U TE P receives grant to improve mental health in the Southwest

BY CHRISTIAN VASQUEZ
The Prospector

UTEP received a $1.1 million grant to create a supporting organization for mental health professionals and students around the area. The center, called Empower Change: The Paso del Norte Center for Mental and Emotional Well-being, will provide a wide array of services to citizens of Southern New Mexico, El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. The Paso Del Norte Health Foundation donated the grant to UTEP in September 2017.

“We need to serve the mental health needs of the people of the region and we also need to provide opportunities for students who are from here and aspire to those careers,” said John Weibe, psychology professor, vice provost and principle investigator of the project.

Because mental health encompasses everything from prison rehabilitation and education to where to find services if someone does not have insurance, the center includes a wide array of personnel to address these issues.

“Our goal is to strategically support and increase regional coordination when it comes to mental health and emotional well-being,” Weibe said. “We do things as mundane as organize meetings and make sure we got room space available for people to come together around a table, then there are slightly more complex tasks that involve background research on issues that leaders are interested in.”

This can include anything from arranging meetings for an organization interested in mental health, to creating the first interactive directory in El Paso that lists all mental health services, to reducing the stigma about mental health at UTEP.

The directory will be published within the coming months, and will list everything from services for people without insurance and aids to help people reenter society from the corrections center to an overall updated list of all the services in El Paso.

“Our hope is that this would become something that is very widely used across the region, by not only front-line care professionals who want to help people, but also consumers themselves, clients-patients who need services,” Weibe said.

Leon Armstrong, a senior psychology major, is a student worker at the center.

“You can see on campus that there is people already breaking the (mental health) stigma and doing that, so our plan is to unify them,” he said.

Armstrong also said that working at the center has changed how he views the importance of research.

“This organization showed me that it’s not just research, you can use the research for something good, and so that’s what I want to do,” Armstrong said. “I can also do not just psychology but social work.”

One of the initiatives, Think. Change. is trying to reduce the social stigma of mental illnesses through contact, education and to a lesser extent, protests.

“We want to let people know that you can have a mental illness, but you can get help for that and you can live a life like any other,” Armstrong said. “I think a lot of students are not just aware of the services they can get.”

The center is also a way for students to get a real world look at how they can use their skills once they graduate. One of the aims of the center is to get students in front of legislators to talk about their respective fields so politicians can have a firmer grasp on the issues that affect citizens when it comes to mental health.

Research also plays a big role in the center’s objectives. A central goal is to provide data and research support that helps those who are in decision-making positions to make those tough calls.

“You might imagine that the leaders of many of these groups are very busy people, they are leaders in their own organizations, with 40-hour-a-week jobs, so they don’t necessarily have a lot of time to be researching these sorts of collective impact goals, and that’s one area where the center comes in,” Weibe said.

The center also wants to create a communication hub.

“It’s about building a social media network, to build a sense of regional unity, common purpose around mental health and emotional well-being, to serve as an information resource for the region on those issues,” Weibe said. “We want to connect to people.”

Armstrong said that the center uses a diverse range of professionals that complement each other.

“I think that’s the best thing in this organization, the diversity of people working,” Armstrong said. “Each discipline has shortcomings, so no one discipline can provide that help.”

Follow Christian Vasquez on twitter at @chrismvasq
President Donald Trump gave his first State of the Union address to Congress on Tuesday, Jan. 29. He focused on the economy, infrastructure, immigration, trade and national security. The Prospector reached out to student groups for a response. The following are their opinions about the speech:

Academic Revival of Indigenous Studies and Education (ARISE)

"Many of our members support immigrants and their words very much echo abusive and misleading to the situation and problems. We all support environmentally friendly practices and his push to deregulate businesses and support industries like coal and car construction only contribute to our global environmental crisis. On a personal note related to our interest to educate people about Indigenous ways of knowing, he completely washes the nation of America by not acknowledging the Native people that existed in the on the continent and instead calls it a "wasteland" and I use the term of "chart their destiny." The promotion of an empty frontier completely ignores and erases our history."

College Republicans at UTEP

“Four of our members attended a viewing party yesterday at the GOP headquarters. Overall, we agreed that the speech was uplifting and we are happy to get this new angle from Trump. As an organization, we are excited to see what this new year brings, especially with all the hints at more changes from the federal level. Throughout the speech he mentioned progress his administration has done in a year such as tax cuts, the continual depletion of ISIS territory, the largest deregulation campaign in U.S. history, historic unemployment loves and the return of manufacturing in America, to name a few.”

Sonando Juntos

"Sonando Juntos stands against any legislation that seeks to destroy the essence of America—a country founded by immigrants. Today’s State of the Union was nothing short of disappointing and offensive to immigrants, people of color, and all groups fighting the forces of oppression. As expected, Trump engaged in dangerous, racist and xenophobic rhetoric that undermined the basic dignity all humans deserve.

Lastly, it is imperative for us to reiterate—we stand against any permanent fix that ends family reunifications. Let us not forget that our parents are the original dreamers. We will continue to fight until all 12 million undocumented persons are protected and all lives are liberated.“

University Democrats

The University Democrats acknowledge and commend President Trump for fulfilling his duties as president of the United States by delivering his State of the Union speech. However, our nation continues down a dark path of uncertainty, several things have become clear in his SOTU. Our president does not seek unity amongst our elected officials, nor does he seek the well-being of those that struggle to create the American dream. President Trump continues to show a lack of leadership needed to exemplify the office of the President of the United States of America. The University Democrats will continue to push forward in restoring the values of democracy, not only in the El Paso area but in cities all over the United States of America.”
Question of the Week: How do you deal with stress or anxiety?

Claudia Hernandez, Sergio Munoz / The Prospector

The closest Topgolf to El Paso is in Tucson, Ariz., around 235 miles away. Note, El Paso’s Topgolf is located on the west side of town, at 365 Yin Rambla Drive, which can be easily accessed via S. Mesa Hills and driving to the end of Suncrest Drive. El Paso’s Topgolf is the 41st opened in the world, the 10th in the Texas and the first one on the U.S.-Mexico border.

“The great thing about El Paso, out of other venues, is that we are so close to the mountains,” Horstman said. “From the restaurant and the stairs you can see three states and two countries—it’s very beautiful.”

The idea for Topgolf began in 2000 on the Jolliff brothers, who sought a way to practice golf with a precise analysis of their skills. After developing the proper technology, they decided to share their work with the public by opening three entertainment centers in the U.K. On 2005, Topgolf opened its first U.S. location, in Alexandria, Virginia.

Topgolf is located on Vin Rambla Drive and has been open since Friday, Feb. 2.

BY PAULETTE VILLA

The internationally recognized sports and entertainment center Topgolf opened its first location in El Paso on Friday, Feb. 2, just in time for the Super Bowl and Valentine’s Day.

Unlike regular golf courses or driving ranges, Topgolf brands the sport as “a game for everyone,” regardless of their age and skill set. Topgolf offers academies for kids and adults, individually or in a group, which are lessons taught by certified instructors from the Professional Golfers’ Association. According to Topgolf’s fact sheet, 51 percent of Topgolf guests are non-certified instructors from the Progroup, which are lessons taught by their age and skill set.

Topgolf finished first weekend in El Paso with games, food and golfing
FEBRUARY 6, 2018

NEWS
THE PROSPECTOR

FREE media sources: Snack Time Workshop
From 1:30-2 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 6 at the UTEP Library. Find out where you can get photos, music, videos and other media without breaking copyright law. Chips, cookies, donuts and coffee will be provided. The event is free.

A CONVERSATION WITH DEE MARGO
The Texas Tribune will host El Paso Mayor Dee Margo from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 7 at the Building A Auditorium at the El Paso Community College Administrative Service Center.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST
The El Paso Museum of History, in collaboration with UTEP, will host “The Global Rise of Neo-Fascism and Recent Elections in Germany and Austria,” with Marion Christina Rohreiter as part of the Lessons from the Past, Looking Toward the Future lecture series. The event is from 6:30-7:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 8 at the El Paso Museum of History.

LOVE AND HIP HOP WEEK
Brown Bag On Rap. The N-Word is Safe? will be Tuesday, from noon-1:30 p.m. at University Suite, Room 312. Open Mic Night: Thursday, Feb. 8 from 5-7 p.m. University Suite, Room 312. The Outro: The Rap on Hip Hop will be Friday, Feb. 9. Doors open at 5 p.m. at the Tomás Rivera Conference Center, Room 308.

SPECIAL TO THE PROSPECTOR

Angela Davis will speak at UTEP on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

BY THE PROSPECTOR STAFF

The Prospector

UTEP’s African-American Studies Program and the Black Student Union are kicking off a lecture series with guest lecturer Angela Davis at 6:30 p.m. this Wednesday at the Undergraduate Learning Center building, room 126.

Angela Davis will speak at UGEC on Wednesday, Feb. 7.

Angela Davis

Davis is an activist, author, academic, humanitarian, civil and women’s rights advocate and a current professor at the University of California. Davis is an activist, author, academic, humanitarian, civil and women’s rights advocate and a current professor at the University of California.

Davis said that her political activism was inspired by growing up around racial violence in Birmingham, Alabama. She was a member of the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s and a former leader of the Communist Party USA.

Michael V. Williams, Ph.D., director of UTEP’s African-American Studies Program, said the lecture series was developed to bring scholars and activists from across the nation to campus to engage with students and to share their passion and expertise with the wider community.

Williams hopes the lecture will help people understand the necessity, particularly young people, of social activism.

“The necessity of becoming a voice in this world,” Williams said. “She’s important because of what she represents in terms of a real strong commitment to racial, gender and equality, social justice, and she is a powerful iconic voice.”

The African-American Studies Program is not placing any restrictions on Davis’ discussion.

“It’s titled an evening with Angela Davis and it’s done that way because it gives her an opportunity to deal with what’s happening currently,” Williams said.

Davis has caused controversy throughout the years, sometimes known as a black militant and self-proclaimed communist. Davis was also acquitted on charges of conspiracy.

“People are generally excited about it, that’s not to say that everyone will agree with everything that’s presented, but then that’s the importance of being on a college campus and in an active community as well—you get to engage people in all aspects and that’s what dialogue is all about,” Williams said.

Sade Talabi, junior history major and treasurer for UTEP’s Black Student Union, said that she admires Davis because she says what people need to listen to and not what people want to hear.

“It’s a plus to have her at the time of the MeToo movement, especially for what she’s done for the community and for women in general, but I think that her being here is just monumental,” Talabi said. “It’s not only important to the black community, it’s important to all communities.

The event is free and a Q&A will follow. There will also be a brief book signing.

As part of Black History Month, the next lecturer will be by Curtis Austin, “The Black Panther Party and the Long Black Power Movement” on Feb. 12 at the El Paso Natural Gas Conference Center at 2 p.m.

The Prospector may be reached at theprospector1@gmail.com.

HAPPENING THIS WEEK

10 El Paso / Las Cruces locations
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UTEP discount!

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$10 A MONTH

SPRING
BATTLE OF THE CHEFS
FEB 22 5-30-7PM
AT THE HICK’N SHOVEL
The cast of “Iconic Pop” rehearses for opening night on Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m. at The Wise Family Theatre in Fox Fine Arts.

As part of their annual tradition, this year the UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance presents “Iconic Pop,” a presentation that represents the celebration of the pop genre and dance.

“Iconic Pop” will be opening at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 9, at UTEP’s Wise Family Theatre.

“Leanne Rinelli, who is one of the head choreographers for this evening, had this idea on doing this idea of doing Mexican pop singers or Latin pop singers,” said Lisa Smith, professor of dance at UTEP. “We thought it was a great idea, something fresh and something that students might really enjoy, not only seeing but performing, so we decided to go with that under the name of ‘Iconic Pop.’”

“The dance concert consists of different dance numbers that represent the different eras of music and dance,” Rinelli said. “‘Iconic Pop’ is a celebration of pop music. Not every piece has pop music, but in the majority. We have some work that features the music of the ‘50s like Frank Sinatra, and also the ‘60s and ‘70s, and Rinelli, assistant dance professor and choreographer, Smith, who is in charge of two pieces in the program, said her longer work is called “Psychodelia” and it’s a tribute to the music of the ‘60s that features music from The Beatles and other artists.

“Aside from being excited to perform, I am excited for the audience to get to see pieces that take place during WW2, the 60s and present day,” said Damian A. Padilla, a sophomore student majoring in communication studies and dance. “Myron Nadel, Lisa Smith, Leanne Rinelle and the entire cast have worked hard in putting together a great production. I truly believe the audience will really enjoy the entire show.”

Smith also said that all the pieces were arranged and recorded by a local band called Latin Tonight.

Padilla, who is also a UTEP Goldigger, said he has dance at several studios and is used to the commercial aspect of dance, but coming into this show has really pushed him to the more classical and theatrical dance.

“Music is as important as dance in this production. Some of the music, chosen by Rinelli for her music numbers include Mexican artist, Natalia Lafourcade, Mon Laferte and Carla Morrison.”

“This process was definitely driven by the music, I came across these artists that I had never heard of because I’m not from here, and I loved the music and the way it sounded,” she said. “I don’t speak Spanish, so it had nothing to do with the words, so it was nice I wasn’t choreographing to words. I was choreographing to what it felt like to me.”

“I don’t speak Spanish, so it had nothing to do with the words... I was choreographing to what it felt like to me.”

- Leanne Rinelli, assistant dance professor

“By doing this show, it has given me the training and experience of doing shows that I normally wouldn’t. This is something that I truly value as a dancer, so that when I go out to dance in the real world, I have a lot of experience in all areas of dance,” said Padilla. “I feel there has to be a balance in knowing how to dance commercial dance (most of the dancing seen at sporting events and music videos on YouTube and classical/theatrical dance (the dancing seen in musicals, dance shows, etc.). This show has allowed me to accomplish and work towards that balance.”

For this production, the dance faculty decided to emphasize contemporary dance—some of the numbers will have a jazz or aerobics influence, but with contemporary dance as the star of the show.

‘Contemporary can take a lot of different ways. It can be more abstract—a lot in and out of the floor, jumping,” Rinelli said. “It can look a lot of different ways to choreographers, and it keeps changing as time’s changing.”

The performance will also be presented at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 10, 15, 16 and 17. A matinee performance is also available on Feb. 10. Tickets are on sale at ticketmaster.com and the Wise Family Theatre box office.

Smith said that as an artist, it’s always rewarding to see a piece of art coming alive, and when it comes to a dance number, it’s not only about the dance, but about the performers.

“It’s lovely to see the performers come alive in this work, it’s wonderful as a choreographer to see your piece, you visualize it, you created, you crafted and then you see it.” Smith said. “It’s wonderful to see your work and see these upcoming young performers grow each time they’re in a different dance.”

With different dance numbers, and costumes that represent each music genre, “Iconic Pop” features something special for every spectator in the audience.

“I think there’s something for everyone in the program and people often say that, but this time, truly, there is a variety of pieces and music,” Smith said. “I think it’s going to be very fresh and very fun.”

The performance will also be presented at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 10, 15, 16 and 17. A matinee performance is also available at 3:00 p.m. on Feb. 11. Tickets are on sale at ticketmaster.com and the Wise Family Theatre box office.
Former UTEP student showcases his love for El Paso through his art

By Aylin Tafoya

Patrick Gabaldon, a UTEP alumnus and now prosecutor for the 34th Judicial District Attorney’s Office, is becoming a widely recognized artist in El Paso.

With no professional art background, it has been no small feat for Gabaldon to have his art acknowledged and showcased in various establishments.

“Luckily because I didn’t study art, everything is still really new to me, and it’s refreshing to kind of get to discover a new thing to be obsessed with,” Gabaldon said.

Gabaldon’s work has been exhibited at the El Paso International Airport, featuring over 20 pieces that showcase the city, and a piece at the Southwest University Ballpark for the 2017 season, UTEP and even as stickers on laptops.

Being a lawyer, husband and full-time artist has proven difficult, but not impossible for Gabaldon.

“There’s a sense of really being free creatively, when I can shut off the logical side of my brain and just kind of go for it,” he said.

Gabaldon said that while all aspects of his life are very different, he combines them easily. Without his art, he wouldn’t have a medium to let go of the stress that comes from being a lawyer, and without being a lawyer, he wouldn’t have the means to create art so freely and so often.

“It’s nice to know that they’re totally separate, but that they also feed each other,” Gabaldon said.

A big focus of his work is giving El Paso a positive image, and making others see the city the way he does.

“When I grew up, a lot of people talked down about El Paso saying how it’s not that great,” he said. “But now I think there’s some sort of cultural awareness about how beautiful the city really is and that’s what I try to communicate with my art.”

Through the use of bright colors and El Paso’s scenic views, he also explained that a message of happiness is embedded in every piece.

“As a prosecutor, I see a lot of cases that are really tough and so I experience enough of that during the day at work,” he said. “When I paint and when someone else has something of mine, I want it to communicate good feelings, happy feelings—joy, peace, tranquility.”

Gabaldon said that his mistakes, such as forgetting to outline a part of his art piece with black or accidentally brushing the canvas with a different color than intended, now creates a better sense of himself in his work.

“Now in recent pieces, I’ve left a little part just not outlined or not finished completely on purpose so that I see it. No one else knows it’s there most of the time, but it’s something for me to have for myself,” he said. “Similarly, if you look at all my artwork, my signature is always in weird places. It’s floating up in the clouds or on a mountain, or curved around the shape of a cactus. It’s somewhat hidden.”

Gabaldon believes that certain pieces of art he has created can’t truly be truly appreciated, unless the person viewing the art is listening to the song that the piece is paired with.

“There’s a piece of a roadrunner eating a little lizard, and that piece is being appreciated when listening to the song ‘Desert Island Disk’ by Radiohead” Gabaldon said. “Every piece has a song specific to it.”

For this piece and everything else he has created, Gabaldon received the El Paso’s Chamber of Commerce Breakthrough Leader Award in 2017.

“It’s still really insane to see my art up at restaurants and seeing them in different publications and getting this award. It’s all these crazy things that I would’ve never imagined,” he said.

He’s donated original artwork to United Way of El Paso, El Paso Bar Association, the Humane Society of El Paso’s Yardly Fundraiser and the Boys and Girls Club of El Paso. He also continues to serve the community, not only as an artist but also through his community involvement as a Border Art Residency Board Member and as a judge for the Bartlett Park Public Art Project, where he got to help choose the public art installations.

“It all started as doing paintings for friends, and that kind of grew and kept going,” he said. “I love creating and I don’t think I’ll ever stop.”

About the author:

Gabaldon may be reached at gabbyvtafoya97@gmail.com.
The Prospector

After a disappointing 2017 season, in which the Miners were only able to collect 12 wins and a last-place finish in the West Division of Conference USA, the UTEP softball team will strive to take advantage of a fresh start and a schedule that might benefit the Miners.

UTEP head coach Tobin Echo-Hawk, who enters her fifth year at the helm, said this year will be different and is excited about her team and this year's schedule. With 21 home games and a mix of quality opponents, UTEP is eager to hit the ground running.

Echo-Hawk says the opponents on the schedule make for an exciting campaign.

“We definitely have some challenging games on our schedule, but we also have some games that we should win and we should compete,” Echo-Hawk said. “I’m excited about our schedule this year, more so than any other year I’ve had.”

Leading the team is junior Courtney Smith, an infielder who was named to 2018 C-USA Preseason All-Conference team. In 2017, she was named to the All-Conference USA second team after a successful sophomore year. She led the team with a .364 batting average (47-129). She was also ranked 12th in the conference in hits.

The Miners have three seniors on their team this season, each who have made an impact. Senior Kaitlin Ryder, who was 2017 All-Conference USA second team and led the team with 51 hits, is putting last year behind her. Her success in the batter’s box makes her one of the biggest threats for the Miners. She looks to secure several school records this season as she only needs 21 hits to secure a spot in the school’s top-10 list.

“Right off the bat, the Miners start off the season in the Kajikawa Tournament, which is held at in Tempe, Ariz. on Friday, Feb. 9, against the Missouri Tigers, who are receiving votes in the AP Top 25 poll. This will be a tournament that consists of some of the better teams in the country including the No. 3 ranked Oregon Ducks.

The Miners then open up for their first home game against rival New Mexico State on Feb. 20, followed by the UTEP Tournament, where Portland State and Idaho State will pay a visit.

Echo-Hawk says working on hitting in the off-season has helped the orange and blue get into game mode.

“That's kind of our strength. We have some great hitters, a little mix of speed, power, contact,” Echo-Hawk said. “We've been really trying to put ourselves in game situations so that we can be prepared for whatever it is, both offensively and defensively.”

Clayton says the teams dynamic is special this year and something the fans should look out for.

“We're focusing on making sure that no matter what happens on that field, we have that foundation and we're going to be strong no matter what,” Clayton said. “I think that's something that we've worked on in the off season and we're also working on now, and I think that will be a strength coming up into the season.”

First pitch against the Missouri Tigers is set for 11:30 a.m. MST in Tempe.
Men’s basketball to battle UTSA in rematch

BY DANIEL MENDEZ

The UTEP men’s basketball team is in survival mode after dropping their last five games, and they are still hoping for a spot in the Conference USA tournament.

The Miners (7-17, 2-9 C-USA) are looking to see if they can bounce back and snap their five-game skid as they face UTSA (13-11, 6-5 C-USA) in a rematch on Saturday, Feb. 10, at the Don Haskins Center.

“We got some games coming up that we really need to take care of. There’s not an easy game left on our schedule,” said interim head coach Phil Johnson, following the loss to Marshall this past Saturday night.

In the first meeting at the Convocation Center in San Antonio, UTEP had the game in the palm of their hands for about 39 minutes. But at the last minute, they let the win slip away when UTSA’s freshman guard Flournoy Jackson stole the ball and converted the layup, leading to a 65-61 Roadrunners’ win.

The Miners are coming off a solid collective effort on defense against the Thundering Herd. UTEP held the nation’s 12th-best team in terms of scoring (85.3 points per game) to just 74 points in the loss. The loss slid UTSA down to the 13th spot in C-USA.

The scoring for the Miners has been an issue for the Miners as of late, as they have been recording double-digit turnovers in their last three games. That is one of the main facets of the offense that has problems. Senior guard Omega Harris hasn’t found his scoring touch since.

In the first game, one weaknesses UTSA was able to exploit on UTEP was inside the paint. UTSA is the second-best team in Conference USA, averaging 80.9 points per game. Jackson, who has been a nice pivot point of energy for UTSA, is C-USA’s fifth-best scorer, averaging 19 points per game. Another freshman guard to watch is Keaton Wallace, who is averaging 11.9 points per game for UTSA.

In the first meeting against UTSA, UTEP’s second-leading scorer, against Marshall on Saturday. Frazier didn’t shoot the ball well (3-12), yet was reliable on the defensive effort (six rebounds). The scoring for the Miners has come from the bench. Against Marshall, the Miners had 42 points off 11 of their 13 field goals made (seven) and 3-point field goals made (five).

Graduate transfer Keith Frazier made his first C-USA start of the season against Marshall on Saturday. Frazier is UTEP’s second-leading scorer with 11 points per game, but against the Herd, Frazier didn’t shoot the ball well (3-12), yet was reliable on the defensive effort (six rebounds).

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