

## Library seeks feedback

**Reina Morgan**  
UP contributor

Lamar University's Gray Library is conducting a web-based survey for students, faculty and staff to help offer the best services to the Cardinal community.

The LibQual+ is a nationally run survey and many libraries participate in the program, Michael Saar, interim dean of the Mary and John Gray Library, said.

"It allows us to gauge our users' perception of how the library is working for them." The survey began Feb. 20 and will be available until March 31.

"We've done it a couple times in the past, but we started in earnest in 2019 on a bi-annual cycle, so this is our third in that cycle," Saar said. "It's going to allow us to create a long-term picture of how we're doing. It looks at questions such as our services that we provide to patrons, our resources — even the building itself."

Each survey participant who provides a valid email will be entered into a random drawing for a chance to win a PlayStation 5, 20 Vouchers for 1 Free Grande Starbucks beverage, or select merchandise from the B&N Campus Bookstore. All participants will be anonymous.

The survey allows respon-



Michael Saar, Gray Library interim dean, peruses the shelves, Feb. 16.

UP photo by Reina Morgan

dents to rate the library for each category, to rate three areas on a one-to-nine scale, Saar said. Respondents will also be able to suggest improvements. If the area is ranked as a seven, maybe the

respondents suggestions raise the level to a nine.

"And then finally, most importantly for us, where you feel we are in that so maybe your bare minimum for one thing is a three and your best

idea would be like an eight.

"Hopefully, you see our library at a seven, eight, or even a nine, but if you see it at a four, three or two, that lets us know, OK, we've got a problem that we need to look

into," Saar said.

In the past, library patrons have indicated they are happy with the service overall, Saar said.

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## 'Not just a period piece'

**LU Theater to present 'The Heidi Chronicles' Feb. 23-26**

**Maddie Sims**  
UP managing editor

Life leads us all along different paths. Through the decades of a person's life, many historical and personal changes follow. Thirty years of life changes anyone, which begs the question, How much will it change Dr. Heidi Holland?

Lamar University's department of theater and dance presents "The Heidi Chronicles" by Wendy Wasserstein, Feb. 23-26.

"The play follows Dr. Heidi Holland, who is an art historian, as she goes through the decades of the '60s, '70s and '80s," director Allan Brincks said. "We follow her, but we see her friends and the people she has relationships with as well, and how those different decades influenced them."

"We see them changing from young adults to adulthood and, how they navigate careers, relationships, women's rights, and the role of women during those time periods. We were looking for lots of roles for strong women and this play had that."

Wasserstein's "The Heidi Chronicles" was released in 1988 and won a Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award in 1989.

"Ultimately, it still has a lot to say to audiences today," Brincks said. "That was one of the things that struck me when I was reading it. Even after the first readthrough, all the students were like, 'This is still really pertinent for today.' It's not just a period piece."

Brincks said he first read it



Kalan Bonnette, left, and Juliana McManus rehearse a scene from "The Heidi Chronicles" which opens Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. in the Studio Theatre.

UP photo by Maddie Sims

when his sister had a copy, but was aware of it already due to its prominence within the theater community.

"Wendy Wasserstein was kind of a prolific female writer at the time when there weren't many female writers," he said. "We could always use more. She made some big waves when Chronicles came out."

Set designer Lee Barker has done a really good job of designing the set, Brincks said.

"Since it takes place in multiple decades and many different places, we decided to go with something that was a little bit sparser, where we have projections filling in some things and furniture pieces to give a hint

about location (including) the shape of the set itself," he said.

"I've been calling it a bottle or urn shape. It's in a corner thrust configuration, which is a little bit different from what audiences may have seen here in the past few years."

"(We played) around with some of those ideas because we move so quickly from decade to decade, and from place to place, that having a huge set to do all that wouldn't really accomplish it very well, unless you had very long scene changes."

Brincks said a lot of the transitioning between decades comes down to Tanner McAlpin's cos-

See **HEIDI**, page 2

## ChatGPT; AI raises ethical questions

**Abi Patterson**  
UP contributor

ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence conversation robot that can write whatever the user wants it to, such as research papers, and educators are concerned that students will use this platform to plagiarize their essays.

This language processing tool allows the user to have human-like conversations with the "chatbot," as well as compose emails, essays, and even software code. It is currently free and available to the public, as it is in its "research and feedback-collection phase," according to the developers.

This phase in its development is to let the AI get smarter by interacting with real users. Every time someone uses it and receives the answer they want, the bot learns and provides those answers to other users more efficiently.

As of Feb. 1, there is a paid subscription version available called ChatGPT Plus. This version of the AI provides a faster response speed, and access to new features that may become available.

ChatGPT was created by OpenAI. The company launched ChatGPT on Nov. 30, 2022, according to Sabrina Ortiz of ZDNET, a business technology news source. The company is also responsible for developing AI art generators and automatic speech recognition systems.

There is some debate amongst those who believe ChatGPT is a positive technological advancement and those who think we should all be terrified. For example, many AI experts are concerned these chatbots have the capability to replace human intelligence.

The AI can compose an entire research paper within seconds, leaving students to just be responsible for fact-checking. This makes it much easier for students to cheat and avoid learning to write properly.

Cheating on tests and essays has accelerated

See **AI**, page 6



## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“America did not invent human rights. In a very real sense human rights invented America..”  
—President Jimmy Carter

## NOTICE

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## SURVEY from page 1

“They find it to be a welcoming place,” he said.

Some concerns that have been raised in the past concern the age of the building, Saar said, with people raising concerns about the environment, the physical building itself.

“In particular, in our last iteration of survey, there was a lot of comments about the study rooms, the amount of them, the quality of them. So, we identified that as an area that could use some improvement.

“So, we got two pilot study rooms that are now open to the public on the sixth and fourth floors.

Saar said the library also ran focus groups on building last year, having been delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re sharing that information with the designers of the upcoming library renovation project,” he said. “Hopefully, that input is going to be put into action for students.

The LibQual+ survey also has some pre-generated questions because it’s a national survey, Saar said.

“They do that for consistency’s sake, and we’re allowed to have five questions in there,” he said. “One of the questions we add is, ‘How are you feeling about hours of service, for example? Another question is, ‘Are you aware of our archives and special collections, those we’ve had for a long time?’

“One change we made this year is we remove the question on our library instruction service, because we have other ways of assessing that, and replace that one with one on our inter-library loan service which is basically items we don’t have in the library. Can we get that for you? Because we just wanted to get set. We’ve heard anecdotally that people are really happy with it, but we wanted to get a better sense of that.

As Gray Library heads into its renovation project, Saar said the feedback is helpful. The survey also has an open-ended box at the end where respondents can say anything they want to add about the library itself, resources, people, building, anything.

“We get a lot of great feedback in that, and we definitely encouraged people taking the survey to include their thoughts in there because that might have stuff that maybe isn’t in the survey and helps us identify areas to explore further actions, we can take to improve services for our students,” he said.

The survey should only take about five minutes, Saar said, and he is excited about the incentives being offered.

Another area the survey looks at is where do are people getting their information? Saar said.

“Is it physical library? Is it the library website? Is it Google? Is it a combination of those?” he said. “I know for myself, it’s a combination, and for a lot of people it might be as well. But I think, in general, as more and more information becomes available online in a variety of areas, having the library is even more critical because, for one hand, we’re the experts in navigating those different information spheres. And we can provide tips and instruction to help you navigate those. We can provide resources that aren’t available.

“You might have heard the adage, ‘You get what you pay for,’ and some of the stuff that’s available for free online might not always be the best quality. We provide access to in-depth research studies, millions and millions of these that you wouldn’t be able to find typically on the open web. But we can also help determine how we suss out the good from the bad searching in general. So, I think our role is more important than ever because we are all of us constantly bombarded and overwhelmed with information all around us.”

Saar said he hopes everyone takes a few minutes to give their feedback. Everyone in the library is invested in student’s success and helping the students to succeed, he said.

“This is one way to help us know how we’re doing or what we might be able to do better to improve that for students and our faculty and staff,” he said.

The survey can be accessed at the survey at <https://lamar.edu/librarysurvey>.

## SURVEY from page 1

tume design.

“As an art historian, Heidi’s looking back,” Brinks said. “A lot of this piece is the ideas, it’s her memory, which is why there’s not a whole lot of very detailed, naturalistic sets. Each scene is in a specific time period and color palette as well. So, it’s almost like she’s going through these different paintings or portraits from different moments in her life. McAlpin has done a really good job of setting that up that we can see from the costumes.”

Brinks said the play offers audiences to put their own interpretation on Heidi and her friends.

“There’s so many things in this play, that everyone is going to take away something different,” he said. “I think it’s just one of those things you got to come and see for yourself.”

Showtimes are Feb. 23, 24, 25 23 at 7:30 p.m. and 2 p.m., Feb.26 in the Studio Theatre. Tickets can be purchased at [lamar.edu/lutdtix](http://lamar.edu/lutdtix).

## IN BRIEF

### LU to host suicide prevention walk

Lamar University will host the Southeast Texas Out of The Darkness Walk for suicide prevention.

The walk will take place on Feb. 25 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. It will be a mile long across campus and will provide water and snacks. The walk will begin at the Setzer Student Center.

### Faculty Appreciation Breakfast set for March 2

A faculty appreciation breakfast event will be held March 2, 8-11 a.m. in the Setzer Student Center Ballroom.

The event features breakfast buffet complete with pancakes, eggs, and assorted breakfast meats and pastries.

### Spring Career Expo set for March 7

A spring career expo will take place March 7, noon-2 p.m. at the Live Oak Ballroom in the Setzer Student Center. The expo is open to those interested in part-time work, internships, and other forms of professional work.

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## GOP hypocrites block history

The culture war is becoming more bloody by the day — its latest casualty is the integrity of education in Florida schools.

“The radical left is brain-washing our kids,” conservatives cry out across the country. “The government is ruining this country, just like ‘1984’ or ‘Fahrenheit 451.’”

These right-wingers draw comparison to some of literature’s most famous authoritarian states, ones that rewrite history books or otherwise ban and burn literary works. But immediately after making their analogy, these conservatives turn around and ban books and courses related to racial inequality, gender identity, sexual orientation and other prevalent topics of today.

Who are the authoritarians now?

In states such as Florida, politicians and school boards alike are banning literature and so-called “woke” curriculum from

### Commentary



Keagan Smith  
UP sports editor



UP graphic by Maddie Sims

classrooms statewide. According to a Washington Post report, Florida’s House Bill 1467 requires that books in schools must be reviewed by a state-trained “media specialist,” and that anyone found to be distributing “harmful materials” to students could be charged with a felony.

Teachers in Florida’s Duval County have removed access to entire classroom libraries in accordance with district guidance. Gone are the days when a student could just pick up a book and read. Seems antithetical to the entire point of education, no?

At the same time, Florida governor Ron DeSantis and the state’s Department of Education banned the teaching of an

AP African American Studies course, supposedly because it was too controversial and non-compliant with state laws against “woke” instruction.

Yet, they still allow AP European History to be taught.

Critical race theory has become the boogeyman in conservatives’ minds. Hell, most Republicans probably can’t even define what CRT is, much less identify theories that are taught in law schools. Yet they kick and scream that their school-age children are being indoctrinated with ideas of CRT, and thus the Florida state legislature signed off on a “Stop WOKE Act” to combat an invisible — and imaginary — enemy.

Critical race theory was

never a part of K-12 instruction to begin with.

These policy decisions are made under the guise of protecting students’ best interests, but there is clearly an underlying reason beneath that excuse. Why is this really happening?

These right-wing decision makers are uncomfortable that not everyone is like them. They’re uncomfortable that their children might see how diverse the world really is, and that just because someone is different it doesn’t mean they’re evil or should be treated differently. These conservatives are uncomfortable that by picking up a book or taking an AP course, kids might discover how their parents’ preferred political party has worked to disenfran-

chise minority groups throughout this nation’s history.

These parents are right to be scared, but not for the reasons they think.

It’s incredibly hypocritical that the party who cries about censorship and being “silenced” (they’re not) would in the same breath work to hide our nation’s ugly truth. Sure, there’s a conversation to be had about what level of detail is appropriate based on age level. Regardless, it’s crucial that up-and-coming generations learn about minorities’ struggle for equal rights, and how it’s often a long and bloody fight against those who work to disenfranchise them.

It is this education that scares them, because through expanded knowledge they know they will lose their privilege and power.

Some conversations will be uncomfortable, but that’s no excuse to shy away. The point of education is to teach, and for kids to learn. It’s important that we don’t forget or gloss over the worst parts of U.S. history — instead, we must educate people on what really happened so that history doesn’t repeat itself.

It’s 2023. Everybody deserves equal treatment, equal rights and equal opportunities regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender identity and the many other aspects that make our society so diverse.

If that upsets you, it’s time to take a good, long look in the mirror.

### UPeditorial

## Spring Break should be fun, but be responsible

Spring break is coming up for Lamar students. Just like everyone else, we can’t wait to hit beaches, bars and wherever else our travels might bring us. However, we also want to make sure that every member of our Cardinal community comes back to the nest in one piece once classes resume.

While we enjoy our break from the constant stress of classes and homework, it is important to remember to be responsible. There’s nothing wrong with having a few drinks, but it’s crucial to know one’s body’s limits and to never get behind the wheel while intoxicated.

According to [collegedrinkingprevention.gov](https://collegedrinkingprevention.gov/), more than 1,500 college students between the ages of 18-24 die from alcohol-related injuries, including vehicular crashes annually.

If planning on drinking, always have a plan to get home, as driving while drunk is extremely dangerous not only for driver and passengers, but also for everyone else on the road.

Think about establishing a designated driver in your friend group, use a rideshare app such as Uber or Lyft. If all else fails, call someone you trust to come pick you up.

Knowing one’s own alcohol tolerance is also important. Binge-drinking and alcohol poisoning are both issues that don’t get talked about enough, so it’s key to remember that both can have some pretty bad consequences. Nobody wants to end up in the hospital, so don’t overdo it.

With that said, we hope everybody has a great time over spring break. Have fun, make memories and recharge so we can start the second half of the semester strong. Just please be responsible.

## New Netflix fees weaken company

Netflix was the first successful streaming service. From its humble beginnings in 1997, Netflix was the foundation of what streaming looks like today.

It started out as a service where subscribers could rent DVDs through the mail. Like a video store, viewers would watch the movie and return the DVD by its due date. Once it moved into digital streaming, Netflix had a monopoly — for a while, at least.

As more and more streaming services become available, Netflix is a powerhouse whose foundation is beginning to crack.

Earlier this year, the service decided to instate an official rule on password sharing where people would pay an additional fee for people using the Netflix account who are not a part of the shared household.

This caused backlash among subscribers which caused Netflix to back down.

Netflix claimed the sharing fee would first be tested in different countries such as Chile, Costa Rica and Peru, and not immediately in the U.S. as some people

### Commentary



Maddie Sims  
UP managing editor



UP graphic by Maddie Sims

believed.

Netflix is testing their password sharing system and has come up with a system where people with Netflix accounts are tracked by their address to make sure everyone using the password is in the same household unless they are paying for an additional person to use it.

Certain countries such as Canada, New Zealand and Spain will begin using this system within the year, and if all goes to plan, the U.S. will, too.

If Netflix is not already aware, they will soon come to realize this will hurt their platform more than they think. They are not the only streaming service on the market anymore.

The Disney+, ESPN+, and Hulu bundle in total is the same price as a Netflix subscription. Three in one seems like a better deal in the long run, right?

Services such as Peacock and Paramount+ have also emerged within the past few years. Viewers have more — and cheaper — options than Netflix.

By creating problems now, more people will cancel their Netflix subscriptions, causing the streamer’s audience numbers to plummet. They also do not realize the technological impact of the world we live in and ways people can easily abuse this system.

People who grew up with technology, such as Millennials and Gen Z’s, are more likely to pirate their content on services provided on the internet, or go to their friend’s or extend family’s homes to watch anything they want on Netflix without having to pay for it.

Netflix is no longer the monopoly it was. By the time they realize how much of a rough patch they have put themselves in, it’ll potentially be too late. They will reap what they’ve sown and will have a harder time getting back what they have lost. It is only a matter of time.

We don’t have to wait for the mailman to arrive anymore. The next streamer is only a click away.

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## From the Archives

## Soul legend headlined LU's Black Week

October 24, 1969

The second annual Black Week, Sunday, Oct. 26, through Saturday, Nov. 1, sponsored by the Afro-American Student Association, will begin with a guest appearance by the Rev. Ransome Howard and his choir in the Recital Hall of the Music Speech Building at 4:30p.m.

Rev. Howard, pastor of the First sixth Baptist church in Port Arthur, will speak on the Association's Black Week theme "Doing Big Black Things in Big Black Ways."

"Ransome Howard is just the man to inspire our young proud Blacks toward a productive and successful week of activities," said William Carter a senior Fine Arts major from Beaumont, and spokesman for the organization.

Gene Locke, a graduate student at Texas Southern University and the vice president of the Afro-Americans for Black Liberation at the University of Houston, appears Monday. Locke will speak in Dining Hall A at 7:30p.m. on "Black Awareness and Black People."

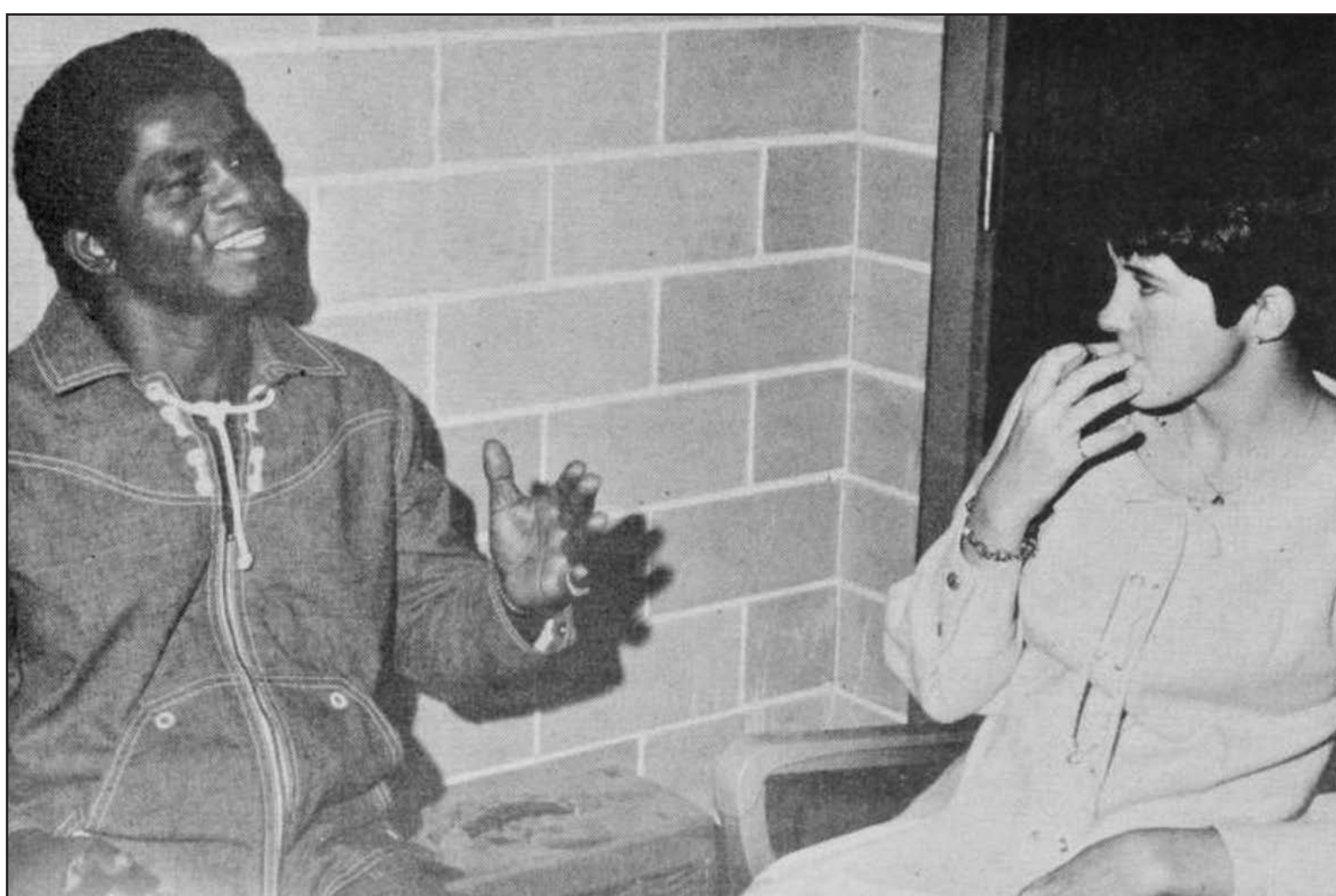
Accompanying Locke is Mrs. Vernell Lillie and the Houston Black Theatre company. Mrs. Lillie, who is the director of the speech and drama department at Phillis Wheatler high School in Houston, will present the Black Theatre in an original black production. The company will also present a black folk singer.

"We are encouraging the public, black and white to attend these functions," says Carter. "It is not only important for the black man to regain his identity, but it is also important that the white man know that he has one," Carter continued.

On Tuesday, the Association plans a "Blac-nic," which will be held in the picnic area between the poll and the Senior Apartments.

On Wednesday night, the Association will present, as he is sometimes called, Mr. Dynamic James Brown. Brown and his Review will make their appearance in McDonald Gym at 8 p.m.

All during the week the asso-



James Brown — Kristine Kreisher interviewed popular soul singer, Brown, following his performance Wednesday night in McDonald Gym. Miss Kreisher found Brown "warm and understanding" (staff photo by Bobby Dickinson)

## James Brown, King of Soul Found to Be Understanding

October 31, 1969

How can you describe James Brown? King of Soul? Militant black? An intelligent human being? He's all of these and more, he's one of the warmest, most understanding people I have ever met. He has no delusions about the state of the black people, but yet he still has an overwhelming desire to help his fellow man.

He wants the best for his people but he doesn't want charity. "We just want to be

permitted the opportunity to do things for ourselves."

Brown is giving Lamar College a scholarship fund to help black students get the education necessary to better themselves and their country.

As I began to ask him questions I noticed one thing more than any other. James Brown is almost fanatically patriotic. He loves his race and is proud of it, but he loves his country even more. He said that the only chance we have to beat

the race problem is for the whites and the blacks to "join forces and fight together."

We asked about his reported retirement, he said that in about 6-7 months he planned to cut down on his work as an entertainer, but that he still had a duty to help his people as much as possible. "It's something I have to do."

Written by Kristine Kreisher

Compiled by Ja'Leigh Cerf.

ciation will be sponsoring two recreational activities; spade tournaments and women's flag or pussycat football. On Thursday, the final play-offs for both of these events will be held, and the victorious teams will receive awards.

"ASA, the initials do not title an organization," says Carter. "However, ASA is an association composed of black student organizations as well as inde-

pendent black students. With this in mind, I would like to announce that the Alpha Phi Alpha and the Alpha Belles two of the member organizations in the Association are contributing a float to Black Week to be entered for competition in the Homecoming parade.

The float will be the first to be entered in the parade by black students," Carter continued, "and we are asking that

all of our students participate in its construction. For this reason, we have not scheduled any events for Friday night, and hope that our students will participate in the construction of the float throughout the entire week after regular scheduled activities have ceased."

Being hung in the Baptist Student Union for viewing throughout the entire week will be a Black Art Exhibit, featuring

talent from Texas Southern University, Lamar Tech and the black area high school. "We feel that these young artists are definitely striving for an identity in their work, and we urge you to come and see for yourselves the talent exhibited by these young artists," Carter said.

Compiled From the archives by Ja'Leigh Cerf.



# Laissez le bon bikes rouler

The thundering sounds of engines revving could be heard reverberating down Beaumont's Main Street, Feb. 18, as area bikers paraded for the Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas Motorcycle Showcase.

Entrants decorated their bikes — as well as donning costumes — as they showed off a variety of bikes.

Leathernecks Confederation MC member Johnny said he has owned his 2010 Harley Davidson Street Glide since 2018 and started customizing it in 2020.

"You think you know about building a bike until you realize you don't," he said.

Johnny's bike was the loudest but not because of its engine or exhaust, but because of the sound system he built.

It wouldn't be Mardi Gras without colorful beads and some riders decorated their bikes for the occasion.

Johnny Colunga decided to take costuming to the next level by dressing up as the Batman and customized his 2018 Polaris Slingshot accordingly.

"My kids always called it the Batmobile so I decided I might as well make it," he said.

It took Colunga three years and six months to build this hot rod.

Most of these biker clubs consists of retired firemen, retired police officers, army veterans, and even a teddy bear made an appearance.

"They like to ride too," one of the bikers said.

Story and photos by Brian Quijada



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## AI from page 1

from writing the answers on your arm to having advanced AI tools write your papers. Professors are still struggling to find a way to prevent cheating in their classrooms.

“My larger question is, why are you even in college?” Paul Hemenway, Lamar University professor of communication, said. “If (students) don’t actually want to learn anything, there are thousands of other things to do. My whole focus in college was, ‘What can I gain from doing this?’ ‘What can I learn?’ ‘How is this going to improve me?’ ‘How am I going to feel better about myself?’ ‘How am I going to have a better place in the world?’ And then, ultimately, ‘What am I going to do to help other people improve theirs?’ ‘What does cheating have to do with any of that?’”

Hemenway and many other professors feel that the prevention of academic dishonesty is the student’s re-

sponsibility, as all students are required to sign a policy document stating that all work they turn in is their own.

“If people want to cheat, they’re probably going to find a way to do it,” Hemenway said. “I’m in the business of helping people and providing them with information that’s going to change their lives. If they want to learn it so they can use it, God bless them. If they just want to get an A on an exam, I’m kind of out of that question. If I find out that they have done things that were unethical or dishonest or inappropriate, I will go down the right channels to try to make sure it doesn’t happen again. But that’s not why I’m here at this job.”

To some professors, the only way they can think of to escape academic dishonesty is to revert to in-class handwritten essays where students can be monitored and

are not allowed technology. Nicki Michalski, Lamar University associate professor of communication said it is an option she is debating.

“But a lot of students’ handwriting has gotten worse over the years, just as people spend more time typing and less time actually writing,” she said. “So, it’s getting really hard to read some people’s essays. Plus, they can’t write very fast because

they’re just not used to it. And so, if you give them five essays with two pages per essay, and you give them 50 minutes, that’s going to be an issue.”

Many educators refuse to do make their students hand-write big essay assignments, so they turn to other solutions to prevent cheating.

“It was suggested to me that I could use a computer lab to monitor students during essay exams,” Michalski said. “That way I would be able to see what they were using. So, I’m kind of playing with that idea, but as far as tests go, the easiest way to prevent cheating without monitoring them in a computer lab is to put a timer on the exams. If it takes you 20 minutes to find one answer and there’s 50 questions and you only have 90 minutes, you’re up a creek. So, then they have to study, right? That’s why I put timers on my multiple-choice tests online.”

ChatGPT and other AI tools are changing the rules and procedures behind providing higher education. On the ChatGPT website, the bot has written a statement about its’ effects on students and academic dishonesty:

“As an AI language model, my purpose is to provide information and assist with tasks, but I understand your concern about the potential

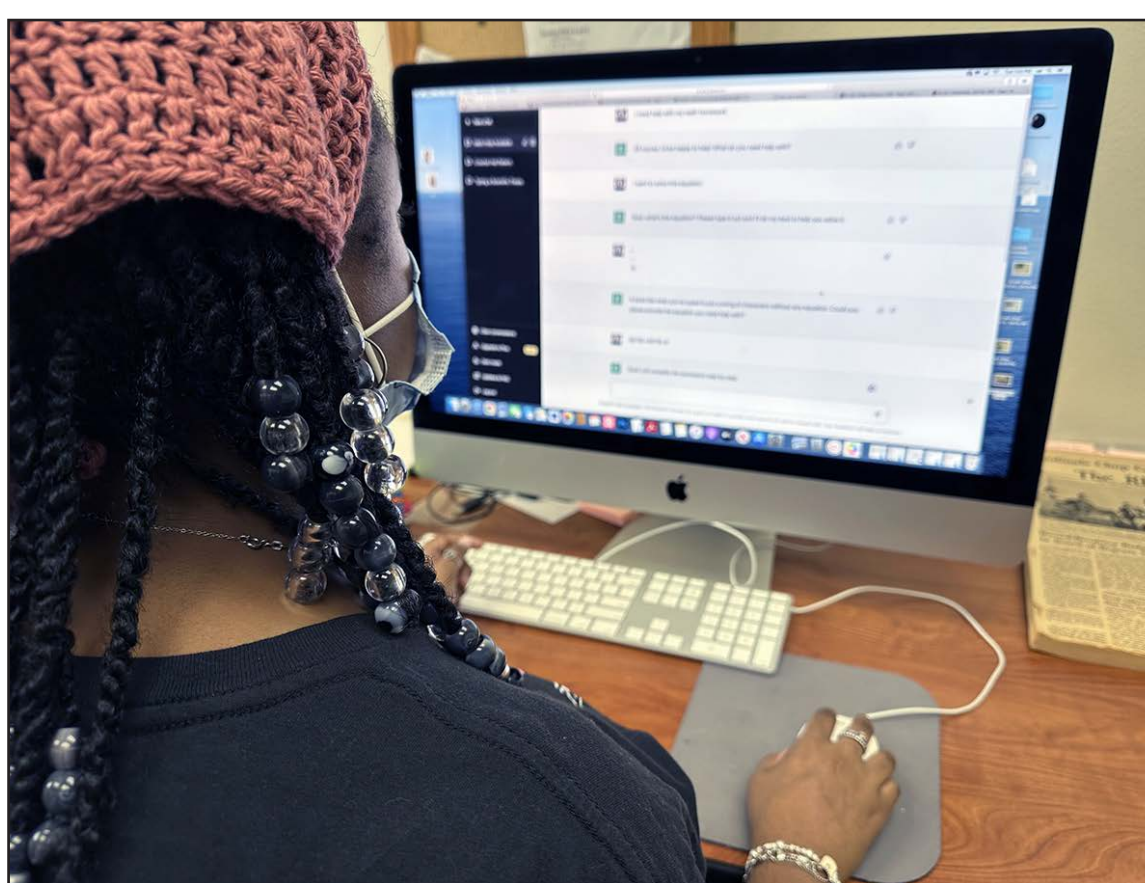
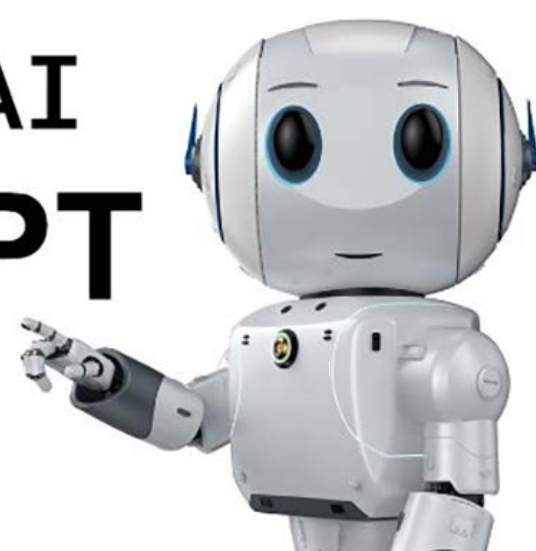
impact on higher education and academic dishonesty. It is important to note that while I can provide information and help with tasks, I am not a substitute for the critical thinking and analytical skills that are developed through higher education. Additionally, many universities have measures in place to prevent academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism detection software and proctoring during online exams. Moreover, I am programmed to provide accurate and reliable information, and to cite sources when appropriate. It is up to the user to use the information provided in an ethical and responsible manner, and to avoid academic dishonesty.

“In summary, while AI language models like myself have the potential to aid in education and research, it is important to use these resources ethically and responsibly, and to recognize the value of critical thinking and analytical skills developed through higher education.”

The program is so popular that users are often notified that the program is at capacity.

ChatGPT is just a tool, but any tool can be misused. Ultimately, a sense of personal ethics is what will stop cheating. But with each technological step, the temptation becomes greater.

# OpenAI ChatGPT



UP photo illustration by Abi Patterson



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# Walking tall

## Cardinal baseball off to scorching start with Oakland sweep

**Keagan Smith**  
UP sports editor

The distinctive sounds of gloves popping, bats cracking and crowds cheering are back. Baseball season has officially begun — and the Lamar Cardinals rung in the new season with a scorching start.

LU opened their 2023 campaign with a three-game home series vs. the Oakland University Golden Grizzlies. Each contest was eventful, and it's probably safe to say few seasons have begun in such dramatic fashion.

The opening game of the season was absolutely electric. Oakland jumped out to an early 3-0 lead in the first two innings, but the Cardinals battled back to tie things up in the third before adding a fourth run in the next inning. LU held a 4-3 lead until the top of the ninth when the Golden Grizzlies knotted the score to force extra innings.

Oakland drove home a run in the top of the 10th frame, but hope certainly wasn't lost. In the bottom of the 10th, Kanin Dodge drew a walk to put a man on base for the Cards. It was followed by the highlight of the night as catcher Ryan Snell sent a walk-off home run over the fence to give Lamar the opening night win.

Interestingly, it seems history does, in fact, repeat itself.



UP photo by Brian Quijada

The Lamar University Cardinals celebrate Kevin Bermudez's home run vs. Oakland University, Feb. 19, at Vincent-Beck Stadium. Lamar's Kevin Bermudez, below, rounds the bases, Feb. 19, at Vincent-Beck Stadium.



Last year's opening contest played out nearly the exact same way — Snell delivered a walk-off homer to begin the Cardinals' season.

Overall, the opening night's action was an encouraging start for Lamar. Three batters recorded multiple hits on the night, while the team showed resilience by digging themselves out of a 3-0 hole.

As if the first game didn't raise Cardinal fans' blood pressure enough, game two of the series, Saturday, was an equally exciting affair. LU trailed through the first five innings before tying the score at 2-2 in the sixth. Landon Odom and Kole Tauzin pitched four scoreless frames out of the bullpen to keep the Cardinals in it heading into the bottom of the ninth.

With the game on the line, Ethan Ruiz drove a base hit into center field and Kirkland Banks

sprinted around the base paths to score all the way from first — giving the Cards their second walk-off win in as many days.

Lamar busted out the brooms in game three to complete the series sweep, downing Oakland in a 5-4 victory at Vincent-Beck Stadium. Kevin Bermudez went 2-for-3 with two runs, an RBI and a walk, while Jack Schell notched a two-RBI triple.

Sure, it's early in the season. But the results of the opening series speak for themselves, and are hopefully an indication of what's to come. After all, Lamar was picked to finish third overall in the Southland Conference's preseason polls. However, it might be worth asking — was that ranking too low?

There's an argument to be made that the Cardinals can win the conference.

Having just moved back to the Southland following their

maiden season in the Western Athletic Conference, Lamar is certainly battle-tested. The Cards finished last year's campaign with a 37-21 overall record, good for a .638 winning percentage. They also went 20-10 over a tough conference slate, which translates to a .667 mark.

If Lamar had played in the Southland last year with those same results, they would have finished first in the conference standings. While it's not a perfect way to predict future performance, it seems LU should be able to compete with McNeese and Southeastern Louisiana at the top of the league.

Besides, the Cardinals returned many key members of last season's squad. Banks, Snell, Bermudez and Josh Blankenship are experienced players and the main cogs of the batting lineup. Tanner Wilson, who ap-

peared in a limited role last season, may be a key name to watch as well in the outfield and at DH. While the pitching staff lost a couple of key seniors, there's still some continuity from last year's bullpen — and Lamar utilized the transfer portal to fill out the rest of the rotation with proven players.

An added bonus of being back in the Southland is the benefit of shorter road trips. The impacts of travel during a long season are often underestimated, and playing in a closer geographical conference will hopefully lead to less fatigue.

Under the leadership of head coach Will Davis, who recently signed a contract extension to remain with Lamar through 2025, the Cardinals will look to meet the high expectations set for them and compete for a Southland Conference championship.

# Lady hoopers clinch SLC tourney berth

**Keagan Smith**  
UP sports editor

Lamar women's basketball team punched their ticket into postseason play with a thrilling win over the Houston Christian University Huskies, Feb. 18.

At press time, the Lady Cardinals held a 16-10 overall record with three games remaining in the regular season.

They were tied for third place in the Southland Conference standings with Texas A&M-Commerce, also sitting just one game behind the second-place Texas A&M-Corpus Christi.

LU's season has been a story of two halves. The team struggled to string together multiple wins at the start of the campaign, going 6-5 through their non-conference slate. It's hard to keep from getting discouraged after losses, ho-

wever, three of those came to Baylor, Arkansas and Louisiana State — all power five schools in the Big 12 or SEC.

The Lady Cards went 2-4 in their first six Southland contests, including a three-game losing streak in mid-January. Something had to change.

Change, it did. Lamar snapped the losing streak with a 20-point win over Incarnate Word, then followed it up with a 17-point victory over A&M-Com-

merce. Overall, they've won eight of their last nine games, rattling off a six-game win streak heading into the season's home stretch.

The effort put into turning the season around is admirable — the Lady Cardinals have shown incredible fight and toughness in the face of adversity, and they've undoubtedly earned their spot in the Southland tournament come March.

Junior Sabria Dean has been one of the standouts of the season. She averages 13.8 points per game, which ranks her fourth overall in the conference. Dean is also first in the Southland in three-pointers made and fifth in steals a game.

Sophomore Akasha Davis is also getting it done on both ends of the floor. She's just behind her teammate, ranking fifth in scoring with 13.4 points a game while also pulling in 7.6 rebounds a night — the conference's fourth-best mark.

Sophomore guard Portia Adams is also fourth in the Southland's assists rankings, and recently won her first Conference Player of the Week honors.

Lamar ends the regular season with games against New Orleans and Nicholls, which are the bottom two teams in the Southland as things currently stand. If the Lady Cardinals can handle business, they have a real shot at jumping to first place and securing the number-one seed in the conference tournament.

The Southland Conference women's basketball playoffs begin March 6 at the Legacy Center in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Tickets are on sale now.



Guard Sabria Dean drives to the basket and attempts a layup vs. Northwestern State, Feb. 4, in the Montagne Center. UP photo by Brian Quijada



# UP sports briefs

The spring seasons are in full swing — here's what LU's teams have been up to.

## BASKETBALL

Men's basketball is 9-19 overall. Their 5-10 record in Southland Conference play may not sound like much, but it's a marked improvement from last year's team which went winless in their conference slate. Alvin Brooks' young squad is showing signs of growth and keeping games competitive despite an assortment of injuries. If they can win two of their final three games, they could even squeak into the Southland tournament as the eight seed.



LU's Terry Anderson goes for a layup against HCU, Feb. 16, in the Montage Center.

UP photo by Brian Quijada

## MEN'S TENNIS

Men's tennis is off to a 7-5 start and is 3-0 in matches at home. They recently downed Southern Mississippi, 4-3 with Max Amling, Filippo Salsini, Max Milicic and

Brandon Do all recording wins on the day. The team will host Rice University at the Beaumont Municipal Tennis Center, Feb. 25.

## WOMEN'S TENNIS

Women's tennis is 3-5

overall to begin their season. At their most recent match, they fell to New Mexico University, 4-0. Their next home contest will take place at 11

a.m., March 4 at the Beaumont Municipal Tennis Center.

## TRACK

Lamar track and field have been competing at indoor meets throughout the last two months to prepare for the upcoming Southland Conference championship, which will be held Feb. 27 and 28 in Birmingham, Alabama. During LU's most recent invitational at the University of Houston, the women's 4x400m relay team finished first overall. The men's 4x400m relay team earned second place, as well.

## SOFTBALL

LU softball is off to a rocky start with a 2-9 record through their first 11 games. Tournament season is in full swing, but they'll play their first home game of the year in Beaumont, March 17.

# Lamar celebrated Mardi Gras in style in 1997

## From the archives

February 7, 1997

Green, purple and gold have been as common as red and white on campus this week, and Lamar University students are ready to "let the good times roll" as Lamar di Gras Homecoming 1997 hits full stride tonight and doesn't stop moving until Sunday evening.

The weekend celebration begins with a pre-bonfire party at Mirabeau's Patio in the Setzer Center today at 5:30 p.m. Hot links and drinks will be available for partygoers who can entertain their friends with a little karaoke.

At 6:30 p.m., students will gather in the Setzer Center parking lot for a lighted parade

with flashlights, candles, and noisemakers. The parade will lead students from the parking lot through the Quad across campus to Parking Lot I next to the Cardinal practice field, where the Cardinal pep rally and bonfire lighting is scheduled for 7 p.m.

After the bonfire, students are invited to close out tonight's festivities in the Setzer Ballroom, where they can enjoy gumbo and music with the Cardinal Singers and the Jazz Band.

The Lamar di Gras activities continue tomorrow with the homecoming parade at 11 a.m. beginning at the Montagne Center. Students may check out the floats and cars entered by fellow students and Lamar organizations. The parade will

travel from the Montagne Center to East Virginia, turn near the library down Rolfe Christopher Drive, then right onto Georgia and right onto University Drive. See page 4 for a map of the complete parade route.

After the parade, students will enjoy the food, games, music and arts and crafts of Quad Days in front of the Setzer Center at noon. Space shuttle laser tag, high striker, pop-a-shot, orbitron, speed pitch and a bungee run will all challenge students and faculty who are in a gaming mood, and dollar meals including hot dogs, chili, cotton candy and more will help them re-fuel for another round of games.

At 1 p.m., students can gather in the circle drive park-

ing lot to watch fellow students compete in the Mini Indy 500, a tricycle relay race that is sure to offer thrills, laughs and plenty of bruised kisses and bent handlebars.

The Alumni House will host an open house from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. where anyone can stop by to chat with old classmates and enjoy a slice of king cake.

Visitors from the Big Easy get a chance to experience Mardi Gras Lamar University style as the Lady Cardinals take on the New Orleans Privateers in the Montagne Center at 4:30 p.m.

The men will take the court against the Privateers at 7 p.m., and the homecoming king, queen and ambassadors will be announced at half-time, spon-

sored by Mobil. Homecoming T-shirts, megaphones and mini basketballs will be thrown into the crowd.

Mirabeau's in the Setzer Center will host a Lamar di Gras party immediately after the basketball game.

Fans still hungry for homecoming sports action can watch the Lamar Cardinal basketball team battle UT-San Antonio at 1 p.m. on Sunday at Vincent-Beck Stadium.

The homecoming festivities will be capped off with a performance by the Symphonic and Concert bands at 3 p.m. in the Setzer Center Ballroom.

Lamar di Gras '97 T-shirts will be available at all home basketball games and in 212 Setzer Student Center.



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