

# Enrollment hits record high



Prospective students tour the LU campus, Oct. 25. Fall enrollment is a record 17,850. UP photo by Maddie Sims

Maddie Sims  
UP editor

Lamar University’s enrollment has set a new record with 17,850 students for the 2024 fall semester, a 2% increase in headcount and a 3% increase in student credit hours.

President Jaime Taylor said the biggest part of the enrollment increase has been the freshman class, which is up by 11%, with the number of transfer students up by 14%.

Katrina Brent, Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing said the numbers revolve around the great work that’s happening across the campus with recruitment events, especially Cardinal View, which attracts high school students to cam-

pus in the fall and in the spring.

“Those events have grown probably twofold just in the last few years since Dr Taylor has been here,” she said. “I feel like a lot of it comes from support from the top, pushing everyone to get involved, that everyone is part of recruiting. We’ve seen steady increases at those events, which has trickled out to the community wanting to come, because almost 50% of students who come to Cardinal View enroll here.”

Taylor said Brent has done a lot for recruiting future Cardinals.

“Cardinal View is a big part of that, but so are the campus

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# BREAKING NEW GROUND



LU President Jaime Taylor, center, throws dirt during Gray Library’s ceremonial groundbreaking, Oct. 15. UP photo by Aaron Saenz

## Ceremony kicks of \$83.5m library renovation

Aaron Saenz  
and Presleigh Peveto  
UP contributors

Campus leaders gathered in front of Mary and John Gray library, Oct. 15, to break ground for the scheduled for \$83.5 million renovation of the building.

Among the speakers was Brett Welch, interim Provost and Vice Pres-

ident of Academic Affairs, who emphasized the importance of the renovation.

“While the days of the building we recognized today may no longer be purposed to carry countless shelves of books, it will enhance the physical spaces for students to read, study and interact with each other,” Welch said. “The improvements will create innovative spaces for advising, mentoring, tu-

toring and digital learning.”

After the ceremony, President Jaime Taylor spoke about the goals of the renovation the library.

“We really wanted to create a hub for students and a place students could go all the time,” Taylor said. “We are trying to build a place where students can interact with each other and inter-

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# EWB hosts haunted house

Carlos Vilorio  
UP photo editor

Lamar University’s Engineering Without Borders student organization held the fourth-annual Cherry Haunted House, Oct. 20, in Cherry Engineering.

The event was supported by other organizations including the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, American Society of Civil Engineers and Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, as well as the sponsorship of LU’s

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UP photo by Carlos Vilorio

A student reacts to a jump scare during the EWB Haunted House, Oct. 20.

# New library dean fosters community

Caraline Otte  
UP contributor

Lamar University’s Mary and John Gray Library is the hub of the school and the community, and Dean Vivienne McClendon is at the center of that hub.

“The library is one of those places that connects,” she said. “A library serves the entire campus — students, faculty, staff, community. Everybody comes in here and there’s something for everyone.”

The Alabama native first came

to Texas when she attended Midwestern University in Wichita Falls to obtain her master’s, but her family is historically from Fort Worth.

“My great grandfather was a German immigrant and he and his wife, they had 13 children, and she ran a dairy up on the hill above the stockyards,” McClendon said. “He was a cowboy and would go on cattle drives. So, I have a very strong connection to Texas.”

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UP photo by Caraline Otte

Vivienne McClendon is the new Dean of Gray Library.



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“We stopped checking for monsters under our bed when we realized they were inside us.”

– Charles Darwin

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SCRABBLES by Dalia Osman

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tours,” he said. “You also got the new Welcome Center, and every day I sit here and the tours go right down (past his office). They stop right here at the corners. I see all these students and I think the number of students visiting campus is up probably this September over the last three years by 150-200%.”

Brent said the enrollment numbers have many contributing factors.

“It’s going to the schools and talking to them about Lamar University, it’s building partnerships amongst everyone in the community and they start talking about it,” she said.

“It’s also athletics. When we win in athletics, more people want to come here for games. They get that campus experience. I think since we did bring in a large class this fall, not only freshmen and transfers, but other students are now being more involved on campus. We’re seeing huge increases just on involvement.”

Taylor said the new vice president for student affairs,

Freddie Titus, has contributed much to the rising student engagement.

“Of course, all the students love Dr. Titus,” he said. “He’s been here for 47 years, and he’s very engaged with the students. He’s been asking them, ‘What do you want? What are the activities you want us to provide for you?’ like the Waka Flocka Flame concert. It was a huge turnout. My understanding is we’re up 50% in the number of students participating in campus activities this semester, and I attribute a lot of that to the leadership of Dr. Freddie Titus.”

Student input has been directly involved in adding new things to campus, such as new chairs in the Setzer Student Center and in the Brooks-Shivers Dining Hall, Taylor said.

“When they ask for something, we do our best to give it to them,” he said. “I think that word is getting out in the community that there’s more campus life at Lamar University than there has been.”

To help increase student at-

tendance for on-campus events, President Taylor has made plans to move some of the holiday-oriented events up earlier than usual, the annual Cardinal Lights show being an example.

“We’re going to move it up two weeks,” he said. “We usually do it after Thanksgiving, but this year we’re going to do it the week before, so we can get some more people to be there. We want students to go to see it, because usually when they go home for the holidays after Thanksgiving, some of them don’t come back.”

Brent said the plan is for enrollment numbers to continue to increase.

“We’re already well on our way to recruiting season for next fall, so we’re seeing some positives in campus tours and in our Cardinal View event, which we’re seeing up over last year,” she said. “There’s lots of momentum. Hopefully, a lot of the stuff we’re doing right now will also help with student retention.”

The next Cardinal View is scheduled for Nov. 16.

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# A twist in the Fairy Tale

## LU theatre to present ‘Peter Pan,’ Oct. 30-Nov. 10

Maddie Sims  
UP editor

A world of fairies, lost boys, mermaids and pirates lies past the second star to the right. As the story book opens, the classic tale of Peter Pan begins. However, this story is a different tale to the Disney movie. Rather it is derived straight from the source.

Lamar University’s department of theatre and dance will present ‘Peter Pan,’ opening Oct. 31 at 7:30 p.m. in the Lamar University Theatre. Adapted from the classic story by J.M. Barrie, this version of Peter Pan takes a more war-torn edge.

Bailey Jenkins (Peter Pan) said this version of Pan is more likable.

“Apparently, when people play Peter Pan, they don’t make him likable, and they make him too cocky and stuff like that,” he said. “We’re trying to play up the naivety of it, like, ‘Oh, he just doesn’t know.’ This Peter Pan has a bunch of issues that he’s fighting off. He has childhood trauma and it’s him trying to fight that. It’s a lot of fun, and the character is a lot of fun.”

Jenkins said the flying mechanics of the show are slightly different, using swings instead of hooks and harnesses.

“You get on the swing and it lifts you up from the ground,” he said. “So, either we swing it, or people come behind us and hold our feet or push us. When I get Wendy and all her siblings



UP photo by Maddie Sims

Janai Collins plays Captain Hook. left, and Porter LaPray plays Smee in Lamar University’s production of “Peter Pan,” which runs Oct. 31-Nov. 10 in the University Theatre.

to go to Neverland, there’s that big transition, and we’re leaning into the spectacle of it.

“What I really think is fun is all the hopping and skipping and the nature of it, because it is just like a child. So, I get to play into the, ‘No, I am who I am, and I am captain. And you have to do what I say, because I’m the leader of this imaginary army that I’ve created.’”

Juliana McManus plays Tinkerbell through the use of a

puppet.

“This is the first time that I ever puppeteered,” she said. “It’s not what you expect because it looks pretty simple, but I think one of the biggest challenges for me is I’m a very expressive person on stage, and whenever you’re puppeteering, you can’t have a lot of expression. You have to strictly look at your puppet, because whenever the audience watches it, they’re gonna follow your gaze. It’s

kind of fun that I get to learn a new skill and it’s fun getting to be sassy.”

McManus said she is not a sassy person, but likes the challenge.

“You don’t really get to just be that as a character — at least, I haven’t,” she said. “I tend to lean in the shadows a little bit, and she is really literally in your face for a lot of her dialogue.”

McManus is double-cast as Tiger Lily, the leader of the wolf

pack.

She’s badass,” McManus said. “She’s very headstrong, very cool. I have to do some quick changes, and I have to really separate the voices of what they sound like, to differentiate between the two.”

Porter LaPray plays both Smee and Mr. Darling.

“Smee’s definitely Hook’s little hype man,” he said. “He’s probably not the sharpest tool in the shed, but he’s a real high-effort guy.”

“It’s amazing to go from (Mr. Darling) who is this very prim, proper energy guy who’s the head of the household, to being really grimy and cruel.”

LaPray said this version of Peter Pan gives the audience more of an emotional side to the story.

“I feel like a lot of times, whenever a kid’s theater is approached, you just want to touch the face of emotions, without really going to what’s behind them,” he said. “And here, I think we just do a really good job of honoring everyone’s stories and giving these characters a life that I think the author put into them whenever he wrote them.”

Another difference is the decision to cast a woman, Janai Collins, as Captain Hook.

“When you watch the movie, Captain Hook is like the ‘bad guy,’ but he’s a coward,” Collis said. “In this version, she’s a fearless leader and she’s angry.

See **PAN**, page 7



# Spindletop Salute

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GROUNDBREAKING
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act with the librarians while making it easier to access information.”

Taylor said the school purchased many of the journals and books, and made them electronic to make more interaction space for students.

“We plan to add more computers and other things to let students have easier access to information,” he said.

Gray Library Dean Vivienne McClendon, who took the position this fall, said she understands how much the renovations will mean to the campus.

“I believe the planning has been going on for close to six years, but the actual work started — preparatory work — two years ago, and has really heated up to this moment,” she said.

While the renovations will cause some inconvenience,



UP photo by Aaron Saenz

LU President Jaime Taylor, center, poses with dignitaries and LU ambassadors during Gray Library’s ceremonial ground-breaking, Oct. 15. The event commemorated the start of the \$83.5 million renovation.

McClendon said there are procedures in place for the library to function.

“Right now, first and second floor are available for student use, and the collection is on second, third and fourth,” she said. “We are retrieving books as people ask for them, but we

have study space, we have quiet study, so we’re doing our best to continue to support students in the way they deserve.”

SGA President Ethan Ellis said the improvements will give students more areas to study.

“I think this would mean a

lot for students, like the STEM building,” Ellis said. “Students love it, but unfortunately, there isn’t enough space in the STEM building for all the students to study at one time. So, I feel like the reopening of the library will mean a lot for students. As well as the improvements to study

spaces, it’ll have a little bit more life to it compared to how it used to be, with it being very dim. The amount of technology and the open spaces that they’re talking about will be a great addition.”

Ellis said that as a student he is excited for the library’s new look, including a new glass exterior.

“I’m excited for the windows,” Ellis said. “It’s the tallest building on campus and whenever people see a big building made out of brick it almost looks like a prison. So, with all the additions of the windows, how they’re tidying up the outside, I feel it’ll make our campus look a little bit more new, more vibrant, and that’s what I’m looking forward to the most.”

The renovations are expected to be finished by fall 2026.

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McClendon has lived in California, South Carolina, Washington, Georgia and across Texas. After experiencing many different environments, she said she was drawn to Lamar specifically for the atmosphere and sense of community that it creates.

“I’m really happy I made this move,” McClendon said. “I actually would like to settle down this time. I have lived in a lot of wonderful places, and while some places may be beautiful, you’re there to do work. So, it’s really about the people.”

Gray Library is undergoing an \$83.5 million renovation and McClendon said part of her new role is to keep the doors open and offer students

areas to study. She urges students to utilize virtual services.

“Librarians are actually sitting in their offices waiting for people to ask questions,” McClendon said. “But if someone would like to talk about research, you know, ‘I have a paper due in two months, and I need to narrow my topic down so that I can get the best information,’ librarians live to answer that question and they are experts. So, if you are able to get free expert help in writing a paper, I hope that everybody would take advantage of that.”

In her free time, McClendon said she enjoys being in nature, gardening, reading, cooking and spending time

with her two dogs, Rory and Scooter. She also has a particular interest in architecture.

“The thing that speaks to my heart most is going out in nature,” she said. “People’s blood pressure goes down when they’re enjoying nature, and I think we all need to connect more to nature so that we’re not constantly spinning.”

McClendon said she enjoys traveling, not only for work, but also for leisure. In the past, she’s owned travel trailers and she road-tripped to different state parks with her friends and her dogs.

“When I was young, I absolutely wanted to live everywhere, and I do love traveling,” she said. “But as I

approach my current age, I am looking for community. That feeling of being part of something larger — that’s really what I was looking for.”

McClendon has attended multiple institutions through her college career, before earning her doctorate at the University of Georgia.

“Every institution that I’ve attended as a student, I found that people supported me, and that’s what I hope to mirror in the way that I do my job,” she said. “It should be more than just making As in a class. (It’s also about) making connections with your faculty and fellow students who will be your colleagues in the future.”

McClendon said that she wants students to know the li-

brary is still open and groups, clubs or organizations are encouraged to meet here.

“The biggest thing I would want anyone to know is I’m here because I care,” McClendon said. “I really enjoy meeting people and learning their stories. We have some of the most wonderful stories from just students who work here in the library, and their success is our success.”

McClendon says her favorite part about her job is being able to help out students and see them succeed.

“The best thing that ever happens is for somebody to come back in with a million-dollar grin saying, ‘I made an A,’” she said. “That’s what I live for.”

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# IS THERE ANYBODY THERE?

## Ouija Boards have roots in 19th-century Spiritualism

Kami Greene  
UP contributor

Every Zoom meeting begins with someone saying, “Hello, is anybody here? Can you hear me?” However, before the internet, Spiritualists used different ways to contact people, specifically the dead.

The Ouija board, a popular board game, has its roots in Spiritualism, a belief system that involves communicating with spirits with a set belief that people, even in death, carry on living.

This ideology dates back to 1848 in Hydesville, New York, when the Fox Sisters created knocking sounds that were alleged to be a spirit communicating with the sisters.

Word of their spiritual interactions spread quickly, and the Fox Sisters, now turned mediums, held public seances which skyrocketed the practice and belief of Spiritualism, not only in America but in Europe as well.

People were drawn to the idea of being able to contact the dead and being able to communicate with those on the other side. The idea comforted people who lost loved ones in the Civil War. Although the Fox Sister’s credibility was eventually denounced, that did not stop people from believing in Spiritualism and trying to contact the other side.

Planchettes (French for little plank) began to gain traction during the era of Spiritualism. This wooden heart-shaped device, which aided in automatic writing and was used to contact the spiritual realm, can be traced all the way to the 1850s, with French monks being the first to invent the planchette. However, G.W. Cottrell was the first to produce the first planchettes in the United States.



The Ouija parlor game is an offshoot of planchettes used to contact the dead during Spiritualist rituals in the 1850s. Spiritualism became popular with the Fox Sisters who claimed to be able to converse with the deceased.

UP photo illustration

They began to gain traction in France and England in the 1850s and gained popularity in the United States in the 1860s. The device became a staple in the Spiritualism movement and was used in seances. Although its use was intended for communicating with spirits, the planchette was also used as parlor entertainment as it allowed men

and women to hold hands in a dark room, which was frowned upon in the Victorian era.

Entrepreneur Charles Kennard got word that “talking boards” were taking over Ohio and as he was no stranger to a quick cash grab, he took it upon himself to start producing and pitching his own version of the talking boards, known as the Ouija board, in 1890 to investors.

After hearing no many times, Kennard finally got a yes from a local attorney, Elijah Bond, whose sister-in-law was acclaimed to be a “strong medium.”

The planchette’s automatic writing feature was swapped out for a simple board that dictated messages through letters and numbers, which the spirits could use to communicate with the living.

The origin of the word is unknown, but people believe Ouija comes from the French word “oui” and the German word “ja,” which means yes. However, medium Helen Peters Nosworthy claimed it means “good luck,” after she asked the board its meaning.

Kennard’s novelty company began mass producing Ouija boards, as we know them today, and they not only became a well-known board game used to communicate with spirits but also became a popular form of entertainment that outsold Monopoly.

The Ouija board became more than just a fun game. During the 1800s, most people failed to live into their 50s, so when Ouija boards hit the market, people were eager to get their hands on them to contact the dead. The boards gained so much traction that roughly 2,000 boards were sold a week.

What was once marketed as a fun

party game, or even a game that encouraged intimacy in couples, soon took a turn as Hollywood began advertising the Ouija board in sinister ways, stripping it of its innocence. The Ouija board has been featured in various films with paranormal activity, the most popular being “Ouija the Movie” in 2014, which sparked the interest of many children and young adults, boosting Ouija board sales.

The boards are now manufactured in new designs and themes such as “Stranger Things,” “Beetlejuice,” and even a pink board with cats and greenery to appeal to the younger generation.

There is also a “Holy Spirit Board” which follows the Ouija board blueprint allows Christians to communicate with Jesus Christ. Although many believe the Ouija board to be a hoax, a study by the University of British Columbia proves the game has Spiritualist undertones.

However, it may not work the way we assume.

What makes the planchette move is known as the ideomotor effect. It is the unconscious influence of the mind on muscle movements. This effect is tied to Sigmund Freud’s unconscious mind theory, which is also linked to Spiritualism.

Although the planchette has been said to have no actual spiritual effect, many still believe the Ouija board is a game to be taken seriously. One must follow a set procedure when using the Ouija board, and if played incorrectly it may just cost you your sanity.

Don’t forget to say goodbye after playing, or you might have a permanent guest who won’t disappear, not even through praying.

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SAT 11/2

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11/5 - 11/7

LifeShare Blood Drive  
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TUE 11/5

Educators Career Fair  
3 pm - 5 pm | SSC Live Oak Ballroom

Student Org Leadership Development:  
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4 pm - 5 pm | SSC Student Org Workroom

THU 11/7

Cardinals Care Resource Fair  
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SAT 11/9

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MON 11/11

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# High Flying Hot Air

## Bridge City hosts balloon festival

**Aaron Saenz**  
UP staff writer

Across the Neches River and over Veterans Memorial Bridge, the sky in Bridge City was illuminated in an unorthodox way. Combustion-fueled balloons painted the landscape in this Southeast Texas town.

Bridge City Elementary and Intermediate School held a Hot Air Balloon Glo Festival, Sept. 14. The festival included food trucks, vendor booths, live performances and, of course, hot air balloons.

The event was a fundraiser for the schools, and the community did not fail to show up. The line to ride one of the two balloons extended for a quarter mile. One could hear the “Ooh’s” and “ah’s” with every balloon that was inflated.

While the sunset stained the sky, the hot air balloon handlers were having trouble getting the two tethered behemoths in the air. It took about an hour and a half from the planned flight time beginning, but the balloons were finally able to rise.

Riding in the balloon’s basket was

thrilling as it rose 40 feet in the air. The rocking back and forth made for a shaky ride, but once in the air, one is at the mercy of the balloon.

“One off, one on,” the operator yelled. “If one person gets off, one needs to get on. Hurry!”

As well as the pair of balloons offering rides, seven out-of-state balloons were inflated but remained tethered to the ground. They were illuminated by multicolored lights.

“The balloons come from all over the place,” the announcer said. “Most of these balloons come from Shreveport and go on display all over the country.”

Once the light show started, the announcer gave out instructions. “All burn,” he said. And simultaneously, the balloons lit their burners.

“Candle burn,” the announcer said, and the balloons flickered their lights for the audience.

The light show continued until the balloons lost their steam and deflated.

It was an unorthodox festival in Southeast Texas, but also an unforgettable experience for most.



UP photos by Aaron Saenz



## LAST CHANCE

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Her drive to kill Peter Pan is not just like, ‘Oh, because she’s the villain of the story.’ She’s angry at him because he cut Hook’s hand off. I would get pretty angry, too, if someone cut my hand off.”

Collins also plays Mrs. Darling.

“You really get to see the stark contrast between the characters, but also some of the driving factor behind Captain Hook,” she said. “One of the factors of Captain Hook is that she’s like, ‘I want to be a mother,’ so I always find that kind of funny, because I also play the mother, and here I am as another character wishing I was a mother.”

“We really leaned into that and like the emotion of having a woman being hated, because that’s not very common. When you see a villain, you mainly think of a man. But having a woman as a villain, we were able to really play around with it and look for the deeper meaning. The great thing is that there is a deeper meaning within the show. It’s not just canons and sword fights.”

Ashley Dennison, who co-directs with Tanner McAlpin, said she looks for shows that have heart and depth.

“This show forces perspective changes in the sense of how you come in with preconceived notions of who you think the characters are,” she said. “My goal as a director was to challenge the audience, and have them walk away from the production thinking, ‘Oh, maybe I got that character wrong. Maybe I misunderstood that character coming in.’”

“Tanner is great at creating the overall envisioning of the world, and then what I like to focus on is sharpening the characters within that world. So, the acting has been my main emphasis, how we’re building these characters, what’s driving these characters and how we see them evolve throughout the production.

“I also am a mother of three boys, and so with it being children’s theater, I did try to look at it through the lens of a child of like, ‘What are things that they like and things that they don’t like,’ and just finding that balance.”

McAlpin helped design the set, create the costumes, and make the Tinkerbell puppet.

“That’s been shuffling the different hats to

wear, which has been really fascinating,” he said. “Thank goodness Ashley and I basically share a brain, so that whenever my brain kind of tapers off or has to go do something else, Ashley picks right back up, and then we trade back and forth. It’s been really great.”

McAlpin said the vision for the costumes came from an initial idea that the play is in an alternate universe, where World War One was fought with nuclear bombs, and there’s been a fallout, so the Lost Boys have scattered into the woods as this little regiment of quasi army folks. And then everybody else was kind of formed from those choices.

The Tinkerbell puppet was inspired by a picture of a World War II mask, McAlpin said.

“I was really fascinated with the shape and with the texture of it,” he said. “Tinker Bell is this wonderful light in Peter’s life, and in different moments we see that light coming through when he needs her most. She’s kind of there for him, even though sometimes he treats her kind of poorly, so that’s where her body came from. We just kind of added all these little elements together until she emerged herself.”

McAlpin said the set is based on a forgotten playground overcome by the jungle after the giant war.

“Everything is kind of overgrown, distressed, dingy, with lots of levels to play on,” he said. “I really wanted to approach this with a sense of adventure and with a sense of fun. I wanted everybody involved in the production and everybody watching the show to feel open to going on this amazing adventure with Peter, Wendy and her brothers. We just tried to add a lot of different artists’ voices, that anyone can bring to the table. Whether it’s dance, acrobatics, vocals, we try to fold that into the story, so that everybody is having their own ideas heard and having a good time doing it.”

Showtimes for “Peter Pan” are 7: 30 p.m., Oct. 31, Nov. 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, and 2 p.m., Nov. 3 and 10.

The show is suitable for children ages 7 and older. Content warnings include fog and possible strobe lighting.

General admission tickets are \$15, \$10 for seniors, \$7 for students with LU ID, and 5\$ for children 12 and under. For tickets, visit [lamar.edu/ lutdtx](http://lamar.edu/lutdtx).



HOUSE from page 1

Cardinals Activities Board.

Trey Ames, EWB president and event coordinator, said the event was a big success.

“The haunted house went amazing,” he said. “Probably one of our best ones yet. We had 700 people come through. It was a lot of fun. The volunteers this year did a phenomenal job. Everyone enjoyed it.”

The group decorated the entire ground floor and participants traversed the halls in groups of 10-12.

The haunted house featured multiple sections with different themes, including the Clown Hallway, Killer Hallway, Purge Hallway, Mad Scientist Hallway, Mama Hallway and, finally, the Jump Scare Hallway.

Approximately 75 volunteers worked the event, Ames said.

The Cherry Haunted House took two days to build but plans for this event started as soon as

last year’s event was over, Ames said.

“We just had a brainstorm throughout the year,” he said. “Summertime is where we really started going on it. Then pretty much as soon as school got into August, we started shopping, buying supplies we needed, getting volunteers, advertising it, etc.

We’re even already talking about how the next haunted house will go in a couple of weeks.”

Courtland Carmouche, Beaumont junior, said the event was fun and exciting and liked that it was on campus.

“I could have my friends (and) that way we can all have an easy place to hang out together and have fun for free,” he said. “I like this year a lot more than last year’s. I felt like it was a lot more well thought out and better designed. I was scared but I would recommend everyone to come to this haunted house, even if you’re scaredy-cat.”



Students react to a headless woman, top, while a pig does his own butchering during the EWB Haunted House, Oct. 20.

UP photos by Carlos Viloria

2024

VETERANS DAY | LU EVENTS

NOVEMBER 7 • 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM

Cardinal Care Resource Fair Tabling | Setzer Student Center Ballroom Atrium

NOVEMBER 11 • 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Veterans Poster Exhibit | Setzer Student Center Ballroom Atrium

NOVEMBER 11• 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Spindletop Salute - A Veteran's Day Celebration  
Spindletop Boomtown Museum | 550 Jimmy Simmons Blvd., Beaumont, TX

NOVEMBER 12 • 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM

VET Talk: Ask a Veteran | Galloway Auditorium

NOVEMBER 12 - 13 • 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Free Veterans Day T-shirts | Exterior of Nutrition, Health & Human Services Building

NOVEMBER 14 • 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony  
Women Veterans and First Responders Wall  
Ceremony in front of Maes building and Display on second floor of Maes building

NOVEMBER 14 • 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Lunch on the Lawn | Dining Hall Lawn (In case of rain: Shelia Umphrey Rec Center)

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES  
LAMAR UNIVERSITY

lamar.edu/veteransaffairs

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# Spookfest scares up fun



**Race Matherne**  
UP contributor

The Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum hosted Spookfest, Oct. 18. Volunteers passed out candy, as well as fliers promoting clubs on the Lamar University campus.

Volunteer Joshua Oonnen said events like Spookfest remind him of the joy he experienced as a kid, and said he loves having the opportunity to give back to the children.

“Some of my fondest memories have been of being at trunk or treats, receiving candy, especially as a kid who wasn’t able to celebrate Halloween for religious reasons,” the biochemistry major said. “I just wanted to be able to help kids enjoy these types of events.”

Kristie was at the event with her child, and said the event was engaging.

“It’s nice, it’s cute, we’re at a historical place, it’s fun for the kids — and that’s the most important part of all,” she said.

Engineering major Abrar Rahman said the event was well planned.

“The weather today and the atmosphere were wonderful,” he said.

The event concluded with a screening of the movie “Hotel Transylvania.”



UP photos by Sydney Vo

From superheroes to Pennywise the clown and more, kids and adults dressed up for Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum’s Spookfest, Oct. 18. The event concluded with a screening of “Hotel Transylvania” by the replica oil derrick in the museum’s main square.





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Department of Theatre & Dance

TICKETS



DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE

2024-2025 SEASON

**peter pan**



DIRECTED BY  
TANNER MCALPIN  
& ASHLEY  
DENNISON

OCT 31 - NOV 10  
THURS - SAT - 7:30 PM  
SUNDAY - 2:00 PM

**fall & recovery**



FACULTY DANCE  
CONCERT

NOV 22 7:30 PM  
NOV 23 2:00 PM | 7:30 PM

**the self destruction of  
emma james**



WRITTEN &  
DIRECTED BY  
KATE BRENNAN

FEB 13 - 15 - 7:30 PM  
FEB 16 - 2:00 PM

**as you like it**



DIRECTED BY ALAN  
BRINCKS

APRIL 10- 12 - 7:30 PM  
APRIL 13 - 2:00 PM

**dance unleashed**



FACULTY DANCE  
CONCERT

MAY 2 - 7:30 PM  
MAY 3 - 2:00 PM |  
7:30 PM





Forward Akasha Davis looks to lead the Lady Cardinals to the Southland Conference tournament title after losing in the final last season.

Coach  
Aqua  
Franklin



**Brian Quijada**  
UP sports editor

Coming off a Southland Conference tournament finals appearance, the Lamar women's basketball team have started their season prepared to get over the hump and add the tournament title to their regular season championship.

The Lady Cardinals finished last season 24-7, the most wins since the 2018-2019 season.

They placed first in the SLC standings with 17 wins and only one loss.

SLC announced their preseason poll with the Lady Cardinals projected to place first once again.

Senior center Akasha Davis received preseason all-conference first team honors alongside being named as one of 25 players on the Becky Hammon Mid-Major Player of the Year Watch List. Graduate guard Sabria Dean also received preseason all-conference first team honors.

LU added three new players to their roster this season. Freshman guard Kamryn Wilson averaged 10.9 points, 6 rebounds, and 4 assists and played in the state championship final. Junior guard K.J. Walker Guard is a transfer from Hill College, and Justice Ross, a graduate transfer from the University of New Orleans, is also joining the team.

LU head coach Aqua Franklin, who signed a four-year extension over the summer, said that the team bonds with each other on and off the court.

"Our team does a great job of really doing some bonding aside from what we do as a program," Franklin said. "We have few that live off campus. They have game night, they go over, they watch the WNBA finals together, they do potlucks. It's a really cool thing to see, as a coach, how well they get along off the floor and that just carries on the floor."

The Lady Cardinals showcased their new team in an exhibition game against East Texas Baptist University, Oct. 26, winning 70-39 in the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center.

Davis finished the game with 19 points and nine rebounds. Sophomore guard Jacei Denley scored 14 points and junior guard R'Mani Taylor ended with 10 points and four assists.

See **LADY CARDS**, page 10

# Proving the critics wrong

**Brian Quijada**  
UP sports editor

After reaching the Southland Conference semifinals for the first time in three years, the Lamar men's basketball team enters the 2024-2025 season with a chip on their shoulder, ready to prove critics wrong.

Last season, the Cardinals were predicted to go ninth in

SLC play, but surprised everyone by winning 19 games, the most since the 2018-2019 season. LU finished fifth in the conference and are predicted to land there again in a Southland Conference Preseason Poll of league head coaches and media relations directors.

The Cardinals see seven players returning, three of whom were starters.

Leading the team is head coach Alvin Brooks who is returning for his fourth year at his alma mater.

"We have a really good group of returners," Brooks said. "Adam Hamilton has been here three years now. Janko has been here three years. Cody Pennebaker has been here three years. B.B. (Knight) who averaged 10 a game returns for a second year, Ja'Sean Jackson returns for second year. So, it's a really good group."

Last year, LU saw four players average double-digit points but only two of them are returning. Hamilton, the team's leading rebounder, averaged 10.5 points per game



Returning guard B.B. Knight, left, will look to lead the Cardinals to the top of the Southland Conference standings this season.

and 6.7 rebounds. Knight, the team's top returning scorer, averaged 10.7 points per game and proved himself as one of the league's top long-range threats in his first season with the team, converting 66-of-178 three-point attempts.

Lamar also returns Pennebaker (6-5, Jr., G, two-year starter), Jayden Barrs (6-1, 190, Fr., G, redshirted 2023-24), Errol White (6-7, 205, Sr., F), Ja'Sean Jackson (6-0, 176, Sr., G) and Janko Bulajic (6-10, 233, Jr., C).

The Cardinals also added new players to the roster with Beaumont native Andrew Holifield returning to his hometown to play for the Cardinals. The 6'10 junior forward transferred from Ranger College where he averaged 12 points with 6.5 rebounds per game.

The other transfers Lamar

acquired are Alexis Mar-molejos (6-1, 180, Jr., G, Arizona Western), Danquez Dawsey (6-2, 180, Sr., G, Central Oklahoma), Terrance Dixon, Jr. (6-8, 235, Jr. F, North Texas). The incoming freshmen are Braden East (6-9, 238, F, Houston, Texas), Jayden Gambrell (6-3,

See **CARDINALS**, page 10



Coach Alvin Brooks





UP photos by Aaron Saenz  
Freddy Richardson, left, and Nia Clatworthy led the Lamar cross-country teams at the Oct. 18 meet at Arturo Barrios Invitational at College Station.

# LU sets 17 PRs at X-country

## Press Release

The Lamar University cross country teams recorded 17 personal bests in a field of national competition at the Arturo Barrios Invitational hosted by Texas A&M, Oct. 18.

Both teams scored top 20 finishes as the women took eighth with 228 points while the men were 20th with 554.

The men opened the day with an 8k meet as all nine runners set personal records. Freddy Ricardson (26th; 23:24.4) was one second off of finishing in the top 25 as he crossed the line first for LU. Lloyd Sheppard-Brown took home 45th with a PR of 23:41.1. Jonathan Rivera (139th) set a new personal best of 24:27.5 while he and Alexis Rodriguez (200th; 24:53.1) each placed in the top 200. Andres Padon (214th; 24:57.8), Riley Trent (222nd; 25:01.3) and Treyton Showen (290th; 25:36.2) took spots in the top 300.

Adrian Han Vadstein (25:53.3) and Brian Woolums (25:56.1) crossed the line 315th and 317th respectively.

Following the men’s meet, the women started their 6k race and had eight runners pick up personal bests. Once again, Nia Clatworthy was the top runner for LU as she crossed the line in 15th place with a new personal best of 19:43.0. Cara Inch rounded out the top 30 with a personal best of 20:06.7. Inca Padfield (53rd; 20:31.5), Annabel Hobday (65th; 20:40.6), Ashton Rainey (143rd; 21:32.0), Anna Eischen (236th; 22:21), Natalee Bergeron (354th; 24:03.4), and Eleana Campos (374th; 24:30.3) also set PR’s while Mykayla Mims (22:35.5) and Claire Bibb (25:38.7) took 261st and 390th, respectively.

The Cardinals now turn their attention to the Southland Conference Championship meet, which will take place in New Orleans, Nov. 1 at Lake Oaks Park.

## CARDINALS from page 9

170, G, Houston, Texas) and Jace Jeffries (5-10, 165, G, Tomball, Texas).

“We’ve got a good nucleus of returners and newcomers that make our team bigger on the front line,” Brooks said. “Our guard group is better, faster, and can score it. As a group collective, I think we’ll be a better defensive group and it’ll be an exciting team to watch.”

Not only did the team focus on getting better on the court, but they also focused on their chemistry and mental health.

“During the offseason, I just got my mental health right,” Knight said. “I’m really focused on that because I’m at the age now where I’ve watched so much basketball that I’m trying new ways to get better on and off the court.

“Our chemistry is very good. We get along on the court, and off the court. Most importantly, we’re, we’re cool off the court. We’re able to all hang out and be cool and just kick it. I feel like being able to do that is honestly more important than anything else.”

According to coach Brooks, this season is the most challenging non-conference schedule since he’s been at Lamar.

“The number of NCAA tournament teams that we play in the non-conferences is much greater than what we’ve had in the past,” Brooks said. “So, it’s a challenging schedule, but one that I think that we’re prepared for, we’re ready for. They help us get ready for the Southland Conference schedule, which is tougher

this year.”

The Cardinals now have their eyes set on the SLC tournament championship, a feat they haven’t accomplished since 2012. LU is set to start their season against Paul Quinn College on Nov. 4, in the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center.

“The excitement and energy in the Montagne Center was really good last year compared to years past,” Brooks said. I thought the student body and the campus community and the community in the Beaumont and the Golden Triangle area was a part of that and helped make that come to fruition.

“We just want people to come out and support us, see us again, and, man, we’re going to give them something to cheer for.”

## LADY CARDINALS from page 9

After missing out on the postseason NCAA tournament, the Lady Cardinals were invited to the Women’s Basketball Invitational Tournament where they lost to Washington State, 66-46.

Despite losing the last two SLC championship tournament finals, the Lady Cards are still hungry for that championship and NCAA tournament appearance.

“I’m excited for the end goal, for everything to come together and for us to actually reach what we want to do,” Davis said. “We won one piece of the puzzle. We need to win both this year to really feel like we’ve determined that we’re the champs and we should be.”

Coach Franklin said she hopes to get over the hump this year and finally win it all.

“Every year is to win it all, right?”she said. “That’s repeat

Southland Conference champs, that’s to hopefully get over the hump. But, we, as a team, as a program, we try to just take it one game at a time. Whoever we’re up against, whoever we’re facing that day we want to win that day. We want to win that game.”

The Lady Cardinals officially start their season on Nov. 4, where they face off against Texas A&M-San Antonio in the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center.

“We’re going to play hard,” Franklin said. “(The players) want to go out and represent not only the names on the back of their jerseys, but they want to represent the name on the front of their jersey and this community.”

“So, come out and support. We’re going to give you a good show. We’re going to fight hard.”



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