

SGA elections set for April 7-8



UP photo by Maria Rodriguez

SGA vice president Campbell Fuller works in the organization's office.

Maria Rodriguez
UP news editor

Lamar University's Student Government Association will host online elections, April 7-8. Students can vote through Self Service Banner which will be available on election days.

Students running for an SGA position will campaign until April 6.

SGA vice president Campbell Fuller said he encourages students to vote because it

gives them a say on campus. "Since you have the ability to have an influence on who might be in a position, you should take advantage of that opportunity," he said. "But also voting gets you involved with the process. You learn more about the different candidates, about what they hope to do."

Voting gives students the chance to be involved with services and programs offered on campus, Fuller said, adding that students should

get to know who the candidates are and what they stand for.

"And then you'll hear like, 'Oh, yeah, maybe Lamar does need that,' or 'I really resonate with this mission,' even if you don't know the person," Fuller said.

Fuller said students should get involved with SGA and other campus organizations.

"I think it's good to keep an eye out and see also where

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OUR EXPO deadline set for April 10

Heather Harmon
UP contributor

The submission deadline for the Office of Undergraduate Research's spring EXPO is April 10. It is the 13th edition of the O.U.R. program, which was created to recognize research funding programs and establish future careers.

The undergrad research program is open to students across the country and is open to all majors to network with peers, staff and future employers.

The 2026 EXPO will be held April 30-May 1 on the Lamar University campus.

"It's like the Oscars for us, academically." OUR director Cristian Bahrim said.

Last year the EXPO drew 250 submissions and awarded 25 undergraduate grants.

Bahrim said each day typically starts with a guest speaker. This year's EXPO will start with Greg Morrison from the University of Houston. The following day will feature Laura Domin from the University of Central Florida.

Accepted participants will present on a variety of topics during the event.

"We anticipate at least 100 presenters," Bahrim said.

"Maybe 75% will be from Lamar, and 25% from outside. We expect to have students from a variety of schools in Texas including Rice University, University of Texas at Arlington, University of Texas at Dallas, Texas A&M and UT-Austin."

This year's event will include a section where submissions are created by using AI, Bahrim said. The competition focuses on using existing AI tools and research.

Bahrim said he encourages all students to submit to the EXPO and to visit the event and see presentations from students. "This is going to be a good motivation of why undergrad is worth the effort," he said. "Because, of course, for everyone, when you engage it is more than class instruction."

"You guys, are the most important things that exist around us."

For more information and to submit a proposal, visit lamar.edu/undergraduate-research/conferences/expo.



UP photo by Regina Ruiz

Roxanne Hamm, second right, directs the cast of "Little Women" in the Studio Theatre. March 26. The show will be presented April 9-12.

LUTD turns theater over to students' work

Regina Ruiz
UP staff writer

In a room full of scripts, sticky notes and late-night brainstorming, stories come alive in Lamar's theater. From the timeless charm of "Little Women" to the sharp, emotional edges of "Half Bloomed," students are not just performing — they're writing, directing

and discovering the power of their own voices.

Lamar University's department of theatre & dance will present the "Student Works Series," April 9-12, in the Studio Theatre.

Roxanne Hamm will direct scenes from "Little Women." She said directing is about more than putting a classic story on stage — it's about capturing the

depth of its characters.

"A lot of the time, Amy is often just a brat and doesn't have anything more to her," Hamm said. "And Laurie is just this sad guy, and it's like they wanted to make the best versions of the characters from the book as possible."

"We started with a week of table

See **THEATER** page 10

LU student media staffers win 32 awards at statewide contest

UP staff report

Lamar University's student media picked up 32 awards at the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association convention in Denton, March 19-20, including a record seven awards in on-site competition.

University Press editor Rayna Christy, who served as the TIPA student body secretary for the statewide organization for 2025-26, said the awards were spread among 17 students across many disciplines.

"After being on the administrative side of TIPA during the convention, it was amazing to see just how well the staff and student media did," Christy said. "I was able to sit with our group and celebrate alongside all of our competitors as Lamar kept winning awards."

The seven on-site awards included three first places. Christy placed first in the Copy Editing contest, UP staff



UP photo by Carlos Vilorio

UP staffer Carlos Vilorio placed second in on-site competition for his photo from the Iowa Wolves vs. Texas Legends basketball game, March 19.

writer Regina Ruiz placed first in TV announcing-Spanish, and UP ad representative Elijah Nelson won the Newspaper Advertising contest.

UP photo editor Carlos Vilorio

placed second in the Live Sports Photo category, UP news editor Maria Rodriguez earned third place for Live

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"It's only after you've stepped outside your comfort zone that you begin to change, grow and transform."
— Roy T. Bennett

NOTICE

The University Press can be read online at www.lamaruniversitypress.com. For updates, follow us on Facebook, or on Instagram and X @uplamar.

Lamar University launches DBA program

Press Release

For the first time in 15 years, Lamar University will launch a new doctoral program. The Doctor of Business Administration in Energy Management is a first-of-its-kind program in the state of Texas and the nation.

The DBA in Energy Management is a professional doc-

toral degree that is designed to provide experienced business professionals and executives with advanced education and critical research skills pertaining to the energy sector. The cohort-based program can be completed in as little as two and a half years.

"Lamar University is thrilled to offer the new DBA in Energy Management," Joby John,

dean of the College of Business said. "This interdisciplinary, executive-level program is built for experienced professionals ready to lead in a rapidly evolving energy landscape."

With an interdisciplinary blend of coursework and applied research dissertation, the collaborative components of the program take a dynamic approach to business admin-

istration.

"Designed to meet the complex strategic, technical, and leadership demands of today's industry, the DBA in Energy Management prepares graduates to drive innovation across traditional and renewable energy sectors," John said.

By examining business strategy and energy economics, finance, policy, AI integration,

sustainability and analytics, graduates will be equipped with workforce development opportunities and industry-specific knowledge.

The DBA in Energy Management program is fully accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

To learn more, visit lamar.edu/dba.

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<p>Editor Rayna Christy</p> <p>Managing Editor Kami Greene</p> <p>Sports Editor Aaron Saenz</p> <p>Photo Editor Carlos Voloria</p> <p>News Editor Maria Rodriguez</p> <p>Contributors Caraline Otte Regina Ruiz Dalia Osman Heather Harmon Carina Wyman Evan Wolford</p>	<p>Josiah Boyd Melissa Tristan Emily Flores Arabella Castañeda-Garcia Emily Flores Joseph Hackney Gerrod Fuller Rylee Zapotoschny Victor Almazan Aliyah Abalos Kendall McCardell</p> <p>Marketing Camdyn Simmons</p> <p>Advertising Elijah Nelson</p> <p>Content Manager Adam Nguyen</p>
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Advisors: Andy Coughlan and Stephan Malick
Member of Texas Intercollegiate Press Association
College Media Association

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you can make your impact at Lamar, too," he said.

Fuller said his favorite part of being SGA's vice president has been connecting all the different pockets of organizations and groups.

"(It's) connecting people that are doing so many different things," he said.

"(They may have) a unified goal of having a big collaborative event, or just some goal that they didn't think

was attainable without the help from other students, or funding from Lamar, or just admin approval."

Future SGA candidates should approach the organization with an open mind, Fuller said.

"Come into it with a plan and with discipline," he said. "But once you get there, approach it with an open mind. Have open ears. Be willing to discuss with anybody about

anything.

"Then try and be that connection between the students who see problems day to day — and they want immediate fixes or they just have immediate goals that they want to reach — and connecting that with the more thorough, planned out and executable (action)."

For more information, visit lamar.edu/sga or follow @lamarsga on Instagram.

SCRABBLES by Dalia Osman

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Student Film Showcase

Showcase Date
April 23, 2026

Doors Open
5:30pm

Showing Starts
6:00pm

Location
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Student Government Association



UP photo by Josiah Boyd

South Texas State Fair returns to Beaumont

A large crowd took advantage of sunny skies and cool temperatures as the annual South Texas State Fair opened its doors, March 26.

The event, organized by the Young Men's Business League, runs through April 5.

The fair features food, a carnival midway and a variety of vendors. Weekend admis-

sion includes the YMBL rodeo and CHUTE OUT Bull Ride.

The fair offers special days throughout the run with discounted prices, free entry and ride wristbands. Visit YMBL.org.

The South Texas State Fair is held at Doggett Ford Park, located at 5115 IH-10 in Beaumont.



UP photo by Josiah Boyd



UP photo by Rayna Christy



UP photo by Maria Rodriguez



UP photo by Josiah Boyd



UP photo by Emily Flores

Clockwise from top: Guests line up at the South Texas State Fair, March 26; Fair attendees enjoy riding the Alpine Bobs; Patrons wait in line for the Mighty Mouse, an updated version of the Crazy Mouse, a fair classic; Riders on the Kraken swing high into the air, looking down at the fairgrounds; The Tango lifts and spins riders as patrons in line for the ride watch; Riders spin in the air on hang gliders as patrons look up at the ride.

Layout by
Rayna Christy

Rest in Press: UP to close after 100 years

Regina Ruiz
UP staff writer

After years of producing meticulously edited manuscripts, groundbreaking student work, and a multitude of trophies, the Lamar University's student newspaper, the University Press will be shutting down at the end of the semester. Administrators say this decision is part of a broader initiative to "modernize" the literary experience, which apparently involves fewer printed words and more Instagram posts.

"Honestly, I thought this was a prank at first," Rayna Christy, UP editor in chief, said. "I came into work Monday morning, and the entire newsroom was gone. I thought, 'OK, maybe they're just upgrading it.' But no. Turns out, it's the entire press.

"I guess my degree in journalism is now just a very expensive hobby."

Faculty advisor Andy Coughlan offered words of consolation.

"We considered going digital-only," he said, "but then realized our PDFs mostly get ignored anyway. So, why not just save everyone the trouble?"

"We're toying with the idea of talking cat memes to present the news, and, of course, everyone knows words and letters are old-fashioned, so we are looking to communicate exclusively in emojis. It is a very exciting time."

For students who relied on the UP for publication experience, he suggested, "You could always start a zine in your dorm. That's very... artisanal."

Communication department chair Nicki Michalski added, "We like to think of this as evolution. Books are a little old-fashioned, paper cuts are dangerous, and nobody under 40 knows what a newspaper is.



This is progress."

Students were reportedly heartbroken, though several admitted the hardest part would be losing the smell of fresh ink and newsprint.

"It smelled like ambition... and toner," Christy said.

The UP's last issue will roll off the presses this April, leaving staff time to explore new creative outlets — calligraphy,

smoke signals, or interpretive dance summaries of their unpublished articles.

Editor's note: Satire is the use of humor, irony or exaggeration for commentary.

LU's Hamidi secures \$833K TxDOT award

Press Release

Lamar University's Maryam Hamidi has received an \$833,000 research award from the Texas Department of Transportation to lead the next phase of an artificial intelligence-driven system designed to improve vessel monitoring and freight analysis along the Texas portion of the Gulf Intra-coastal Waterway.

Hamidi, the project's principal investigator, will lead the effort alongside co-principal investigator Jing Zhang. The research team is also supported by department of in-

dustrial engineering student Homayoon Arbabkhan, whose work has helped make the project feasible.

Together, the team will oversee development of a system that integrates live video feeds, trade data and marine Automatic Identification System, or AIS, data using advanced computer vision and machine learning techniques. The project builds on an earlier phase in which the Lamar research team developed a user-interface software platform for TxDOT to quantify and visualize vessel traffic patterns along the waterway using

AIS data.

While AIS broadcasts provide vessel location and identification information, they can contain inaccuracies due to manual data entry. For example, a vessel may report a length of 200 feet, even though the combined length of the vessel and its barge tow exceeds 1,600 feet. Such discrepancies can limit the reliability of traffic assessments and freight analysis.

The new phase seeks to close those gaps by combining real-time video analysis with AIS and trade data to enhance accuracy and deliver more

comprehensive insights for maritime stakeholders, including TxDOT and U.S. Coast Guard vessel traffic service units.

Currently, waterway surveillance relies heavily on personnel manually monitoring multiple camera feeds — a process vulnerable to fatigue and human error. The AI-enabled system under development will automatically detect vessels and barges, classify them by size and type, and track their direction of travel, strengthening operational efficiency and decision-making capabilities.

"We sincerely appreciate the Texas Department of Transportation maritime section for its support and strong collaboration on this project," Hamidi said. "TxDOT's technical expertise, guidance and partnership have been instrumental in advancing the research and ensuring its practical relevance and impact."

The award reflects Lamar University's continued investment in applied engineering research focused on infrastructure innovation, freight mobility and maritime safety along the Gulf Coast.

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TIPA from page 1

Spanish News Writing, and honorable mentions went to UP sports editor for Live Print Sports Writing and Christy for Live Print News Writing.

On-site competitions involve students from schools across the state among the 375 attendees at the convention.

“To place in so many categories is a testament to the students first and foremost, but it also shows that we are doing a good job preparing our staffers for the professional field,” Andy Coughlan, director of student publications, said. “Live contest replicates the professional environment with fast turn-arounds and strict deadlines. It is a great learning experience and builds confidence in their abilities.”

LU student media also earned 25 awards for work published during the 2025 calendar year.

Former UP social media manager Sydney Vo and the UP staff placed first in the Social Media Overall Excellence category.

“Social media is an important part of professional media and it is more than just posting pictures,” Coughlan said. “Media outlets depend on social media to alert people to the quality content the students are producing. It requires strategic planning

and hard work by the entire staff.”

UP web manager Adam Nguyen placed first in the Social Media General Coverage category, UP contributor Dalia Osman placed first in the Cartoon Strip/Panel category and Saenz placed first the Sports Page Design category.

UP managing editor Kami Greene won for General News Video Story for her work with LUTV, and LUTV’s Phil Borjas won for Sportscast Video.

Second place was awarded to the UP staff for Website Overall Excellence, Overall Newspaper Design and Special Edition Design. Other second place awards went to former UP editor Maddie Sims for Critical Review, Nataly Magana and Nancy Ryan for Static Ad Design, Kevin Flanagan for Editorial Cartoon and Vioria for General News Photo.

The UP staff earned third-place for Newspaper Overall Excellence. Third place went to Christy for Headline Writing, and Ruiz for Spanish Opinion Writing and for Spanish News Story. Ruiz and Christy shared awards for Newspaper Feature Page Design and Newspaper Editorial Page Design.

LUTV earned third place for Landin Doucet in the General News Video Story category and Chris Love for In-Depth News Reporting-Video.

Honorable mentions went to the UP staff for Overall Web Design, Vo for General News Photo and Greene for Static Information Graphic. Sims and contributor Meagan Lafley won honorable mention for In-Depth Reporting.

“Student media is open to all majors and departments, not just communication majors,” Christy said. “If you’re interested in writing, broadcasting or just media in general, LU student media would love to have you.”

The previously published contest drew more than 2,000 entries across the categories.

TIPA is the oldest collegiate journalism organization in the country, and currently has 63 member programs representing 51 campuses, both four- and two-year institutions.



ARTS

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UNIVERSITY PRESS
Wednesday, October 8, 2025

STORY PACKAGE BY RAYNA CHRISTY AND REGINA RUIZ

Material legacy

Menil Collection unfurls Rauschenberg fabric show

HOUSTON — “You could describe the art world as a party at my dad’s house,” Christopher Rauschenberg said, recalling his father Robert’s boundless energy and curiosity.

The show runs through March 1 and features the Port Arthur native’s unique work with found cloth.

“I was really interested in setting up this exhibition so it was truly loosely chronological,” Michelle White, Menil senior curator, said at a media preview. “We’re dealing with a really interesting period where he works in series. He often is working on multiple series at a time, and for an exhibition like this, which explores and celebrates different approaches to fabric, I find it really important to not delineate series in this exhibition.”

The first series catching the eye of visitors is the “Pyramid Series,” in which Rauschenberg utilizes washed cheesecloth and cream-colored paper. These were run through a printing press to bind them together to mimic the typical arrangement in a printing studio when after being used to wipe stencils or plates the material is hung up to dry.

After the “Pyramid Series,” visitors move on to the “Venetian” works from 1972-1973. “This is the moment fabric really starts to come to the fore in his work,” White said. “He’s using very specific pieces of found cloth.”

One example is a mosquito net held in place by shoelaces in “Saint Agnese (Venetian)” from 1973.

After the “Venetians,” visitors are confronted by the “Hourglass” series, which incorporates text and images that are printed on gauzy fabric by way of solvent transfers.

“Rauschenberg was really interested in more experimental approaches to the printing studio,” White said. “He takes very lightweight, porous, transparent materials and pushes them through the printing press on a bed of solid cover images from the print newspapers. Sometimes it’s really hard to read, and that’s by design.”

“He was really interested in kind of integrating the image, letting some atmosphere feel

around the images he was working with.”

After the Hourfrosts, we move into the colorful nature of the “Jammers.” The series takes its name from windsurfing sails, known as “jammers.” Rauschenberg took up the spot when he moved from New York City to Captiva Island, Florida in 1974.

Using lightweight materials such as silk, gauze, bamboo poles, and ropes, he constructed large, vibrant works that hang, stretch and float in space rather than rest on traditional canvases.

Entering the room where “Jammers” is located equals visitors in a newfound selection of colors and images.

The final gallery includes “Hicups,” one of Rauschenberg’s most intricate pieces. The work features 97 individual panels of handmade paper, each individually printed, and connected with zippers.

“If you go back to Rauschenberg, his love of sewing and fashion came right off the cutting table,” White said.

The biggest highlight of the collection is “Dmitri Geography.” This refers to the set and costume design he created for Merce Cunningham Dance Company’s “Travelogue,” which premiered in 1977.

“It can give you a sense of how Rauschenberg was deeply involved in modern dance and how that impacted his understanding of fabric, color,” White said. “We need to also think about Rauschenberg as a designer of stage sets and costume design.”

The museum will host “Dancing with Bob,” a performance series organized by the Cunningham Trust and the Trisha Brown Dance Company, which will bring excerpts of Rauschenberg’s stage collaborations to Houston in November.

“There was a sort of running joke, and it was not really a joke; it was true,” Christopher Rauschenberg said. “There was this sort of 20-year lag that Bob would do something, and 20 years later, people would finally kind of understand it and come to appreciate it.”

Robert Rauschenberg died in 2008, and Christopher said he feels proud of his father’s

work and hopes others are able to continue appreciating it.

“He’s gone,” Christopher said. “But what does it mean to say that he’s gone (when) people are still having their minds blown by looking at his work?”

The Menil Collection is located at 1333 Sul Ross St., Houston, TX. Admission is free.



Rayna Christy and Regina Ruiz earned an award for their page design, above, of the Robert Rauschenberg exhibition at the Menil Collection. UP ad rep Elijah Nelson won first place in on-site competition for his ad design, left.

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Red Beak to preview 'Normal' April 16

Press Release

Lamar University's Red Beak Productions will present an early screening of "Normal," an upcoming action movie starring "Better Call Saul" and "Nobody" star Bob Odenkirk, in the Dishman Art Museum Auditorium at 7 p.m., April 16.

The screening is in partnership with Magnolia Pictures, the film's distributor, prior to the film's release on April 17. The screening is free to the Lamar community.

"We are grateful to Magnolia Pictures for allowing us to preview the movie," Evan Wolford, Red Beak vice president, said. "The studio has generously made the film and poster avail-

able to us, which validates our student organization and our desire to share movies — both studio produced and student made — with the community."

"Normal" was shot on 35mm film and premiered at Austin film festival South by Southwest on March 15. The film, penned by Derek Kolstad, the creator of the "John Wick" franchise, also stars Henry Winkler. Odenkirk plays an unassuming sheriff who gets himself in trouble that's anything but normal.

As part of the event, a raffle will be held with the chance to win an authentic poster of the film from Magnolia Pictures.

For more information, visit @red-beakproductions on Instagram.

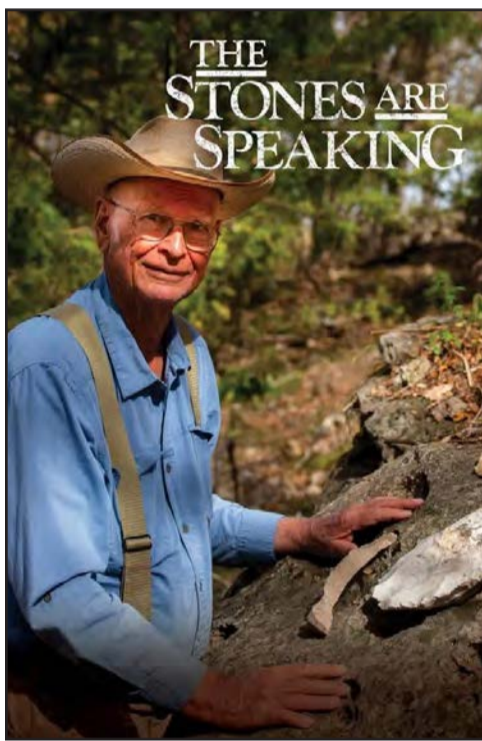


Photo courtesy of Magnolia Pictures

Bob Odenkirk stars in "Normal" which will screen on campus, April 16.

Digging through history

'The Stones are Speaking' shines a light on Texas archeology



REVIEW
Regina Ruiz
UP staff writer

The wind blows harshly over the Midland, Texas hills, where a young Michael Collins once dug through the earth in search of history's whispered secrets.

Michael Collins is a Texas based archaeologist, as well as the inspiration for the documentary "The Stones are Speaking."

Directed by the visionary Olive Talley, this film brings us deep into the heart of the Gault Archeological Site in Bell County, Texas, a place where ancient human history has remained buried for millennia.

What truly stands out in "The Stones are Speaking" is the palpable passion behind the camera. Talley's unwavering dedication to the project

shines through every frame.

The stunning cinematography, which often lingers on the vast, sweeping landscapes of the Gault Site, invites viewers to pause and consider the sheer enormity of the history hidden beneath their feet. For a Texan, it's almost surreal to realize that such an extraordinary story unfolds just hours away from home.

Talley's commitment to bringing this film to life is even more impressive when you realize that she self-funded the project. Despite being a low-budget production, "The Stones are Speaking" never feels limited. The raw authenticity of the film allows its message to resonate deeply, and it's clear that every dollar spent was poured directly into making this story as impactful as possible.

At its core, "The Stones are Speaking" is a meditation on perseverance.

It reminds us that the archaeologists, like all explorers, face obstacles — physical, financial, and emotional — yet their passion keeps them digging.

This theme of persistence is reflected not just in Collins' journey, but in Talley's own struggles behind the scenes to bring the documentary to fruition. Like the stones themselves, both the filmmaker and the archaeologist have unearthed treasures not just of history, but of the human spirit.

As the film draws to a close, Michael Collins gazes out over the Texas horizon, a quiet moment that perfectly encapsulates the pride and reverence he feels for the land that holds the stories of our distant ancestors. It's a feeling that lingers long after the credits roll — a reminder that the stones are still speaking, and we are still listening.

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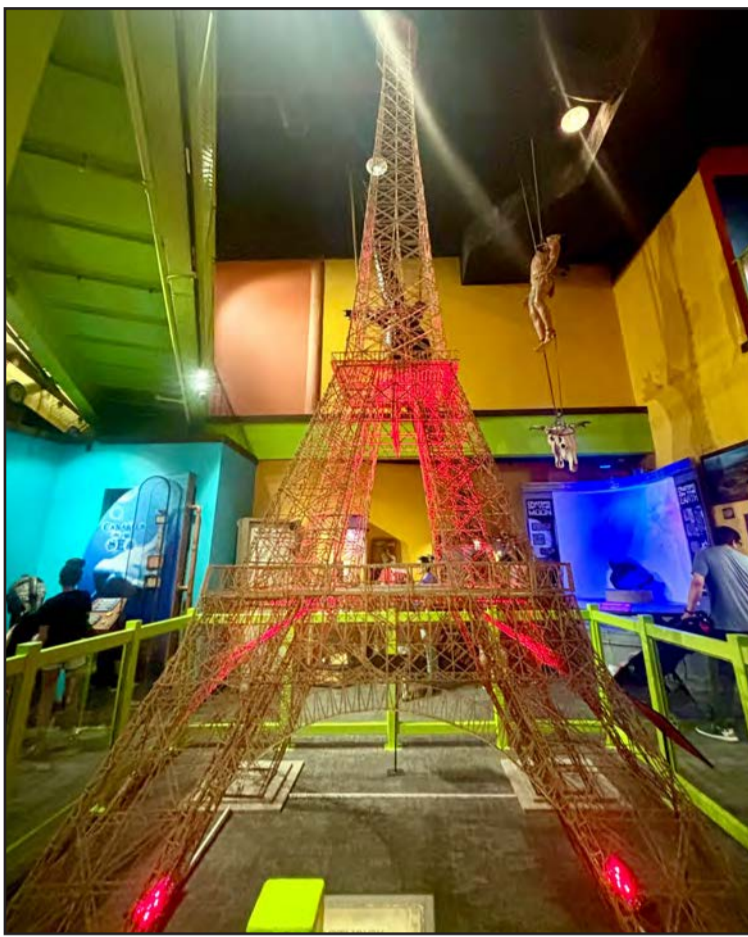
Aliyah Abalos
UP contributor

SAN ANTONIO — The first thing we notice walking into Ripley’s Believe It or Not is how quickly everything around us changes. One moment we’re outside in the middle of San Antonio, and the next we’re surrounded by things that don’t quite feel real.

Located across from the Alamo and just steps from the River Walk, the museum stands out from the usual tourist spots. Instead of long lines and crowded walkways, it offers something different — an experience built on curiosity and the unexpected.

As one moves through the exhibits, it becomes clear that no two displays are alike. Some are detailed and creative, such as a model of the Eiffel Tower by Joe King from Stockton, California built entirely from toothpicks. Standing 24-feet tall, the structure is made from over 110,000 toothpicks and weighs less than five pounds.

Other exhibits are based on real people and records including a life-size display of Robert



UP photo by Aliyah Abalos

A 24-foot tall replica of the Eiffel Tower made from toothpicks is on display at San Antonio’s “Ripley’s Believe It or Not Museum.”

Wadlow, the tallest man ever recorded. He began growing abnormally at two years old, and by the time of his death at age 22, he stood 8 feet, 11 inches tall, with a 9-foot-5-inch arm span, a size 37AA shoe, and weighed

440 pounds. This display puts into perspective just how unusual the human body can be.

Staffer Jesus said beyond the exhibits it is the experience that keeps people coming back.

“We get a mix of people every day, from tourists to locals who have been here before,” he said. “What makes it fun is watching people react, because no two exhibits get the same reaction.”

Cheyenne Smith said her family visits Ripley’s every time they visit San Antonio.

“It’s a nice break from the crowded tourist spots like the

Alamo and the River Walk,” she said. “The kids love it, but honestly, there’s something interesting for everyone.”

Throughout the museum, the exhibits shift between history, science and creativity. A massive mammoth skeleton stretches across an entire room, immediately catching your attention. Nearby, other cases hold smaller objects that raise just as many questions. Some of these come from native tribes, whether it’s a Karuat dance ornament from New Guinea designed to make men resemble a boar, or shrunken heads from the Jivaro Indians of Ecuador, who kept their enemies’ heads as war trophies. From unusual artifacts to odd collections, each display has us wondering what is waiting for us at the next turn.

The museum also includes modern pieces made from unexpected materials. A scrap metal sculpture of pop-culture icon Spider-Man, made from recycled auto parts by artist Anchalee Saengtai of Thailand stands out.

Larger exhibits and interactive displays make the experience feel immersive. Instead of simply walking past everything, one finds oneself stopping, looking closer, and trying to understand how or why something exists in the first place.

A personal favorite is the hand-painted butterflies from Mexico. As someone who has always loved both butterflies and art, this display stands out. Each butterfly is carefully preserved and painted, with designs that reflect Mexico’s culture and history. It was interesting to see how something that represents life and beauty

can still hold that same presence even after death. There’s something about taking something that no longer has life and transforming it into art that feels intentional and respectful. Instead of feeling unsettling, it feels peaceful and symbolic, and memorable.

Ripley’s doesn’t follow a single theme, and that’s what makes it work. It moves between the strange, the historical and the creative without feeling disconnected. Each section adds something new, keeping the experience from feeling predictable.

What makes Ripley’s Believe It or Not worth a visit is not just one exhibit that stands out, but the variety of everything. Ripley’s Believe It or Not lives up to its name — and that you can believe.

For more, visit ripleys.com.



UP photo by Aliyah Abalos

A life-size display of Robert Wadlow, the tallest man ever recorded.



UP photo by Aliyah Abalos

A butterfly display at San Antonio’s “Ripley’s Believe It or Not Museum.”



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PAYING IT FORWARD

LU's Lannie Milon uses mentorship to guide future leaders

Kendall McCardell
UP contributor

For many college students, trying to balance school, internships and career aspirations can be overwhelming. For Lannie Milon, mentorship is one way to help students find their path. Milon said mentorship is more than guidance, it's his responsibility for the next generations.

"Mentorship has always been something that's near and dear to me," he said.

Milon, LU assistant professor of educational leadership, teaches doctoral students preparing for leadership roles in education. His career includes many years of experience within K-12 education.

"I have been a teacher, a middle school principal, a high school principal, and an executive director of schools," he said. "Mentorship has always been part of what I have done throughout my career. Even as a graduate student myself, I was mentoring students."

Milon's commitment to mentorship stems from his experiences growing up.

"I come from a single parent home," he said. "I'm a first-generation high school graduate. My parents didn't even make it past high school."

Learning to navigate his way through education on his own gave Milon a responsibility to mentor and help guide others through their struggles, he said.

"The value I find in mentorship is being able to pay it forward for others," he said.

Whether it is answering



Milon, LU assistant professor of educational leadership, has built his career around mentorship.

Courtesy photo

questions or providing advice, Milon said mentorship begins with being present.

"Sometimes, people just need a set of listening ears," he said. "And an informed set of listening ears can help them a great deal."

Being a college professor wasn't part of Milon's plan, he said. After he obtained his doctorate from Penn State University, he decided to seek leadership positions within the K-12 educational system.

"When I graduated with my doctorate, I was asked to apply for a professorship," he said.

"However, at that time, the (public school) administrative pay scale was more attractive

than the professor pay scale."

But as he gained experience within educational leadership, Milon said he began to understand that being a college professor would enable him to have a wider impact.

"Having taken the route of being a practitioner first, I have gained a wealth of experience that really expands my mentorship possibilities," he said.

Milon is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., a historically Black fraternity that focuses on achievement, leadership and service. The ideals of mentorship and uplift resonate within Milon's work.

Several of Milon's mentees have gone on to successful and

fulfilling careers within various industries, he said. One particular instance that stands out was when one of Milon's former students achieved national recognition.

"The Chicago Tribune contacted me and said they were featuring one of my mentees in their Sunday paper," Milon said. "He mentioned me as his inspiration for why he mentors kids on the South Side of Chicago."

Moments like that helped Milon realize the impact mentorship can have.

"I didn't realize how impressive I was to students until they went out and were professionals," he said. "I have men-

tees that are millionaires. Some are doctors, pharmacists, engineers, finance bankers and first-round NFL draft picks."

Milon said he thinks mentorship isn't so much about creating success for someone as it is helping them realize their potential.

"People that grow into those positions already have it in them," he said. "They're just looking for someone to help them conceptualize their ideas."

The motivation to continue to mentor students goes back to Milon's sense of responsibility he learned as a young man.

"For me, it's integrity," he said. "I didn't have anyone, so I understand the importance of being there."

Mentorship can help students develop important skills outside the classroom, Milon said, and every moment can be a teachable moment.

Milon said if he could give his younger self a piece of advice it would be to trust his experiences and stick to his goals.

"Your experiences are tailor-made for you," he said. "Don't get distracted by measuring your encounters with someone else's."

"A lot of people don't finish the race. If you stay committed and keep going, you'll be fine."

At the end of the day, Milon said he believes mentorship has a very simple yet powerful purpose.

"If someone asked me why mentorship matters in one sentence," he said, "I would say it matters because it's a way to pay it forward."

NEXT DRAFT: STUDENT WORKS SERIES

APR. 9 - 12



DANCE UNLEASHED

APR. 24 - 25



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Baseball blanks UIW in SLC action

Aaron Saenz
UP sports editor

The Lamar Cardinals were hitting on all cylinders against the University of Incarnate Word, March 29 in Southland Conference baseball action.

Right off the bat, Lamar scored four runs in the first inning, including a solo home run by junior Lane Sparks to the right field wall. This was followed by a double to right field by senior Brayden Evans that brought home senior Tab Tracy.

The final run of the first inning came after junior Jake Wagoner singled to second base, bringing in senior Kevin Duran for the score.

The game at LU's Vincent Beck Stadium was a show of dominance for Big Red, winning 9-0 with pitcher Blayne Fritcher picking up the win.

Senior Beau Durbin extended the lead in the second inning with a solo home run of



Lamar's Kevin Duran swings at a pitch during the Cardinals' 9-0 win over UIW, March 29.

UP photo by Gerrod Fuller

his own over the right-center wall.

Hit after hit, runners were constantly finding themselves

on base and many scored the hitters selflessly sacrificed themselves to drive them home. LU put runs on the

scoreboard in each of the first four innings. In the third, Wagoner grounded out to bring Evans in for another run.

In the fourth, senior Hector Rodriguez had a sacrifice bunt, allowing Durbin to score another run. In the sixth, Rodriguez had another sacrifice play, this time flyer, allowing Tab run up the score some more. In the seventh, Wagoner grounded out again to bring senior A.J. Taylor home. The home Cards only went scoreless in two innings.

The visiting Incarnate Word Cardinals struggled all afternoon. They barely got anyone on base, with four hits, and were completely shut down.

The win puts the Cards at 17-11 on the season and 10-5 in Southland Conference play, putting them in a tie for first in the SLC.

The Cards played at TCU on March 31. The result was unavailable at press time.

The Cardinals will host a three-game homestand against nationally-ranked Oregon State. April 2-4 at Vincent Beck Stadium.

School records fall at first outdoor track meet

Press Release

Anthony Oliver and Kyndall Drones each won two events and broke school records as Lamar University showcased its athletic prowess at the Prairie View A&M Relays, March 27, to open the outdoor season.

In total, the Cardinals won 12 events and were in the top three on 35 occasions.

Oliver won the men's hammer throw and became the first Cardinal to reach 195 feet (59.70 meters/195-10), which bested his previous mark by

five. He then took the top spot in the discus with a mark of 46.18m (151-06).

Drones' two wins were in the women's shot put, where she set a new school mark of 14.82m (48-07.50) and the women's discus (43.48m/142-08) in front of Xiomara Rodriguez (41.91m/137-06). In addition, the Pearland native managed to take second in the hammer throw (48.70m/159-09), just ahead of Sophia Saldutto (45.93m/150-08). Kyra Davis placed second place in the shot put with a mark of 13.55m (44-05.50).

Saldutto also took home third in the women's javelin (40.29m/132-2) behind teammates Neelie Schiel (42.37m/139-0) and Eloise Dubosq (40.55m/133-0), who occupied first and second, respectively.

Alex Williams III finished second in the hammer throw (56.09m/184-0) and third in the discus (44.49m/145-11) but was able to win the men's shot put (16.27m/53-04.50) in front of second-place Christian Booker (15.55m/51-00.25).

The women's pole vault victor was Morgan Louvier (3.50m/11-5.75) while Jacon

Semb-Josefson earned second in the men's circuit (4.70m/15-05). Israel Williams (1.98m/6-06.00) came within two inches of winning the men's high jump.

Making his first appearance of the season, Kenson Tate leapt for a second-place mark of 7.06m (23-02.00) in the men's long jump and ran third in the men's 200m (21.41). Ke'Asia Hall placed second in both the women's long jump (5.99m/19-8) and the women's triple jump (12.87m/42-02.75).

LU added five track titles

with Ethan Ellis in the men's 400m-hurdles (52.05), Anna Eischen in the women's 1,500m (4:44.60), London Jessie (1:54.66) and Hannah Roberts (2:16.24) in the men's and women's 800m, respectively, and the women's 4x4 relay team of Aaliyah Booker, Krystan Bright, Erial Fontenot and Kayla Smith (3:48.13).

The Cardinals will next send a split squad to Austin for the Texas Relays and to Nacogdoches for Stephen F. Austin's Carl Kite Invitational. Both meets will start April 1 and continue through April 4.

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LUNCH AND LEARN, APRIL 7
12:45 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
109 Social and Behavioral Sciences Building

12:45 p.m.: Welcome by President of Beta Xi Chapter
Dr. Vidisha Barua Worley

12:46 p.m.: Presentation by Dean Rebecca Boone on
Real Lives in the Eighteenth Century

12:55 p.m.: Presentation by Dr. Xuejun Fan on
Hybrid Bonding, Advanced Substrates, Failure
Mechanisms, and Thermal Management for
Chiplets and Heterogeneous Integration

1:03 p.m.: Presentation by Dr. Michelle Fennick on
The Time Alignment Method: Reclaim Your Time,
Redefine Your Priorities, and Realign Your Life

1:10 p.m.: Presentation by Dr. Millicent Musyoka on
Advocating and Empowering Diverse Families of
Students with Disabilities Through Meaningful
and Active Family Engagement

1:18 p.m.: Presentation by Dr. Sanaz Alasti on
Judicial Corporal Punishment as an Alternative to
Incarceration in the United States

1:26 p.m.: Presentation by Dr. Vidisha Barua Worley
on Legal Implications of Taser Use and Prone
Position on Excited Delirium Subjects

1:33 p.m.: Presentation by Dr. Debbie Troxclair on
Twice-Exceptional Education

1:40-1:45 p.m.: Q&A and Closing Remarks.

Hosted by the LU Beta Xi Chapter
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Finding their voice, one draft at a time

Regina Ruiz
UP staff writer

What begins as a joke, a late-night idea, or a scribbled scene in the back of a notebook doesn't usually end under stage lights — but for three student writers, the words on the page have become scenes on a stage.

Cameron Durso and Samantha Hatcher have adapted scenes from "Little Women," and Bailey Jenkins has scripted an original work, "Half Bloomed," for LU's Student Works Series, to be presented April 9-12.

For Durso and Hatcher, learning to trust their storytelling has been just as important as learning to craft it — a journey that began with frustration as they set out to adapt "Little Women."

"We were kind of unimpressed with other adaptations," Hatcher said. "So, we joked about writing our own — and then we did."

What followed was a deeply collaborative writing process shaped by constant revision and shared ideas, they said. The pair set out to restore complexity to characters they felt had been over-

simplified, shifting the focus from a single protagonist to the March family as a whole.

"We were always bouncing ideas off each other," Hatcher said. "It was very involved."

Durso said one of the biggest lessons is being flexible.

"Nothing is really set in stone," he said. "You have to be open to change."

That adaptability reflects the nature of student writing, where experimentation is encouraged and supported, Durso said. The environment is one with a safety net, allowing writers to take risks without fear of failure, Hatcher said.

The experience also pushed Hatcher to grow as a leader, she said.

"This is something we built from the ground up," she said. "We had to advocate for it."

Durso said writing expanded his view of theater beyond acting, introducing him to the creative possibilities behind the scenes.

"It's a completely different experience creating something before it gets to the stage," he said.

Both writers said the moment when



The cast of "Little Women" rehearse in the Studio Theatre.

their script came to life in rehearsal was the most rewarding part of the process.

"Watching people bring those characters to life — that's when it really feels real," Durso said.

Jenkins took a more personal route with "Half Bloomed," an original play developed from a class assignment.

"I realized I had a lot of personal investment in it," he said.

The writing process quickly became introspective, Jenkins said, requiring vulnerability and long hours of drafting and revising.

"It feels like you're putting everything about yourself out there," he said.

Workshopping the script added another challenge: letting go of control. Hearing actors interpret the work sometimes led to unexpected — and even better — outcomes, Jenkins said.

"That's the coolest part," Jenkins said. "Seeing how people take your words and make them their own."

The experience also reshaped their understanding of leadership, emphasizing trust and collaboration.

"You have to let people do their thing," Jenkins said.

The three writers said the Student Works Series has transformed writing from a private exercise into a shared process. Whether adapting a classic or creating something original, each writer described growth not just in skill, but in confidence.

"It has confirmed that this is what I want to be doing," Hatcher said.

From first drafts to final performances, the writers aren't just putting on a show — they're stepping into their roles as storytellers, one risk, one revision and one breakthrough at a time.

THEATER from page 1

work and dissecting the script and understanding motivations and goals for characters and what's in their way from getting that."

As blocking began, her focus shifted to relationships and emotional nuance, Hamm said.

"I want the actors to feel like they have the freedom to make this character their own and bring it to life the best way they can do it," she said.

Audiences can expect to see some of the novel's most memorable moments come to life on stage, including Christmas Day, Beth's illness, and the Laurie confession scene.

"I'm excited for them to see the relationship that we build with the March sisters in Act 1 and how that relationship impacts everybody when Beth gets sick," Hamm said.

Hamm said directing her peers can be challenging but is ultimately rewarding.

"There can be difficulties in balancing the friendship and the director side of the process, and making it clear that while we're in rehearsals, I am your director," she said.

Meanwhile, Gracie Parsley will steer audiences through the emotionally charged world of "Half Bloomed," a contemporary story about siblings

navigating a toxic household.

"There's a lot of lying, manipulation, different forms of abuse in the house and navigating how they leave without feeling guilty about leaving either each other or their younger sibling or their parents," Parsley said.

Parsley distilled the heart of the play into three words: "Companionship, hope and resilience."

Parsley's directing approach is collaborative, giving cast and crew space to shape the story.

"I've been kind of keeping it like an open room discussion during all of our rehearsals,"

she said.

The process allows actors to explore their characters fully, Parsley said, and allows the actor to develop the role.

"(It's) giving them, not permission, but allowing them to follow, (to) guide them on their journey of where they want to take the character and where they want to take the show," she said. "Being able to have that input and direction is really awesome."

For both directors, the Student Works Series is an exercise in leadership and creativity. Hamm said the directors have been given independence which has been

invigorating.

"There's no faculty telling us what to do," she said. "It's all us, and I hope that (audiences) find a new appreciation for these characters."

Parsley said the experience has taught her to trust herself and the collaborative process.

"I hope audiences take away that you're never stuck," she said. "Life is always moving, and it's up to you to decide where you go and who you go with."

Showtimes are 7:30 p.m., April 9, 10, 11, and 2 p.m. April 12.

For more tickets, visit lutd.ludus.com.



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