



**Bits & Bites** Diverse cuisine presented at annual Dallas College fundraising event, *Page 5*



**Voting** Your voice matters, *Page 2*



**Chaz Hafey** Brookhaven astronomer shares his love for the stars, *Page 8*



# THE BROOKHAVEN COURIER

Award-winning student news since 1978

## Brookhaven names Student of the Year

By **Kamila Vargas-Gonzalez**  
Contributing Writer

A student stares into the hallways of the Dallas College Brookhaven Campus she courses through daily. A smile creeps onto her face. "I don't regret any of it," she said about her experience as a student.

Gisselle Lopez, president of the Student Government Association and a Phi Theta Kappa member, has been selected as the Dallas College Student of the Year for Brookhaven Campus. She took

a few seconds to translate her gratitude into words. "It's definitely a

rewarding feeling," she said.

### RECOGNITION

Lopez is part of organizing campus cleanup projects, reconstructing the SGA constitution and creating a survey for students to voice their concerns. "I kept pushing through," she said. "I kept doing what I love, which is helping others."

"I never see her sit down and relax," Oscar Lopez, a Dallas College student and Gisselle's brother, said, chuckling. "At home, she's also working."

At home, Gisselle sits on her bed with a laptop across from her. Her laptop fan runs as the computer overheats. Gisselle finally wraps a meeting with other SGA members across Dallas College, letting her laptop rest. She begins winding down for the night, but chimes from her phone prevent her from doing so. Gisselle checks her phone and sees an email congratulating her for receiving the Student of the Year honor.

• **Gisselle**, *Page 7*

Photo by Trennt Rhea



Photo illustration by Edgar Palacios and Elizabeth Zuniga Galindo

## AI seeps into coursework

By **Leonardo Rosas**  
Contributing Writer

In less than six months, ChatGPT has become a household name. The AI service can write paragraphs, essays, speeches and fill in exams. So many people have flocked to the chatbot for a glimpse of its power that the servers have to be shut

down at times. It is a tour de force of artificial intelligence.

ChatGPT was developed by OpenAI, an artificial intelligence company founded in 2015 with a mission to ensure that artificial general intelligence benefits all of society, according to OpenAI's website.

The human-like chatbot can

answer almost any question the user provides, and it has been trained to respond as a human would.

When asked about its pros and cons, ChatGPT said, "It's important to note that while I can be a helpful tool for certain tasks, human judgment and critical thinking should always be exercised when interpreting and using the information

generated by AI systems like me."

With ChatGPT's capabilities, it comes as no surprise students have been tempted to consult it for assistance with their assignments, especially in English courses. However, some Dallas College faculty warn students of ChatGPT's downsides.

• **Chat GPT**, *Page 7*



Photo by Trennt Rhea

## SGA leads campus cleanup

Student **Caroline Simpson** (left), **Jason Hopkins**, senior head athletic coach, and student **Kelsie Trevino** throw away litter at the Brookhaven Campus cleanup on April 18.

## SGA works to integrate campus constitutions

By **Kamila Vargas-Gonzalez**  
Contributing Writer

Student Government Association members are working to scrap, reword or rephrase drafts of their constitution to present a final draft to Dallas College. This is part of an ongoing effort by SGA organizations across Dallas College to advocate for student interests.

Gisselle Lopez, president of SGA at Brookhaven Campus, said an increase in engagement across the seven campuses is the primary reason for streamlining the constitution. Lopez said it works as a base to be in a position where they can advocate for students' rights, interests and resources.

She said: "Before the pandemic, SGA was very active. They were constantly getting awards from state recognition. But since then, we lost a lot of engagement."

In 2018, Brookhaven SGA won seven first place awards at the Texas Junior College Student Government Association Convention.

Lopez said a few ideas to get

engagement rolling at Brookhaven include surveys and class visits. She said: "The survey gives the ability to voice five concerns, and it is completely anonymous. The idea is to come into first-year classes to advocate for students to voice their concerns and speak with them for five to 10 minutes about how SGA is there to represent the student body."

Lopez is student-driven when it comes to her goals for SGA. "We are sticking to the student agenda and making sure that students are the main voice of this campus," she said.

Frankie Ward, director of student life at Dallas College, said: "On Feb. 25, 2023, I, 14 SGA leaders and Dr. Stephanie Hill, the assistant vice chancellor, met to discuss the future of

SGA as it relates to the one-college approach. Then we decided that streamlining the SGA constitution is necessary for future growth."

In 2020, Dallas County Community College District received approval to become Dallas College, which merged all seven formerly independent campuses. This meant the SGA organizations from each campus had to find a way to merge as well.

Previously, Ward worked as an adviser for SGA at Tarrant County College and helped develop their constitution. She said: "I got them acknowledged by the TCC board of trustees as a student union in the TCC board of trustees policies and procedures. My prior

**"We are sticking to the student agenda and making sure that students are the main voice of this campus."**

— **Gisselle Lopez**,  
Brookhaven Campus SGA  
President

• **SGA**, *Page 7*

## First four-year grads toss caps

By **Jayline Quintana**  
Contributing Writer

As graduation season approaches, Dallas College prepares to graduate its first cohort of the four-year Childhood Development/Early Childhood Education program. Students will graduate with a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education and teaching.

Although students will have to return the following fall semester to complete their one-year alternative teacher certification program, they will be able to work as the "teacher on record."

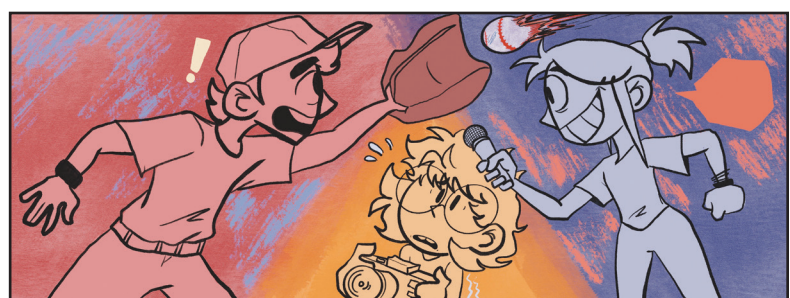
Dallas College's education program initially offered associate degrees in teaching and was expanded to a four-year program in the Fall 2021 semester. The program

currently has around a thousand students enrolled, and is expected to continue growing.

Robert DeHaas, the vice provost of the School of Education, said, "From this spring to last spring the program experienced about 75% enrollment growth."

The apprentice program is a

• **Graduates**, *Page 7*



**Athletes Q&A** Get to know Brookhaven baseball and soccer players, *Page 6*

**Student Awards**  
Brookhaven Courier brings home 40 awards, *Page 3*

**Mental Health**  
Resources for suicide prevention, *Page 7*

**Meow Wolf**  
New art exhibit to open in Grapevine, Texas, *Page 4*

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# OPINION

— Staff Editorial —

## Vote: Your voice is crucial

The right to vote is a cornerstone of democracy and is one of the most important civic duties we have as citizens of the U.S. Voting is a great responsibility, and it is crucial we understand its significance in determining the course of history.

One reason voting is so important in the U.S. is its ability to promote equality. The preamble to the U.S. Constitution opens by clearly stating, We the People, granting every citizen an equal voice in policy-making processes. By casting your vote, you actively participate in upholding this principle of fairness, ensuring each voters opinion can be taken into account.

Amid the uncertainty of what the future will look like for our generation, younger voters seem to be taking over polling centers across the country, and influencing decision-making in the House and Senate, according to National Public Radio.

The young people of this generation have the potential to shift the very structure of state, and in some cases even national, politics. There are so many of us. If the majority of us came out to vote, and voice our opinions, we could change the system for the better.

According to the Pew Research Center, 24 million Generation Z

citizens were eligible to cast a vote in the November 2020 election. They were also the most diverse generation to hit the polls that year.

There are often heated debates surrounding national elections and the question of whether or not your vote counts. While political races are important, it is equally important to recognize the impact local politicians have on our daily lives.

Local politicians such as mayors, city council members and school board officials are responsible for making decisions that directly impact our communities. They are essential in administering and maintaining our parks, schools and other public government agencies as well as establishing neighborhood rules and regulations.

In a diverse state such as Texas, local officials are in charge of managing and allocating resources to meet the particular needs of many communities and areas. They are in charge of supporting economic development, preserving public safety and maintaining local infrastructure and



Photo illustration by Trennt Rhea and Maria Elena Franco

significance of local elections and take an active role in them.

Voters can guarantee their voices are heard and their priorities are represented by taking time to learn about their local candidates and the issues most important to them. By keeping local elections

a priority, we can ensure our communities are represented by individuals who share our values and who will work hard to increase the standard of living of voters.

When you participate in federal or local elections, you pay homage to those who fought tirelessly for our right to vote. Historically, various segments of the population were excluded from this civic duty, and many have faced intense opposition while advocating for equal representation. By voting, you honor their sacrifices and recognize the privilege you possess as a citizen of a democratic nation.

For young people, this is another pivotal moment in history. A bill has been proposed to the Texas legislature which would ban polling on Texas colleges and universities. This act is an attempt to silence our generation. The very politicians who are

supposed to represent us have instead chosen to cast us to the side.

If we want to combat these challenges, we must become more politically active, and that starts with voting. Vote for the individuals who will accurately represent your voice.

Every vote has the power to make a difference. There are countless examples of elections won or lost by remarkably slim margins. Your individual vote may well be the deciding factor in the outcome of an election, with broader implications for your community, state or even the country.

It's important to be aware of and vote during elections because the future of this country depends on our participation. We must fight to protect and improve this country. The first step is voting for officials we believe in.

**"It's important to be aware of and vote during elections because the future of this country depends on our participation."**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT UPCOMING ELECTIONS AND THE POLITICIANS WHO REPRESENT YOU BY VISITING THE WEBSITES LISTED.**

LWVtexas.org  
 texastribune.org/directory  
 ballotpedia.org

## Time management skills for student success

Final exams are fast approaching. Soon, professors will prepare students for final projects, from essays to speeches to quizzes. With only days remaining in the semester, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed. The average student is more susceptible to stress and burnout during this time period.

I am here to say: Fear not. Here are some time management skills any student can benefit from.

Plan at least a week ahead. College is not like high school. Outside of rare cases, there will be no assignments announced a few days before they are due. Before the semester begins, almost all Dallas College courses become available on eCampus, with semester-long syllabi provided.

The syllabus is always your friend. It will do wonders in helping you manage your time. Jot down and categorize your due dates in a notebook. Do not rely on your instructor to remind you when an assignment is due.

At the beginning of each week,

make a list of every assignment you must complete during that time. Dedicate at least three hours over a two day period in the week per assignment.

Make sure to assign a specific time of day for each task. This will ensure there are no time overlaps for assignments. If at all possible, pick a time of day before 8 p.m. If you start an assignment past this time, you have already sabotaged yourself by working on something with a tired mind and body.

Identify your learning style. Are you a visual person? If so, write a more detailed list of assignments and due dates in a notepad. Start with the larger assignments (exams, projects, speeches, etc.) and work down from there. Use different color pens for easy identification.

If you absorb information in a more auditory fashion, it never hurts to set reminders. Your smartphone's calendar app is capable of holding a semester's worth of reminders in it. Use that convenience. Set specific chimes for each category of assignment. Perhaps a brighter one for homework, and an urgent one for more heavy duty assignments. Be sure to set the reminder a few days before the due date. Set up multiple reminders for each assignment. Think of these as

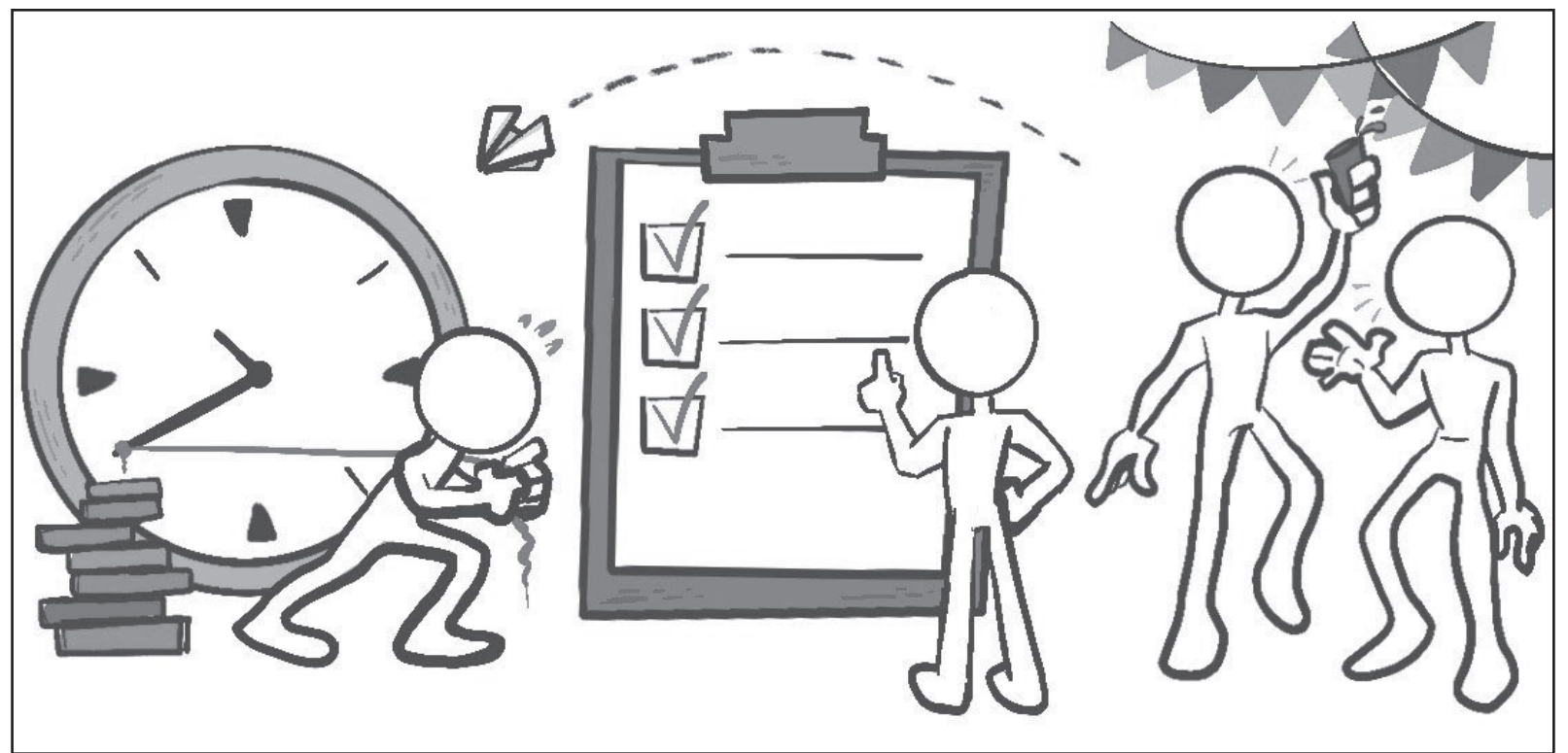


Illustration by Elizabeth Zuniga Galindo

medication reminders; important notices that if followed, will benefit you.

Did neither of these methods appeal to you? In that case, you may be a kinesthetic learner. You will require a bit more motion with your methods. I would suggest putting up a medium sized whiteboard in the area of your house where you are likely to be moving around the

most, such as the kitchen.

At the beginning of each week, write down a list of assignments due, as well as any other academic goals. In addition, put daily sticky notes by the front door or on your bathroom mirror. Being reminded of your due dates while you are more active should assist you in keeping track of everything.

Do not overwork yourself.

College is hard. It requires dedication and consistent effort. That is the reality. However, that is no excuse to avoid self-care.

Try not to dedicate more than four hours to an assignment without taking a break of at least 15 minutes. Not allowing yourself to sit back and relax once in a while will have detrimental effects on you and your health. It will also

result in poorer work overall. You may feel pressured to keep working, but in my experience, it is always best to stop working when you feel your focus slipping. A clear head will produce clear work.

Finals are no fun. That is a fact of life. However, if you are able to manage your time effectively, they can at least be bearable.



### THE BROOKHAVEN COURIER

Award-winning student news since 1978

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# NEWS

## Courier scores big at TIPA convention

By **Emmy Hardy**  
Copy Desk Chief

The Brookhaven Courier editors and staff earned 40 awards at the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association's annual convention.

The convention took place March 23-25 and was held at the Hilton Hotel at downtown Fort Worth. Approximately 285 student journalists and 65 advisers attended this year's convention.

Students competed in live contests categories ranging from news, editorial and public relations writing to photography, design and broadcast.

One of the contests was Copy Editing where contestants competed in copy editing sentences and news story.

With 24 entries submitted, the News Writing competition was one of the most competitive contests. Contestants were packed into buses and shuttled off to Joe Pool Lake, where they were tasked with reporting on a staged drowning.

Other contests that comprised the News Event included Spanish, TV and radio writing, as well as photo and live video news production.

Other students had the opportunity to critique or photograph a live concert in the Critical Review and Two-Person Photo Essay contests. Contestants attended Tulips FTW,

a music venue in Fort Worth, for a concert headlined by Rosegarden Funeral Party, and preceded by openers Ester Shank and Over-share.

Andrea Olan, managing editor with the Courier and a contestant in the Two-Person Essay, said, "Being my first year attending TIPA, it has been an important learning opportunity for me. The live news event taught me about breaking news reporting, and how to react in those situations."

Olan, said she was proud of the effort The Courier staff put into the live competitions. "Events like TIPA give us students a chance to network and create connections that will help us throughout our personal and professional lives."

In the Best of Show categories, The Courier earned third place in Division 3 for newspaper and second place in website. The Courier earned over 25 awards in the previously categories.

The Courier staff also earned first place for both newspaper and website in the Overall Excellence category, along with third place in general magazine for the second edition of the Texana Magazine.

Brandon Donner former photographer and managing editor with The Courier earned an honorable mention in Individual Overall Excellence for Photojournalist of

the Year for Two- and Four-Year Schools.

Workshops included Law-suit-Proofing Your Newsroom, hosted by Frank LoMonte, a CNN legal counsel, and Finding Sources and Stories with Diverse Voices, hosted by Rebecca Aguilar, a freelance reporter and former president of the Society of Professional Journalists, and many more.

On March 24, a career and trade fair took place. The event hosted several Texas colleges and media outlets, which advertised job opportunities for students.

This TIPA convention marked a special promotion. Julie Reed, outgoing TIPA president, was elected as the new executive director. When asked what she hoped students learned from TIPA, Reed said, "I hope the biggest thing they take away is encouragement/inspiration."

A luncheon was held, where Lo-Monte gave the keynote speech.

Eddy Gallagher, a longtime adviser with Tarrant County College, received the 2014 College Media Association Distinguished Adviser award, as well as the 2005 TIPA Adviser of the Year award, and was inducted into the TIPA Hall of Fame.

In a conversation later in the day, LoMonte, in reference to student journalists, said: "I think it's



Photo courtesy of Rory Moore

Jubenal Aguilar (left), student media advisor, Maria Elena Franco, Sheree Peart, Leonardo Rosas, Daniel Rodrigue, faculty advisor, Andrea Olan, Trennt Rhea and Emmy Hardy hold individual and group awards.

important to recognize that you may very well be the most reliable and trusted news organization in your entire community. The law is a very powerful tool that is very often on your side."

The convention was funded in part by Diamond Sponsor Baylor University, Gold Sponsor Sony and others. Van Nguyen, senior pro imaging support for Sony, said, "This is a big part of Sony's push to support schools and student journalism."

### TIPA LIVE CONTEST AWARDS

Place	Contest	Winner(s)
2nd	Spanish Radio Announcing	Andrea Olan
2nd	Critical Review	Emmy Hardy
3rd	Print News Writing	Leonardo Rosas
3rd	Spanish News Writing	Andrea Olan
HM	Editorial Cartoon	Maria Elena Franco
HM	2-Person Photo Essay	Andrea Olan & Trennt Rhea

## Dallas College tours civil rights sites

By **Jayline Quintana**  
Contributing Writer

Nearly 100 Dallas College students traveled to historical civil right movement landmarks March 23-26 across Mississippi and Alabama.

Students accompanied by Dallas College faculty, a licensed counselor and a nurse visited sites such as the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, Legacy Museum, National Voting Rights Museum and Institution, and Foot Soldiers Bridge.

This year the excursion was preceded by the Civil Rights Speaker series at North Lake Campus. The series featured presentations by North Lake faculty on topics such as Martin Luther King Jr., the women of the civil rights movement, as well as a documentary centered around last year's trip presented by Sharie Vance, a video technology professor at North Lake Campus.

On the first day, students heard from Jerry Mitchell, a journalist famous for his work with cold cases from the civil rights era and getting authorities to reopen them.

Roy Vu, a history professor at North Lake Campus said, "It was just an honor and a privilege to have Mr. Jerry Mitchell, an award-winning journalist, to speak with our students on the very first day of our trip."

Students visited the 16th Street Baptist Church, where they learned more about the church bombing, as well as a Black boy killed by police officers that day.

Xavier Chancellor, a Mountain View Campus student, said, "It just stuck with me because it is something that we face today as African American men and minority males in general."

Chancellor, who has now attended the trip twice, said visiting Dexter

Avenue Baptist Church, where students learned more about King's life was another key moment of the trip for him.

After the exhibits, students participated in small group discussions led by faculty.

"We broke out into small group discussions, and each adviser was assigned to four to six students," Vu said. "It was quite powerful and insightful to see, a lot of tears were shed but it was beautiful."

Rory Etienne, North Lake Campus SGA president, said: "I feel like it is paramount that trips like this are done with the college because it is history that is not told in the traditional classroom. There is just not enough time in a traditional classroom to cover these topics."

Moore said he hopes to expand the trip in the future. He said: "Our hope is that we no longer have waiting lists. That we are able to have anyone that is interested from Dallas College to attend and then have this great educational experience."

Vu said he feels the same way. "Unfortunately, a lot of history has been ignored, erased, neglected and just forgotten," Vu said. "So as a historian, it is important to make sure those stories are told and heard and therefore shared."

The first trip was offered the Spring 2019 semester.

Although it was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the trip was officially brought back last year in 2022.

Vu and Shanee' Moore, senior director of college administration at Dallas College, helped plan this year's trip.

Previous guest speakers have included individuals such as Dale H. Long, a survivor of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church, an attack by the Ku Klux Klan that killed four Black girls.



Photo by Trennt Rhea

Dallas College student Maria Mendoza donates blood at a Carter BloodCare mobile blood drive on March 29.

## Brookhaveans donate blood, save lives

By **Gabriela X. Zuniga**  
Copy Editor

Dallas College hosts Carter BloodCare mobile units to collect blood that goes to patients across north, east and central Texas.

The blood drives held at all Dallas College Campuses are open to anyone in the community as long as they meet the eligibility requirements to donate blood.

Cynthia Carreon, a registered nurse and Dallas College blood drive coordinator, said, "It is really important that the donor is in good general health." She said donors must be 16 years or older and weigh at least 110 pounds and feel well the day of their donation.

The list of eligibility exceptions to donate blood with Carter BloodCare can be found at: [tinyurl.com/](http://tinyurl.com/)

eligibilityexceptions

Carreon said the list of eligibility restrictions and rules for donating blood is extensive. "It is important to keep those who donate and those who are receiving the blood safe," Carreon said. "So, donors' eligibility is checked every single time they donate."

According to the Carter BloodCare website, around one pint of blood is drawn in every donation. The human body has 10-12 pints but the one-pint loss can be replenished within two to three days of a donation.

At the mobile units, only plasma and blood can be donated. Other types of donations would need to be done at Carter BloodCare centers. Before donating blood, make sure to have a good breakfast and be hydrated.

Carreon said the donation process is safe, especially for healthy and eligible adults. "After donating the body will actually begin to replenish the lost volume in red blood cells," she said.

Many other benefits can be obtained from donating blood. Carreon said donors get a free health screening. With their blood pressure checked, pulse checked and blood tests done, it allows them to screen for different infectious diseases.

Carreon said volunteering and helping others is linked to overall positive health outcomes such as lowered risk of depression. Another benefit of regularly donating blood is a healthier heart and cardiovascular system.

Graduating students are eligible to receive a graduation cord from

Carter BloodCare if they donate twice or more a year. Early College High School students are also eligible to receive this cord. Occasionally, gift cards are given out at drives. At times Carter BloodCare will provide goodies on the site of the donation such as socks, water bottles, T-shirts or blankets.

Students who are interested can help by getting people to sign up. More information can be obtained at the Health Center in S Building.

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# ARTS & CULTURE

## Bits & Bites gives taste of Dallas

By Andrea Olan  
Managing Editor

From chardonnays to Texas barbecue bánh mì and upside down cheesecake, over 700 attendees were welcomed to an evening of delicate bits and appetizing bites at the annual Dallas College fundraising event, hosted by the college's Culinary, Pastry and Hospitality program.

Bits & Bites was held April 16 at the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden's A Tasteful Place. Guests enjoyed a scenic view of White Rock Lake with the Dallas skyline in the distance while tasting various dishes offered by Dallas chefs. Singer Sierra Leone delighted attendees with live jazz music.

Dallas College Chancellor Justin Lonon said he hopes attendees got a sense of what Dallas College stands for and their focus on contributing to the community. "We get to showcase our students, our culinary program, our partners and restaurants from Dallas," he said. "We want to ensure [Dallas College] students have the opportunity to go into the workforce and get great jobs."

This year's event was in honor of Jim White, radio show host and co-founder of Savor Dallas Food and Wine Festival, who died June 4, 2022. His contributions to the Dallas culinary scene are widely known, especially by those who tuned in to his radio show for local food recommendations and unique dining experiences. He was known for "The KRLD Restaurant Show," and created the Celebrity Chef Kitchen at the State Fair of Texas.

His wife, Vicki Briley-White,



Clockwise from left: Dallas College student Christopher Ourfalian applies sesame seeds to a single yakisoba noodle salad with Asian dressing and smoked duck breast on top; The flavorful combination of yakisoba noodle salad waits to be savored; Mesquite High School student Alexa Estevez performs a skillet toss while she cooks roasted corn with queso fresco and cilantro; Rosewood waygu beef short rib over corn and pico de gallo served with tortilla chips from Beckley 1115 is plated for guests to eat.



Photos by Trennt Rhea

was the honorary guest of the evening. She welcomed guests and greeted familiar faces. She invited them to participate in a silent auction to endow a scholarship in their name, the Jim White and Vicki Briley-White Scholarship.

Briley-White said the scholarship will assist Dallas College students committed to the culinary and hospitality industry. "I started this scholarship in my husband's honor," she said. "Part of it will be invested so they can give it every year and keep growing."

Steve DeShazo, senior director of Workforce and Career Connected Learning at Dallas College,

said White and Briley-White have contributed to his culinary career. "Every time Vicki and Jim could think of an opportunity to involve students, they called me," he said. "Without their vision, none of these chef festivals would be as prevalent as they are today."

During the event, attendees had the opportunity to donate through QR codes to support the college's Culinary, Pastry and Hospitality program.

Around 30 local chefs, including Dallas College alumni and current students, contributed to the culinary event and served 18,000 plates of food. It was an

opportunity for culinary and hospitality students to get a glimpse of the Dallas service industry and create important connections for their careers.

Christopher Ourfalian, a culinary student, said it was his first time participating in Bits & Bites. "We are moving at a pretty quick speed," he said. "We are having fun. Food is good and networking has been enjoyable." Before the event concluded, students visited other booths for a taste of other dishes.

Preston Nguyen, a Dallas College alumnus, 2022 World Food Champion and "Next Level Chef"

competitor, said his dish was inspired by flavors familiar to his childhood, while adding a Texan fusion to a classical Vietnamese dish – a Texas barbecue bánh mì sandwich. The delicately plated toasted baguette, with smoked pulled pork, pickled root vegetables, Asian aioli and soy sauce pearls on top, was popular with attendees.

"Growing up in Texas, I obviously love barbecue, and my dad is Vietnamese, so I wanted to infuse the two together and try something new," Nguyen said.

Chef Segundo Romero Victorica, a Dallas College culinary

instructor, said his team of students worked on developing their dish for two weeks. "We had been thinking about how we want to present it and also checking the weather. We decided to make something cold," Victorica said.

They presented a fresh gazpacho with olive oil, apple cider vinegar, celery, beer, a touch of serrano peppers and dill with lemongrass shrimp.

Victorica said he loves Bits & Bites because it is not very formal. "We have people from everywhere and any age from kids to old people," he said. "It is a family event in a beautiful atmosphere."

## Three classic 24-hour diners to visit in D-FW

By Trennt Rhea  
Photo Editor

Plates clattering, bacon sizzling and people conversing are the exact sounds produced from a unique American experience: the

24-hour diner.

From the neon lights and vinyl booths of classic diners to the modern decor of contemporary restaurants, 24-hour diners have evolved since they first started. Despite COVID-19 and many societal

challenges of the past few years, 24-hour diners remain a beloved American establishment.

For decades, 24-hour diners have been a staple in American culture. They offer a place for people who stay up all night, early risers in the

morning to come grab a plate or for students who need to stay late to study. For some customers, the 24-hour diner is more than just a place to grab a late-night meal. It is a social hub, a gathering place for friends and family to catch up over

coffee, pancakes, waffles, bacon and eggs.

There are many 24-hour options to choose from in Dallas. You can always go to Whataburger or any late night fast food restaurant. You can even go and get snacks from

QuickTrip. All of these places are convenient but lack the one thing that makes 24-hour diners great: a social connection. Fortunately, residents in D-FW have three great options that offer the classic 24-hour dining experience.



With red chairs and green plastic booth seats, the seating section of J's Breakfast & Burgers awaits customers.

### J'S BREAKFAST & BURGERS

14925 Midway Road #105  
Addison, TX 75001

J's Breakfast & Burgers gives you a more straightforward 24-hour dining experience. This independent diner has been serving breakfast and burgers since they first opened in 1982. They now have 25 employees working three different shifts.

With cream colored walls, red chairs and green booth seats, J's makes you feel as if you traveled back to when American diners were making their way toward landmark status. They even allow smoking. This is a no-nonsense diner that gives you a sense of familiarity with affordable prices. Like their name suggests, the menu is breakfast and burgers.

Samantha Lynn Beckner, a midday shift waitress, said she believes J's is a perfect example of what a 24-hour diner should be. "We are the greasy spoon," she said. "We want to give our customers lots of food and lots of happiness. We are here to feed them so they are happy."

Beckner said she loves the uniqueness of J's and how it is different from chains and franchises. "We are a small business, not a franchise," Beckner said. "If you don't act right, we'll yell at you. We have generations of faithful customers, and we allow smoking."



Plates with the hobo combo which include a side of scrambled eggs, bacon strips, sausage links, hash browns and a stack of pancakes.

### METRO DINER

2316 W Davis Street  
Dallas, TX 75208

Metro Diner began as a chain in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1938 and is now a Dallas staple. The Diner did not receive the same level of success as Waffle House as a chain, but this does not diminish the many qualities it has.

Metro Diner features a more retro look with black and white square patterns on the exterior of the building, red and black booth seats and plastic red and white menus.

The food also sets Metro Diner apart, with classic bacon, eggs, pancakes, hash browns, fried chicken and waffles their extensive menu.

During the midday shift, chef Jimmie Jewel Joneson stays busy with orders from customers. "People eat with their eyes," Joneson said.

"If you slap that food on that plate, they might not eat it," Joneson said. "But if you take the time to cook it like you're supposed to, they'll sit there and eat everything on the plate... I try to put enough on everybodys plate so they'll be full."

Metro Diner gives the distinct ambience of what a 24-hour diner should be and epitomizes a piece of American culture.



Film photos by Trennt Rhea

Waffle House salesperson Matthew Brown (left) grabs a tray while grill master and salesperson Thomas Krueger pours coffee.

### WAFFLE HOUSE

14951 Marsh Lane  
Farmers Branch, TX 75234

Waffle House, the iconic Southern diner chain, has been a fixture on the culinary landscape for over 65 years. Known for its iconic yellow sign and being open 24/7, the chain has established itself as a cultural representation of the South.

Because of Waffle House's accessibility, people flock to it when everything else is closed. As soon as you walk in, Waffle House feels like home. The aroma, atmosphere and food remind you of a time when you had no troubles. You feel the same thing at 3 a.m. or at 6 p.m.

Going with friends or family exemplifies this feeling. It feels as though you are creating a memory.

Thomas Krueger, a salesperson and master grill operator, has been working at Waffle House for less than a year while still in high school. "One thing I like about this place, whether I work here or not, is the atmosphere," Krueger said. "I like the diner atmosphere where you actually have to sit down and enjoy a meal instead of getting your food in a paper bag and drive off."

He said, "I can get a cup of coffee and I can bring my laptop in and do some work at 9 a.m. in the morning or at 2 a.m. in the morning."





# CAMPUS

## BHC athletes discuss favorite sport

By **Trennt Rhea**  
Photo Editor

**Balin Valentine**  
Centerfield Sophomore

*Bears Baseball #23*

**How long have you been playing baseball?**

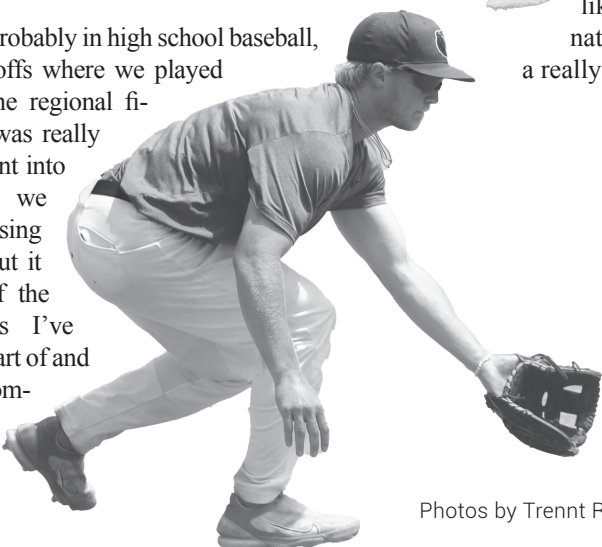
I've been playing since I was about 4. I played T-Ball with my sister actually.

**What is your favorite part of playing baseball?**

What I love the most about baseball is what it reveals in people because, like my teammate Ray once said, "In a sport where you fail seven out of 10 times, you really see what people are about and what their physical and mental toughness is." You really get to see who works the hardest and who wants it the most.

**What is your favorite memory of playing baseball?**

For me, probably in high school baseball, in the playoffs where we played Aledo in the regional finals. That was really fun. We went into extras and we ended up losing the game but it was one of the best games I've ever been part of and the most competitive.



**Alexa Bezpalko**  
Forward Sophomore

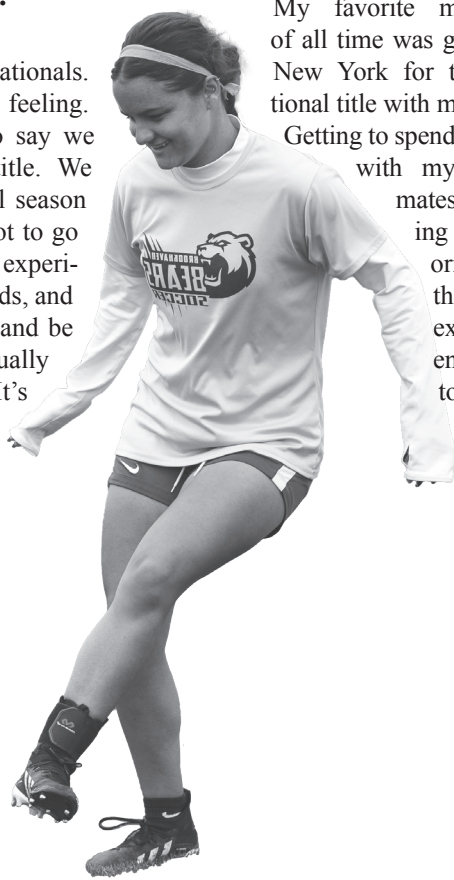
*Lady Bears Soccer #99*

**How long have you been playing soccer?**

I was 4 when I started.

**What is your favorite memory of playing soccer at Brookhaven?**

Winning nationals. That was a good feeling. Just being able to say we won a national title. We worked so hard all season to get there. We got to go to New York, have experiences with our friends, and we get to look back and be like, "Wow we're actually national champions." It's a really cool memory.



**Allison Kolba**  
Forward Freshman

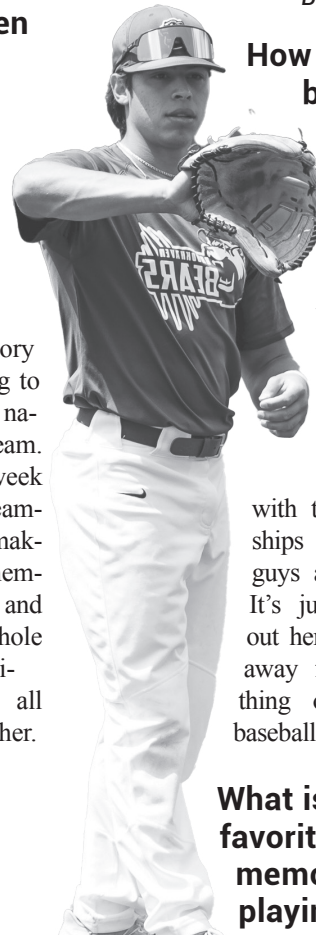
*Lady Bears Soccer #12*

**How long have you been playing soccer?**

About 14 years.

**What is your favorite memory of playing soccer?**

My favorite memory of all time was going to New York for the national title with my team. Getting to spend a week with my teammates, making memories and the whole experience all together.



**Jacob Vela**  
Sophomore Outfielder

*Bears Baseball #22*

**How long have you been playing baseball?**

I've been playing since I was 3 years old, so 18 years.

**What is your favorite part of playing baseball?**

I just love being out here with the guys, the relationships you have with the guys and the coaches. It's just great being out here and getting away from everything outside of baseball.

**What is your favorite memory of playing baseball?**

One of the first home runs I hit, I was about 6 years old, and my pops caught it in the outfield and I was so happy when I saw him catch it.

**Ivy Jimenez**  
Defender Sophomore

*Lady Bears Soccer #9*

**How long have you been playing soccer?**

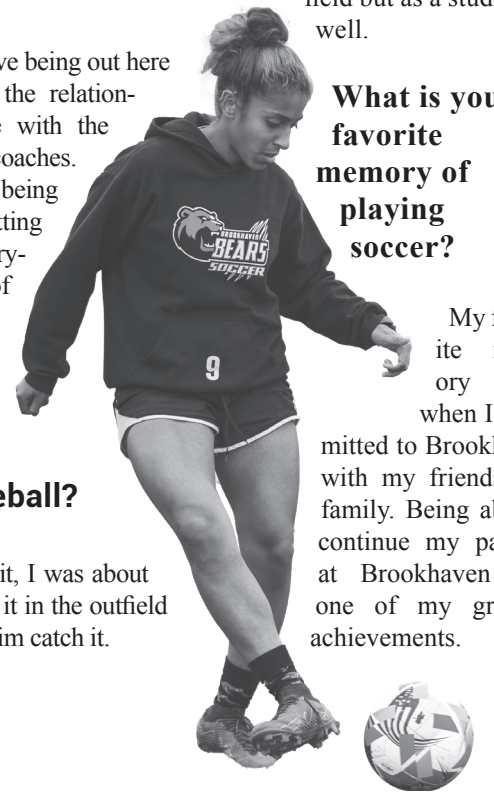
Since I was 4 years old.

**What is your favorite part of playing soccer?**

All of the people that you meet and it definitely keeps you disciplined not just on the field but as a student as well.

**What is your favorite memory of playing soccer?**

My favorite memory was when I committed to Brookhaven with my friends and family. Being able to continue my passion at Brookhaven was one of my greatest achievements.



Photos by Trennt Rhea

## Brookhaven employee spotlight

By **Maria Elena Franco**  
Art Director

**Xzia Merritt**  
Follett Access Team Lead

**How long have you been working at Brookhaven?**

I started off as a temporary member in 2019. About a year ago, I became permanent part-time.

**What do you enjoy about your job at Brookhaven?**

The joy in working in the bookstore is that I come across all types of students of all ages – from early college high schoolers to 18, to older people in their 70s. I like talking to different people, meeting them and getting to know what they're doing, like what path they want to walk on.

It's very interesting to get a look at other people's lives and what they want to be and what they want to do. It's very nice meeting different people. And seeing my regular people too. They come into the bookstore and even if they're only buying snacks it's just good to see people's faces. It gives more of that college student experience.



**Jessica Edwards**  
Learning Commons Librarian

**How long have you been working at Brookhaven?**

I've been at Brookhaven for seven months.

**What do you enjoy about your job at Brookhaven?**

Early on in my educational journey, I recognized my passion and love for life-long learning. Being a librarian and being here at Dallas College I get to kind of inspire that in other people. I really enjoy working with students and kind of helping them toward their educational journey, helping them reach their goals.

I had a really wonderful mentor early on in my career. She definitely inspired me. She was the type of leader that was very hands on with staff and she definitely took an interest in me early to try to mentor me. I saw the way she worked with others, being open to learning about them and being open to what their thoughts were and guiding them based on what inspired them. I really took that on and kind of modeled my own professional career and who I am as a person and as a professional based on how she treated others.



**Brenda Quezada**  
Career Connected Learning Support Specialist

**How long have you been working at Brookhaven?**

I was a work-study while I was getting my associate [degree] and then once I graduated in May [of 2022], I then came back in the fall as a full-time employee. So it's going to be about six or seven months.

**What do you enjoy about your job at Brookhaven?**

My job title is working a lot with the ESL and GED students, so this is just really about helping them continue their education and to letting them know that it's never too late to do something about whether it's about a new language or continuing getting their GED. That's what I love about it. Empowering the education system – doesn't matter your age, your height, your color, your ethnicity. Education is for all.



**Ryan Secord**  
U.S. History Adjunct

**How long have you been working at Brookhaven?**

Two years.

**What do you enjoy about your job at Brookhaven?**

I started at Brookhaven and just grew to love the environment itself. I went to Ohio University, and the small class environment really helped me learn. It's a lot more intimate. And so Brookhaven seems like a very peaceful, small place if you want to think. Brookhaven's campus is, in my opinion, the most conducive to thinking and education. It's the most like a regular university campus that I find.

The students are great. What I intended to do is I stayed at Brookhaven so that people could take U.S. history I and II with me over and over, rather than bouncing from place to place and a lot of students want to take every class that I have so I just stick around mostly for the students. I would do this job for free. I love this job.



Illustrations by Maria Elena Franco





# NEWS

## College offers suicide prevention resources

By Emmy Hardy  
Copy Desk Chief

Suicide rates are rising, particularly among people under the age of 25. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To combat this, Dallas College offers a variety of suicide prevention resources. The Office of Counseling and Psychological Services provides a service called ASK Training for students, staff and faculty.

ASK Training is geared toward training individuals to recognize suicidal tendencies. Mental health first aid training is another resource provided by the counseling center. Katie Neff, a licensed professional counselor at Brookhaven Campus, said, "Mental health first aid training is a skills-based training course that teaches participants about mental health and substance-use issues."

There are multiple signs of

suicidal tendencies. According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, some signs include expressing feelings of hopelessness or being trapped, demonstrating an observable increase in alcohol or drug use, becoming generally withdrawn and displaying humiliation or shame. These are only some of many tells one may find in a person with suicidal tendencies.

Neff said if an individual is displaying clear intentions to self harm, or plans to harm another individual, it is imperative to call 911, the campus police at 972-860-4290 or the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Neff said it is important for students to support and check in on one another. "Truly ask another individual, 'How are you doing?'" she said.

In addition to suicide-oriented

resources, the counseling services office offers free professional counseling for all students. At Brookhaven, the counseling center is located in Room S136.

Dallas College will present a Mental Health and Wellness Symposium 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on May 5 in the Hoblitzelle Auditorium of the Bill J. Priest Center in Dallas. The event will focus on bringing awareness to mental health and reducing stigma surrounding the subject. The event will be free to attend and open to all students, staff, faculty and community members.

A live stream will be provided for people to attend the event virtually. Breakfast and lunch will be available to all who attend in person.

Neff said suicide is an extremely pressing issue to address. "Just as if someone is having a heart attack or stroke and calls 911 for assistance, we also need to be prepared to help our community and make the call for a higher level of care," she said.

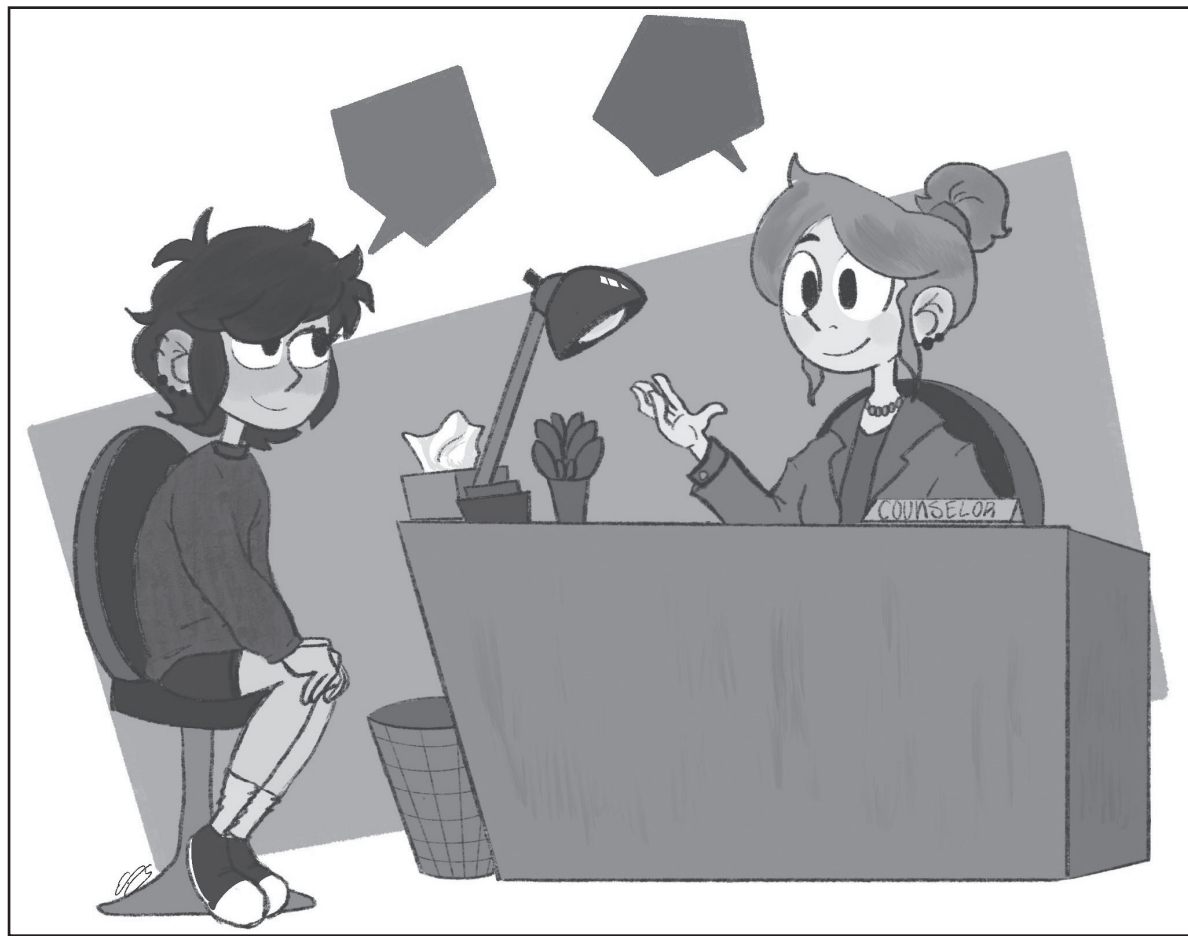


Illustration by Elizabeth Zuniga Galindo

## ChatGPT

Continued from Page 1

"A lot of people have heard of it but aren't sure exactly what it does, or what it doesn't do," Marylynn Patton, Dallas College El Centro Campus ESOL curriculum chair, said. "It doesn't do everything."

Patton recently presented on ChatGPT at a national Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages conference where she spoke about ways ChatGPT can be used as an educator, and how to detect whether something has been written using ChatGPT.

She said since its release in November 2022, ChatGPT has greatly improved. Where it used to score mid-range on AP exams and Bar exams, it is now scoring higher than 90%, Patton said.

One area where the AI falters is in English and literature courses. Patton said ChatGPT is scoring a two on the AP English exam, which is below college level. "[ChatGPT] is not highly qualified," Patton said.

"In the lower-level skills like read, respond, summarize, [with] those things it can do pretty well," Patton said. "It's the higher level, the critical thinking, the evaluating materials, giving reactions to things. Those are the things that it cannot do."

Dallas College does not have an official stance on ChatGPT yet, Patton said. But she urges instructors to sway students from resorting to ChatGPT. She suggests that teachers discuss the AI chatbot with students. "Talk about the ethical side of it, how it could be used or ways that it's being abused," Patton said.

On the upside, ChatGPT is useful

for providing formats for essays and letters, Patton said.

English professor Kendra Unruh said she is changing how she formats assignments for her students. One thing she does is have students write a rough draft in class so she has something on which to base her students' writing. If a student turns in the final draft and their writing style veers from the rough draft, it will be obvious they did not write the essay.

Unruh has also updated her discussion board posts to directly ask students what they thought about a topic. She said she tries to make the process personal enough that an AI can not reproduce the results.

Patton related ChatGPT to a calculator. "It will be the new calculator for writing," Patton said. "In math, you learn your basics and then after you learn your basics you can use the calculator."

## Gisselle

Continued from Page 1

She let out a scream of excitement. Gisselle's dad checked on her, and she told him the news. "He was very proud of me," Gisselle said, swiveling in her chair as she recalled the moment, "Anytime [he has a chance], he says, 'This is my daughter. She's the first one to go to college.'"

### OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Gisselle is a first generation college student. Her mom is from Sinaloa, Mexico, and stopped going to school after middle school. Her dad is from Jalisco, Mexico, and did not graduate high school. "They were both young when they came to the U.S.," Lopez said. "I've been living with my dad since they separated."

Growing up with her dad came with unexpected challenges for Gisselle. When she was in eighth grade, she and her dad faced homelessness. She said, "My dad was laid off from work and he was struggling to find a job."

Gisselle and her father lived out of a car, and if they got lucky, a family member would offer them a place to spend the night. "It was

hard, but I wasn't depressed," she said. "I knew we would be out of there." They lived under these circumstances for the next three years.

As a result of these struggles, school became Gisselle's main shelter. She spent most of her time roaming the grounds with her friends from sunrise to sunset.

Her father found an apartment, and Gisselle got ready to graduate and move on to the next chapter in her life.

She decided to attend community college. She said, "I thought I was going to go straight to the workforce, and so I told myself if I flunk out or it doesn't work out, at least I'm not going into debt because of Dallas Promise."

Dallas County Promise covers tuition for Dallas County high school graduates who attend partner schools such as Dallas College.

Gisselle's first semester consisted of getting lost in Brookhaven's hallways and walking through a revolving door of success coaches. Dallas College's online services, such as eCampus and eConnect, were hard for her to comprehend, she said.

### CHANGED MINDSET

Gisselle was lost. "I was super quiet," she said. "I wasn't interacting with anybody. And I didn't

have any interests in student clubs or organizations my first year of college."

In the Spring 2022 semester, Gisselle became active with SGA. "What made me change was realizing I did enjoy school," she said. "I wanted to keep it pushing."

Jeremiah Stinnett, a co-adviser of Brookhaven SGA and Brookhaven Male Achievement Program lead, nominated Gisselle for the Student of the Year honor.

Stinnett said: "She really believes that as students, whether you are at Brookhaven Campus or a different campus, you have rights and expectations that should be happening for you, and it should matter. I really do believe wherever she ends up, whatever she does, it is going to be impactful."

Today Gisselle flows through every corner of Brookhaven, listening to and helping students who need support.

"I didn't have the proper guidance when I first started college, and I know there are other students like me," Gisselle said. "I want to use my voice to help others going through what I went through."

Gisselle said: "I want to create a nonprofit for children facing homelessness. That's what matters to me most because that's what I have experienced. I feel like that will fulfill my life purpose."

## Graduates

Continued from Page 1

union between Dallas College and local school districts and programs such as Dallas ISD, Richardson ISD, Uplift Education and others, which give every senior-level student the opportunity to participate in a paid learning experience.

"They don't have to decide 'Do I work or do I go to school,'" DeHaas said. This pathway allows students to do both.

The program also has other enticing benefits for students, such as the option to take all courses virtually.

Cherise Simeon, a student of this year's graduating class, said she picked the Dallas College program

because it was all online.

Simeon said, "That was a plus for me because I wanted to obtain my bachelor's degree, but I didn't have the time to be on campus for classes and maintain a full-time job."

Michelle Ballais, an upper course level professor, said: "The age of my students typically is mid-20s to mid-30s." Ballais said she has a lot of teaching assistants who decide to finish their bachelor's degree.

Dallas College allows program students to continue working within their same schools. "I work at a Montessori school for my senior year of college," Julia Hill, a member of the graduating cohort, said. "The fact of the matter is that the college was so flexible with me wanting to teach at more of an alternative school, which I'm very

thankful for."

Bernadette Rodriguez, professor of child development at Brookhaven, said, "I would describe my students as hardworking." She said no matter what experience her students enter with, they want to be at the college.

Sara DeLano, dean of educator pathways, said she hopes this program was a meaningful experience for students, and they feel supported by Dallas College. "I hope that they feel incredibly well prepared for their next career step," DeLano said.

Hill said she encourages more students interested in education to join the program. "Join it, because you will graduate debt free," Hill said. "It's a smaller community of people. People are more connected."

## SGA

Continued from Page 1

knowledge has helped me launch these changes to better the SGA at Dallas College."

Jeremiah Stinnett, co-adviser of SGA and the Male Achievement

Program lead at Brookhaven, said he foresees the new changes positively affecting student life. He said, "I believe it will help to create a more succinct SGA experience at all seven campuses and allow students to flexibly be involved at any campus in the event that they switch from taking courses at one campus to another."

# BOLDLY GO

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and learn about Admissions, Financial Aid & Scholarships or schedule a weekday tour

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

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## FEATURE

# BHC astronomer talks life's journey

By Kamila Vargas-Gonzalez  
Contributing Writer

Usually spotted wearing a vibrant, tropical patterned short sleeve button-up shirt and foam padded sneakers, Chaz Hafey, astronomer, geologist and lab specialist at Dallas College Brookhaven Campus visits up to six classes almost every day in K Building.

Like the star clusters Hafey observes in the sky, he is part of a cluster of organizations and activities outside of Dallas College. All are related to astronomy. "Sleep would be good," Hafey said

as he got comfortable in one of the many chairs in Room K251. "There are things constantly going on in the sky."

Hafey has dedicated his career to his passion for astronomy. From a young age, his eyes have stayed glued to the sky in search of astronomical wonders.

## 1960'S SKY EFFECTS

In 1966, a young Hafey stepped out from his home and joined his father on the concrete driveway. With their chins pointed to the sky, father and son admired the glowing streaks running through the atmosphere: a meteor shower. The bright

rays reflected in both of their eyes.

Since then, Hafey has remained enchanted by the lights in the sky. He received a Bachelor of Science in astronomy at The Ohio State University. "Emphasize the 'The,'" Hafey said, chuckling as he remembered his Alma mater's attempt at trademarking the word "The."

Soon after entering college, Hafey went through a difficult chapter in his life.

**"I was given the option of naming an asteroid, and I named one Brookhaven."**

— Chaz Hafey,  
Brookhaven Campus  
Physical Sciences Lab  
Specialist

Hafey said he decided to move out of his parent's home because he was driving between work, school and home. He moved in with a friend in an apartment close to his college campus.

Two weeks before he moved out, his parents separated. In the same year, his grandparents, dog and cat died. Hafey was 20 years old, and either withdrew from or failed every class he took that year.

"Obviously, I survived," Hafey said, smiling and gesturing toward Room K251, where labs take place for Brookhaven students. "Maybe I had to go through that so I could look at a student in their face and say, 'I know, I've had challenges too.'"

## WONDROUS STUDENTS

If the sky is clear and there is little to no wind, stargazing observing



Photo by Trennt Rhea

Chaz Hafey, physical sciences lab specialist, looks through a transparent celestial sphere.

sessions for the astronomy students are a go. Hafey said he finds students' reactions to looking through telescopes more memorable than anything he has seen through a telescope himself.

"When they first see the moon through a telescope, they say, 'I can see craters.'" Hafey said with wide eyes and a tight smile. "You can do that with binoculars."

Saturn especially fascinates Hafey's students. Through the telescope, Saturn's rings reflect in the students' eyes, and their smiles reflect in Hafey's.

Students at Brookhaven who take astronomy courses are familiar with

Hafey. Julia Wagner, a dual credit student, said, "He's enjoyable to work with and helpful in a lab scenario."

Hafey said, "I want to infect people with a love for astronomy."

Sitting at one of the black science lab tables, Hafey stares with his chin pointing slightly up at the three award plaques on the wall of Room K251, two from NASA and one from Pan-STARRS. "I was given the option of naming an asteroid, and I named one Brookhaven," he said.

## FOR FUN

Flashing back a couple of decades, Hafey participated in the

Messier Marathon in an observatory north of Columbus, Ohio. His team saw 108 out of the 110 of Charles Messier's list of objects, such as galaxies, nebulae, star clusters and birth and death places of stars. "[It was] back in the late '70s or early '80s," he said.

In 2017, Hafey planned a trip to see a total solar eclipse. He said, "A friend of mine and I went up to Roberts, Idaho, and we were able to see where the moon completely blacked out the sun for two minutes, and then we could see stars in the sky in the middle of the day."

While Hafey spends a lot of time traveling across the country, he is also part of the Dallas Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT, where he obtained his amateur radio license. "I became a member of CERT in Dallas through a whole week-long training session," Hafey said.

As an amateur radio operator, learning disaster response skills for emergencies such as severe weather storms is critical. Preparation and practice is key. Practice for Hafey includes Turkey Trots, the Plano Balloon Festival and bicycle races. During these events, amateur radio operators radio each other, checking whether the event is going smoothly.

"When I first got my amateur radio license, the Dallas Amateur Radio Club was meeting in a church across the street because it was a free room," Hafey said. "I went to their December meeting, and I applied for membership. The president of the club at the time, Tom General, was reading off all the stuff to the whole group, and they said, 'Astronomy? You do astronomy? I need to talk to you afterward.'"

Hafey was talked into being part of a broadcast on astronomy, which can be viewed on YouTube. The channel is DARC Skynet - Astronomy Net. He said: "We broadcast not only over amateur radio, but we do it over the internet on YouTube. It's every Saturday night from 9 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. I think we're in our 13th year of doing this."

# Alumnus recalls unforgettable graduation walk

By Andrea Olan  
Managing Editor

Samuel Salmeron expected a normal walk across the stage on May 11, 2017, his graduation day. After eight years, and many challenges along the way, it was time to receive his well-earned degree.

With excitement and eagerness, he approached the main stage, name card in hand, reflecting on the years of college education that were behind him. Salmeron had been working at Dallas College around nine years at that point, but he never expected to be the standout of his graduation ceremony.

## AN UNFORGETTABLE WALK

On May 11, 2017, graduates moved like a well-oiled machine. Students walked up to the presenter, turned in their name cards and walked across the stage with their diploma in hand without interruption. It was Salmeron's turn, and as he handed his name card, the well-oiled machine of students took a pause.

As his name was called, former Brookhaven College president Thom D. Chesney urged professors and staff on stage to shake Samuel's hand and personally congratulate him in front of all attendees. Confusion and shock were the only thoughts going through Salmeron's head, while his family, with gasps and excitement, cheered from the audience.

He shook hands with everybody on stage, and made his way down. With excitement, Salmeron had only one phrase on his mind: "I did it."

## FINDING DIRECTION

Growing up in a military family and constantly moving from state to state, Salmeron's high school years were spent in Honolulu, Hawaii.

He attempted to start his college career after graduating high school in 1989. Salmeron never considered himself the studious type, and left his college education undone. "I dropped out," Salmeron said. "I was failing every class, and I had no option really."

His parents wanted him to have a sense of direction, and originally set him to enlist in the military.

He refused and moved to Texas. With a construction job lined up, he hoped to find his direction.

Salmeron eventually found his way into Brookhaven Campus as a heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration technician.

Salmeron wanted to take advantage of the tuition discount for full-time employees. He was informed of this benefit through his sister-in-law, Mai Salmeron. She said getting him started was the most difficult task. It took locating old transcripts and taking placement exams for Samuel to gain momentum and begin his academic journey once again.

Three of Samuel's siblings were Brookhaven alumni, who transitioned to four-year universities. Samuel felt the pressure to enroll after high school. He took their example as motivation, and became the last sibling to enroll in college, determined to finish.

## SLOW BUT STEADY

In 2008, Samuel enrolled in his first college class after taking a break from his studies since 1989. He said by taking one or two classes a semester, he balanced work and school.

The biggest challenge Samuel faced when taking his classes was technology. He said there was a leap between going to college in the '90s and today. "When I originally went to college, everything was on typewriter. Technology totally changed," Samuel said.

There was a point every semester where Samuel wanted to throw in the towel. He said he regularly visited his advisers to drop classes, but they never allowed him to quit.

Mai said her brother-in-law felt frustrated and tired of taking classes. She reminded him of how close he was to getting his degree, and to lighten up his coursework through interesting elective classes.

Having a support system was important for Samuel. His family, professors, classmates and coworkers wanted to see him succeed. "I had the right people around me to push me, guide me, and help me finish," Samuel said.

Eventually, it became easier for Samuel to find motivation. There was a community of people who wanted to see him finish his degree. "I believe that his trust in me made it easier for him to reach out when he needed help or guidance," Mai said, "that allowed him to continue with his education and not be discouraged."

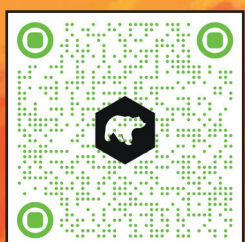
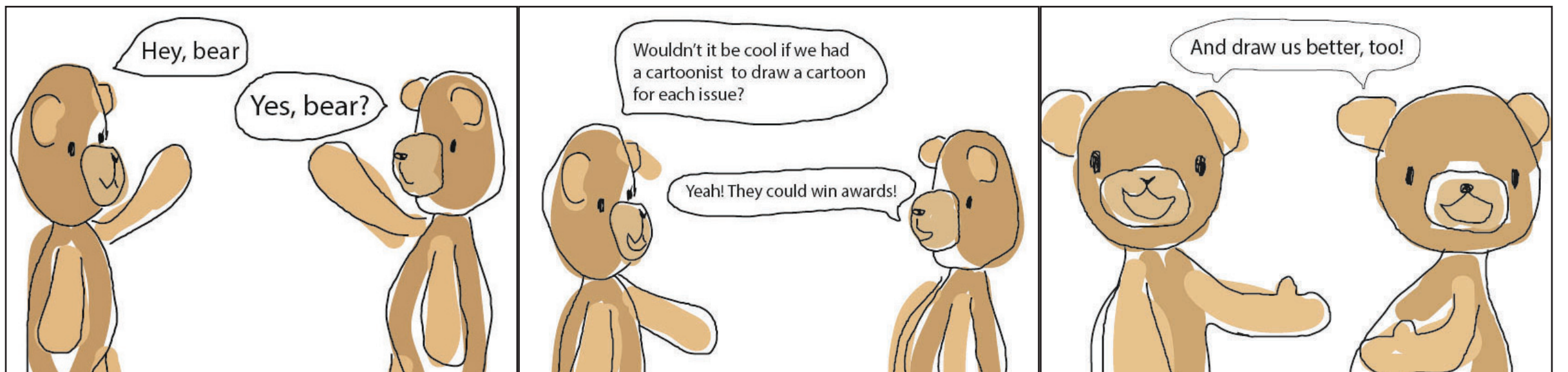
He said he does not regret any minute of it. Having the opportunity to go to college for free and walk across the stage was the greatest satisfaction.

Mai said, "That moment solidified for me that [the] Dallas College family does support and care for their students and employees, and want[s] them to succeed."

Samuel said he encourages students from all walks of life to keep going. "If you are in a two-year college, and it takes you four, five, six years, it does not matter," he said. "What matters is that you finish. All of this was worth it."



Illustration by Maria Elena Franco



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