Bachelors of Arts in the Philippines for Communication and Marketing, and eventually moved to Corpus Christi with her husband. She began to work as an ESL teacher for three years, while also recruiting/training ESL teachers. During the pandemic, she sparked interest in starting her own line of clay jewelry. Thus, RC Clay Designs was created.

As a mother, I try my hardest to be a role model for my children," Colo said. "I am completing my master's degree as a mother and wife while running a small business. My family, small business, and wonderful customers have inspired me daily to do my best."

In the beginning, Colo began watching videos of various artists who would create jewelry out of clay. Her creative process and inspiration

came from people with different backgrounds, and eventually, she started to create different pieces of jewelry from clay, resin, and acrylic.

"When I design jewelry, I must make sure that it is unique, represents you, and makes you feel beautiful," Colo said. "I started this business because I enjoy making art, especially earrings. I am passionate about my craft and enjoy creating beautiful jewelry that empowers women."



Roda Colo, small business owner, and graduate student at TAMU-CC, talks with Elizabeth Cook, a community member, at the Corpus Christi Art Walk while selling her jewelry. Photo by Lillian Crane.

Women's History Month is important to Colo, as the month signifies the celebration of women and promoting women's empowerment. With her jewelry, she hopes women can feel powerful while wearing the earrings she designed.

Priscilla Capetillo has been supporting RC Clay Designs since the fall of 2021, and loves that Colo's jewelry is versatile by having silly and elegant pieces of jewelry for everyone.

"Roda is a very kind and caring person," Capetillo said. "I see her at markets often and she always has made an effort to get to know me."

Capetillo continued by saying how there are many reasons why she has been supporting Colo, and will continue to do so with her creativity and unique designs.

"She is a local mom with a family so I feel like, when I support her, I'm also support-



Roda Colo smiles brightly as she talks with customers as they look through her earrings on display. Photo by Lillian Crane.

ing the dreams she has for her family and their future. Overall, she's an amazing person who appreciates her customers and always makes us feel welcomed."

Colo is active in the Corpus Christi community as she does pop-up events, out-of-town shows, and sells at the ArtWalk every first Friday of the month and every first Saturday she sells at the Heritage park. She also occasionally sells at the Art Center and vends at TAMU-CC.

Recently, she's been finishing up her website and plans to launch it soon so her customers from outside of Corpus Christi can access her jewelry.

"Without the direction of the Lord, my family, my friends, and my great customers, this business would not exist," Colo said.

"I want to urge everyone to show kindness to one another," Colo said. "Rather than competing, be inspiring. Your only competition is you, so it doesn't matter if you feel someone is taking your business. What matters is what you do."

Greg Abbott's Diversity Memo Controversy

Dante Ortiz | Reporter

The Texas A&M University system is changing its hiring practices in response to a memo that deems Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices for state agencies and public Universities illegal during the hiring process.

In response to the memo, Chancellor John Sharp of the Texas A&M University System asked all branches to remove DEI statements from their hiring process and will now focus on hiring candidates based on their cover letter, curriculum vitae, teaching strategies, and references.

"No university or agency in the A&M System will admit any student, nor hire any employee based on any factor other than merit," Chancellor Sharp said.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives were put in place to encourage diversity within the workplace, giving representation and celebrating members of historically underrepresented communities no matter sexuality, race, disability, and mental health giving employers a broader pool of candidates to choose from.

The concern addressed by the memo was that state institutions are misusing DEI initiatives and are causing the uplifting of certain demographics to the detriment of others. "When

DEI is done correctly, there is no legal issues because you are just looking for the best job candidates and trying to make sure

you hire the best job candidates", said Dr. Juan Carlos Huerta, professor of political science.

On Feb. 6. Gardner Pate, Gov. Abbott's chief of staff, sent a memo out to all state agencies and public universities asking them to discontinue implementing DEI initiatives during hiring. The memo stated, "Indeed, rather than increasing DEI in the workplace, these DEI initiatives are having the opposite effect and are being advanced in ways that proactively encourage discrimination in the workplace. Illegally adding DEI requirements as a screening tool in hiring practices or using DEI as a condition of employment leads to the exclusion and alienation of individuals from the workplace." Pate stated.

The Texas legislative Black caucus with the NAACP and the Mexican American legislative caucus reached out to the National Basketball Association, the National Football League, Major League Baseball, and the National Collegiate Athletic Association to withhold from hosting championship games in Texas until Governor Abbott withdrew his statement.

DEI is meant to provide all faculty and students with a leveled playing field, creating an inclusive environment for all within work and school.

"Just because someone worked with a really

good professor or just 'cause somebody went to a prestigious university does not make them the best candidate for a job, and then when people come to campus, you hire them, faculty members, students, staff people want to feel a part of the community. They have a place within the community. They don't feel isolated and ostracized 'cause of the work they do or things about them." Dr. Huerta said.

The removal of DEI initiatives impacts more than just the hiring process. These initiatives show potential students and staff the strides agencies and state universities take to make sure each demographic is represented. "Activities that fall under DEI are Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month. These events are an important part of history and students. If we don't have these types of events it would be weird to advertise that we are a diverse institution when we do not favor it.", said student William Hammond.

Diversity is encouraged within institutions



Members of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus speaking out in response to Gov. Greg Abbott's Memo courtesy of Evan L'Roy from The Texas Tribune

to broaden students' and staff's education. When interaction between communities is increased, students learn to communicate with individuals from various backgrounds breaking down preconceived thoughts on cultural stereotypes, strengthening and diversifying thoughts, and communication within state agencies and public universities.

The Texas A&M University system will continue monitoring their implementation of DEI practices within employee and student application processes admitting individuals based solely on professional and educational experiences.



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

February 4, 2023

Mr. Porter Wilson
Executive Director
Employees Retirement System of Texas
P.O. Box 13207
Austin, Texas 78711-3207

Dear Mr. Wilson,

Federal and state law forbid discrimination against a current or prospective employee because of that person's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or military service. This legal protection covers the hundreds of thousands of individuals who are employed by the State of Texas, including everyone who works at your agency.

As Texans, we celebrate the diversity of our State and the presence of a workforce that represents our rich culture. In recent years, however, the innocuous-sounding notion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) has been manipulated to push policies that expressly favor some demographic groups to the detriment of others. Indeed, rather than increasing diversity in the workplace, these DEI initiatives are having the opposite effect and are being advanced in ways that proactively encourage discrimination in the workplace. Illegally adding DEI requirements as a screening tool in hiring practices or using DEI as a condition of employment leads to the exclusion and alienation of individuals from the workplace.

As the head of your agency, you have a duty to follow the law. When a state agency adjusts its employment practices based on factors other than merit, it is not following the law. Rebranding this employment discrimination as "DEI" does not make the practice any less illegal. Further, when a state agency spends taxpayer dollars to fund offices, departments, or employee positions dedicated to promoting forbidden DEI initiatives, such actions are also inconsistent with the law.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. If you have any questions, please contact the policy advisor assigned to your agency.

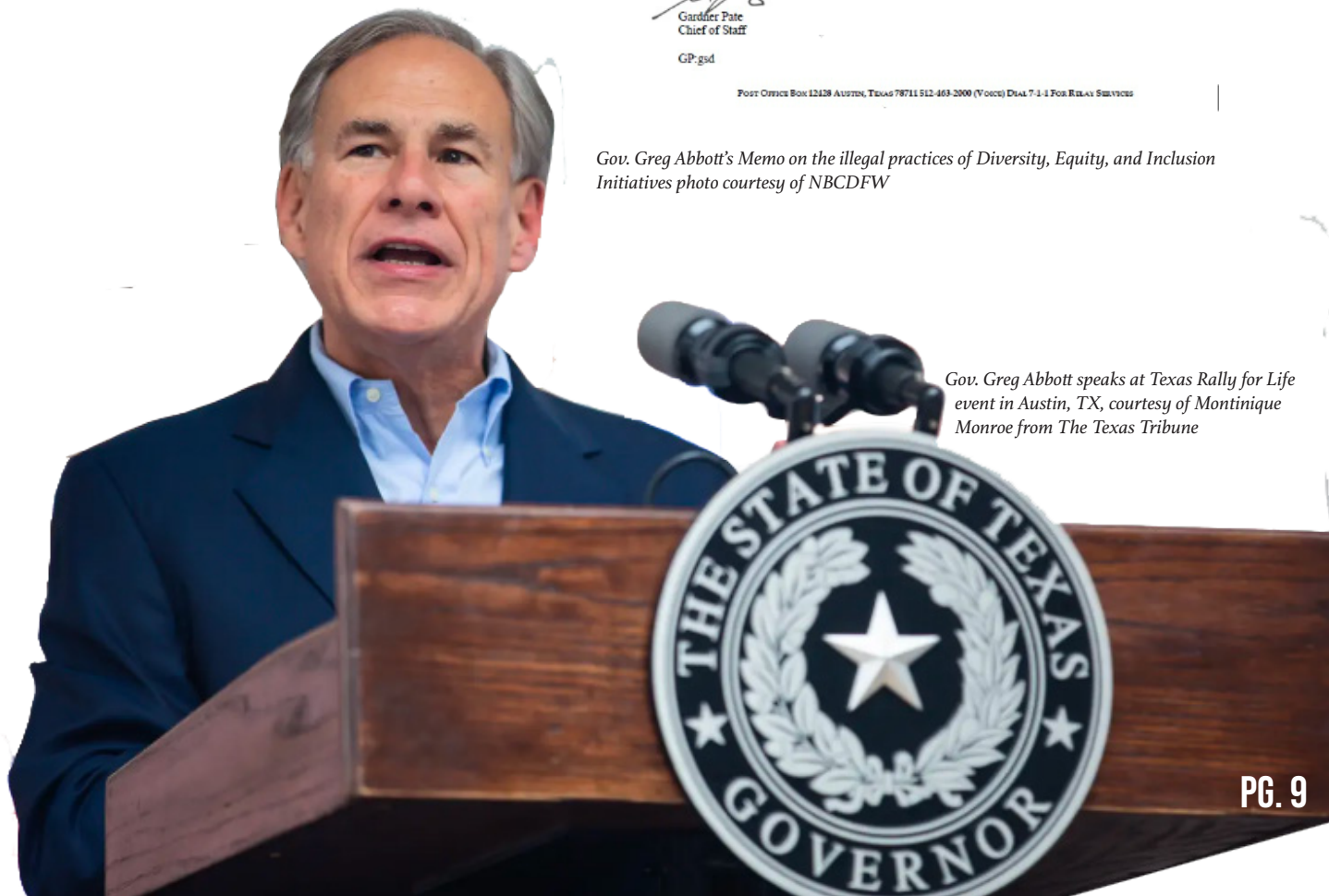
Sincerely,

Gardner Pate
Chief of Staff

GP:gsd

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Gov. Greg Abbott's Memo on the illegal practices of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives photo courtesy of NBCDFW



Gov. Greg Abbott speaks at Texas Rally for Life event in Austin, TX, courtesy of Montinique Monroe from The Texas Tribune

Chancellors Propose Additional Funding in Exchange for a Two-Year Tuition Freeze

Miranda Martinez | Reporter

In December 2022, six university chancellors from around the state sent a letter to state officials asking for an additional \$1 billion in funding. These chancellors expressed that if this request was met, they would freeze undergraduate tuition for the next two years.

\$352 million would be allocated to general funding, \$290 million would be given to staff health insurance coverage, and \$80 million would be distributed to regional universities across the state such as Texas A&M International University in Laredo. The additional funding would also help reimburse \$276 million worth of fees waived by the institutions for dependents of veterans. These funds would be taken from a state surplus totaling \$32.7 billion.

“This is an incredible, unprecedented time in Texas,” said TAMU-CC President and CEO Dr. Kelly Miller. “I mean, we have such a surplus that the state is really really doing very well, and so we are really excited to be a part of that. Normally, \$1 billion is a lot.”

Chancellor John Sharp from the Texas A&M University System signed this letter alongside Brian McCall of the Texas State University System, Tedd Mitchell of the Texas Tech University System, Michael R. Williams of the University of North Texas System, Renu Khator of the University of Houston System, and James Milliken of the University of Texas System.

“This is really a university initiative across the state to make affordability a priority,” Dr. Miller said. “Every school in the system is working with the chancellor, and all the schools in the other systems are working with their chancellors to try to get affordability to be a priority this session for the legislature.”

Dr. Miller also expressed that she is actively working alongside other members of the Texas A&M system and local politicians to secure funding.

“Things are looking very positive in terms of the interest of politicians to support it. Our legislative group, Senator Juan Chuy Hinojosa and Chairmen Todd Hunter and Abel Herrero, [are] 100% behind it,” Dr. Miller said. “Senator Hinojosa sits on Senate Finance, which is very helpful to get these things into the discussion. We are very hopeful that we are gonna see some movement this session.”

The outcome of this request will not be known until the state passes its budget. However, Dr. Miller remains hopeful the university systems will be granted the additional funding requested.

“We hold our breath until the end of May,” Dr. Miller said. “Until they ring that bell and the budget is final, we don’t

count our chickens. But I think we are moving in a very positive direction.”

Texas Government officials Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, House Finance Committee Chair Greg Bonnen, Senate Finance Committee Chair Joan Huffman, and Speaker of the House Dade Phelan all received the same letter asking for additional funding.

If the chancellors are unable to secure this funding, Dr. Miller expressed that TAMU-CC would look at other areas to help alleviate any financial stress put on the university and its students.

“We look at every possible angle. We cut things if we need to. We’ve tightened our belt in different places, trying to be more efficient,” Dr. Miller said. “Some of the decisions we made in the past would be, let’s say, someone left a job on campus. We would keep salary savings while hiring that position. That would give us money to use in another spot.”



Vehicles commuting towards the Physical Plant/SSC by the Oso Bay. Photo by Adelena Vera

The letter, which was first acquired by the Texas Tribune, stated that “our education mission is funded almost entirely by two sources of funding: state support and student tuition and fees. Without increased state support, Texas institutions must look to additional efficiencies and then tuition and fees to be able to continue to maintain high quality education. In order to hold tuition flat for our students and their families, Texas universities seek increased state investment.”

Currently, tuition for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 is estimated to cost in-state undergraduate students \$9,754. Out-of-state students had a higher tuition estimate of \$20,344. In total, an undergraduate student from Texas is estimated to spend \$21,774 in one academic school year between tuition, room, board, books, and supplies.

For more information about TAMU-CC’s tuition please visit <https://www.tamucc.edu/cost-and-aid/tuition-and-fees.php>.



*A view of the University Center and the schools anchor on a warm sunny day.
Photo by Adelena Vera*



TAMU-CC students walking towards the Center for the Sciences and the Center of Instruction. Photo by Adelena Vera

The Met Gala: Celebrating Black Excellence and Femininity

Dejaneé Miles | Web Editor

On March 10 in the University Center, the Black Student Union (BSU) hosted its annual Met Gala. It featured catered food, lively music, an award ceremony, a photo booth, as well as a raffle. All of which coalesced into creating a space to further uplift and honor the Black students, especially Black women and feminine figures, on campus.

The occasion centered around the guests expressing their nuanced interpretations of Black excellence through their clothing and accessories. The theme of the night chosen by the BSU was “fairytale and folklore.” Jeannia Washington, the president of BSU, was in charge of overseeing the arrangements made for the reception.

Washington denotes that the theme was intriguing because of the plethora of Black women and people in roles of royalty or power. “So I know H.E.R. played Belle in a musical and then, of course, Halle [Bailey] playing Ariel, and then there’s, I think, Yara Shahidi she’s also...playing Tinkerbell,” she states.

Washington was the first to propose the idea of the Met Gala in 2020. “I feel everybody deserves to, like, dress up, and, feel pretty, have a good night, and have events that are kind of, like, highlighting Black excellence but not having, like, a bar of what that is.”

Upon registering at the entrance of the ballroom, those who had financially contributed to funding the function received a ticket for procuring the meals and refreshments catered by Chartwells. There was chicken parmesan and a choice of iced tea, lemonade, or fruit-infused water.

The attendees ate at tables decorated like the fantastical Disney environments, complete with decorative elements of

moss, rocks, and small animal figurines. Additionally, each table featured its own unique artwork of Black people placed in familiar canonical materials including Hansel and Gretel, Rumpelstiltskin, and Rapunzel.

Attendees were dancing, as the D.J. was playing a wide array of contemporary pop songs and classic melodies highly regarded within Black communities. These include “Boy’s a liar Pt. 2” by Pink Pantheress and Ice Spice and “Candy Rain” by Soul for Real.

When the guests were not dancing, they could take photographs at the photo booth. There were fantasy props including crowns, masquerade masks, and bows, among other items. The backdrop was ornate with vines and golden curtains at both sides, and the center featured text stating “Once upon a Time” with a detailed drawing of a castle beside it.

The newest member of the BSU, Kendall Stewart, a junior nursing major, was dressed as a pink fairy princess adorned with various pastel-colored butterfly clips accentuating her long braids and pink dress. Stewart emphasizes the significance of the occasion due to its inviting space for Black people and women specifically. “I think it’s really cool to see other people that look like me and, you know, have the same background as me—being able to dress up and look nice...I feel a lot more comfortable in this space dressing up and being myself.”

Quinneicia Tatumñ and Lucero Cabral take a picture at the photo booth. Photo by Maddy Benson



Toward the end of the Gala, a ceremony was held to commemorate the people that have either greatly contributed to or impacted the BSU in some fashion. The awards themselves are in the shape of gold shooting stars uprooted on a black stand, reinforcing the notion of simultaneously illustrating and encouraging the vast array of unique qualities and accomplishments of all Black figures that the Met Gala strives to promote.

The last major activity was a raffle where attendees and BSU officers alike could win a black Telfar purse; a commodity adorned by many Black female celebrities and feminine people of high social and economic statuses. The winner was Rian Schultz, the treasurer of the BSU who aided in securing the proper funds for the Met Gala.

As the Met Gala came to a close, each of the attendees was given gift bags. Inside the bag were thematically appropriate trinkets, such as a small mushroom-shaped stone, lip balm, and a small champagne-like bottle filled with soap.

The Met Gala as a whole serves to actively memorialize the calipers of grace and prowess that Black feminine figures and women exhibit, and act as a measure of extending gratitude for engaging in the space and their continuous expressions of Black excellence in their daily lives. The Met Gala is a testament to how the combined efforts of Black women and feminine people further invite places of comfort and acceptance of those who have faced similar challenges as them, while exuding differing degrees of femininity and Blackness.



Student guests and members of the Black Student Union bust their moves on the dance floor. Photos by Maddy Benson/ Island Waves

Beach Volleyball Program Prepared To Win The SLC Championship Again

Gabriella Ruiz | Sports Editor

The Texas A&M University Corpus Christi beach volleyball program started their 2023 season by traveling to Houston for the Third Coast College Classic and headed to Florida for three-day matches.

Head coach Gayle Stammer is entering her seventh season with the Islanders and is preparing her players to play at the highest level to compete against the top 20 teams in the country.

Last season, the Islanders ended the season 21-13 overall and Stammer was named the 2022 Southland Conference Coach of the Year for leading the Islanders to win their first-ever championship for the Southland Conference Tournament. Stammer also led them to earn an automatic bid into the 2022 NCAA Beach Volleyball Tournament, which was their first-ever appearance in program history.

“Last season was amazing, it was a lot of firsts for the program,” Stammer said. “We won the conference for the first time and we ended up going to our first National Collegiate Athletic Association tournament in the same year, which was great.”



The beach volleyball program defeated Houston Baptist University 3-2 to take home the Southland Conference Championship title last 2022 season.

The Islanders have 12 players that are returning that will be carrying the team to the championship again along with newcomers added to the lineup. Four of those returners were recognized as the Southland's 'Players to Watch', in which graduate student Kiley Lewis, senior Giuliana Poletti Corrales, and juniors Tori Johnson and Shea Slusser were picked for this season.

During the Islanders' off-season, they have been pushing each other and working hard to face their opponents for this year's 2023 schedule. They will be facing teams such as Spring Hill College, Louisiana State University, Florida Gulf Coast University, #20 Washington, and more.

Lewis, who was on the team last year, mentioned how last year was one of the best years for the program as they accomplished their goal of winning the championship in the conference.



Graduate student Kiley Lewis and senior Giuliana Poletti Corrales went up against their opponents from Texas Christian University on Feb. 26. All photos courtesy of Islander Athletics

“It felt really good that all of our hard work paid off because now we are coming off of a championship title and I think we're ready for the challenge again this year,” Lewis said. “We definitely have high goals for ourselves coming into this year. I hope that we can improve mentally when we have bad games or tournaments. There's going to be good games and there's going to be bad games, so I think it is really important for us to respond well.”

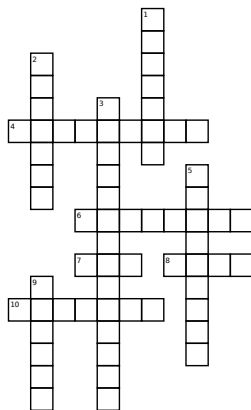
Corrales, who is an international student, earned the 2022 AVCA Top Flight Award with her former teammate pair Brooke Pertuit. While Corrales and Pertuit were named SLC Pair of the Tournament, they helped their team win the Southland Conference Tournament.

“I think last season was really good and I think we had a good connection with the team,” Corrales said. “I think we all worked super hard and I know this team this year is also like working super hard and we get even better every year.”

This year Corrales is paired up with Lewis and she is excited to learn more about her teammate to enjoy every single part of playing beach volleyball. Corrales continued by saying how she believes this team can go even further as long as they go out in confidence knowing they are great beach volleyball players.

“We're all extremely excited about going to play and see what we can do out there,” said Stammer. “We all feel we're ready for this [season] and well prepared.”

ISLANDER CROSSWORD



Down:

1. A caffeinated drink some cannot function without.
2. Another critter you can find roaming around on campus. Typically not a pet.
3. Where events and club meetings are usually held.
5. where the free candy and flyers are handed out.
9. everywhere on campus but mostly near Miramar and the trail.

Across:

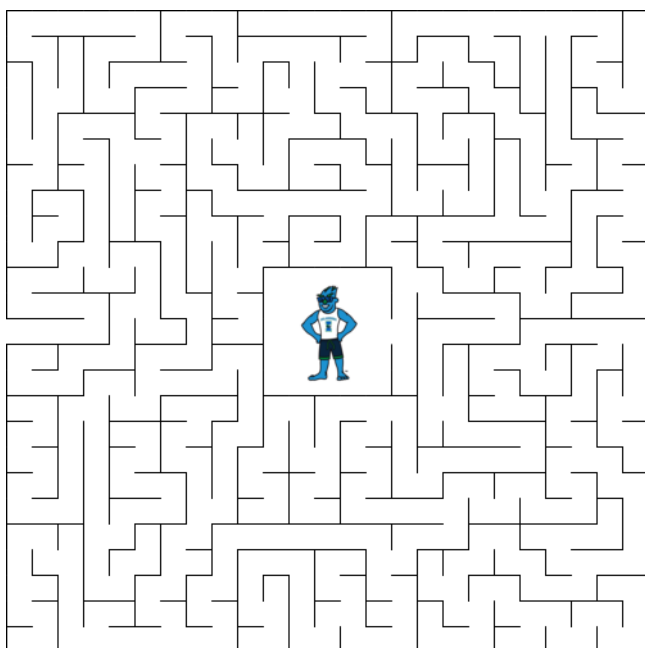
4. What we are.
6. A place to relax and play games located at the UC.
7. A pet that purrs. Can be seen all around campus.
8. The school mascot.
10. The band performing this semester.

AFFIRMATION BINGO

T B L I S S E L F C A R E J C
 I W A M L J O C T A F I Q L Y
 M N U M W U P I S L L T W J S
 Z V N K V J L Q V M B J H D E
 S C H E D U L E G N R F M G L
 C T Z U R B T V S E E S C S F
 H O B C G P I P E S A T O T L
 A W N V W C E F A S T E M U O
 P F O F U D R A Y B H A F D V
 P M A X I Q I E C U E D O Y E
 I F S D G D S E L E S I R I U
 N L A S L X E L E A X L T N W
 E O A Z O W V N E S X Y W G E
 S W T U W W P X C E F F U J R
 S L D J P L A C B E P J P I M

Inner peace	Confidence	Happiness	Bliss
self care	Self love	Schedule	Flow
Calmness	Steadily	Relax	glow
Studying	Sleep	Breathe	
Comfort			

IZZY'S ESCAPE



SUDOKU

	7	8		1			2
		9		2		7	
2			7	4	8		3
	3					2	6
8		4		6			1
9	6					3	
6		5	2	3	4		
	9	3		8	5	4	2
4	8		6				1

	6	1			4
3	4		2	6	1
				4	
5	3	4			
	5				2
	1		4	3	

	2	1	
		2	3
	4	3	
	3	4	

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ISLAND WAVES

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Island Waves is a student-produced publication at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Island Waves ceased print publication at the onset of the pandemic and is currently being produced digitally.

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