



UP photo by Heather Harmon

Former Speaker of the Texas House of Representative and Beaumont native Dade Phelan speaks at the naming ceremony for the Dade Phelan Building on the Lamar University campus, Feb. 12.

LU names building for Dade Phelan

Rayna Christy
UP editor

Lamar University held a naming ceremony honoring Dade Phelan, Feb. 12 at the Dade Phelan building, formerly known as the Center for Innovation, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship.

Phelan served two terms as the 76th Speaker of the Texas House representing District 21.

“He’s been in the legisla-

ture for 12 years, and when I first came here five years ago, the very first thing I walked into was a whole lot of new funding from the state of Texas,” LU President Jaime Taylor said.

“It was very much due to his leadership that funding came in. Having that funding has allowed Lamar University to just do some really transformative things for our students.”

While Phelan did not go to

school at Lamar, he said that being local allowed him to see how the university changed over time.

“I was born and raised here,” Phelan said. “When I was 18, this was not an attractive place to go to school. The opportunities were not obvious, but things have changed.”

Phelan said that he was a congressional staffer when he

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UP photo by Rayna Christy

Attendees applaud during the naming ceremony for the Dade Phelan Building, formerly the Center for Innovation, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship.

Cardinal View set for Feb. 28

Victor Almazan
UP contributor

Lamar University will host the spring Cardinal View recruitment event, Feb. 28. This year’s theme is “Picture Yourself.”

The event is hosted by the Welcome Center and takes place across campus, including the Setzer Student Center and the Sheila Umphrey Recreational Sports Center.

What started as an open house has grown to a campus-wide event to recruit high school students. The event also helps students who have been already accepted to LU with advice on registration, financial aid, scholarship and services.

“They can come in and make an advising appointment, check their FAFSA, and we will also be having CVS doing meningitis shots,” Karen Sandoval Lopez, assistant director of the Welcome Center, said.

Cardinal View is for anyone that is interested in attending Lamar,” James Lucia, Welcome

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Cardinals in Service

Campus, community come together for ‘The Big Event’

Maria Rodriguez
UP news editor

Lamar’s biggest community service event, The Big Event, will be held, March 28. Students, staff and faculty are invited to volunteer and give back to the community through a series of tasks.

The Big Event, originally started by Texas A&M in 1982, has turned into a nationwide community service event.

“Universities across the country get a bunch of their students and go out in their local community and volunteer,” Ben Kern, LU director of recreation and wellness, said.

Nonprofit organizations fill out a form listing tasks for volunteers, which are then divided among the groups, Kern said.

“If you’re part of a student organization and you have a bunch of people from your student organization, we usually try to keep people together,” he said. “We try to send organizations to nonprofits that fit what (the organization is) looking to do.”

Tasks include landscaping, clearing debris and cleaning buildings, Kern said. Registration is available online through LU Hub, with a deadline of March 20.

Kern said The Big Event staff will be present in the Setzer Student Center for the next three weeks.

“We’re going to be tabling three



Courtesy photo

Student volunteers for “The Big Event” in 2025 work at Beaumont’s Giving Field.

days a week, different days, different times, to try to catch as many people as possible,” he said. “But we’ll have fliers with a QR code that’ll take you right to the form.”

Volunteers must register ahead of time, Kern said. A variety of student organizations are listed on the form. However, not every student organization is listed.

“If you want to register with a student org that’s not on the drop-down list, you can (go to) ‘Other’ and say what it is, and we will build that into

the form,” he said. “Or you can reach out to our office or any of our student volunteers, and we can make that change for you all on the form.”

Kern said The Big Event is a good way for student organizations to come together to create impact off-campus.

“I would say the main purpose is to be more connected with the community,” he said. “You know, building a culture of connectedness on

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker."
— Frederick Douglass

NOTICE

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campus, where you're not just a Lamar student but you're part of the Beaumont community. I think it's important that the university gives back to the community in some regard."

Nederland senior Elizabeth Drago has participated in the event since her first year at Lamar. She now

serves on the executive committee.

"This will be my third year helping with The Big Event on the exec side of things," she said. "(It) just kind of sounded interesting and sounded like a good way to be involved and give back to the community."

Drago said the event is a

chance to have fun serving with one's friends in an organization, or to meet new people."

"I honestly think that Lamar is very special in the fact that it is in the Southeast Texas community — there's so many resources around us," Drago said.

Drago said The Big Event

is a way to give a thank you to the Southeast Texas area and to serve the community as a whole.

"Invite all your friends, come out," she said. "My parents have been going every year. They're both alumni, and so I think if you've got any family members, they can sign up

and they can get connected with Lamar."

Volunteers will meet at McDonald Gym on the day of the event and will be provided with breakfast and supplies.

For more information, visit @lu_bigevent on Instagram or lamar.edu/bigevent.

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Recruiters will spread school spirit during the spring Cardinal View event.

Courtesy photo

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Center event specialist, said. "It doesn't have to be for straight-out-of-high-school students."

The event will also include tables for different departments and student organizations. Awards will be given for the best tables.

"So, we have most creative, most spirited, best overall, most energetic, most inter-

active, and Quad favorite," Sandoval Lopez said. "Students that sign up and participate, they're up for these trophies, and whoever wins also gets \$1,000 to the organization."

Sandoval Lopez said LU President Jaime Taylor suggested the awards to encourage student organization involvement.

The goal is to continue to grow Cardinal View, Morgan Kay, Welcome Center recruitment specialist, said.

"There have been more students that have signed up, and the students come with their parents — sometimes they can tell younger siblings," she said.

For more information, visit lamar.edu/admissions/cardinal-view.

GET INVOLVED AT LU!

LU Division of Student Affairs

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25

Blood Drive • 9:30am - 3:30pm • SSC Cypress 125/127
Career Prep Rally • 3pm - 5pm • Galloway 102
Free Swim Lessons • 7pm - 7:45pm • Indoor Pool

THURSDAY, FEB. 26

Free STI Testing • 10am - 4pm • Gentry Hall
Canoe Battleship • 6pm - 8pm • Indoor Pool
Meet the Firms • 6:30pm - 8pm • SSC Live Oak Ballroom

FRIDAY, FEB. 27

Show Us Your Red • 11am - 1pm • Galloway 102

MONDAY, MARCH 2

Popcorn Monday • 11am - 1pm • Galloway 102

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

Free Swim Lessons • 4pm - 4:45pm • Indoor Pool
SGA Senate Meeting • 6pm - 7pm • SSC San Jacinto 218

THURSDAY, MARCH 5

Spring Career Expo • 12pm - 3pm • SSC Live Oak Ballroom
Canoe Battleship • 6pm - 8pm • Indoor Pool

FRIDAY, MARCH 6

Show Us Your Red • 11am - 1pm • Galloway 102

MONDAY, MARCH 16

Popcorn Monday • 11am - 1pm • Galloway 102

TUESDAY, MARCH 17

Free Swim Lessons • 4pm - 4:45pm • Indoor Pool

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Humble warrior for change

Versie Jackson paved way for integration at Lamar

Heather Harmon
UP contributor

“I would say she was definitely one of the sweetest people I’ve ever met in my entire life,” Candice Jackson, said of her grandmother, Versie Lee Jackson. “She never met a stranger. Everybody was always like a friend or somebody that she just hadn’t met yet.”

Versie was a mother, wife and high school graduate who aspired to become a kindergarten teacher.

“In the way that all grandparents always do, she would spend time with us, go to church with us, pick us up in school sometimes.” Chris Jackson, Versie’s grandson, said. “In high school, I was in the academy and we had to do community service. I would do community service with her, going around to visit people. So, that leaves a mark on you, seeing her interact with people.”

Versie, who was African American, attended Prairie View A&M University, an HBCU, but wanted to be closer to her family in Beaumont. She was a bright student and hoped to go to Lamar State College of Technology, which later became Lamar University.

In 1956, Versie applied to Lamar State only to be told by the registrar’s office that she could apply but she would not be accepted because of her race.



Courtesy photos

Versie Lee Jackson at her high school graduation, left, and in the documentary about her role in the 1955 integration of Lamar State College of Technology.

Despite the warning, Versie applied anyway, not knowing how big the situation was to become.

In 1954, the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court case ruled that the U.S. state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. In other words, Versie should be able to apply to the school based on her academic achievement, not her race.

Beaumont attorneys Theodore Johns and Elmo Willard III offered to represent Versie in her case but remained skeptical that the courts would treat them fairly.

According to the documentary, created by the University of Texas and Chris Jackson, Shepard warned Judge Cecil, the judge over the case in Jack-

son v. McDonald (1956) admitting that the African Americans in the case of Sweatt v. Painter were “discontented and aroused in a community between the races residing by too hasty forcing of a claimed right of two puppets dangled before this court of a national racial organization.”

Hemann Marion Sweatt was represented by Thurgood Marshall and the NAACP. Sweatt wanted to attend the University of Texas, according to the Texas State Historical Association the president of the University of Texas admitted he was qualified but could not attend due to his race.

Sweatt’s case reached the supreme court who ruled in Sweatt’s favor citing that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment also

applied in this case. Sweatt should be allowed to attend college based on his academic achievements.

At the time, there were petitions created by the students at Lamar State College who supported the rights of people of all races to attend the school. Even though the students welcomed Versie, there were riots against the integration of the college. According to Candice Jackson, Versie was afraid something would happen to her or her family.

“I think about the quote, ‘Speak softly and carry a big stick.’ That’s exactly what she did,” Candice said.

According to the Dallas Records Office, John Ben Sheppard has attempted to fight against the NAACP, including probing the headquarters of the

NAACP, Texas chapter office to look for barratry and tax fraud. Once John and Willard joined the case, Sheppard saw them as no exception.

Judge Lamar Cecil ruled that Versie Jackson and any other African Americans had the right to attend Lamar State College.

Although Versie was a bright student, she was forced to drop out after a semester to take care of her family. However, as a result of her fight, Versie’s daughter, son, sister-in-law and granddaughter were all able to attend Lamar.

A documentary based on Chris Jackson’s historical essay about his grandmother, “My grandmother is a warrior” — Integration of Lamar University in Texas,” is available on YouTube.

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Primary elections set for March 3

State, local candidates vie for spots on November ballots

Aliyah Abalos
UP contributor

Texas voters are in the middle of the first major election of 2026 as early voting continues across the state ahead of the March primary. Early voting began Feb. 17 and runs through Feb. 27, offering voters the opportunity to cast ballots before Primary Election Day, March 3.

Although general elections in November receive more public attention, primary elections play a central role in shaping the ballot. A primary election determines which candidates from each political party will advance to the general election.

Texas operates under an open primary system. Voters are not required to register with a political party. However, when casting a ballot, they must choose whether to participate in the Republican or Democratic primary. Once that selection is made, voters cast ballots only for candidates within that party. Participation in one party's primary does not require long-term party affiliation, but voters may not cast a ballot in both parties' primaries during the same election cycle.

The March ballot includes federal, statewide, judicial and local races. At the federal level, voters will select party nominees for one U.S. Senate seat



Election signs greet early voters at Rogers Park in Beaumont. Early voting runs through Feb. 27 with election day March 3.

UP photo by Josiah Boyd

and for all 38 Texas seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Several statewide executive offices are also on the ballot. Voters will choose party nominees for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, comptroller of public accounts, agriculture commissioner, land commissioner and railroad commissioner.

Judicial contests are also included, with seats on the Texas Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals up for nomination. In certain districts, voters will also select nominees for the State Board of Education.

Local races vary depending on the county. Ballots may include county judges, commissioners, district attorneys and

other judicial offices.

In order to make sound choices, voters should look at sample ballots in advance of voting. Sample ballots and polling information are available through county election offices and the Texas Secretary of State's website.

For students balancing academic schedules, work and extracurricular commitments, early voting can provide flexibility. During the early voting period, many counties allow residents to vote at any designated early voting site within the county. On Election Day, voters are typically assigned to a specific precinct location. Checking polling hours and site information ahead of time can help ensure a smoother voting experience.

Texas law requires voters to present an approved form of photo identification when voting in person. Acceptable forms of identification include a Texas driver license, Texas personal identification card, U.S. passport and other government-issued IDs. Voters who do not possess one of the listed forms may have additional options available under state guidelines. Election officials advise voters to review identification requirements before arriving at a polling location.

Primary elections serve as a critical step in narrowing the field of candidates. In races where no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, a runoff election between the top two candidates

will be held.

For many college students, the 2026 primary represents one of their earliest experiences participating in a statewide election. Understanding the mechanics of the primary process, from selecting a party ballot to confirming polling locations, will make the process more straightforward.

While the March primary does not finalize who will hold office, it plays a decisive role in determining the choices available to voters later in the year.

For more information, visit the Texas Secretary of State website at sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/important-election-dates.shtml or the Jefferson County Elections website at jeffersoncountyelections.com.

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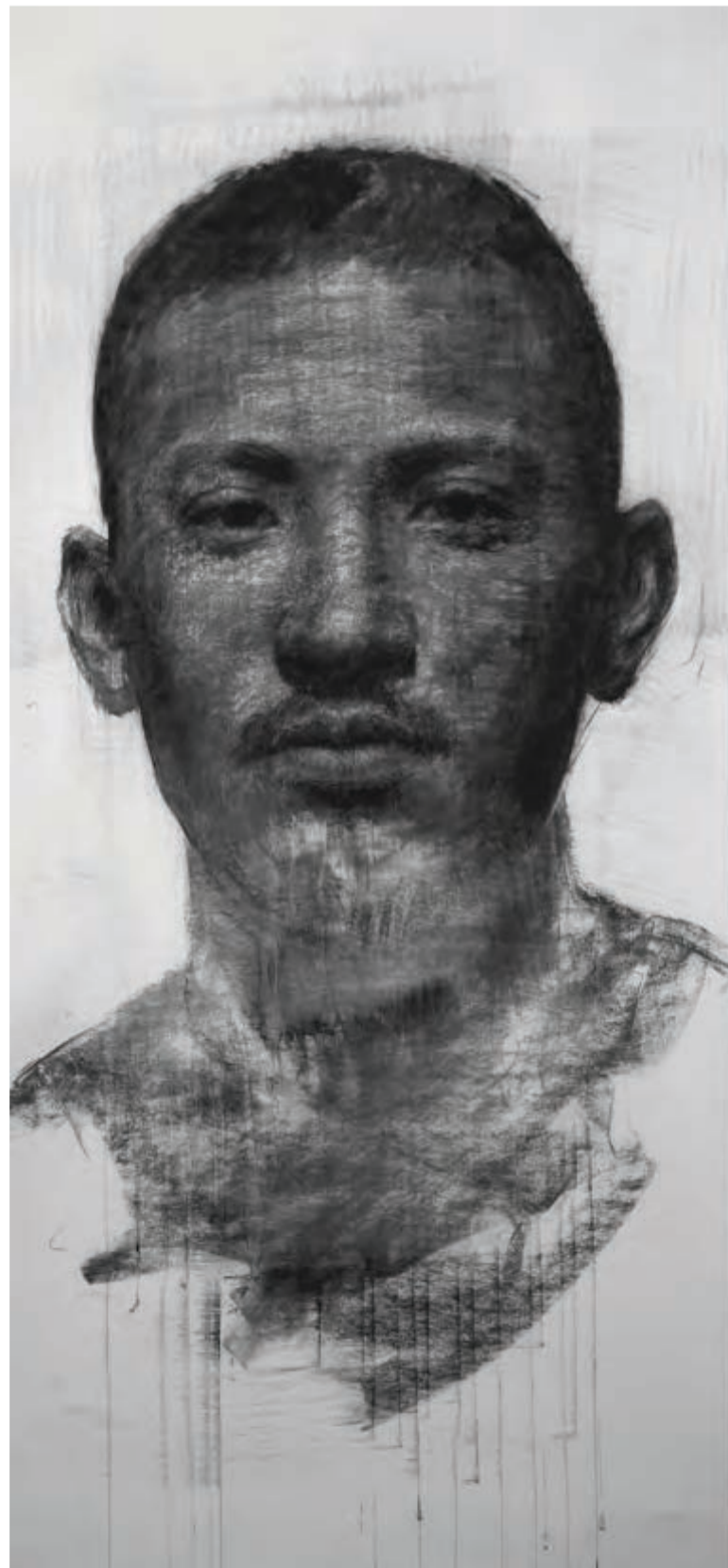
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Mardi Gras comes to campus with events at SSC, Rec patio

Lamar University celebrated Mardi Gras, the day before the beginning of Lent, with a pair of activities. Students lined up for Mardi Gras king cake, bottom right in the Setzer Student Center, Feb. 16. The next day, the Cardinal Activities Board incorporated the celebration into their weekly Patio party at the Sheila Umphrey Recreational Sports Center. Madison King, below right, plays a game while wearing "drunk goggles," while students, left, adorned themselves in traditional Mardi Gras beads. Madelynn Holdreith handed out mocktails to students including Gabriella Cervantes, bottom left, during the party.



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PHELAN from page 1

was 18, and was there when the Lamar Board of Regents shifted to the Texas State University System Board of Regents.

“We joined the larger system, and things changed, and it took a while, but here we are,” he said. “I mean, this campus is beautiful. We’re creating the jobs, the careers for tomorrow. We really are. Maritime programs, nursing programs, engineering programs, some of these are being recognized not just in Texas, not just nationally, but globally.

“Some of these programs are now seen as top-five, top-

three, and that wasn’t the case when I was 18. Here I am 50, and it’s just kind of icing on the cake to see that happen.”

Brian McConnell, chancellor of the Texas State University System, said Phelan has helped beyond what people may see online.

“For most Texans, Dade Phelan, or any speaker for that matter, is a two-dimensional figure,” McConnell said. “The only thing that we know is what we see in the news or read on social media.

“But let me tell you what I know of Dade Phelan, who, in 2017 during Hurricane Har-

vey, was in boats and up to his waist in water and spending nights working for the people of this country, this region, to get through a horrible calamity. How do I know that? Because he called me a couple times a day to let me know what was going on on these campuses, at Port Arthur, Orange and Lamar.”

McConnell said Phelan has a remarkable ability to treat each court with dignity and made sure that he could help others help the people in their districts.

“There are a lot of people that are in politics that are not

in public service,” he said. “Dade Phelan is a public servant.”

Phelan said that he has seen significant changes over the last 12 years and the success story is here in Southeast Texas.

“While I will not be in office next session, there will be others who will come in and fill that role, and they will have the same opportunity and the same, I hope, experience that I had, and be able to tell that story to not just legislators across Texas, but really the whole country,” he said. “You

know, at the University of

Texas, they say what starts here changes the world. Well, what starts here kind of fuels the world, and that really does mean something in Southeast Texas.”

Phelan said he was thankful and excited for the honor.

“It’s become a shortcut of colloquialism that students who work out at the Sheila Umphrey workout center say they’re going to the Sheila,” McConnell said. “I can’t wait to hear what they’re going to do at the Dade.”

The Dade Phelan building is located at 5091 Rolfe Christopher Drive.

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Women trounce UNO on senior night

Press Release

Six players scored in double figures as Lamar University honored its four seniors with a convincing 84-54 victory over New Orleans, Feb. 21, at the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center. The 84 points are the most the Cardinals have scored this season.

Alexis Parker tallied a season-high 12 points and grabbed 11 rebounds for her first double-double. Also with a double-double was Solenne Olenga, who scored 13 points and secured 12 rebounds, while Jacie

Denley (11 points) was one rebound and three assists shy of a triple-double. T'Aaliyah Miner (12), freshman Shaila Foreman (11 points, six assists) and senior R'Mani Taylor (10) combined to score 33 points.

LU shot 49.2% from the field, including a season-high 11 three-pointers, and converted 9-of-10 from the foul line. The Cardinals dominated the paint with 38 points and 44 rebounds, while the bench combined to total 31 points. Big Red also stole the ball 13 times and dished out 22 assists.

Parker ignited an early 11-3 lead with four points. The Car-

dinals shot 46.7 percent from the floor and led by five after the first quarter.

In the second quarter, LU turned to the three-point shot and knocked down five from behind the arc. Miner connected on two threes, while Denley and Forman added five points to put LU up six at half-time.

LU outscored the Privateers, 49-25 in the second half. The scoring started in the third quarter when the Cardinals, who hit 11-of-17 from the field, scored 27 points to stretch their lead to 20. The guards of Denley, Taylor and Kamryn Wilson each came up with six points on 7-of-9 shooting combined.

The Cardinals added 22 points in the fourth quarter despite hitting less than 40 percent of their shots. Olenga scored nine points in the fourth quarter while Parker added five points and eight rebounds to secure her double-double. Fellow senior K.J. Walker finished off the victory with a pair of threes.

LU heads out on I-10 for its final two road games beginning



UP photos by Gerrod Fuller

LU's Alexis Parker, above, fights for a rebound during the Cardinal's 84-54 victory over New Orleans, Feb. 21, at the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center. Solenne Olenga, left, shoots a layup during the game.

Feb. 26 with a trip to Houston Christian to take on the Huskies at Sharp Gymnasium.

The contest is scheduled to tip at 6 p.m. and will be streamed on ESPN+.



Cardinals fall short vs. Privateers

Aaron Saenz
UP sports editor

The Lamar University basketball team came up short against the New Orleans Privateers, 77-71, Feb. 21, at the Neches Federal Credit Union Arena at the Montagne Center. The Cardinals allowed New Orleans to go up by as many as 19 in the second half and began to

chip away too late.

The Cardinals were led by seniors Errol White and Andrew Holifield, who scored 14 points each.

The team came out on fire, going up 7-0 after quick scoring and great defense. UNO quickly cut the lead, however. The Cardinals kept it close in a back-and-forth first half and went into the break only down by

three, 32-29.

Unfortunately for the Cardinals, it was a tale of two halves. The team came out completely flat in the second half. They gave up bucket after bucket and struggled to put the ball in the hoop. The momentum was completely on New Orleans' side and a couple of huge dunks only made it worse for the Cards.

As the game started winding down, the Cards started making up the deficit. A couple of easy layups and open threes brought the 19-point deficit to as little as six. Unfortunately, there just wasn't enough time left on the clock. The Privateers knocked down clutch free throws to keep a comfortable lead.

The loss was LU's fifth in a row as they drop to 12-16 on

the season, 7-12 in Southland Conference play. They sit seventh in the conference with three games to play, with the top-eight teams making the SLC tournament.

The Cardinals played Nicholls State, Feb. 23, in Beaumont in a nationally televised game. Result was unavailable at press time. The Cards next play at Incarnate Word, Feb 28.

NEXT DRAFT: STUDENT WORKS SERIES

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DANCE UNLEASHED

APR. 24 - 25

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Mental health app available

Health Center partners with TimelyCare platform

Emily Flores
UP staff writer

Lamar University's Student Health Center is partnering with the TimelyCare app to provide a mental health platform for students.

Students interested in using the app will need to pay a \$41 health center fee and use their Lamar email to sign-up. After payment, students will have access to all functions on the app.

"It has 24-7 access throughout the whole year for mental health care," Jayna Bonnette, assistant director of health education, said. "Our main point is letting the students know that it is available and provided by Lamar."

The app's main function is online counseling and mental health care, but it also has other functions that are available for students.

Talk Now is a crisis counseling option within the app that aids students who are in an immediate crisis.

"Let's say it's after hours at Lamar or it's a holiday, so our counselors aren't available and students really need to talk to someone," Bonnette said. "There's an option to get connected with a provider on the app in minutes."

"Students also get nine free counseling sessions a year through the app, but there's a lot more than just counseling." Health coaching is an extension that caters towards basic wellness goals. Coaches can create meals, physical activities, and both nutrition and therapy plans that are special-



UP photo by Emily Flores

Jayna Bonnette, left, and Sarah Chavez navigate the TimelyCare app in the Student Health Center.

ized for each student's specific needs.

The app also has a function called journeys, a self-care module where students can access programs such as meditation, yoga, and grounding techniques that help with sleep and anxiety. These modules are for students who need a walk through if they're struggling with depression or other mental health issues and want aid outside of counseling, Bonnette said.

Since implementing the app, the Student Health Center has seen an influx of students willing to talk about mental health topics, Sara Chavez, health education program coordinator, said, whether that be for personal affairs or student organizations wanting to

advocate for the app.

"We get a lot of positive feedback from students who will come up and say how much they benefitted from TimelyCare," Chavez said. "It's really nice to see. And having resources for students who are wanting to better their health is our goal at the end of the day."

Daniella Z. Lopez-Rosa, senior business management major, said she found the app through her job as a peer health educator at the health center.

"I wanted to learn more about resources for selfcare and how to create a routine when you have ADHD, and I wanted it to be at my own pace rather than scheduling an appointment," Lopez-Rosa said. "I was someone who would Google everything, and I find

TimelyCare has better resources than just searching on the internet."

Lopez-Rosa said when she felt out of her comfort zone while studying abroad she used the community feature on TimelyCare, which allows people to post anonymously and lets other users reply and comment on her post. Lopez-Rosa said she was also able to find people who shared her experience on the app and to take their advice on how to feel comfortable and less alone while in another country.

Though counseling on the app is online, patient confidentiality works the same as in-person.

"Each of their counselors is licensed across the nation, and so there are standards for fed-

eral and state guidelines that they have to abide by to ensure HIPAA and confidentiality are not breached," Bonnette said. "How our Student Health Center operates with confidentiality, it's much the same for TimelyCare."

Through the partnership, the health center and TimelyCare both conduct research to update the app when needed.

"We're constantly learning about mental health, whether that be with talking with our counselors about what they're noticing across the student body or on a national level," Bonnette said. "We also do a survey every two years to assess student health and wellness, so it gives us a broad picture of what's changing within the current year."

"As far as TimelyCare, they stay on top well by offering webinars for staff to attend so we have a way to communicate openly to address our concerns, or they can let us know things that they're noticing, trend-wise, in the mental health area."

TimelyCare representatives are in place to advocate for each college's needs in their system.

"We have a TimelyCare representative specifically for Lamar," Chavez said. "So, if we ever have any technical, staff training, or educational type questions, we have direct communication with the company."

For more information, call the Student Health Center at 409-880-8466.



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