

## G-2 lot affected by construction

**Regina Ruiz**  
UP staff writer

Construction has begun in the G-2 parking lot to make way for a new music annex. The building will provide storage and rehearsal space for the marching band.

Miriam Morgan, director of support operations, said the project addresses the band's ongoing need for space and accessibility.

"We've got a great need with programming," Morgan said. "What we don't have is room for it to grow. The marching band has been practicing in a parking lot and storing their instruments

off Jimmy Simmons Boulevard. This new annex will finally give them storage and an indoor rehearsal space when the weather is bad."

Freshman band major Arden Vanandehoef expressed excitement about the new building.

"I came to Lamar because of our band program," Vanandehoef said. "I'm happy to hear they want to expand it."

The new facility will be located next to the intramural field, which will serve as the band's primary practice area.

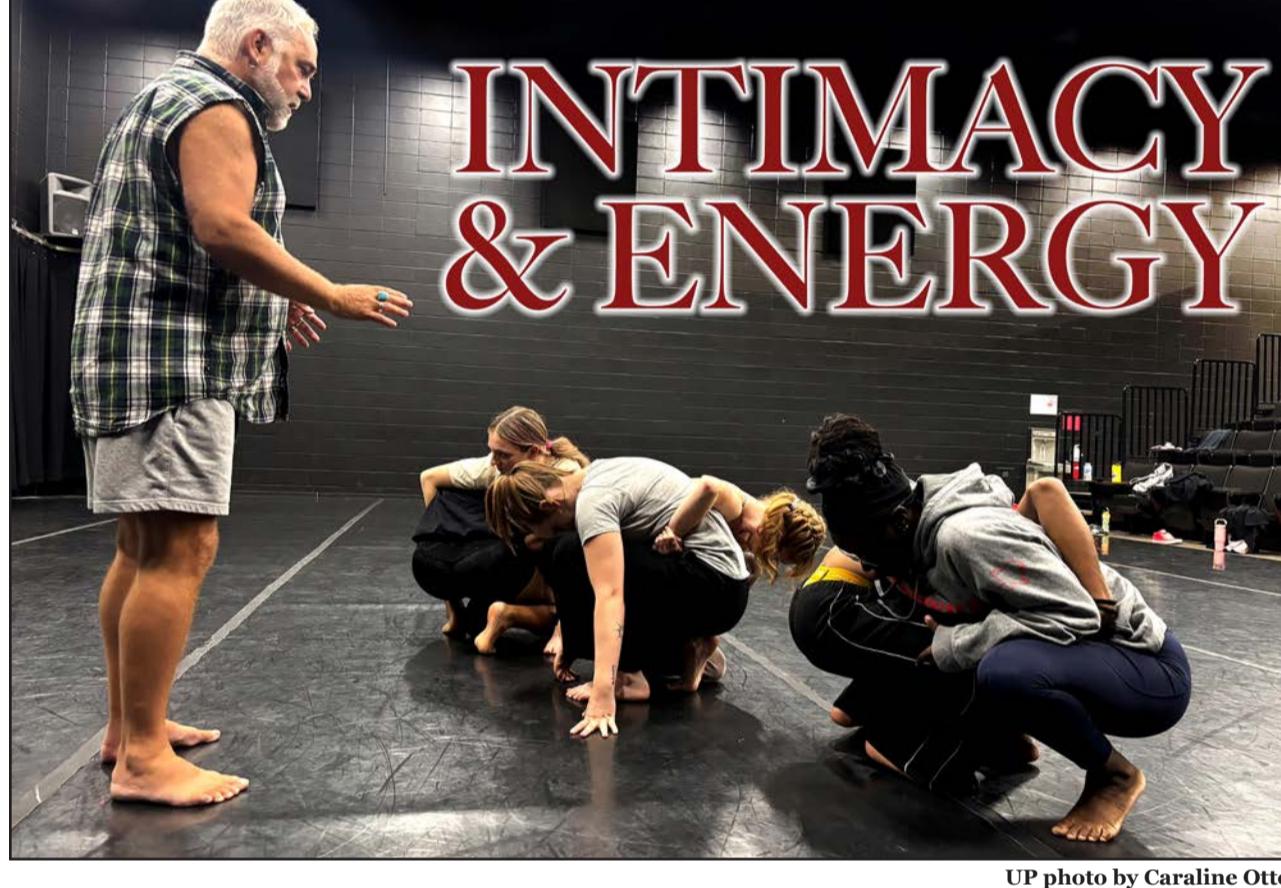
Construction fencing currently blocks off much of the G-2

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Courtesy graphic

An overhead look at the area impacted by the construction of the new marching band facility.



UP photo by Caraline Otte

Guest choreographer Bill Wade works with Lamar students in the Dance Annex ahead of the "Fall & Recovery" concert, Nov. 20-22.

## 'Fall & Recovery' concert set for Nov. 20-22

**Caraline Otte**  
UP staff writer

The stage may be smaller, but the energy will be huge. Audiences will get a chance to get up close and personal with the performers during LU's upcoming dance concert.

Lamar University's department of theatre & dance will present "Fall and Recovery," Nov. 20-22 in the Studio Theatre rather than the usual University Theatre stage.

"It's a smaller space in general," Amy Wright, assistant professor of dance, said. "You're also very close

to your audience. Instead of being separated by the proscenium and the orchestra pit, you're close enough to see them blink. You're close enough to see if they're reading their programs or if they're paying attention or they're falling asleep. So, it makes you very focused. It makes you very aware. It makes you very present in every moment."

"Fall & Recovery" is the traditional faculty dance concert and this year's will feature seven new dances choreographed LU full-time and adjunct faculty, and one by

guest artist Bill Wade.

"There's one dance in the concert that is the music of Jelly Roll Morton, and it's a little bit more classic — it's tap and jazz," she said. "But then everything else in the concert is going to be very contemporary, sort of 'of the moment' current work."

The concert is repertory style, Wright said, which means that all of the works are standalone.

"They're all coming from differ-

See **DANCE**, page 2

## SNAP food insecurity puzzle filled by Some Other Place

**Rayna Christy**  
UP editor



UP photo by Adam Nguyen

Players and interns from Lamar's men's basketball program wrap Christmas gifts at Some Other Place, Nov. 11.

The holiday season often brings increased community need, but the loss of SNAP benefits due to the government shutdown has strengthened that need even more. For people searching for help, Some Other Place offers multiple programs, including some for those struggling with the loss of food stamps or providing for the holiday.

Some Other Place has served the Beaumont community since its founding in 1968.

"Three churches came together and said, 'We keep telling these people to go

See **PLACE**, page 5

LUPD's color guard present the flags during the Veterans Day event in the Sheila Umphrey Rec Center, Nov. 11

## Veterans Day event honors service

**Heather Harmon**  
UP contributor

Lamar University celebrated Veterans Day, Nov. 11, with a lunch in the Sheila Umphrey Recreational Sports Center.

Caleb Hood, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction and a former Marine, was the emcee for the event. The event began with LUPD's color guard's presentation of the flags, and Hood led the gathering in the Pledge of Allegiance, before President Jaime Taylor spoke in honor of servicemen and women.

Hood said Veterans Day is a chance to remember the people who have served.

"You do these things when you're really young, and time passes," he said. "You keep events that shape your life as a periodic thing once a year, where you remember when you did things that were so much larger than you as an individual — you did something that was a part of your nation, a part of your community. The remembrance of that, people coming together and saying what you did matters, is one of the things that is super important to me."

"It's the idea that service to a thing larger than yourself matters. That's why I like Veterans Day."

## DANCE from page 1

ent places and inspired by different things," she said.

Vidor senior Reagan Dearing said she wants the audience to see that dance can be extremely diverse.

"Dance can't just be one thing," she said. "It's not pretty ballet or cool tap with flashy moves. It's about the movement. It's about the intention of the movement — and not

just to be showy, but seeing the full picture."

Wright has two pieces in the show: "Amplitude" and "Stranger in a Strange Land."

"(Amplitude) is a duet with two of our seniors that's about the movement of pendulums," Wright said. "It's about the John Mellencamp quote, 'I know there's a balance. I see it when I swing past.' 'Stranger in a Strange Land' is a brand new group work exploring the female experience of refugeeism

## QUOTE OF THE WEEK

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on.

— Robert Frost

## NOTICE

The University Press can be read online at [www.lamaruniversitypress.com](http://www.lamaruniversitypress.com). For updates, follow us on Facebook, or on Instagram and X @uplamar.

# UNIVERSITY PRESS

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parking lot near the Science and Technology Building, the Honors College, and the Campbell and Monroe dorms.

Morgan said the fencing will gradually shrink over the next few weeks as the contractor establishes access routes for construction vehicles.

The project is expected to conclude by Sept. 11, 2026, Morgan said.

"By then, only the new building will remain, with about 80 parking spaces lost permanently," she said.

To offset the parking loss,

Lamar plans to reopen the C-4 parking lot, which has been closed for several years while the band used it for practice.

While no new lots are being added, students will have temporary flexibility to park in some faculty and staff lots after 5 p.m.

The Parking Advisory Committee will also show leniency for students unable to move their vehicles by 7 a.m., Morgan said.

Students who must park farther away can call LUPD dispatch at 409-880-8307 for a campus security escort or use university shuttles, which now feature QR codes for live tracking.

Junior Adan Baeza said the new development has become a major inconvenience.

"This parking lot is shared between the Honors College, the science building, and two of the dorms," Baeza said. "Giving us less parking is the opposite of a solution."

Morgan acknowledged frustration among students but emphasized that the construction will benefit the campus community.

"It's a short-term inconvenience with a big payoff," she said. "We're lucky to have leadership addressing long-standing issues. It'll be worth it once everything's complete."

## SCRABBLIES by Dalia Osman

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# 'Night Strike' helps homeless

**Josiah Boyd**  
UP contributor

The hustle and bustle of people setting up tables, preparing booths, and heating up hot bowls of chili filled the air downtown Beaumont.

More than 100 people gathered in a parking lot on the corner of Liberty and Magnolia streets for a monthly homeless outreach event, Nov. 7, hosted by Night Strike Ministries.

"Night Strike is an outreach program where we pass out hot meals, supplies and the love of the Lord to the homeless in our community," Sondra Hammond, Night Strike coordinator, said. "Night strike is about helping our homeless neighbors help themselves."

The local non-profit was created 15 years ago when founder, James "Wesley" Coleman, stopped at a streetlight in Beaumont.

"Wesley was coming home from work when he saw two homeless men asking for money at a stoplight," Billy Campbell, Night Strike board member, said. "He decided it would be a better idea to grab some burgers and sit and have a meal with them."

While he sat and ate, Coleman asked the men where other homeless individuals stayed in the city, Campbell said.

"The guys told him about the area close to where we are now next to Wiess Park, and



UP photo by Josiah Boyd

Amy Chapa, left, Aymee Thompson and Janeal White pass out clothes and toys at Night Strike, Nov. 7, in downtown Beaumont.

the next week he rolled up there with his barbecue pit and passed out hot links," he said. "After that first Night Strike he got local churches together and started passing out meals, hygiene products, blankets and the love of Jesus."

Coleman continued to lead Night Strike events until his death in October 2024.

"Night Strike was Wesley's pride and joy," Hammond said. "It is important to us that we keep his legacy going, so we are always looking for people who

truly care about the issue. Wesley always used to say, 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.'

Night Strike has continued to grow even after Coleman's passing, Hammond said.

"Wesley was the connecting point for a lot of local churches and when he passed, we were a little scared our numbers would start to dwindle, but the Lord provided," she said. "Over the past year, we have had so many different groups come

and support that I had to start going up to them and introducing myself."

Aymee Thompson, Friendswood junior, led a group of Lamar University Resiliency Think Tank members at the event by passing out diapers, baby clothes and toys.

"It was super awesome to come out and give back to the community," she said. "Everybody was so kind, and the guests were so grateful for all the donations. It was truly amazing to see the community

come together and help show our neighbors that they are loved and valued."

Think Tank member Amy Chapa, Beaumont junior, said the event was an eye-opening experience and that it felt good to give back to local families.

"I was able to help pass out diapers and wipes to parents who needed them, and that was amazing," Chapa said. "It was super fun picking out outfits and clothes for their kids and learning more about them."

Campbell said he enjoys seeing all the new volunteers each month, and he is always happy to see Lamar students show up and dedicate their time.

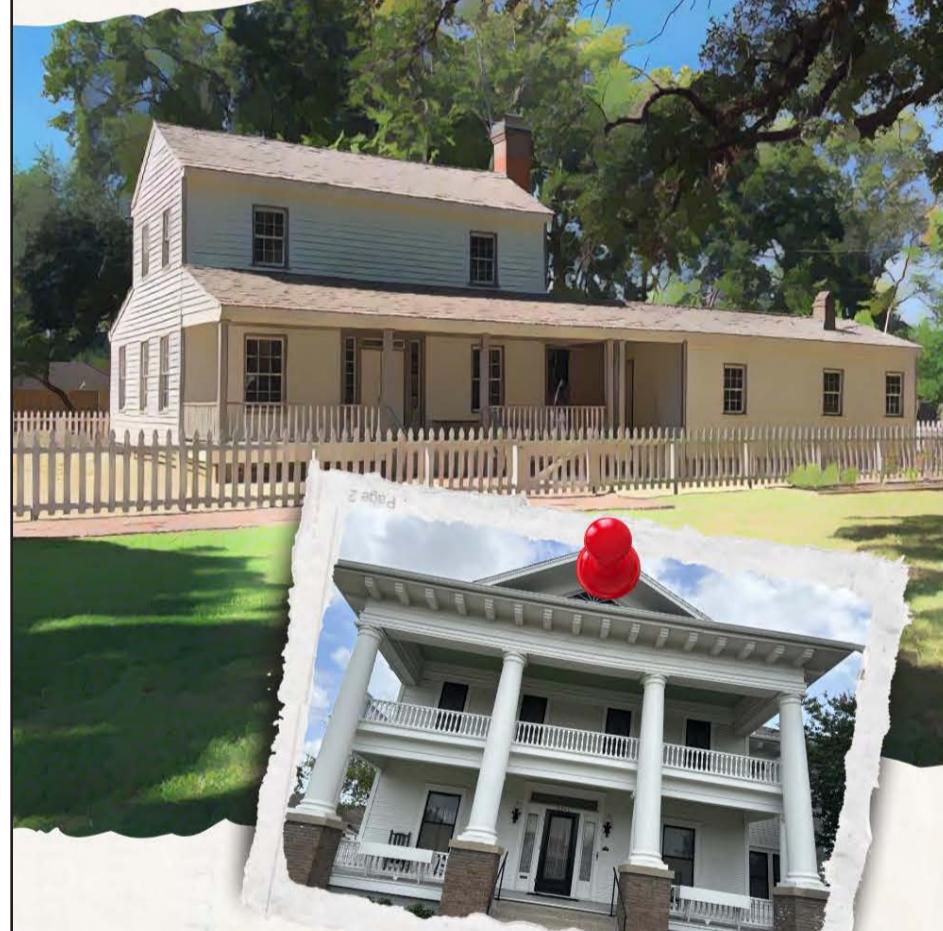
"There has been a group of Lamar students coming pretty regularly each month," he said. "They could be anywhere on a Friday night, and they are here with us — that means something."

Night Strike Ministries is always looking for volunteers, Hammond said.

"If you want to help but can't volunteer, we are always asking for prayer and donations," she said. "If you can't donate blankets or hand-warmers, just pray for us."

Night Strike is held the first Friday of every month at 6:30 p.m. in the empty lot on the corner of Liberty and Magnolia streets in Beaumont.

For more information, visit the organization's Facebook page.



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# FOOD DRIVE

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**The UP wishes everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving**

## Diary of a Desperate Turkey



### November 28 — A.K.A. 'The Day of Doom'

**Tom "Drumsticks" Featherston**  
UP contributor

Dear Diary,

If you're reading this, I'm probably on someone's dining table — surrounded by mashed potatoes and betrayal.

It started weeks ago. The humans began acting... strange. They hung paper turkeys on the walls (offensive), talked about "brining" like it was a fun hobby (it's not), and kept eyeing me with this unsettling mix of hunger and affection. Susan even said, "He'd look great golden brown." Ma'am, I'm already brown.

I tried to play it cool. I even faked a cough to seem diseased — it didn't work. Farmer Joe just said, "Looks like he's ready." Ready for "what," Joe? A modeling career?

No — the oven.

Yesterday, I overheard the words "350

degrees for three hours." THREE HOURS! What are you people, villains in a slow-cooking horror movie?

At dawn today, I made a break for it. I flapped past the barn, past the pumpkin patch, and almost made it to freedom — until I saw a "Turkey Trot 5K." Do you know what it's like to see hundreds of humans "pretending" to be you while you're running for your life? Terrifying.

If I don't make it, tell the others: never trust anyone holding a baster.

Stay strong, stay fluffy and remember — Thanksgiving isn't a holiday — it's a trap.

Sincerely,

Tom

(Current status: hiding behind a pile of decorative pinecones)

*Staff writer Regina Ruiz  
helped Tom write his story*

## Lamar, BISD, ExxonMobil collaborate on literacy

**Caleb Hamilton**  
UP contributor

Exxon/Mobil and Beaumont ISD have committed to strengthening students' literacy skills through a program that connects first graders with Lamar student volunteers.

Charlton-Pollard Elementary School's Literacy Initiative allows Lamar students to instruct first graders in key skills such as phonics, spelling and basic reading comprehension.

Jenny Angelo, BISD executive director of curriculum and instruction, said she appreciates Lamar's willingness to invest in the school.

"Charlton-Pollard serves a community that faces significant economic challenges, making it all the more essential for schools, families and community partners to come together to provide resources, training and encouragement," Angelo said. "This initiative allows us to do just that by strengthening parent engagement, getting high-quality books and literacy materials into homes, and involving Lamar University students as tutors and mentors."

Chelsey Gallagher, an English/Language Arts Education major, said she hopes she can

impact the first graders not only in their intellectual abilities, but also on a deeper level.

"You always have that one teacher that you never forget," she said. "I think about my elementary and middle school years, and I can tell you at least one sentence that a teacher said that stuck with me that I still use today. I hope that maybe we could be part of those memories for those children."

Angelo said literacy is a significant skill and early development can strengthen critical thinking and empathy, among other vital traits.

"Research consistently shows that reading for just 15–20 minutes each day has a profound effect on vocabulary, background knowledge, fluency and emotional development," she said.

Overuse of digital devices, often used as substitutes for adult interaction, has been linked to lower language and literacy scores and a decline in conversational skills, Angelo said.

"Through our partnership with ExxonMobil, we are directly addressing this barrier by putting books into students' hands and fostering a culture of reading that begins at home and extends throughout the community," she said.

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## PLACE from page 1

somewhere else — we need to make somewhere else,” Kaitlyn McCarter, special programs and outreach director, said. “So, they got together and created the basis for it.”

Some Other Place offers multiple programs, each with a different focus, including the Thanksgiving Day store, the Giving Tree, a back-to-school program, rent and utility assistance, a food pantry, a clothing store, a soup kitchen, Meals on Wheels and Henry’s Place, the homeless day center.

“I think that Some Other Place is synonymous with homelessness here in Beaumont, and that’s only one of our programs,” Chris Robertson, president and CEO, said. “Some Other Place is not a homeless agency. It’s just an agency with a homeless program.”

Robertson graduated from Lamar University in 2016 with a degree in social work.

“Some Other Place was one of the places that I was looking at when I came out of college,” he said. “When you have a national corporation

you’re locked into an existing structure. I think one of (Some Other Place’s) best qualities is that we are like the jigsaw piece, as far as we help with what the needs are in the community — that doesn’t always stay the same.”

Earlier this month, the government shutdown led to a loss of access to SNAP benefits. In Texas, 3.5 million people lost their food stamps, according to everytexan.org. Robertson said 40,000 people in Jefferson County rely on SNAP benefits, and Some Other Place worked to fill in the gaps.

“Some Other Place is kind of a well-known name in the community,” he said. “So, when the SNAP benefits were cut, anybody who wasn’t going to get food assistance came here to our food pantry the first day of the cuts. We had 31 families who came in that day for the food pantry. So, that night, I went to HEB and replaced everything that the 31 families bought, and it was back in action the next morning.”

Robertson said there was a struggle to get news coverage before people were made aware that they were losing benefits. However, he did finally get the story out and informed people that Some Other Place would help if they got a denial letter or lost access to SNAP.

“I think people were scared that they weren’t going to be able to make it,” he said. “I’ve seen a bunch of people who are low income and used to being poor (that), just to put it bluntly, can stretch a budget like you wouldn’t believe. But that’s dependent upon food

stamps. If you take that away, they can’t do anything.”

Robertson said that no matter the community, everybody has struggles.

“Some Other Place is Beaumont specific,” he said. “The programs that we offer are a direct reflection of the biggest needs in the community.”

“I think it’s kind of like a perfect jigsaw puzzle piece. We literally were formed to help those with what they need most in this town.”

Full time Some Other Place employees are not the only ones who help the community. They are always looking for volunteers during their business hours, and that need increases during the holiday season with their Thanksgiving and Christmas programs, McCarter said.

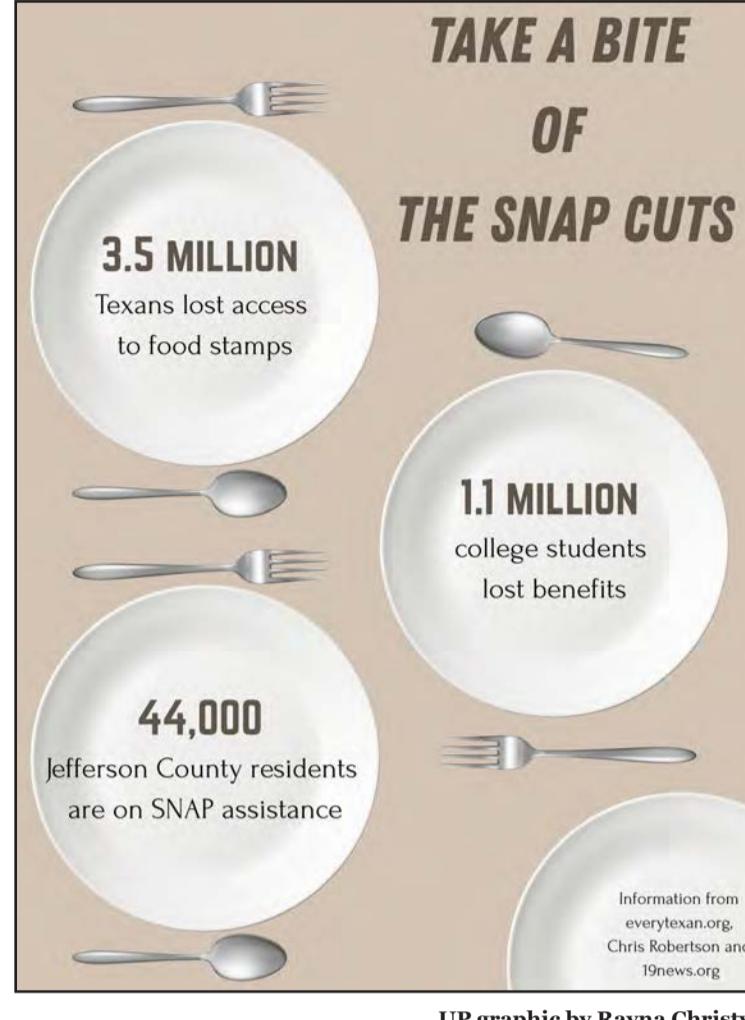
“During the holiday season we have a lot of need — helping with our Thanksgiving store, sorting canned goods and bringing donations, as both Thanksgiving and Christmas are solely run off of donations,” McCarter said.

“Without people donating and bringing that here, none of these programs happen.”

“But when these donations happen, they have to be organized and sorted, especially with Christmas. We have 1,300 kids that each get two presents. So, we’ll have 2,600 presents to sort and organize, so we’ll need volunteers helping.”

For those looking for a specific date to volunteer, distribution days are already set.

“All our distributions happen on one day,” McCarter said. “So, when the day of distribution comes, somebody can come in and say, ‘Oh, I’m



UP graphic by Rayna Christy

here with the last name Jones.’ We pick up the Jones bag and they’re in and out the door.”

Thanksgiving distributions are set for Nov. 25, and Christmas distribution is set for Dec. 19. Alongside those dates, Dec. 12 is always busy and is a good day to volunteer, McCarter said, as that is when Christmas gifts are due.

To help purchase Christmas gifts, gift tags are available at 1240 McFaddin Ave. during business hours, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Thursday.

“The younger generation doesn’t support charity the

same way the old one did,” Robertson said. “That’s a dying quality. So, I would encourage people to get involved. If we don’t continue to get support from the community, we won’t exist anymore. That’s a very real thing for a shop local nonprofit, and with how many people depend on us, I think it’s worth getting involved and trying to get this younger generation to support charity.”

Prospective volunteers can fill out an online application at someotherplacebeaumont.com/volunteer-at-some-other-place, or visit the facility in person.

## ORANGE COUNTY



## SPECIAL ANGELS

## RODEO



**CONGRATS CARDINALS ON A GREAT SEMESTER**

# BJLI educates students about voting

**Maria Rodriguez**  
UP news editor

The Barbara Jordan Leadership Institute, a nonpartisan student-led organization, is helping students register to vote and emphasizing the importance of voting and creating leaders.

The campus organization has chapters across Texas. It was named after U.S. representative Barbara Jordan, who was the first Black woman from a southern state to be elected.

"We are a non-profit organization that strives to educate both students and faculty on the importance of knowing their rights, like voting, freedom of speech, etc.," Taylor Leblanc, BJLI president, said.

The organization was founded through LU's political science department in 2024, becoming more official this year, Regori McGill, BJLI vice president and political science major, said.

"(The political science department) were trying to just bring an organization that informs students and informed others on just what's going on," she said. "And I love to do that. I love to talk to people. I love to connect with others. As much as I love learning about the law, I think everybody else should learn about the law. So, I felt like it was a perfect fit."

McGill said BJLI plans on reaching out to more students.

"I feel like with our campus, the size of our campus and how tight other organizations are, I do think that we can spread word of mouth, as well as social media," she said.

BJLI hosts events throughout

the year, such as registering students to vote.

"It's pretty simple," McGill said. "It's basically the standard table setup. It kind of just gets into more detail when you're trying to register a student."

The group also visits high schools. McGill said if they get someone who is not eligible to register, they try to inform them of the steps to take to register when it's possible.

McGill said that, according to data, only 50% of people are aware that there are three branches of government.

"The goal is to have more people understand what's going on," McGill said. "So, we want to keep that number above 50% and growing — and start young."

McGill said it is important to reach out to high school students as the quicker voting information is introduced, the more information students retain.

"Not many people are registered when they want to start voting," McGill said. "So, when they put in that first ballot, it's a provisional ballot, so it's not counted."

Leblanc said the group also emphasizes the importance of voting in local elections.

"They think just because it's a city or statewide election, that it doesn't hold weight," he said. "But in all honesty, this is the most important, because this is the closest to your home."

Redistricting bills in several states, including Texas, affect representation, McGill said. In Texas, HB 4 introduced PLANC2333, a new redistricting map for the state, which



Courtesy photo

Lamar University students Taylor Leblanc, left, and Regori McGill, president and vice-president of LU's chapter of the Barbara Jordan Leadership Institute, stand outside the Capitol Building in Washington D.C., Oct. 15.

passed in an 18-8 vote. The bill changed several congressional districts that previously had minority representation. *Louisiana v. Callais* is a pending U.S. Supreme Court case also involving redistricting maps.

McGill and Leblanc were present at one of the hearings for the case in Washington, D.C.

"I did not know exactly what the details of the case were," McGill said. "But to find out that this map, and this court case specifically, put the Voting Rights Act in a gray area, was mind-blowing."

Leblanc said he wants people to know their voice is being heard.

"I hope that they walk away

knowing that they are heard, and that their voice is really important and powerful," he said. "No matter what any-

body may tell you, you matter."

For more, visit [lamarbjli.org](https://lamarbjli.org) on Instagram.



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**NEW LOCATIONS COMING SOON**

# Beaumont comics build community

**Joseph Hackney**  
UP contributor

On any given night, fans of comedy can find a handful of comics standing under spotlights, clutching a mic and chasing laughter. Some are seasoned performers, others are first timers, but all share the same mission — to make Southeast Texas laugh one punchline at a time.

Across Southeast Texas, local comedians are building a tight-knit community that thrives on persistence, humor and heart. For performers like Chad Perron, Shameka Gowen, Devan Callihan and David Hicks, stand-up isn't just entertainment — it's a creative outlet, a coping mechanism, and proof that a powerful comedy scene can exist far beyond a major city.

Perron is part of the comedy roots in Beaumont at Pour409 Bar and Rooftop's Tuesday open mic. Perron has been performing in Beaumont since 2016 and describes his style as experimental.

"I try to wrap an intellectual thought in absurdity and find a way to make that funny to everyone," Perron said. "At my most basic I am an observational comic who relies on puns, mirrors or reverses, and sometimes niche references."

Perron said that he normally has a funny idea or concept naturally and will try to elaborate on it. He interacts with other comics and performs at other venues and then tries to extend or "tag" and "callback" to that idea.

Perron said the Beaumont scene struggles to gain recognition, but it is not for a lack of trying. Despite the challenges, Perron says the city's audiences are among the most encouraging.

"In my experience there is always a great audience when you can get lots of people together," he said. "Sometimes that's hard to do, but I find the group of people who have come together in Beaumont is much more accepting and supportive than the larger scenes."



UP photos by Joseph Hackney

Comedians SuppaTheEmcee, left, Shameka Gowen and Too Tall perform at Pour409 Bar and Rooftop's Tuesday open mic nights.

Comedy is more than art — it's therapy and a way to give back to the local community, Perron said.

"I have a real stake in our scene as I am a small part of its community," he said. "I try to help build it with others. It ebbs and flows, but I can say that without it, I would be in a mental breakdown. It's the closest thing to therapy I have ever felt. It's helpful for my mental health."

Hicks, known to the community as SuppaTheEmcee, hosts Pour409's open mic evenings, which include poetry and music, as well as comedy. He started the Beaumont group Comedy 409 to give everyone a chance to shine.

"This was a way to start my stand-up comedy career and to give other artists a platform to perform," he said.

Hicks said the most challenging part about hosting Comedy 409 events for the past three years is finding consistency. But through hard work and de-

termination, he said he has noticed an impact.

"The scene is growing daily," he said. Hicks encourages comedians and newcomers to keep pressing on and try to have fun.

Callihan said famous comedians inspired him, such as Redd Foxx, Richard Pryor and Jerry Seinfeld, proving one can wittily commentate on life and people will enjoy it.

Callihan first started doing comedy in Houston about six years ago. He said part of the comedy process is dealing with hecklers and tough crowds.

"I just power through, give my all, and don't take it personally," he said. "The ringleader has to power through, and when a joke doesn't land, I usually say something dumb or funny afterwards to save it."

Callihan aspires to perform at festivals and to get on the circuit and start touring.

"The main goal is to just joy bomb these mofo's," he said.

While most comics in Beaumont are men, 409 Comedy also has a few female comics. Gowen said being a female comedian has its challenges, and she has faced her fair share of misogynistic hecklers.

However, Gowen said she still finds the community of comics to be supportive and encouraging. If one person shines, she said, then it shines on every comic in the community.

"I rarely admit it, but I would like to make a career out of this," she said. "I would like to get national attention and book shows worldwide. But starting small, I want to build my confidence and have fun."

"The world is full of darkness and hardship — I want to be the bright spot in someone's day."

For showtimes, visit the 409 Comedy Facebook page.

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Cardinal running back Kyndon Fuselier runs through the SFA line during the Nov. 15 game against the Lumberjacks in Nacogdoches.

Photo courtesy of Danny Bowden, LU sports information

## Cards fall to SLC leading SFA

### Press Release

NACOGDOCHES, Texas – Stephen F. Austin jumped out to 10-point lead and Lamar University was never able to complete the comeback falling, 26-15, Saturday evening at Homer Bryce Stadium. The loss drops LU to 8-3 on the season and ends Lamar pursuit of the 2025 Southland Conference title, but the Cardinals are still alive for a shot at the playoffs.

The Cardinals finished the night with 258 yards of offense (134 on the ground and 124 through the air). SFA

ended the night with 329 total yards and held the ball nearly 10 minutes longer than Lamar.

The Cardinals completed 18-of-26 passes for 124 yards and one touchdown. Senior Robert Coleman got the start and completed eight of 12 passes for 46 yards, while Aiden McCown came on in the second half completing 10-of-14 for 78 yards.

Freshman LaDamian McDowell led the Cardinals' ground attack with five catches for 57 yards and a touchdown, while senior Kyndon Fuselier led the team with five catches for 40 yards.

Senior Kristian Pugh led the defense with a team-high 12 tackles, including one for a loss and one interception.

SFA broke the scoreless tie with 2:21 remaining in the first when they moved the ball 68 yards on 10 plays which ended on a 13-yard run from Jerrell Wimbley. The lead grew to 10 moments later when SFA turned an interception into a 43-yard field goal.

The Cardinals answered on their next possession when McDowell scored on a hand-off up the middle. Facing 2nd-and-10 from just shy of midfield, McDowell took the

handoff, broke a tackle and carried it the distance for the score putting Lamar on the scoreboard with 12:11 remaining in the half. The 54-yard run is Lamar' longest of the season. The Lumberjacks managed to tack on another field goal before halftime and took a six-point lead into the locker room, 13-7. Lamar ended the half by picking off a Lumberjack hail mary to close the first half.

The defenses dominated the opening 30 minutes. SFA finished the half with 186 yards while Big Red put up 140.

The Lumberjacks opened

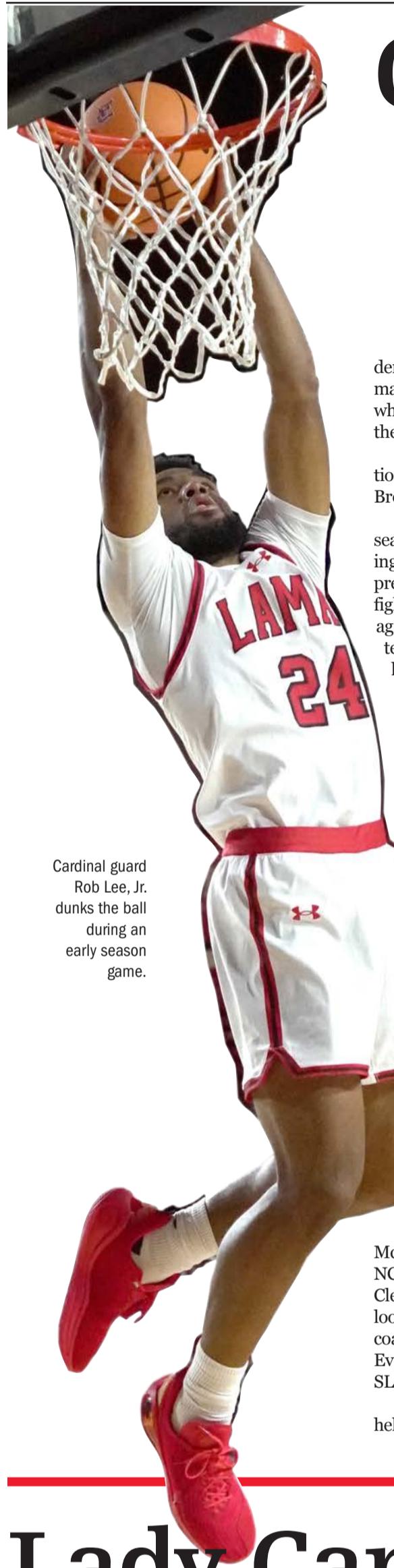
the second half by scoring 10 points in first seven minutes of the third building a 23-7 advantage. After SFA took a 26-7 lead, the Cardinals mounted a late drive that saw Coleman push the ball across the line from a yard out. After Lamar got the two-point conversion the deficit was trimmed to 11 but Lamar could get no closer.

The Cardinals will close out the regular season Saturday, Nov. 23 against McNeese in the annual Battle of the Border. The Senior Day contest is set for a 3 p.m. kick from Provost Umphrey Stadium.



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Cardinal guard Rob Lee, Jr. dunks the ball during an early season game.

## Cards' culture key to SLC success

**Aaron Saenz**  
UP sports editor

The men's basketball season is underway, and the team is looking to make huge strides from last year, when they finished as runners-up in the Southland Conference.

The team has championship aspirations under fifth year Coach Alvin Brooks.

The Cards finished the 2024-'25 season with a 20-13 record before losing in the SLC tournament final. Some preseason predictions have them fighting for the conference crown again. Coach Brooks said that it's a testament to how far the program has come.

"We've come a long way from where we were several years ago where we were picked at the bottom," he said. "We are now considered to be a good program because we won 20 games last year, got to the conference championship game — and the year before, we won 19 games and (reached) the semi-finals. It is motivating for us to have an opportunity to compete for the conference championship, but the preseason predictions make no difference."

"Whether you are picked first or picked ninth, it has no impact on how you actually play. The motivation for us is to continue to get better as a program and improve and try to play to the level of basketball we were at last season." Back-to-back SLC champion McNeese State was all the buzz at the NCAA tournament last season beating Clemson in the first round. But they look different this year as their star coach, Will Wade, left for NC State. Even so, Brooks said the Cowboys are SLC favorites.

"The conference tournament will be held in Lake Charles at McNeese, so

that clearly gives them an advantage over most of the other Southland Conference competition because they can play in front of their home crowd," he said. "We're looking forward to just getting off to a good start. We have a tough non-conference schedule that should prepare us for conference play."

Brooks said that the Cardinals' culture is a major reason why they will compete for top spot. It is also a major reason why players are buying into the program and not transferring in NIL and transfer portal environment, Brooks said.

"I think it says that our culture and staff have built an environment to make guys comfortable here and understanding that we are developing them to reach their goals," he said. "It also speaks to our administration and how they've supported us, that our student athletes feel comfortable and taken care of to return to Lamar University."

However, even with the support, players transferring is just a factor in the sport, Brooks said.

"You're going to lose guys, that's just going to happen," he said. "We've had guys hit the portal every year, but we've also gotten better every year. Our retention rate is great, and that gives you the chance to have some continuity."

The Cards lost one of their leaders, Adam Hamilton, as his eligibility was up, but Coach Brooks said it gives others an opportunity to step up.

"Leadership now has to come from our seniors, Cody Pennebaker, Andrew Holifield and Errol White," Brooks said. "They're going to have to step up and lead us. Within our core group that returns, we have several guys that have started games the last couple of years. That's the beauty once you build a program and create a culture."

The team opened their season with a 90-49 exhibition win over Mary-Hardin Baylor University, Oct. 29. The Cardinals beat Texas A&M-San Antonio at home, 93-53, before losing 78-

65 at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

"Regardless of when we play, we need to be ready to play," Brooks said. "Most importantly, when we play in the Montagne, we need to be ready to protect home court and play our absolute best."

The Cardinals will be featured on CBS twice this year for nationally televised games against Nicholls State and McNeese State, which Coach Brooks said is huge news for the program. "I'm just so honored and grateful that (CBS) feel like we play quality basketball and that we're competitive enough," he said. "Even though we're losing some guys, they think the program is trending in the right direction."

Brooks said having a good home crowd makes all the difference in the world.

"It makes us significantly better," he said. "That's like our sixth man. Our best outings have been when the student body and the community rally around the team and provide so much energy."

The Cardinals have not won the Southland Conference championship or made the NCAA tournament since 2012. Brooks, who played in the NCAA tournament for Lamar in 1984 and '85, said it would mean everything to finally get over the hump.

"Having an opportunity to get to the tournament would be huge, because then we would have come full circle as a program," he said. "We went to the Sweet 16 my junior year and went to the second round of the tournament my senior year. The last time Lamar basketball had back-to-back 20-win seasons was in '84 and '85, and we have an opportunity to do that for the first time in 40 years."

Next up for the Cardinals is the Blaine Taylor Classic in Missoula, Montana. The Cards return home to the Naches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center, Nov. 29, against Our Lady of the Lake at 6 p.m.

## Lady Cards eye tourney title

**Aaron Saenz**  
UP sports editor

The Lady Cardinal basketball season is underway, and the team is looking to continue its winning ways. In Coach Aqua Franklin's seventh year, the team is looking to grab a Southland Conference title to add to their years of consistently high finishes.

The Lady Cards have won 20 or more games in each of the past three seasons. Their 2024-'25 season ended with a 22-8 record along with a 17-3 conference record, including a 13-1 home record. Although the team performed great in the regular season, they have fallen short in tournament play.

Last year they fell in the first round against third-seeded Stephen F. Austin. Despite the disappointment, Akasha Davis and Sabrina Dean were both named All-SLC First Team. Unfortunately for LU, both have graduated, and the team only has six players returning. But they were able to recruit eight newcomers from as close as Kountze and as far away as



R'Mani Taylor drives to the basket during last season's matchup against St. Thomas.

Courtesy photo by Jeff Kellum

Lagos, Nigeria.

The pre-conference schedule is tough with games against powerhouse teams such as Kansas State (an 89-61 road loss) and Kansas. The 29-game schedule features 14 home games and 22 conference games. The SLC tournament is scheduled for March

9-12 at Lake Charles, La.

One of the six returners is senior R'Mani Taylor who's 2024-'25 campaign featured 28 games played, starting 14. She averaged 8.3 points, 2.4 rebounds, 3.3 assists and one steal per game. She said she is looking to add to those totals this year.

"I am most excited about getting another chance to make a statement," she said. "It being my senior year, I'm reminded every day that I will not get this time back, and to take advantage of every game. I'm also excited to see how much we grow as a team and how far we can get to shock a

lot of people throughout the year."

With the majority of the team being newcomers, there is a new energy surrounding the team, Taylor said. She said the youth keeps everybody on top of their game.

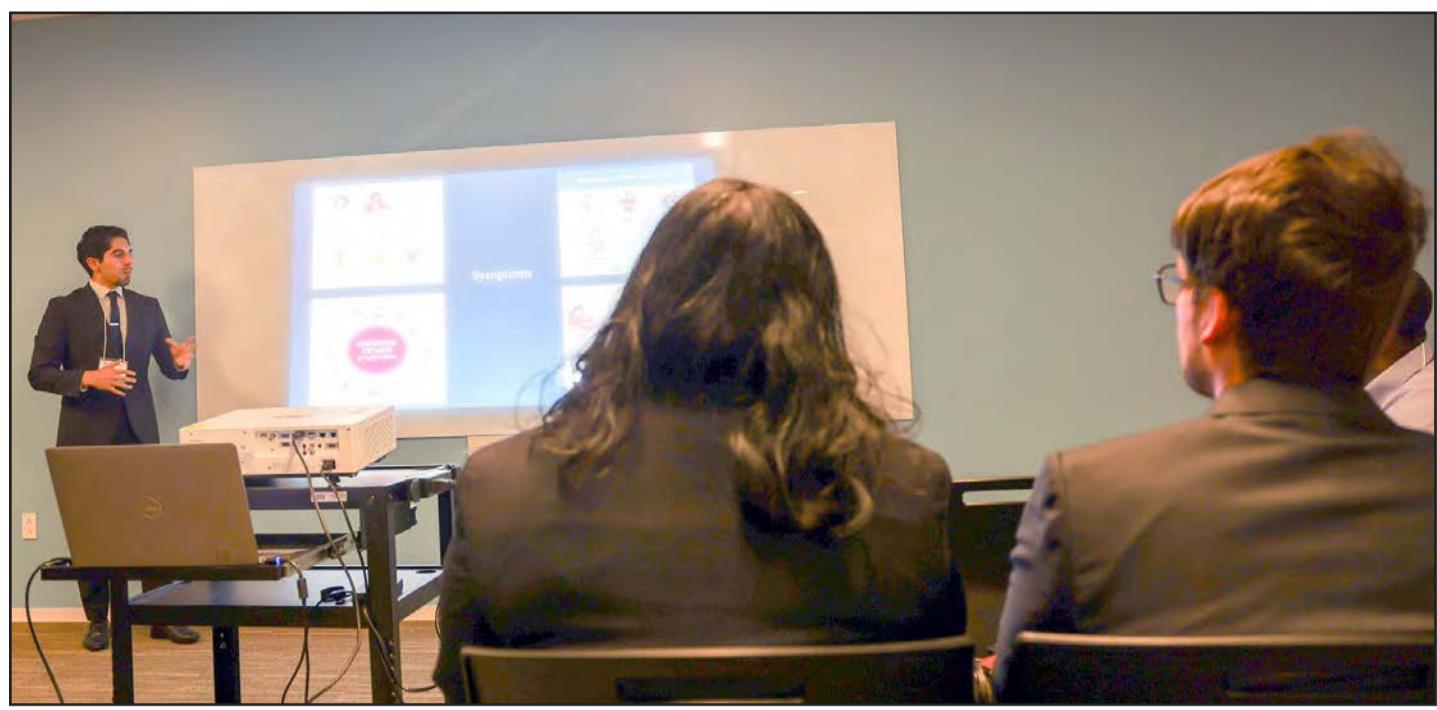
"I think having a sort of new and young team is great for us," she said. "Our young ones play really hard for us. They have come in and showed that they can be trusted in many different ways."

Taylor said the team is new, so it's going to take time to build chemistry, but it will happen.

"The more games we play the more we will gel," she said. "Our newbies have come in and helped to take a load off by filling in roles and spots we lost from last season. They will push the team by keeping us young, energetic, fast and having heart. They are willing to do whatever is asked of them."

Taylor said there is a lot of the motivation for the season after coming up short in pre-

See WOMEN, page 10



LU's Sergio Mendez presents his research, "Arbovirus detection in mosquitoes of Jefferson County, Texas," during the 2025 OUR fall conference, Nov. 14, in the Student Setzer Center, Nov. 14.

## OUR conference attracts 200



UP photos by Carlos Viloria

LU's Mohamed Irhabi presents his research, "The Eye as a Window to the Brain: Advancing Neurovascular Disease Detection through Retinal and Corneal Imaging," during the 2025 OUR fall conference, Nov. 14.

**Carlos Viloria**  
UP photo editor

The Office of Undergraduate Research hosted its 12th-annual fall conference, Nov. 14, in the Setzer Student Center. Students presented their research in front of their peers and faculty.

The event also featured guest speakers, poster displays, a banquet, and an award ceremony.

OUR director Cristian Bahrim said round 200 people attended the conference, including students and professors from the University of Tennessee Health Center, UT-Dallas, UT-Arlington, Texas A&M-Commerce, Texas A&M-Victoria, Western Kentucky University and Lamar.

Bahrim said a record 25 students earned undergraduate research grants.

"This is a special event for us and we are very blessed to have a lot of students from other schools," Bahrim said. "(It was) all of high quality research that is really meaningful, very nice presentations, very well organized messages. A combination of clarity in alignment terms and technical lan-

guage indicates they are high achievers."

Mohamed Irhabi, Woodlands junior, said OUR's fall conference and spring EXPO are critical.

"You connect with like-minded individuals, but you also hear and learn from other types of research projects that are going on, not just the field that you're doing, and connect with the faculty and (principal investigators) and researchers," he said.

Lamar Undergraduate Research Association president Kayla McKinley, Lumberton junior, said she was glad to see students from so many different majors and schools participate in the event.

"I feel like it's great right now," she said. "We've had so many students from all different majors — people from outside of Lamar — and I can't be more happy than that," she said. "Then also, we have a bunch of professors from all the different departments, which is great. A lot of professors asked their students to come, and they offered extra credit, which we always love."

For information on spring EXPO submissions, visit [lamar.edu/our](http://lamar.edu/our).

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vious seasons.

"The motivation is to get it done," she said. "We have fallen short every year in the (Southland Conference) tournament. Winning the tournament is the only thing we have not done and that's all the motivation we need."

"It's not to please anyone else, but more so to please ourselves. We want to finally see that the hard work we put in has paid off. Our coaches, day in and day out, preach effort, staying in the gym and being tough."

The team is looking to finally get over the SLC championship hump and every test the team has faced in previous years has got them ready for their championship moment — they just need to capitalize on it, Taylor said.

"There's only one way to do it and that's to just remain humble and keep going," she said. "Every year we come across a different test, but each has taught us a lesson. To get over the hump we just have to stay consistent in the way we know how to play ball, trust each other, trust the coaches and trust the process. We will come out on top."

Taylor said that having support in the arena keeps the team on their game.

"It means a lot to us," she said. "We are nothing without our fans, without the continuous support of seeing people show up to games. It's mostly the small things that stick with us the most. Having schools bring their kids, seeing the concession stand workers and our janitors always encouraging us, and students being at all our home games is what keeps us going."

The Lady Cards tip off their home slate tonight against St. Mary's University at the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center. Tip-off is scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

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