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The Prospector, February 21, 2013

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Twenty-five years ago, UTEP President Diana Natalicio wasn’t sure that she wanted to take on the presidency of a struggling university, but she took on the job hoping to change the mainly ceremonial role of the president. Now, with an institution of nearly 100 years headed towards tier one status under her care, she said those changes have certainly been made.

“I think what was going through my head at the time was, ‘Wow I can’t believe I’m really going to do this,’ she said, ‘I wasn’t sure that it was the kind of job...that I would enjoy because I like meaty things, things that have to do with research and I saw it as a bit ceremonial.’”

Feb. 11 marked the 25th anniversary of Natalicio’s inauguration as UTEP president in 1988. Before that, she served as vice president for academic affairs, dean of liberal arts and chair of the languages department. She first came to the university as a linguistics professor in 1971.

Natalicio, 73, was born and raised in St. Louis, Mo., where she received a degree in Spanish and graduated cumma cum laude at St. Louis University. She then went on to receive her master’s in Portuguese and a doctorate in linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin.

Under her leadership as the first female president of UTEP, the university’s enrollment has grown from 14,971 to more than 22,700 students, who, she said, reflect the demographics of the region. The university’s research expenditures have also grown from about $5 million in 1988 to nearly $80 million in 2012.

“That’s what our research and doctoral program activity has done, it’s changed the climate entirely on the campus. Undergraduate students have much higher aspirations now to go on to graduate schools, to do a lot of other things, because we’re a different kind of UTEP, “ she said. “We’re not just a continuation of K-12, or sort of a regional comprehensive university, we’re a research university that offers a broad range of highly enriched experiences.”

Part of the university’s plan towards a tier-one status includes increasing annual research expenditures to $100 million and granting 100 doctoral degrees per year. Last year 75 doctoral degrees were granted and research expenditure was at $79 million.

“On both fronts we’ve made huge strides,” she said. “We’re getting closer and closer...we’re $20 million away and we’re growing at $3, $4, $5 million a year so it could be four or five years.”

Natalicio assures that the preparations towards tier one won’t sacrifice accessibility for quality and prestige.

“...you can’t just dream about it, you’ve got to do it...”

– Diana Natalicio, UTEP President
PARKING, PRICES AND ALTERNATIVES

BY KRISTOPHER RIVERA

From a health aspect, there’s definitely a benefit to averging a total of eight miles of walking a week. Also, in big cities with metro systems, like subways, it’s normal to walk a good distance to get to work or home. It’s a natural thing.

Another thing to consider, along with parking issues, is the amount of time it takes to commute to school. An accident on the freeway can cause a big delay in the usual amount of time it takes for a student to get to school. Along with the time it takes to park and walk to class can lead to a late arrival for both students and teachers. I’ve had professors arrive late to class because they couldn’t find any parking space for the lot they paid for.

Then I begin to think if there should be more leniency when it comes to professors who keep a really close eye on attendance. It would be very disappointing for a student to be dropped off their final grade dropped a full letter based on circumstances that are out of their control. Traffic has always been an issue in El Paso. Just now, the city has worked to minimize traffic by creating the new Spaghetti Bowl on the East Side. Yet, there’s still a slight build up of traffic for students coming from the East Side. Everyone is heading to the West Side of town in the morning and vice versa in the evening.

Also, for international students coming from Ciudad Juárez, the wait time at the bridges can take up to three hours. Because of all these situations there should immediately be some initiative or priority to give students some cushion from all these issues. I’d definitely be excited to see a shuttle service for students who park off campus, not just close to the remote parking lot, but the area around the southeast and east portion of campus for students who park in the public parking spaces around the residential area.

Also, for students, especially female students, a walk from campus late at night can be dangerous. Look at the case of the student who was sexually assaulted near Taco Bell. She was walking to her vehicle parked off campus.

Security should expand to areas off campus. Even if it’s not mandatory being that it’s off school grounds. Though, it should still be something taken into consideration rather than ignored. It’s students who school at UTEP and invest their time and money in the school. There’s money being spent in other areas of campus that we can live without. I’d rather have a comfortable experience in school taking advantage of everyday services offered rather than a campus transformation, although I am looking forward to it now that it’s being worked on. If having improved parking and services will help me get to class on time or sooner than ever, then I’m all for it. It’s going to show on my final grade. I won’t be credit- ing any of my success to campus transformation.

Laff-a-day

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TEACH Grant offers alternative to pay college

BY SABRINA NUÑEZ
The Prospector

For students looking to become full-time teachers, financial aid in the form of the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant may be available to those who are looking to teach in a high-need field in a high-need school. The TEACH Grant provides opportunities for students to get some financial assistance with their studies, which is always a good thing,” said Judith Munter, associate dean of the College of Education.

The TEACH Grant was set up by the federal government and awards students with $4,000 a year to put towards their education. “Students have to be in a program of study that will lead to becoming a teacher in a high-field need and must work in a high-need school. What that means is, anything having to do with work in a high-need field. UTEP had 333 students on the TEACH Grant program during the 2011-2012 aid year with an average award of $3,000,” said Craig Westman, associate vice provost for Enrollment Management.

“Undergraduate students can get up to $16,000 total and then graduate students can get up to $8,000 total,” said Edens.

Students who pursue a career in education can enroll in the TEACH grant program during the 2011-2012 aid year with an average award of $3,000. If the student does not complete four years of service within the eight years at a designated school, the TEACH Grant turns into an unsubsidized loan.

“Let's say you're in your eighth year and you've done three years of teaching, but you've decided to go work for a company that is outside of the teaching profession, you have to pay back the loan, with the interest, and it goes all the way back to the first year (you received it),” Westman said.

“What they’re saying is, you’ve got to commit to those four years.”

Throughout the years of service, students must provide the Department of Education with documentation, proving they are working towards completing their service in a timely manner. If a student leaves the service, he or she must remain in contact with the Department of Education.

“Here’s entrance counseling (students) go through that tells them to make sure they understand what they’re committing to. There’s exit counseling as well letting them know here’s what you need to do in order to have the grant money basically waived so it doesn’t become a loan,” Westman said.

“Her leadership has had a huge impact on this campus,” he said. “We’re becoming a campus where students are engaged in research labs, they work on campus, they have leadership opportunities, they participate in events and that’s something that I’m really excited about, where we balance the academic life of the campus and the social and student life of the campus.”

Natalicio concludes that the university’s future lies in believing that more can be done to improve, along with working on achieving that vision. She said that campus transformation and UTEP’s growing research opportunities are all part of that vision.

“I think we begin to put meat on the bones of that vision, you begin to see little pieces and parts of it,” she said. “I think, yes, you’ve got to take (it) on a day-to-day basis, you can’t just dream about it, you’ve got to do it, and I think we’re pretty good at both—dreaming about it, creating a vision and then making it happen.”

“Now, colleges are made.”

With 100% of the Class of 2012 graduates reporting, 98% are employed. Of those 90% employed, 63% are in the admission required jobs, 6% are in a business where a B.S. is preferred, and 9% are in other professional positions.

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Godwin Lewis PC

For College and Higher Education

By SABRINA NUñEz

The Prospector

February 21, 2013

THE PROSPECTOR

Students who pursue a career in education can enroll in the TEACH Grant program, which pays for their college education in exchange for four years of teaching a high-need field.

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Transportation

Outer campus parking grows as campus closes for construction

By Marilyn Aleman

The Prospector

Whether struggling to find a parking spot or trying to avoid city parking violation tickets, students still manage to make it on time to class, even while parking in the neighborhoods near campus.

UTEP currently has over 9,600 parking spaces and 54 parking lots, including the three parking garages, Sun Bowl, Schuster and Glory Road. Costs can range from $100 to $437 and generally, the closer students and faculty are to campus the more expensive the costs are.

However, with more than 26,000 students attending campus, not everyone can make amends to buy a parking permit, often resorting to parking in the nearby neighborhoods such as Kern Place and Sunset Heights.

Arthur Morales, junior English and American literature major, has been parking off campus for several semesters.

“I know finding parking sometimes is like finding gold, but the school needs to offer more options to make it easier to use other forms of transportation like the school bus system,” Morales said. “Parking in the garage might be a two minute walk whereas parking on El Paso (Street) is a 15 minute walk when you’re rushing to class.”

Morales said saving money is the primary reason he parks off campus.

“The best part about not parking on campus, or taking the bus, or riding your bike is not having to pay such a ridiculous amount for a parking pass,” he said.

Vanessa Mendosa, sophomore mathematics major, said she does not mind parking off campus since she enjoys the walk or the ride on her bike.

“You just have to remember that the farther you get there the better, but then a lot of other people realize that too,” Mendosa said. “You also have to be careful with the signs; it looks like you’re going to park somewhere until 20 feet down there’s a sign (that says ‘no parking’).”

With a constant amount of students parking in the neighborhoods, some of the residents in the area could be burdened.

Historic district homes, such as Kern Place and Sunset Heights are built differently as opposed to homes in the Upper West Side and East side of El Paso. There is a lack of driveways and alley ways for residents to park their own cars as well as small narrow roads.

Victor Pacheco, assistant vice president of Business Affairs, said UTEP works with residents in the area with a city residential parking permitting program.

“When the program tries to restrict residential parking to residents. (But) not the entire neighborhood is zoned that way so that’s where students park.”

If students violate any signs or restrictions within the neighborhoods, they are ticketed by the city police. Depending on the violation, most tickets start at $55.

Even with the restrictions, students have always managed ways to park off campus, but with construction on the way and parking spaces presumably coming at a loss, there is a misconception that there are less spaces.

It is the complete opposite, officials said. Even with construction happening and with the upcoming inner campus-pacificuscentennial transformation, there is a net gain of 1,896 spaces due to the parking garages.

Mark Stresow, director of Parking and Transportation Services, said that with the eventual building of a new parking garage, UTEP will offer more parking spaces to the community.

“In the immediate future there is a garage plan for the east end of campus and this is within the next 24 to 36 months,” he said. “As for parking spaces there has been a net gain overall but with campus transformation we project to probably lose about 319 spaces so that will give us a net of 1,577.”

The intention of the upcoming parking garage is to help both faculty and students have more leeway to get to their classrooms and to benefit residents of the El Paso community nearby, Stresow said.

According to Pacheco, there will be other ways to get rid of off campus by implementing a bus route from the East Side.

“We’re currently working with Sun Metro to increase the number of bus routes they have coming to campus,” Pacheco said. “We’re currently working on one that will be coming in from the far East Side near Tinseltown so we’re doing as much as we can to try to help the neighborhoods relieve the tension in parking.”

According to Stresow, Sun Metro has seen an increase of students taking the Route 70 bus (the direct route to UTEP from the East Side Terminal). It started as a trial but with the increasing numbers it then became a permanent route.

Students find off campus parking at the closed Chevron gas station and El Paso Street.

UTEP campus parking at the closed Chevron gas station and El Paso Street.

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Spanish dance lures students for classes

Rita Triana demonstrates Flamenco, a Spanish dance to students taking her class at UTEP.

BY OSCAR GANZA

Rita Triana, instructor of Spanish dance, brings the art of Flamenco, and its cultural background to UTEP students and faculty with a passionate and authentic flavor.

The course teaches the origins, the traditions and the styles concerning dances in Spain and Latin America, as well as theories and the cultural background behind them. The class is offered as part of the Chicano Studies and the Kinesiology programs.

“I love to teach, for me, it’s a privilege to dance and I really feel that,” Triana said. “What we call Flamenco were really the people who had to run and hide, they were oppressed during the Inquisition. And these people were lamenting what they had lost in Spain, and then gradually it became part of the culture.”

This semester Triana is teaching her students the Tango of Andalucia and said that the historical context of all these dances are part of what allows individuals to connect with their own identity.

“I’m happy to teach the last day of the class, when they say ‘oh watch this’ and they’ll show me something and that’s my reward,” Triana said. “These are all the roots that really sustain us and make us individuals and make us proud of our identity.”

Dennis Bixler-Marquez, director of Chicano Studies, said that the class can appeal to anyone because of its contributions to the understanding of culture and traditions.

“There is that sort of heritage that came over here, from the cultural perspective, for example in her course she may bring someone from the music department and others who look at how Flamenco dancing in terms of certain instruments, in terms of how certain musical genres come to be,” Bixler-Marquez said. “It’s not strictly about performance; there is a theory and history attached to the course where people learn about the origins and so on.”

Bixler-Marquez said that people come from a variety of backgrounds to enjoy the class.

“You can really put yourself into the dance when you realize that you’re dancing history, you’re dancing steps from the past.”

- Rita Triana, Spanish dance instructor

Buddy’s offer knock-knocks, imported and craft beers

STEVEN MANSFIELD

The Prospector

Buddy’s Beer Barn, located at 1015 Montanas on the East Side, is a hidden gem in El Paso that is slowly uncovering itself as more than just a beer stop. Aside from having more than 300 beers in the barn, Buddy’s offers a room full of whiskey and snacks.

Whether driving through or walking in to purchase drinks, it is also hard to miss the racks of thrift clothing and knock-knocks for sale.

Doug and Pat Barger have converted this old barn into what it is today.

“We opened 11 years ago on May 23,” said Pat Barger, co-owner of Buddy’s Beer Barn. “We evolved to the Whiskey Keg two years later and the Corndog Shack about three years later. Everybody goes there, here and there. It’s kind of like a one-stop shop.”

Serving as both a drive-thru and a walk-in store, Buddy’s has an overwhelming amount of beer on their shelves, including foreign beers and a wide selection of liquor, wine and beers. Most of these beers cannot be found at local convenience stores.

“We have over 300 different beers from China and all over the world. I cannot even name the craft beers from the United States anymore,” Pat Barger said. “There are over 100 different kегs. We always have a couple on special so you just ask for the beer and I see if it comes in a keg. Sometimes they’re in three different sizes and we even have personal kегs.”

Buddy’s offers specials to alleviate spending on different kinds of beers.

“We always have specials and try to always have a $1 beer. We try to accommodate that pocket that only has $1 and, of course, on to $20 bottle. It just depends on what you are looking for,” Doug Barger said.

Barker said. “People will come and look and if they are not sure what to drink, their staff. Victor tells customers anything they want to know about beer and if they are not sure what to drink, he can lead them in the right direction.”

“I have a kid that works here on weekends and he can tell you exactly where the beer came from, the sources, what’s in it and the season. We have an extremely good expert,” Doug Barger said. “People will come and wait just for him and he knows exactly what he is talking about.”

Students agree that Buddy’s is a nice alternative to Wal-Mart and convenience stores.

“It’s mainly a focus on a bigger selection and people are always nice there too,” said Dorian Payan, junior sociology major. “I think it has developed this sort of cultural cache imbedded into it too because among groups, Buddy’s has a cult following. You make more of a conversation when you say you got your beer at Buddy’s in contrast to Wal-Mart.”

Buddy’s isolated location, however, makes it difficult for people to visit unless they are on that part of town or plan to head that way. Many students also seem oblivious to the fact that it even exists.

“Buddy’s has a cult following. You make more of a conversation when you say you got your beer at Buddy’s in contrast to Wal-Mart.”

Buddy’s also has a beer specialist on their staff. Victor tells customers anything they want to know about beer and if they are not sure what to drink, he can lead them in the right direction.

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Thomas Demoss, junior graphic design major, had never heard about Buddy’s but said, “I love beer and that place sounds really cool. I will definitely have to check it out.”

Doug Barger may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

VERONICA ENRIQUEZ / The Prospector

When the bowling people came for six months and turned the Coliseum into a bowling alley, they came over to see everything,” Barker said.

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Santa Teresa Airport

all about the retro. "

for me it's the game and you have to finish the

you a hard time, you can't pause in

the games that there were back then, " Garcia said. " And

still maintain it and continue, besides

in their childhood, " Garcia said. " And

this style of games.

revisit their old memories of playing

and tournaments.

Bernie Garcia, owner of the store, has not only a passion for retro video
games but also hopes that customers
revisit their old memories of playing
this style of game.

"It's something that I grew up with and
that's why I decided to bring up a store that still holds the values of memories
of what one went through in
their childhood," Garcia said. " And
still maintain it and continue, besides
having classic games but collectible items as well that were designed from
the games back in the day."

Garcia said that anybody can enjoy
retro gaming. One doesn't need to be
from a particular generation to enjoy it,
even younger players can enjoy it.

"I think they'll see the difference of the challenges of the games that there were back then," Garcia said. "They give you a hard time, you can't pause in
the game and you have to finish the
game in order to beat it. For me it's
still wonders, it's a nice image and it's
all about the retro."

Garcia, the most gratifying as-
pect about bringing retro video gam-
ing to the community is the feedback
he receives from customers.

"I hear their emotions, how they
grew up with it and you know, saying
thank God there is a store selling the
old school stuff and I feel very appreci-
ated that I'm helping others bring back
their memories cause they're hard as it
to come around," Garcia said.

One of the customers from One
More Level said that the store allows
him to experience and revisit games
that he grew up with.

"Besides the actual games, the se-
lection of merchandise is quite large and
it offers things that most other retail
game stores won't have," said Luis Malui, junior creative writing major. "Aside from the sales, I love
the fact that you host tournaments
every once in a while, all of which
turn out to be a great experience
where a lot of people can come out
and enjoy themselves."

Malui said that the appeal of retro
gaming comes from a place of nostal-
gia and the originality played into the
creation of the game.

"It's a combination of a few things,
nostalgia for those that want to relive
the fun moments of their childhood," Malui said. "It's a time period where
quality and originality had priority
when creating a game."

Cesar Hernandez, junior education
major, said that he likes how original
retro games are and how they were
the first of their kind and served as a
basis to later allow video games to be
taken to a whole new level.

"They appeal to me because it's
what I grew up with. I remember playing
these games as a kid and it's interesting to see how far they
come," Hernandez said. "I think
they can be enjoyed by anyone but
only a small few."

Hernandez said that these games have
always been there and it's almost like
the latest trend but now there
is an element of nostalgia that adds
something more to the players.

"I think retro video games are
more enjoyed and appreciated by the
people who originally played them," Hernandez said.

Garcia said that he hopes that custom-
ners have unique and special reactions
when entering the store.

"Their reactions, their first impres-
sions that they get when they come in
are oh my god, old school, memo-
ries," Garcia said. "Their first reaction
is what I like when they step into the
store because they see the different
things, not just one thing, but every-
thing that we have in the store just
brings their attention to themselves."

Garcia hopes that in the future they
can open a store on the West Side that
would include animation merchan-
dise as well.

"Trying to hold everything as old
school because I mean old school never
dies, that's what started it all," Garcia said.

Oscar Garza may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

For more information, visit los-pai-
sanos-chamizal.com.

"Our mission is to celebrate the
cross-cultural nature of the border-
land community through visual and
performing arts," she said. "(Next week) Eden Enterprises will be per-
foming scenes at schools from sev-
eral of the plays that are going to be
performed the following week."

A teacher workshop is also sched-
uled at 9 a.m. Feb. 23 in Los Paisanos
Gallery at the Chamizal National
Memorial, where teachers will be
presented with lesson plans that relate to
the Spanish Golden Age of literature.

Desing said the Spanish-language
festival plays an important role in con-
necting the local Hispanic audience
to their cultural heritage. He said that
much like an English-speaking audi-
ence feels connected to Shakespeare,
so should a Spanish-speaking audi-
eonce connect with Spanish theatre.

"In the same way, Lope de Vega,
Miguel de Cervantes, Calderon de la
Barca, Tirso de Molina are an impor-
tant part of the history of the Span-
ish language and literature in Spanish
and so that's an important aspect—
connecting people to part of their
heritage," Desing said.

Jessica Castañeda, freshman pre-
business major is looking forward to
the festival.

"I'll probably be attending one of
the Lope plays, either here or in
Juarez, because I feel it's necessary to
support our drama scene," Casta
da said. "Especially this festival that
has come to represent our community in
such an important way."

Tickets can be purchased for $5 at
the door or from members of Los Pais-
anos del Chamizal. Four of the plays
will also be performed free of charge at the Auditorio Reminto Juarez in Ciudad Juarez.

For more information, visit los-pai-
sanos-chamizal.com.

Spanish theater festival to educate locals

BY ANDRES RODRIGUEZ
The Prospector

The 11th annual Figal de Oro Drama
Festival is set to begin March 10-11 with a little more than the usual per-
formances at the Chamizal National
Memorial Theater.

This year, festival planners were
granted permission to screen the
Spanish film, "Lope," which had
not been screened in the United States
before. The festival is also implement-
ing an outreach program and teacher
workshop to help educators prepare
curricula in connection to the festival.

Garcia said that planning began immediately af-
after the festival ended last year with
the help of Los Paisanos del Cham-
izal. They open the call for proposals
early and received about 25 to 20 pro-
posals to select from. The festival will
be centered around "El ca-
bulleto de Olmedo," one of two Lope de
Vega plays to be performed. They
are actually choosing the ac-
tion in the period of the war of the
Cristeros in Mexico. So the custum-
ers can see old and new Mexico and
the music is from that period too," Desing said.

Producciones Shake & Falstaff from
Puebla, Mexico is the production company
behind opening night's perf-
importing the Cambalache Theater
from Murcia, Spain will perform Lope de
Vega's "La Vengadora de las Mujeres"
the following night. March 8, Nau-
Tamores from Segovia, Spain, will
perform the compilation work "Mis-
teros del Cristo de los Gascones."

"That's a completely different kind
of play," Desing said. "It's not by any
one playwright, it's a reconstruction of
what we think these liturgical dramas
were, based on a lot of research that
went into the creation of the play."

Other performances include Miguel de
Cervantes "El Colocado de los Per-
ros" and "De burletones y burletas" by
the Moreto Teatro Clásico, a produc-
tion company from Burgos, Spain.

"Our mission is to celebrate the
cross-cultural nature of the border-
land community through visual and
performing arts," she said. "(Next week) Eden Enterprises will be per-
foming scenes at schools from sev-
eral of the plays that are going to be
performed the following week."

A teacher workshop is also sched-
uled at 9 a.m. Feb. 23 in Los Paisanos
Gallery at the Chamizal National
Memorial, where teachers will be
presented with lesson plans that relate to
the Spanish Golden Age of literature.

Desing said the Spanish-language
festival plays an important role in con-
necting the local Hispanic audience
to their cultural heritage. He said that
much like an English-speaking audi-
ence feels connected to Shakespeare,
so should a Spanish-speaking audi-
eonce connect with Spanish theatre.

"In the same way, Lope de Vega,
Miguel de Cervantes, Calderon de la
Barca, Tirso de Molina are an impor-
tant part of the history of the Span-
ish language and literature in Spanish
and so that's an important aspect—
connecting people to part of their
heritage," Desing said.

Jessica Castañeda, freshman pre-
business major is looking forward to
the festival.

"I'll probably be attending one of
the Lope plays, either here or in
Juarez, because I feel it's necessary to
support our drama scene," Casta
da said. "Especially this festival that
has come to represent our community in
such an important way."

Tickets can be purchased for $5 at
the door or from members of Los Pais-
anos del Chamizal. Four of the plays
will also be performed free of charge at
the Auditorio Reminto Juarez in Ciudad Juarez.

For more information, visit los-pai-
sanos-chamizal.com.
Miners open first home games with pair of double-headers

**By Paul Reynoso**

The Prospector

The UTEP softball team is gearing up for its first home stand of the season by hosting the UTEP Invitational this weekend. The tournament will feature double-headers with rivals New Mexico State and South Dakota. After competing in back-to-back softball tournaments to open the season, the Miners are eager to open the home slate at the Helen of Troy Field. For the athletes, playing at home again is rewarding.

"We learned a lot from our first two weekends," said junior pitcher/in-fielder Colleen Hohman. "It's our first home stand. So, especially for all the new girls, it's really exciting to finally get to play on this field we've been practicing on."

The Miners are coming off a trip that saw them take three-out-of-five games last weekend in the Jimmy Johns Classic in Hammond, La. Junior transfer Alana Leasau continued her early season success as a Miner by hitting two home runs and driving in eight runs during the tournament.

One of the early bright spots in the season for the Miners has been Leasau, who leads the team in slugging percentage (.526) and runs batted in (14). Head coach Kathleen Rodri-guez, attributed Leasau's success on the diamond to her hard work.

"First and foremost, Alana is a worker. For any coach, that's what they want," Rodriguez said. "The fact that she came from a high-tier junior college–they took third in the nation–she knows what it's like to win."

The Miners are looking to build on that success as a Miner by hitting two home runs and driving in eight runs during the tournament.

"We have power hitters, but maybe not as much that hit home runs," Leasau said. "We have to manufacture runs and I think we need to make adjustments on our offense for this weekend."

Waits also said that the rivalry with New Mexico State is what is going to make this weekend's games intriguing.

"I think after the first meeting, it just wasn't us. It's not who we are," Waits said. "The great part of it is they think that's who we are. We're going to come out on this weekend ready, guns blazing, going to kick some butt, so we're really excited about it."

The Miners will have two double-headers this weekend, Feb. 21-24. The team will play against New Mexico State and South Dakota.

"New Mexico State is good. They are defensively sound, they are coached extremely well and they can swing the bat," Rodriguez said. "As a staff, I think we have to come in and make sure that our girls are prepared for that and make sure we're taking advantage of every single pitch that's thrown at us."

"It helps us find out what we need to work on for the conference, it reveals the strengths of the team."

Sophomore distance runner Elka- na Rotich, who registered the 8th best mark in the country and the best for Conference USA, reaching 15.60 meters. Jack- son finished in first place in the triple and long jump at the Texas A&M and is one of the favorites in conference.

Other notable athletes and events include junior distance runner Elka-na Rotich, who won in the mile with a personal best of 4 minutes, 6.37 sec- onds, and the 4 x 400 relay led by Ni-gran native Onakoya and El Pasoan Daniel Tarango. The team made some strides finishing fourth at College Sta- tion, despite Tarango not performing at his prime.

"I had a bad time in the 800-me- ters, but I made up for it in the 400-meters, which is not that great either. I wasn't feeling well the day before the race I was kind of sick, but it's all part of the learning process," Tarango said. "During the 800-me- ters I hurt my calf and it was bothering me for several days, fortunately I felt much better throughout the week and I've been able to finish my workouts very strong."

For the women, the strongest per- formance were by sprinters. Junior hurdle/sprinter Janice Jackson took first place in College Station in the 400-meter hurdles, followed by Bri- anna McGee who crossed the finish line in fourth place. In the 60-meter dash, Yolanda Suggs finished fifth with a time of 7.55 seconds.

"I know I have one more year of eligibility, but I want to win a confer- ence title. I really want this," Jackson said. "All I have to do is come off hard from start to finish and I'll be good, because that's been my problem so far, I'll wait until like the third hurdle to really switch gears, but we've been working on that a lot lately."

Coach Laaksonen, for the most part was pleased with the performance by most of the athletes, but acknowl- edged that there are a few that need to improve for the conference cham- pionships. The main goal for the track team is to compete hard and with a lot of pride.

Laaksonen said that regarding the women's team he hopes it will be a great learning experience for the younger athletes who haven't par- ticipated in many competitions. But when it comes to men, he is hopeful that the Miners can win their first conference indoor championships title in seven years.

"I think we're hoping to see a lot of people who are capable of competing really well to actually compete well because they haven't been compet- ing to their full potential," said senior jumper Donovan Grant. "What's on paper in a lot of events aren't what they're capable of doing."
Miners look to break two-game losing streak

By Albert Gamboa
The Prospector

The women’s basketball team is back at the Don Haskins Center, Feb. 21, to face the Houston Cougars after a tough, winless road trip that concluded with an overtime loss to UCF.

“We just got to gather back and be mentally ready,” said junior forward Kayla Thornton. “Plus, coming back home always gives us a boost because we got great fans.”

The Miners head into this contest with their second two-game losing streak of the season while having lost four of the past five games; something that hasn’t happened since 2011. Currently in fourth place in Conference USA, the Miners look to get back on track with three of their upcoming games against teams in the bottom six in conference standings.

The last time the women’s basketball team played the Houston Cougars, they were soaring with only two losses on their record while riding a three-game winning streak. Since that late January game, UTEP has hit a slump, most noticeably on offense. The Miners are only shooting 34 percent from the floor while turning the ball over 81 times in the past five games.

“We need to stay as a team and continue to play hard. We’ve turned the ball over too many times so that’s hurt us,” said senior center Anete Steinberga. “So we need to take care of the ball better and execute our offense.”

Steinberga and Thornton are the only Miners hitting their shots. Steinberga has been averaging 19 points the past three games on 47 percent shooting, whereas Thornton has been averaging 15 points and 8 rebounds a game. The past game against UCF, the Miners had three players score in double figures and the rest of the team didn’t have more than four points.

Both junior guard Kelli Willingham and freshman guard Irene Garí have been on a funk, combining to shoot 16-of-71 field-goals on 23 percent shooting in their last three games.

The Miners defense is a reason why they are in close games as they lead the conference in field-goal percentage defense, rebounding and rebound margin and rank third in limiting opponents to 57 points per game.

Houston comes in with momentum after a comeback double-overtime win against Tulane. The Cougars have won two out of their last three games by a combined total of three points. Though the Miners beat the Cougars by 11 points in their past meeting, UTEP isn’t going to take them lightly.

“(Houston) rebounds it well, they’re athletic, (senior guard) Porsche Landry is really good. We’re going to have to hustle and shoot the ball better,” said head coach Keitha Adams.

Landry, the fourth leading scorer in Conference USA, is the only player on the team averaging double-digit scoring with 16 points per game.

Junior forward Trionna Campbell is coming off a career high with 17 points and five assists in her last game against Tulane, including making the game-winning lay-up in the second overtime.

Freshman guard March Amerson won her second C-USA Freshman of the Week award this past week after putting up 15 points on 70 percent shooting in her last game.

Playing at home should be an advantage for the Miners. The women’s basketball team is 12-2 at home while the Cougars are struggling on the road at 3-7. The Cougars have won only three games at the Don Haskins Center since 1987.

Albert Gamboa may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

“Finding this cure isn’t about finding fame, it’s about saving lives.”

- Jeff Blu, biology major