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Texas House LGBTQ Caucus hosts Town Hall at El Paso

Anahy Diaz
The Prospector

Founding members of the Texas’ House LG­
BTQ Caucus hosted their first Town Hall meet­
ing at El Paso Thursday, Oct. 17, at UTEP’s
Union Cinema, to discuss political engagement,
equality and the progress the caucus continually
makes to increase representation for all LGBTQ
Texans.

“The caucus institutionalized our place in the
legislature,” said Mary Gonzalez, one of El Pa­
só’s state representatives. “It really said, ‘We are
part of the leadership team, we deserve to have
a seat at the table.’ It made sure our voices were
centered and that other people weren’t speaking
for us.”

Gonzalez is one of five women lawmakers who, earlier this year, decided to form the first
Texas Legislature LGBTQ caucus, whose goal is
to advance bills for the benefit of lesbian, gay,
bisexual, transgender and queer individuals
across Texas.

Aside from Gonzalez, other LGBTQ law­
makers include Celia Israel of Austin, Erin
Zwiener of Driftwood, Jessica Gonzalez of
Dallas and Julie Johnson of Carrollton. Thurs­
day night, Mary Gonzalez, Israel and Zwie­
ner answered the audience’s questions, which
were moderated by Texas House Speaker Joe
Moody.

The lawmakers touched upon the challenges
and discrimination they face as they try to move
forward or argue bills, specifically in the recent
legislative session in which lawmakers tried to
defeat the now passed Senate Bill 1978, which
prohibits government entities from punish­
ing individuals or organizations in partner­
ship with someone exercising their religious
beliefs, even if those beliefs are perceived as
discriminatory.

However, the lawmakers will continue to fight to
defeat bills they believe are
discriminatory to the LG­
BTQ community by filing
some of their own bills
pertaining to this commu­
nity’s rights.

Mary Gonzalez and Israel, for example,
are currently each working on bills. Israel’s bill
focuses on outlawing conversion therapy, the
practice of trying to convert an individual’s
sexual orientation through psychological or
spiritual interventions while Mary Gonzalez fo­
cuses on her “Romeo and
Romeo” bill, which would
include same-sex rela­
tions in the
current
Texas law that protects teens who engage in
consensual sex from being prosecuted if they’re
over 14 and within three years of each other.

see LGBTQ on page 2

Photo illustration by Teddy Baylon
Swamped with politics in food, sports and Hollywood

Luis Hinojos
The Prospector

Your mother may have told you not to talk about politics or religion in public. She was right.

Recently, we have found ourselves surrounded by political in food, sports and your favorite streaming platform.

Yes, we should be educated on the political happenings in our country. No, we shouldn't have to come face-to-face with a hairy political issue in the refuge of a restaurant, Monday Night Football or your guilty pleasure series.

Politics has crawled its way into the kitchen of one of the biggest fast-food restaurants in the United States, Chick-fil-a. This started all in 2012 when, according to Jena McGregor of The Washington Post, the company's founder, Dan Cathy, expressed support of traditional marriage. Cathy, who graduated from UTEP in the spring of 2019. "To make be an ally," said Evan Carcerano, 21, who graduates in saying these types of things are wrong," Mary activism and become allies for members of LGBT.

"I believe it's my responsibility as a citizen to Iic. She was right in activism and become allies for members of the LGBTQ from front page

"We want to make sure the next generation of folks elected or young people have a voice in answering these questions of wrong," Mary Gonzales said. "That's one of the things we did do. Now, as a caucus, every time something was said that was homophobic or attacking the LGTB, we were able to call it out."

Lawmakers urged students to get involved in activism and become allies for members of the LGBTQ community, as they believe unity leads to a better tomorrow.

"I believe it's my responsibility as a citizen to be an ally," said Alonzo Mendoza, 21, who identifies as bisexual. "We have to do to make sure people in the LGBTQ community are accepted and loved and feel like they can be themselves without people looking down on them or being discriminatory or ugly toward them."

Lawmakers also emphasized the importance of being politically involved, encouraging students to apply for internships and even the fellowship they themselves are offering. However, Mary Gonzales especially emphasized the importance of being politically involved on campus as she acknowledged the levels of racism, sexism, heterosexism and classism that are present in institutions.

This discussion led to a question that touched on the controversy surrounding the appointment of UTEP President Heather Wilson and her anti-LGBTQ congressional voting record, which led to protests mainly led by the Queer Student Alliance at UTEP.

Zwiener revealed that a few of the caucus members sat down with the Chancellor of the University of Texas System to express their concerns regarding the appointment and discuss what they could do to help set the new university's president on a path to succeed with the LGBTQ community.

"I encourage you all to hold your leadership in what they could do to help set the new university's president on a path to succeed with the LGBTQ community.

"My hope is that there is not only more visibility, but more acceptance," said Alonzo Mendoza, 20, who identifies as bisexual. "We have to do the right thing, even if it's not the popular thing."

The lawmakers said more work needs to be done for the advancement of LGBTQ rights in this country, which mainly dwells on defeating society's discriminatory acts against this community.

"I encourage you all to hold your leadership here at your university accountable," Zwiener said. "To follow up on building those relationships and doing better. It's not that you guys have to do the work, but it's important work, in order to protect the entire student body."

The problem with Hollywood boycotting entire states for production is that, once again, it hurts the people, including the individuals and businesses that depend on the film industry, because of legislative action, while also influencing an extreme polarization that will forcibly push the country to the extremes, instead of finding an even-handed compromise.

Airports and universities should empower the individual choice.

As a country, we should look to the example of Pitaro. Further still, we should look to the example of Stacy Abrams, the Democrat who ran in the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial race. She has spoken against the Hollywood boycotts on Twitter saying that, "(She does) not believe it is the most effective, strategic choice for change."

Problems swarm around "the swamp." It's best to leave them there. Politics do not belong in every aspect of our lives.

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Microsoft officials’ book proposes bringing humanity into technology

Marisol Chávez
The Prospector

Brad Smith, president of Microsoft, and Carol Ann Browne, senior director of communications and external relations at Microsoft and an El Paso native, held the Centennial Lecture “Tools and Weapons: The Promise and the Peril of the Digital Age” Monday, Oct. 14, at UTEP’s Undergraduate Learning Center.

The lecture was based on the best-selling book of the same name which they co-authored and released last September.

“Technology is supposed to serve people, if it doesn't, there's probably not a great reason to keep creating it,” Smith said in an exclusive interview with The Prospector before the Centennial Lecture.

Their book focuses on the need to “bring humanity into technology,” and the ethical responsibility that comes with the creation of innovations such as artificial intelligence.

“We're actually creating machines that have the capacity to make decisions that previously have only been made by people,” Smith said.

Smith talked about ethics being a fundamental part in creating artificial intelligence and how, in their book, they developed six ethical principles to guide computers to make decisions.

“In some ways, I think the most important principle is what we call accountability,” Smith said. “Making sure that machines remain accountable to people and that people remain in the loop of decision-making.”

According to Smith, the ethicality of development is not an issue solely pertaining to the creator of technology, but a multi-directional effort that involves users, companies and governments.

“No industry has ever completely regulated itself, it takes laws because some won't get on board,” Smith said. “There's food safety rules, there's pharmaceutical safety rules, why can't there be digital technology safety rules?”

During the exclusive interview, Browne mentioned part of the intent of writing the book was to help educate the general public, including policymakers.

“We have a responsibility in the tech sector to educate the government, because it's not their job to create technology, but it's ours,” Browne said. “We are the ones that can educate them.”

Regarding some of the obstacles that can arise from the passing of laws to regulate technologies, the lack of understanding from representatives stood out.

“I don't have any doubt in the world that people in Congress and elsewhere are more than smart enough to figure out how to address these issues,” Smith said. “It doesn't mean that they're ever going to know as much about how the technology is created as (the) people who created it, but they can learn enough to figure out how to regulate it.”

The authors also propose government collaboration in order to accomplish better regulation worldwide.

“Microsoft is one of the founders of a new organization called the CyberPeace Institute,” Smith said. “Part of its mission is to share this kind of (cyber security violations) information publicly about attacks, so then governments and others have access to that information and can use it in their attribution analysis.”

The authors referenced the Geneva Convention and how it was created as a treaty that imposed on governments the responsibility to try to keep civilians safe even in times of war and about how they proposed a new version of it.

“We point out the irony of moving from the Geneva Convention in 1949 to a world in 2019 where governments are actually attacking civilians in what is supposedly a time of peace,” Smith said.

Both authors recognize that their book aims to inform their audience about a topic that is not studied by many, but is used by most and is affecting everyone.

Technology is supposed to serve people, if it doesn't, there's probably not a great reason to keep creating it.

- Brad Smith
president of Microsoft

“It's just important for you guys to understand these issues as you head out in the world and make decisions on how you use technology, and also how you shape your career,” Browne said.


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Last day to sign up Oct 23.

IT'S TIME TO GET CREATIVE
"What Were You Wearing?" brings awareness on sexual assault victims

"We need to create awareness of what sexual assault was and what sexual assault is," said Horacio. "We need to talk about sexual assault and how it affects people."

Also providing safe space for expression are the workshops provided by the El Paso Center for Reproductive Rights and the University of Texas at El Paso. The workshops aim to empower victims of sexual assault and support them throughout their healing process.

"They are sharing their stories as a way to heal and talk to other survivors," said Andrea Martinez, a survivor and advocate for sexual assault awareness in El Paso.

"What Were You Wearing?" is an art exhibit that highlights the experiences of sexual assault victims. It opened on Saturday, Oct. 9, at a Gladsad, an art project based in the University of Texas at El Paso along with other members of the community who have experienced sexual assault.

The exhibit displayed uniforms, dresses, and other clothing items that were worn by victims of sexual assault. The exhibit aimed to provide a platform for survivors to share their stories and to raise awareness about sexual assault.

"I hope that people will come and see this exhibit to learn more about sexual assault and how it affects people," said Horacio. "It's important to be aware of these tragedies and to support survivors."
Students, faculty promote queer inclusiveness in classrooms

Exodus Ward
The Prospector

UTEP students and faculty from the UTEP's College of Education hosted the second annual Queer(in)g Our Classrooms Oct. 14 at the El Paso Natural Gas Conference Center.

As implied by the title, the event's theme was discussing LGBTQ topics in classroom settings. The event began with a reading of the play "Queer as a Second Language" by Cynthia Nelson, a doctorate degree-holder in applied linguistics, followed by a discussion panel.

Nelson based the play on her research on English as a second language (ESL) classes and 150 hours of one-on-one interviews. It is also based on real-life situations.

The play depicted interactions between three foreign students learning English: 30-year-old Mi-Young from Korea, 25-year-old Miro from Mexico, 62-year-old Mr. V from Vietnam, and their two American professors, Roxanne and Tony.

"It is intended to be easily performed with minimal rehearsal by actors and non-actors usually in conference settings where scholars are gathered to present research," said Josey Pickett, the play's director and teaching assistant within UTEP's Department of Theatre and Dance.

"This is an alternative way of presenting research designed to make findings come to life," Pickett said.

"It is more nuanced capturing complex social interactions and emotions. It's more accessible to a wider audience."

The play is a "reader's theatre," in which actors read their lines while acting out scenes.

The event's main goal was to educate the community on LGBTQ issues and to show solidarity between allies and the LGBTQ community on campus.

The College of Education allegedly received a hate letter which, when brought up with administration, received little attention.

One targeted faculty member even ended up leaving UTEP.

A study conducted by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism found that LGBTQ-based hate crimes have been on the rise since 2017.

Seeing a need for a better sense of security, postgraduate education students and community members from other departments at UTEP came together to host the inaugural Queer(in)g Our Classrooms.

The first year, they brought in four speakers who discussed how to make supportive spaces for queer students.

"We wanted to do something to improve the safety of our community and the supportiveness of the community for LGBTQ students, faculty and staff and improve our ability to educate teachers to do that as well," said Katherine Mortimer, associate professor of bilingual and biliteracy education.

To read the full story and find more content, visit theprospectordaily.com

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Are you curious about hypnosis?

A TV Production company is crossing America filming a new series about the power of hypnosis. They are conducting hypnosis workshops and will select a few people from El Paso to be in the TV show.

Any potential participant should be:

- 18+ years old
- Be in good health
- Not pregnant
- Not suffering from any serious physical or mental illness.

For example:
1. Breathing difficulties
2. Epilepsy
3. NOT taking any psychoactive medication

Those who participate in the 2 hour hypnosis workshop will be paid $50 dlls.

To express interest text "HYP" to 915-317-9284

Follow our page at El Paso Focus groups on Facebook for more information.
Kawaii Hello Kitty Café Truck excites local enthusiasts

Maria Salette Ontiveros
The Prospector

The traveling Hello Kitty Café Truck made a stop in El Paso to entice the Japanese character's diehard fans with a variety of Hello Kitty merchandise and treats Saturday, Oct. 19 at the Cielo Vista Mall.

The truck officially opened shop at 10 a.m. but members of the community began arriving as early as 4:30 a.m. to get first dibs. This is the second consecutive year that the truck has come to El Paso.

Clarissa and Cynthia Conde, two relatives and huge fans of Hello Kitty, found out about the event through Facebook.

"We came last year, and we wanted to be here this year again," Clarissa Conde said.

"In California, they have an actual shop of Hello Kitty, probably where this truck comes from, and I guess it's kind of cool that they have all those little pop-up shops," Cynthia Conde said. "We would like to go to Japan where Hello Kitty originates from because they have a café and an actual shop and it includes all the characters, not just Hello Kitty, that is just one character in the big universe."

Attendees of all ages wore Hello Kitty-themed T-shirts, skirts and accessories at the event.

Attendee Dayana Pedroza mentioned that she learned of the event through social media as well.

"This truck travels from city to city and I think it's good they do that because that way they can reach out to more fans in bigger cities," Pedroza said.

The truck sold pastries, Hello Kitty-shaped water bottles, lunch boxes, cushions, thermoses, totes, T-shirts, pins, mugs and many other items in the likeness of the Japanese cat character.

Yuko Shimizu designed Hello Kitty and included the character in the 1974 lineup of early Sanrio characters.

The character's first appearance was on a Japanese vinyl coin purse, where the character sat between a bottle of milk and a goldfish bowl. Hello Kitty first appeared in the United States in 1976.

Maria Salette Ontiveros may be reached at prospector@utep.edu

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YOUR BUZZED IS THEIR TOTALLY DRUNK

- Mixing alcohol and sex can make it difficult to know if you or your partner can consent.
- And if someone is totally wasted, they can never consent. Don't assume you are on the same level, get consent through mutual agreement. utep.edu/cars

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This week's entertainment stories

- Turkish food festival embodies peace and positivity
- Russian Ballet Theatre charms El Paso with stunning rendition of Swan Lake
- 'Real Women Have Curves' celebrates Latina empowerment
- Pollution conference informs city developers on sustainable building practices
- Lenox: a local drag queen's story
- ROTC competes in national race
- Events happening this week

Read them at theprospectordaily.com
Penalties sink Miners

Michael Cuviello
The Prospector

The UTEP Miners’ first drive was an indication that things were not going to go well versus the Florida International University (FIU) Panthers Saturday night. On the third play of the game, senior quarterback Brandon Jones threw an interception in Miner territory, which resulted in a Panther field goal.

That interception would be the only turnover of the entire game for either team, but the Miners would make up for that in spades with their most penalized output of the season. The Miners finished with the most penalty yards of the Dana Dimel era with 106 yards.

The Miners overall played well defensively for a little over three quarters bottling up the very potent Panther running game, until running back Anthony Jones took a handoff 65 yards downfield, setting up a final FIU touchdown to close the game. Even with that play, the Miners’ offense had almost as many yards as the Panthers.

Briefly having a 7-3 lead in the first quarter, the Miners, even in good situations, could not avoid costly penalties. Catching a break after a Panther penalty, the Miners had FIU at first and 25 yards to go for a touchdown, quickly erasing it with a face mask penalty by senior corner Ykili Ross.

Right after FIU proceeded to score a touchdown, the Miners then committed an illegal block, setting them back 44 yards to their own 10. The next play resulted in a safety for the Miners putting them behind 12-7 early in the second quarter of the game. Two Panther field goals had the Miners trailing by 11 at halftime.

"Eliminating penalties, unforced errors, I can’t say that enough," coach Dana Dimel said. "You take the bad snaps and the penalties out of the ball game, we win."

The first possession of the second half for the Miners emphasized how ineffective the offense has been this season. In a series that ate up more than six minutes of possession time, the Miners gained a net 9 yards on nine plays. Of those nine plays, three were penalties and none were passes. The Miners went 43 minutes between the team’s first touchdown and the very next score with seven minutes left in the game.

As reliable as the defense was overall for the Miners, it did not register a single sack or a turnover for the game, which has been a recurring theme the whole season. For the season the defense has six sacks, averaging one a game. Taking out the three sacks UTEP had in the opener, it has only three in five games and no games with multiple sacks. The defense only has five turnovers total, while the UTEP offense’s most positive statistic is its lack of turnovers with six.

Senior quarterback Kai Locksley generated most of the offense for the Miners with 196 yards of total offense. Locksley’s best play was a well-timed pass to freshman receiver Jacob Cowing for a 34-yard touchdown late in the game.

The Miners’ defense and offense suffer the most on third down efficiency as both rank among the worst in the NCAA. The offense only makes 28 percent of its third-down conversions, and the defense gives up more than 50 percent of third-down conversions to opponents.

New week same result as UTEP fell 32-17 to FIU in Miami. The team has no offensive identity as it rotates between two quarterbacks, which correlate to having no starting quarterback. Up next for UTEP is Louisiana Tech 6 p.m. Oct. 26.

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