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FOOTBALL

Quarterbacks struggle in spring game

By Jeremy Thomas
@jeremyobthomas

With more than 10 injuries on both sides of the football, the first game of the new Charlie Strong era saw the remaining Texas quarterback struggle early in the Orange-White Scrimmage on Saturday.

Sophomore quarterback Tyrone Swoopes, who led the first-team offense, struggled through the first half. In addition to opening with an interception, the 6-foot-4-inch sophomore completed

just two passes for nine yards through his first nine pass attempts. One incompletion sailed past senior wide receiver Jaxon Shipley, when he was wide open in the end zone.

“Well, he had some overthrows, [but] you have to bounce back and get your head up and just execute and just do what we ask you to do,” head coach Charlie Strong said. “It is about your confidence, and, once you start managing the offense, you understand that you are

going to run the offense and that you have to have a sense of urgency about you.”

With less than eight minutes to go in the second quarter, Swoopes and the first team offense drove the ball 91 yards capped off by an 11-yard rushing touchdown from senior running back Malcolm Brown. And, with seconds before halftime, Swoopes completed a hail mary pass to junior running back/wide receiver Daje Johnson.

OFFENSE page 6



Sam Ortega / Daily Texan Staff

Sophomore quarterback Tyrone Swoopes was sacked four times and threw one interception Saturday afternoon.

SYSTEM

UT System pilot has best office on, off campus

By Madlin Mekelburg
@madlinbmek

Rick Khalar is the chief pilot of the UT System's Beechcraft King Air 350, a nine-passenger airplane with swiveling chairs, tinted windows and a toilet disguised as a seat.

“I have the best office in the world,” Khalar said. “I sit up there, and I see the world go by, and it's all mine. I take pride in what I do, and I think I do it well.”

Khalar — who served in the U.S. Air Force flying B-52s for 30 years — has been the System's chief pilot since December 2000. He said he misses the extreme nature of Air Force flights.

“We're in the other extreme [at the System],” Khalar said. “We're in the safe world, doing things extremely carefully.”

Khalar said his first time



Amy Zhang / Daily Texan Staff

PILOT page 3

Rick Khalar has been UT System's chief pilot since December 2000 and says he has “the best office in the world.”

CAMPUS

UT racers give Boston Marathon second run

By Jordan Rudner
@jrud

When Steven Moore, a project manager in the department of chemistry, crosses the finish line at the Boston Marathon on Monday afternoon, he expects he will feel triumphant. As of Sunday evening, Moore said he's just focused on the race.

“It's an early bedtime for me tonight. I'm just taking it easy,” Moore said. “I'm competitive, and I want to run faster. I'm going to leave the emotional connections for after I cross the finish line.”

Moore is one of roughly 36,000 runners who will compete in this year's marathon — a field 9,000 runners larger than last year, according to the Boston Athletic Association. Last year, on April 15, 2013, two pressure cooker bombs exploded at the finish

line of the marathon, killing three people and injuring more than 250 others.

Moore, who ran the race last year, said the death of Martin William Richard, an 8-year-old boy, resonated with him strongly during his preparation.

“He was there at the finish line to watch his father, with his mother and his sister,” Moore said. “That's a carbon copy of my family. That could've been my wife and two kids, standing at the finish line to watch me. So I will run this race with him in mind.”

Mechanical engineering senior Spencer Buxton, who also ran in last year's marathon, said deciding to tackle the marathon again was an easy decision.

“It was kind of a no-brainer

BOSTON page 2

RESEARCH

Shade-grown coffee production declines

By Natalie Sullivan
@natsullivan94

If you drink one type of sustainable coffee, your next caffeine buzz may be in short supply, according to research by one UT professor.

Biology assistant professor Shalene Jha found that the proportion of land used for shade-grown coffee, or coffee grown below the canopy of a forest, has decreased worldwide by 20 percent since 1996.

“The way coffee is grown across the globe has changed a lot in the last 20 years,” Jha said. “[It's] shifting more towards sun style, with open trees.”

According to Jha, who studies conservation biology, shade-grown coffee provides a diverse habitat and resources for native animals. Jha said the



Coffee growth worldwide is shifting from the shade-grown coffee toward sun-grown coffee, which involves a more intensive style of farming that could have damaging effects on the environment.

Shweta Gulati
Daily Texan Staff

growing alternative, sun-grown coffee, involves an intensive form of farming in which forests are cleared to make room for coffee cultivation, which could have damaging environmental effects.

“Shade-grown coffee supports a lot of biodiversity — it allows the soil to replenish nutrients,” Jha said. “It provides natural

pest control and a habitat for birds. The thing about [sun-grown coffee] is it's a form of short-term production [that] doesn't last long, and it tends to lead to deforestation.”

Jha said the shift in coffee growth is a result of large drops in the price of coffee worldwide. Since growing sun-grown coffee is less

expensive and does not require certification, many growers have shifted to the more intensive style of farming to keep costs down.

Beth Beall, president of Texas Coffee Traders, an Austin roasting company that has several coffee shops on campus, said,

COFFEE page 2

TEXAS TRAVESTY

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CORRECTIONS

Because of an editing error, an article in the April 16 issue of The Daily Texan misstated the number of UT professors who have won the Rome Prize. Architecture associate professor Vincent Snyder is the sixth UT professor to win the prize.


Because of an editing error, a graphic in the April 18 issue of The Daily Texan incorrectly reported the disparities between assistant and associate professor salaries. The correct disparities can be found at dailytexanonline.com.

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TOMORROW'S WEATHER

High
86



Low
60

Noodeli?

THE DAILY TEXAN

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FRAMES FEATURED PHOTO



Amelia Hiatt, president of the Texas Polo Team, rides during outdoor practice Saturday afternoon in Lockhart.

Jenna VonHofe / Daily Texan Staff

COFFEE

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despite the decrease in shade-grown farming, sales of the coffee in the U.S. and locally have increased over the past few years. According to Beall, the company's sales of organic shade-grown coffee have increased by 25 percent each year for the past two years, but there is often a trade-off consumers face between quality coffee and lower prices.

"People come into Coffee Traders daily asking for organic and fair trade coffees," Beall said in an email. "From the consumer side, our sales are up, but there is a push back when prices rise due to the higher costs associated with an organic or small farm coffee."

Beall said one reason for the decline in shade grown production is the cost of certification for farmers.

"Once an organic farm is approved, the farmer must

pay the certification fee, the fertilizers used must be organic, and an inspector must be paid to inspect the farm annually," Beall said. "All of this is on the gamble that the coffee will sell at a higher price in the market."

English senior Cara Shaffer said, although price matters when she buys coffee, ultimately, she would go with the more environmentally friendly brand.

"I'm a poor college student, so I care about the price, but I do like trees and the environment, so I think, honestly, I'd pay a little more [for shade-grown coffee]," Shaffer said.

HALL

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followed the work of the House Select Committee on Transparency in State Agency Operations as they are investigating the conduct of Regent Hall, we thought this was the perfect time to reaffirm our vote of no confidence," Jerath said.

Jerath said she wanted the student voice to be recognized in this matter. The letter will also emphasize senate's support of Powers.

"We encourage him to resign, and, failing that, we ask Gov. Perry to seek his

resignation," Jerath said. "As student leaders, we have a duty to represent our constituents, to ensure that their interests are protected, and, since we have lost that trust in Regent Wallace Hall, we thought this was the appropriate action that was necessary at this time."

Andrew Wilson, outgoing president of the Liberal Arts Council, which signed the letter, said he completely supported the letter after observing Hall's actions throughout the year.

"Regent Hall's actions were really uncalled for and illegal in some regards, and it's really

just unacceptable on behalf of the students," Wilson said. "The things that stuck out to me were the laws he broke regarding student privacy."

Along with senate's letter, the seven members of the SG Executive Board will also write a letter and introduce legislation calling for Hall's resignation at the upcoming SG meeting Tuesday.

SG President Kori Rady said he hopes the executive board's letter and Tuesday's resolution will continue the momentum of student involvement in the issue.

"We felt like this was important and key for the University and the students," Rady said. "We want to make sure that people are aware that we know what's going on, and we don't want this to continue."

BOSTON

continues from page 1

to come back up here. It didn't take long," Buxton said. "Watching the city bounce back like it did and seeing everybody out here running — that's electric."

Buxton said he has tried not to dwell on concerns about the race's safety, although he has noticed tightened security around Boston. This year, race officials have increased the number of law enforcement officers along the route, including undercover officers, banned baby strollers from the marathon area and set up checkpoints to search backpacks and coolers.

"You don't let yourself think about it," Buxton said. "It's in the back of your mind ... but everything is so much safer this year, and the energy of the city really overshadows anything else."


Biology senior Patrick Hunt, who is also running the marathon for the second time, said he has also thought about the logistical difficulties of keeping the entire route safe.

"There's always the worry, [but] I think I was more worried last year. ... This year, I know security is so high," Hunt said. "That wasn't really going to stop me."

Moore said he hopes finishing the marathon for a second time will be a gratifying experience.

"The first year, I ran the marathon out of respect for the sport," Moore said. "After the events unfolded, I felt like there was some unfinished business. I felt like I needed to come back and be a part of things here."

The 26.2-mile race will begin 10:30 a.m. CST and will be livestreamed on watchlive.baa.org. Additional reporting by Alyssa Mahoney




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CAMPUS

Professor links global warming hiatus to rain

By Kate Dannenmaier
@kjdannen

While global average temperature has remained steady over the past 15 years, a visiting professor said at a talk Friday that there are warmer temperatures in store for us.

Shang-Ping Xie, University of California-San Diego climate, atmospheric science and physical oceanography professor, said his research indicated the decadal cooling of the Pacific Ocean seems to be a major cause of the current global warming hiatus. According to Xie, the cooling of the Pacific could not be linked to a carbon dioxide increase and is an example of enhanced climate variability.

“This led us to believe that the decadal cooling we saw over the past 15 years is largely due to natural variability,” Xie said. “If that is true, what’s going down is going to come up. So, when the pacific decadal isolation swings into a positive phase, we are going to see global warming coming back.”

Yuko Okumura, a research associate at the Institute for Geophysics in the Jackson School of Geosciences, organized Xie’s talk. Okumura said she thinks some people may still be skeptical about global warming because of the hiatus. According to Okumura, the natural variability caused by the interactions of the ocean and the atmosphere tends to overshadow the impact of human-caused climate change.

Judd Partin, a research scientist at the University’s geophysics institute who studies past climate change, said he thought Xie gave a great explanation of the hiatus in global warming. He said that, until the talk, he had not known sea surface temperatures could control rainfall patterns.

“The warmer sea temperatures lead to higher precipitation and vice versa,” Partin said.

Xie said the heat waves, warm temperatures and droughts seen in the southern United States seem to have resulted from the hiatus event because all of the precipitation and



Shang-Ping Xie, climate, atmospheric science and physical oceanography professor at UC-San Diego, said a decadal cooling of the Pacific Ocean could be the cause of a recent global warming hiatus.

temperature patterns can be traced back to tropical Pacific cooling.

“People rely on imported

water — 80, 90 percent in Southern California at least,” Xie said. “If the rainfall shifts away or something, it’s going

to have tremendous consequences. Maybe it’s fairer to say global warming is not really a temperature issue but,

rather, a water issue. Rainfall is going to increase somewhere and decrease somewhere else.”

RESEARCH

New research links gamma waves with memory stores

By Wynne Davis
@wynneellyn

Neurons and gamma waves in the brain can give insight into how people remember their location, according to UT researchers.

In a study released Thursday, neuroscience assistant professor Laura Colgin and graduate student Kevin Bieri found the brain’s place cells can create a map using different types of gamma waves.

“Place cells are neurons that fire in specific spatial locations and thereby provide the brain with a map of where we are at any given time,” Colgin said. “Our study showed that place cells represented recently visited locations during periods when fast gamma waves occurred and that place cells represented upcoming locations ... during times when slow gamma waves occurred.”

Colgin said gamma waves are important because they coordinate neuron activity.

“Connections between neurons are strengthened when

the neurons fire together, and this strengthening is believed to be the way in which memories are stored,” Colgin said.

Colgin said the relationship between the gamma waves and memory retrieval is not clear but believes the waves do help in the memory retrieval process because they work with the neurons in regions of the brain where memory is stored.

“This may allow neurons in those regions to produce a powerful output and thereby effectively transmit the stored memories to regions that need to access the stored memories,” Colgin said.

Bieri said he originally joined Colgin’s lab because of his interest in neural communication and memory.

“If oscillations are, in fact, doing as the growing evidence suggests, this adds a whole other layer of complexity and flexibility to the way neurons talk to one another, and this may help explain complex cognitive functions like attention and memory,” Bieri said.

Lab technician Katelyn Bob-

bitt said these findings could lead to further developments in research regarding cognitive diseases such as schizophrenia and Alzheimer’s.

“Knowing how we make and recall memories of place and events could, one day, help those with diseases like Alzheimer’s, where short-term memory is altered,” Bobbitt said. “Maybe there’s a way to help forgetful people like myself better remember things like where they parked their car or left their phone.”

Colgin said she plans on continuing her research with gamma waves to see whether she can choose which waves to block and then determine the specific role each type plays in memory processing. She said she is also working with a mouse model of Alzheimer’s disease, which shows spatial memory deficits.

“We hope to use deep brain stimulation to restore normal gamma waves in these mice and determine whether memory deficits are alleviated,” Colgin said.

CAMPUS

Researcher: Roma stereotypes perpetuate cultural prejudices

By Natalie Sullivan
@natsullivan94

Despite recent advances in human rights laws worldwide, laws for Romani women still allow discrimination because of cultural stereotypes, said a guest speaker on campus Friday.

Human rights activist Alexandra Oprea spoke about the subordination and lack of reproductive rights for Romani women and how their experience parallels with that of minority women in the U.S. The Romani, also known as Gypsies, are an ethnic group that originated in India but now live mainly in parts of Europe and the Americas.

Ian Hancock, linguistics professor who is Romani, said he believes the Romani’s history of migration has subordinated them and made them subject to discrimination.

“They’re a population with roots in Asian language and culture but existing primarily in the West, which has created problems since day one,” Hancock said. “They’re eternal outsiders. They have no country, no army [and]

no government to belong to.”

Oprea, who is Romani, said she believes discrimination toward the Romani arises because of their poor economic and social status. According to Oprea, they are the poorest ethnic group in Europe, and 80 percent of Roma in Romania and Bulgaria live on fewer than \$4.30 per day. Their literacy rates are also among the lowest in the world: Only 31.7 percent of Roma in Europe have finished primary school, according to Oprea.

Because of these social and economic factors, Romani women have few legal rights, Oprea said. During childbirth, Romani women are often forced to sign consent forms for sterilization procedures, even though they cannot read, according to Oprea. She said this discrimination exists because of cultural stereotypes about Romani women.

“The rape of Romani women isn’t considered a crime because of this Jezebel trope [of the Roma],” Oprea said. “People see Gypsy women as ‘welfare queens,’ sexually promiscuous and irresponsible.

The discrimination and

subordination Romani women face parallel that of minority women in the U.S., Oprea said.

“Like African-Americans and Native Americans, Roma have a long history of subordination in the hands of white supremacy,” Oprea said. “Just as the rape of black women by white slave masters was essential to the perpetuation of the system of slavery in the U.S., the rape of Romani women was essential to the system of slavery in Romania.”

Angel Fuhre, Russian, East European, and Eurasian studies senior said she did not realize the extent of the discrimination Romani women experience.

“It was shocking to me, to think that this is 2014, and all of this is still going on,” Fuhre said.

Oprea said more support is still needed for Romani women — both in the U.S. and worldwide.

“We don’t have a Romani civil rights organization in the U.S.,” Oprea said. “There needs to be more laws protecting Romani women and avenues for outside support.”

PILOT

continues from page 1

on an airplane was in the eighth grade.

“They had this little air show,” Khalar said. “One guy was selling rides in a Cessna 172 for a penny a pound, and my buddy Dave and I got on a scale. I paid a \$1.60 for my flight, and he paid a \$1.30, and we took off with the pilot. We had a great time.”

According to Randy Wallace, System associate vice chancellor, controller and chief budget officer, the System plane cannot be used for personal excursions.

“Any of our administrators can actually reserve the plane, realizing that they could be bumped off by the chancellor or our executive officers,” Wallace said. “UT-Austin athletics makes up a fairly substantial amount of our business, but it’s primarily used for System administration.”

Amy Mitchell, administrative associate in the System controller office, is responsible for scheduling

flights and coordinating payments and maintenance. Mitchell said it costs approximately \$1,000 to operate the plane for an hour, in addition to fuel and maintenance charges. According to Wallace, flight costs are built into the System’s budget.

“The plane is funded centrally,” Wallace said. “[The System] budgets for the plane, so we pay the cost. ... When people want to utilize our plane that are not in the core administration, then we charge them the fair going rate.”

Mitchell said plane usage varies depending on the time of year, but most flights take place in Texas.

“Sometimes there’s less usage during the summer, of course because the institutions are on a summer schedule,” Mitchell said.

The plane usage is closely monitored by the state and the UT System Board of Regents’ rules and regulations. Mitchell said Khalar is allowed to fly a maximum of six consecutive flights per week. Because the rules also stipulate two pilots must be

Multimedia

Check out our video coverage at dailytexanonline.com

present for each flight, peripheral pilots are hired at a daily rate to accompany Khalar on flights.

The plane is located at the Texas Department of Transportation’s hangar at Austin-Bergstrom International Airport. According to Nancy Sutherland, Travel Program director, TxDOT employees handle all maintenance for the plane. Sutherland said, when the System’s plane is in use, state planes are available for the System’s use.

Khalar said his long tenure at the System has turned his passengers into family.

“I’ve actually seen weather coming towards an airport, and I’ve called the travellers and said, ‘You guys need to come back because we need to leave right away,’” Khalar said. “Our relationship is so great here that I don’t get questions. It’s like, ‘We’re on the way,’ and here they come.”



Rick Khalar’s long tenure as the UT System pilot has turned his passengers into family, as he frequently flies the same people.

Amy Zhang
Daily Texan Staff

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HORNS UP: CITY COUNCIL SUPPORTS RAISING MINIMUM WAGE



On Thursday, the Austin City Council passed a resolution supporting a minimum wage of \$11 per hour for all part-time city employees — the same minimum wage that full-time city employees currently make. On April 18, the council also passed a resolution expressing support for an increased state minimum wage or the ability of local municipalities to set their own minimum wages, which they currently cannot do. Horns up to the council for doing what they can to support raising the minimum wage, because \$7.25 per hour is simply not enough to make ends meet in Austin. We hope that more city councils around the state will follow suit, and that the Texas legislature will do something about this pressing issue in the upcoming 2015 session.

“Horns up to the council for doing what they can to support raising the minimum wage, because \$7.25 per hour is simply not enough to make ends meet in Austin.

HORNS UP: AUSTIN BREWERIES CAN NOW SELL BEER ON-SITE



Last Thursday, the Austin City Council unanimously passed an amendment that would reverse language in the City Code restricting beer sales at breweries. The reversal comes after the state legislature passed a law allowing Texas breweries to sell their beer on-site last June. For a few months, the delicious craft alcohol was flowing in Austin. However, Austin City Officials soon realized that selling beer on-site, while no longer prohibited under state law, was still in some cases a violation of city code. Consequently, the breweries were forced to turn off their taps. The limitation, according to the Austin American-Statesman, lowered some local breweries’ sales. Thursday’s decision will offer the breweries more leeway to sell on-site; however, breweries within 540 feet of a family home will have to either acquire a conditional use permit or challenge the zoning laws. Still, progress is progress, and summer is coming — so Horns Up to the Austin City Council for making a change that benefits both local businesses and our chances of getting a frothy glass of cold beer.

“Thursday’s decision will offer the breweries more leeway to sell on-site; however, breweries within 540 feet of a family home will have to either acquire a conditional use permit or challenge the zoning laws.

TAKE YOUR SHOT

Firing Line: UGS courses are meant to challenge students

Editor’s Note: On occasion, the Daily Texan editorial board will publish a selection of tweets and online comments culled from the Daily Texan website and the various Daily Texan Twitter accounts, along with direct submissions from readers.

Our intention is to continue the tradition of the Firing Line, a column first started in the Texan in 1909, in which readers share their opinions “concerning any matter of general interest they choose.”

Submissions can be sent to editor@dailytexanonline.com. Submissions are edited for length and clarity.

Here’s a harsh reality faced by many students: college is much harder than high school was.

The Signature Course, the UGS class required for every UT-Austin undergraduate, is designed to push entering students out of their comfort zones. This challenge can take a variety of forms, and of course it is slightly different for every student. UT is made up of a diverse entering class of students from all over Texas and beyond who have one thing in common: they were good enough to get into the university.

We created UGS 302s and 303s to address that diversity and to do a few other important things as well. Suchi Sundaram, whose recent Texan column you might have read, is partially correct: Signature Courses were developed to help transition students from a wide variety of high schools to college. But introducing them to the resources the campus offers is only one small portion of what the Signature Course aims to achieve. More importantly, the course is intended to be academically rigorous; our top faculty are trying to expand students’ horizons.

Sundaram asserts that “The diverse struc-

“Suchi Sundaram, whose recent Texan column you might have read, is partially correct: Signature Courses were developed to help transition students from a wide variety of high schools to college... More importantly, the course is intended to be academically rigorous.

—Brent Iverson,
Dean of Undergraduate Studies

“Signature Courses ... provide a chance to see what college has to offer.

—Andrew Clark,
Outgoing Senate President

tures of the courses have led to a knowledge disparity among students.” Although each course is indeed distinct in its content and approach, here are the things every single Signature Course must incorporate:

- Distinguished faculty who have been recommended by their department chairs
- Interdisciplinary and contemporary content
- Assignments that build a solid platform of writing skills
- An oral presentation requirement
- Information literacy content
- Organized use of unique campus resources

The advisory committee charged with making sure Signature Courses all meet those requirements and for ensuring the high quality of the courses overall is made up of faculty from a variety of disciplines, along with a student representative.

Andrew Clark, the outgoing Senate president and the student voice on the committee, had this to say: “While it is true there is an incredible diversity of course offerings, I believe that’s what makes Signature Courses so valuable. They provide a chance to see what college has to offer. Mine remains one of the best courses I took at UT because it challenged me academically, personally, and ultimately expanded my worldview.”

Signature Courses and the faculty who teach them are focused on imparting to students what they believe will prove most valuable in a college education. According to top CEOs, medical school admissions officers and my own observations as my daughters leave college and enter graduate school or the work force, UT graduates need the following skills most of all: the ability to think critically about complex ideas, the ability to communicate effectively, and, above all, the ability to write persuasively.

Some students think the path of least resistance is the best one. As we enter the registration period, I hope that students opt for the classes that offer them the greatest opportunity for intellectual growth.

Hook ‘em,
Brent Iverson
Dean, School of Undergraduate Studies

GALLERY



Illustration by Owen Dodgen / Daily Texan Staff

COLUMN

Hegar’s property tax plan would cost the state’s poor



By Noah M. Horwitz
Daily Texan Columnist
@NmHorwitz

If there is any consistency in Texas politics, it’s about taxation. The Republican Party sees it as pure evil — and no, that is not hyperbole. The Texas GOP’s platform advocates for the repeal of the 16th amendment, which allows for a federal income tax, and for the total abolition of capital gains and property taxes, among others. Accordingly, when a Democrat rants and raves about a Republican opponent wanting to raise taxes, it should raise more than a few eyebrows.

Mike Collier, the Democratic nominee for Comptroller, which is the state’s chief treasury and financial official, recently accused his Republican opponent, State Sen. Glenn Hegar, R-Harris County, of wanting to engage in a massive tax hike. A recent television ad by Collier pledged to “hold the lines on taxes.” So, for a party so hell-bent on dismantling sources of government revenue, how on earth could one of its candidates be accused of raising them?

Hegar, like his party, is in favor of abolishing property taxes, although they are the largest single source of revenue for local governments in this state. Specifically, municipalities and school districts receive inordinate amounts of their revenue from such sources. Texas’ property taxes are high compared to the rest of the country, but they occur in the complete absence of a state income tax — something few other states boast.

The problem, of course, is that Hegar would not be content simply gutting a major source of revenue and then allowing the state to flounder helplessly toward bankruptcy. Rather, he voiced an alternative solution: upping the state’s sales tax to compensate for the loss.

“I don’t like the property tax, never have. I think we should replace it,” Hegar said at a campaign forum in January. “The best thing to replace it with is a consumption type tax, sales tax per se.”

Analysis from Texas Tribune’s Ross Ramsey confirms the suspicion that fully

“Just about everyone dislikes taxes, but the ugly truth is that they pay for the things we use every day, including bridges, parks, roads and schools. If one of the biggest taxes in the states is done away without equal offsets in spending, it would logically have to be replaced by another irksome tax.

“I don’t like the property tax, never have. I think we should replace it. The best thing to replace it with is a consumption type tax, sales tax per se.”

—Sen. Glen Hegar,
R-Harris County
Candidate for Comptroller

replacing the property tax with an expanded sales tax would raise the rate to nearly 25 percent. To review some simple arithmetic, this would mean that a \$50,000 automobile would have a tax bill of \$12,500 — no small potatoes.

When I asked Collier about the prospect of Hegar’s sales tax, he doubled down on his tax hike rhetoric, saying, “It’s the worst decision I’ve ever seen,” and adding that it would “dampen our economy,” be “unfair” and “deeply regressive to poorer people.” This view was echoed by students here on campus.

“A sales tax always disproportionately burdens those of lower incomes,” said Taral Patel, a University-wide representative in Student Government. “Many students are on loans or work to make ends meet usually on a minimum wage, and Senator Hegar’s 25-percent sales tax causes significantly more burden to students because we can barely afford the high costs of tuition as it is.”

Indeed, simple economics teaches us that flat taxes are inherently regressive, because those with less money must dedicate a larger proportion of their limited funds than those with means. A sales tax is the epitome of such a scheme, with all of society’s most vulnerable demographics — the young, the old and the impoverished — being hit the hardest.

For the vast majority of us — left and right — it is not a joyous occasion to have hard-earned income garnered by the government. Just about everyone dislikes taxes, but the ugly truth is that they pay for the things we use every day, including bridges, parks, roads and schools. If one of the biggest taxes in the states is done away without equal offsets in spending, it would logically have to be replaced by another irksome tax.

A 25-percent sales tax, however, would not merely be equally irksome to the property tax; it would be much, much worse, especially for students. In today’s political system, the benefits of governmental services must be paid for by the detrimental effects of taxation. Granted, were Hegar to win, his position would not allow him to make changes to Texas’ tax laws. Still, his ridiculous rhetoric could sway lawmakers, who can make changes to the tax code. Consequently, voters should have a say in making sure those taxes are not too detrimental to society’s most vulnerable groups.

Horwitz is a government junior from Houston.

WEEKEND RECAPS

TRACK & FIELD / DANIEL CLAY AND GRANT GORDON

At this weekend's Michael Johnson Dr. Pepper Classic in Waco, the Longhorns grabbed 16 top finishes split evenly between men and women. Head coach Mario Sategna praised the team as it continued to dominate.

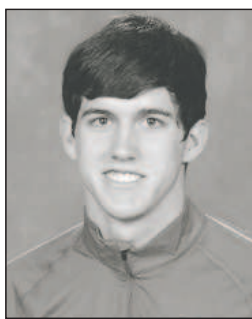
"It was a really good day for the both the men and women," Sategna said in a statement. "We had some impressive performances with a number of seasonal and lifetime bests."

As the No. 3 women cruised to first place finishes in eight events in the unscored team meet, freshman Kendall Baisden burst onto the scene with a victory in the 400 meters. The freshman outpaced Olympic silver medalist Lyudmila Litvinova and teammate senior Briana Nelson, who finished third with a personal-best time of 52.27.

Junior Ashley Spencer carried the Longhorns to a 1-2-3-4 sweep of the 200 meters. Spencer finished in a personal-best time of 22.92, which places her at sixth nationally.



Kendall Baisden
Freshman



Zach Bilderback
Sophomore

Sophomore Morolake Akinosun and sophomore Courtney Okolo finished second and third, respectively, also with personal-best times.

Sophomore Zack Bilderback was the star of the day on the men's side. Bilderback ran a personal-best 45.73 in the 400 meters, placing him first in the race ahead of several professionals and even Olympic gold medalist Jeremy Wariner. His time ranks him ninth on the 2014 NCAA performers list, to pair with a second place in the 200 meters — another personal best at 20.76.

The men also posted impressive performances

in the throws. Junior Ryan Crouser won both the discus and the shot put, nearly eclipsing his school record and nationally leading mark in the shot put. Junior Will Spence, often forgotten in Crouser's large shadow, finished second in the discus and third in the shot put with a personal-best toss of 63 feet, two inches, a mark that ranks 12th nationally on the NCAA performers list.

Texas will send several sprint and distance runners to Penn Relays starting Thursday for one of two meets remaining before the Big 12 Outdoor Championships.

MEN'S TENNIS / BRIANNA HOLT

The Longhorns concluded conference play with a 5-1 victory against Texas Tech on Saturday. Ending its season ranked No. 7, the team stole a Big 12 title, despite stiff competition among three top-seven teams. Texas has won 11 of its last 13 matches and ends the regular season with a 7-3 record.

This weekend, the Longhorns won their first four singles matches after moving inside to continue the match

because of rain and hail. There were no doubles competitions.

The team joins the volleyball, men's swimming and diving, women's swimming and diving and women's indoor track and field teams as the fifth athletic program at the University to win a Big 12 Conference title this season.

The Longhorns will continue play Friday through Sunday in the Big 12 Men's Championship in Fort Worth.



Soren Hess-Olson
Junior

WOMEN'S TENNIS / CHRIS CARAVEO

The Longhorns closed out their final game at the Penick-Allison Center with a long and memorable match on Senior Day on Friday against Baylor.

Seniors Elizabeth Begley and Juliana Gajic followed pre-match celebrations by breaking out the team huddle with one last "Texas Fight."

Only Begley triumphed that night. She and sophomore Breanna Addison defeated Victoria Kisileva and Jordaan Sanford 8-0. Gajic struggled to get the ball over the net in doubles, as she and freshman Pippa

Horn lost 8-2.

In singles, Begley picked up two straight games down 5-2 after a dispute with an inbounds call in favor of No. 81 Ema Burgic. Unable to pull even, she lost 6-4, 6-1.

As she cheered for her teammates from a 3-0 deficit, the Longhorns won three straight points, including No. 14 Addison's tiebreaker victory over Kiah Generette 7-6 (0), 7-5.

At No. 4 singles, freshman Neda Koprčina forced a third-set tiebreaker to decide the finale. Down 6-5 at match point, she failed to return the



Elizabeth Begley
Senior

ball as it soared to the back of the court.

Despite the 4-3 loss, Texas and its seniors made the four-hour, 37-minute match one to remember.

DEFENSE continues from page 6

defense. The starting defensive line finished with 15 tackles, three sacks and five quarterback hurries. Among these were a quarterback hurry by junior defensive end Shiro Davis that led to an interception return for touchdown by senior safety Mykkel Thompson.

Senior defensive tackle Desmond Jackson, who finished with a Texas-high six tackles, thought the defense performed well after struggling the first series.

"Overall, the first series to me is the one that, to me, sticks out because we had a couple of critical errors," Jackson said. "We had missed assignments, a couple of bad tackles, a couple of bad angles, but, overall, we had got our butterflies out, and we were able to just go in there and make the adjustments and say, 'Everybody calm down. Just relax and have fun, but let's get our assignments done.' As soon as we did that, that's when we started go-

ing out there and executing."

Executing may be a bit of an understatement, as the defense held the second-string offense to only 32 yards the rest of the way before being pulled to start the fourth quarter.

But it wasn't only the starting defensive linemen who dominated. Freshman defensive end Caleb Bluiett showed a lot of potential, recording two sacks and a game-high eight tackles against the starting offensive line.

One of the keys to the defensive line is communication between ends and tackles. Since assistant head coach Chris Rumph took over both positions, he's run the merged group through the same drills in practice. This move should help the units stay in sync and avoid critical errors. It's a move junior defensive tackle Malcom Brown thinks could help the team.

"We are all on the same page really," Brown said. "We

Overall, the first series to me is the one that to me sticks out because we had a couple of critical errors.

—Desmond Jackson,
Senior defensive tackle

aren't being taught one thing then being taught something different. We are all taught the same thing. We all do the same drills and everything. It's nice, and it has its perks."

After the first series, the

defensive line disrupted the game. With solid outings from senior defensive end Cedric Reed, as well as Brown and Jackson, Texas' front should be poised for another dominant campaign in 2014.

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RECYCLE BECAGTE

By **DAVID OUELLET**

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O	F	N	T	S	I	L	D	I	A	L	P	R	U	Y
D	L	L	O	A	T	H	K	T	S	I	E	R	D	L
A	E	⊗	E	T	E	U	S	R	R	K	T	S	R	I
K	C	⊙	Z	E	S	W	M	T	A	L	C	R	E	S
L	T	⊕	I	K	C	E	S	E	E	P	E	O	S	H
O	O	N	S	C	U	E	N	N	I	P	S	S	S	A
P	R	A	R	A	T	S	E	I	M	D	G	I	M	R
A	T	D	E	J	E	C	L	U	H	O	O	V	R	N
R	I	N	V	I	K	A	J	A	W	R	G	O	A	E
K	U	E	P	S	V	N	I	N	D	O	G	S	H	S
A	S	P	T	I	A	R	A	R	A	L	L	O	C	S
T	U	A	S	D	Y	P	R	I	N	C	E	S	S	E
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By Drew Lieberman
@DrewLieberman

On the first snap of the spring game, sophomore running back Jalen Overstreet took the handoff and burst outside for 22 yards. It was a poor start for the first-string defense playing against offensive backups on a drive that culminated in the only points the starting defense allowed. During this drive, the starters surrendered 70 yards, including the two longest plays it would allow all day.

But that would be the only drive during which the starting defense looked bad.

Texas, who wore dark jerseys and featured the majority of the first team players easily beat the Longhorns, who sported white uniforms and were made up mostly of second and third string players, 38-14.

Once the defensive line started to have its way with the second-string offensive line, this contest was dominated by the



Pu Ying Huang / Daily Texan Staff

Running back Malcolm Brown carried the ball 20 times for 82 yards and one touchdown in the Longhorns annual Spring game Saturday. Texas' run game was solid throughout the contest, but the Longhorn quarterbacks struggled all afternoon.

DEFENSE

page 5

OFFENSE
continues from page 1

In the second half, Swoopes completed eight of his next 10 passes. With a late third-quarter 6-yard touchdown pass to Brown, Swoopes ended the day 17-for-30 with 229 yards, three touchdowns and one interception.

"Well, you like the way he was able to bounce back," Strong said. "He missed some big throws there ...

but then the way he settled down and was able to bounce back, then you felt like 'OK, he is getting himself back under control.'"

Swoopes took all of the snaps with the first-team offense and only faced the second-team defense. Strong said he wanted to the first team to come out with some confidence.

In the fourth quarter, Swoopes threw his best pass of the day as he connected with Shipley for a 44-yard touchdown. Shipley, who caught six passes for 95 yards and a touchdown, said Swoopes kept his composure and showed signs of maturity pushing through the bad plays.

Shipley expressed optimism about the coaching change.

"This was our first time to actually go through all the plays that we learned," Shipley said. "We will have

more time in fall camp to get better. We will improve."

With the second-team offense, senior quarterback Miles Onyegbule completed 5-for-10 passes for 60 yards and had two interceptions. Walk-on quarterback Trey Holtz entered the game in the fourth quarter and went 5-for-7 for 55 yards and a touchdown pass to senior wide receiver John Harris near the end of the game.

Brown, who carried the ball 20 times for 82 yards with a rushing and a receiving touchdown, said the offense was not in sync at the beginning.

"That's something we are going to work on," Brown said. "We got a lot of guys on the offensive line that are getting more game reps than they are used to. ... We all just have to get on the same page so we can all come out there and play fast."

BASEBALL | TEXAS 1, TCU 3



Andrea Kurth / Daily Texan Staff

TCU swept Mark Payton and the Longhorns in Austin this weekend. Texas scored only one run during the three game series and managed just 17 hits against the Horned Frogs.

TCU dominates the mound, sweeps No. 6 Texas in Austin

By Evan Berkowitz
@Evan_Berkowitz

Saturday afternoon, for the third consecutive day, the No. 6 Longhorns found themselves in the middle of a pitching duel. And, just like the first two, the Longhorns came out on the losing end, falling 3-1 as TCU completed a series sweep in front of the largest crowd of the season at UFCU Disch-Falk Field.

"When you score one in three games, you don't win many of them," head coach Augie Garrido said.

The Longhorns (30-11, 9-6 Big 12) had their chance in the ninth, as they loaded the bases with just one out. But freshman DH Andy McGuire grounded into a 4-6-3 double play to end the game.

"It stings," senior center fielder Mark Payton said. "We have a lot of heart, a lot of passion. We are going to bounce back from this."

Senior Nathan Thornhill (6-1) and his .78 ERA pitched well for the Longhorns in a losing effort.

In 6.2 innings, Thornhill allowed just five hits and two runs. Thornhill looked nearly unstoppable through five innings.

After that, Thornhill began to get in trouble. He got out of a 30-pitch sixth unscathed, but the momentum carried over into the seventh. A one-out RBI double by Dylan Fitzgerald tied the game up at one, and a two-out single brought him home to give TCU (26-13, 10-4 Big 12) the lead for good.

While Thornhill was dealing on the mound for the Longhorns, Tyler Alexander held his own for TCU. He allowed just six hits in his five innings and surrendered just one run. The bullpen for the Horned Frogs then shut out the Longhorns to protect the win.

"I saw two good pitching staffs going after each other," Thornhill said.

Texas' only score came in the first on junior right fielder Collin Shaw's RBI dribbler down the line to give Texas its first and only

run of the series.

That was all the Longhorns would get as they fell from their previous Big 12 standings.

"Losing three games hurts you," Garrido said. "We had a chance to control our own destiny."

In the second game of the series Friday night, the Longhorns were shut out 2-0 by TCU's pitching staff. Preston Morrison went seven scoreless, allowing just four hits for the Longhorns.

Junior pitcher Dillon Peters got the nod for Texas and went 6.2 innings, allowing eight hits and two runs. But he got no support from his offense who was shut out for the second straight game. Payton, however, did extend his nation-leading 80-game reach-base streak with a walk Friday and hit Saturday.

The Longhorns continue Tuesday against UT-Pan American before a crucial match-up against Big 12-leading Oklahoma State (29-11, 11-4 Big 12).

SOFTBALL | TEXAS 0, OKLAHOMA 8

Sooners bounce back to blowout Longhorns

By Jacob Martella
@ViewFromTheBox

After a 9-0 run-rule win Friday night, the Longhorns had a golden opportunity along the inside track toward the Big 12 title.

But that hope was dashed from the start of the final game of the series Saturday when No. 14 Oklahoma scored four runs in the bottom of the first inning. The Sooners would never relinquish the lead en route to an 8-0 win that gave them control of their own destiny in the conference.

A day after being shut out by freshman pitcher Tiarra Davis, the Sooners (34-10, 11-2 Big 12) took almost no time scoring to start this game. With the bases loaded and one out, sophomore outfielder Kady Self lined a double to center to score two runs before scoring herself two batters later as part of a four-run Oklahoma inning.

Oklahoma then enjoyed back-to-back home runs courtesy of sophomore catcher Whitney Ellis and sophomore outfielder Paris Townsend to go up 6-0 in the third inning. After back-to-back RBI singles later in the inning, the

Sooners extended their lead to 8-0.

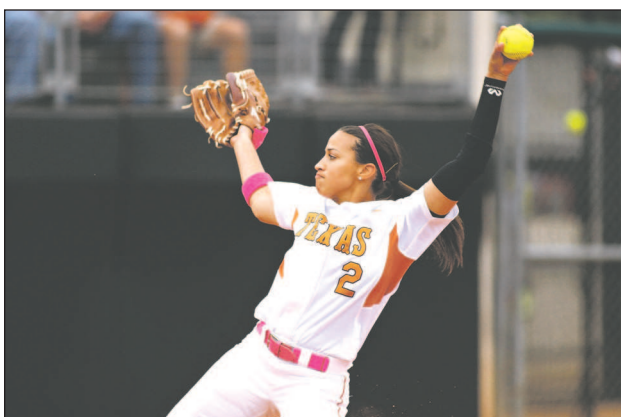
Davis did her best to keep the game close Thursday night and shut the Sooners down Friday night, but she only lasted 1.1 innings Saturday. After Davis gave up six hits and four runs against a mere 12 batters, freshman reliever Lauren Slatten allowed four hits and four runs in an inning of relief.

Meanwhile, Oklahoma sophomore Kelsey Stevens shut down the Longhorn offense. Texas (27-18, 7-3 Big 12) managed only five hits and was sent down in order in three of the five innings. Stevens matched her strikeout total from Thursday night with seven batters sent on strikes.

With the win, Oklahoma moves up 2.5 games ahead of Texas in the Big 12 to now hold the tiebreaker.

The Longhorns have eight conference games remaining on their schedule against Oklahoma State, Kansas and Baylor. Seven of the eight contests are home games.

Texas will travel to San Marcos to play Texas State on Wednesday in its final non-conference matchup of the regular season. First pitch is set for 6 p.m.



Daulton Venglar / Daily Texan file photo

Freshman pitcher Tiarra Davis delivers a pitch in an April 5 home game against Texas Tech. Davis shut out the Sooners en route to a 9-0 Texas victory over Oklahoma in Norman on Friday.

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Malcolm Brown
@MallyCat_28
At the end of the day, I end up in all black

SPORTS BRIEFLY

Popovich tells Sager, 'I promise I'll be nice.'
SAN ANTONIO — Spurs coach Gregg Popovich says he looks forward to sideline reporter Craig Sager's return and "I promise I'll be nice."

TNT's Sager is missing the NBA playoffs as he undergoes treatment for leukemia, so his son, Craig Sager Jr., filled in for Sunday's broadcast of San Antonio's playoff opener against Dallas, asking Popovich a few questions after the third quarter.

Popovich is famous for his terse answers to in-game questions from Sager and other sideline reporters. Sager even joked about it in a statement Friday confirming his diagnosis: "Too bad, I had some probing questions for Pop."

This time, Popovich was verbose by his standards in discussing the Spurs' play. "Great questions from Craig JUNIOR," he quipped at the end.

The younger Sager, a sports reporter in Atlanta, said he asked his father for suggestions but was told, "You're on your own."

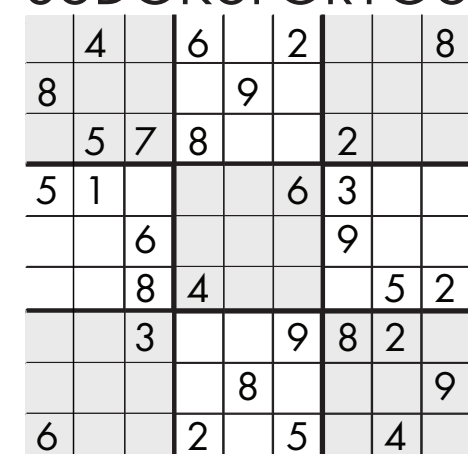
"You did a great job," Popovich said to him, "but I'd rather have your dad standing here."

Popovich then shared this message for his father: "We miss you. You've been an important part of all of us for a long time, doing a great job. We want your fanny back on the court, and I promise I'll be nice."

The ponytailed Sager Jr., 25, wore a sparkly orange tie from his father's closet. A former football walk-on at Georgia, he later tweeted that his dad didn't know about the trip to San Antonio until host Ernie Johnson mentioned it on air at tip-off.

The younger Sager was supposed to tape an interview with Popovich, but the coach insisted on doing it live during the game. Popovich also gave him a hand-written letter to deliver to his father.

—Associated Press



today's solution will appear here next issue								
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60 Up to, briefly

CAMPUS

For senior, staff spinning provides clean slate



By Sam Hays
@samingtonhays

Jesse Crandell perfects his craft every Tuesday and Thursday on the South Mall lawn. Crandell spins a wooden staff around his body, sometimes flourishing behind his back, but never losing focus.

Crandell, 34, is a Hispanic linguistics and Portuguese senior at UT. Although he was born in South Carolina, he grew up mostly in Vermont and Illinois. At 17, he dropped out of high school and lived on his own as a musician. Later, he decided to get his GED so that he could get a degree in music. In 2002, Crandell graduated from Parkland College in Champaign, Ill., with a degree in music performance.

As far as the staff spinning is concerned, Crandell said there is no official name for what he does, but he practices it every day.

Crandell's gestures, steps and even his words are succinct and deliberate — efficient to a fault. A man of medium height, Crandell walks with an innate dexterity — a visual manifestation of the kung fu training on which his staff spinning is based.

"It's a combat form," Crandell said. "But the whole philosophy isn't to learn how to hurt people [but to learn] how to defend the peace. The real master avoids the conflict altogether."

The philosophy behind the staff spinning, and kung fu allows Crandell to draw a meditative benefit from what he does. He says it's relaxing



Helen Fernandez / Daily Texan Staff

Every Tuesday and Thursday, Jesse Crandell spins a wooden staff in the South Mall. Crandell is a musician and a licensed massage therapist who also studies Portuguese and Hispanic linguistics at UT.

but also practical. He says, if he's coming from a Spanish class and has to switch gears and think and speak in Portuguese for the next hour, spinning the staff is the equivalent of wiping the slate clean.

"I can forget everything," Crandell said. "I can just start fresh."

Crandell gained his appreciation and interest in Spanish and Portuguese from his musicianship. He's been a musician since he was a teenager, and his musical interests span from playing Nirvana and Metallica covers in his adolescence to playing in a touring bluegrass band in his twenties.

"I've been a musician

for a long time and was kind of searching," Crandell said. "When you realize you can't play everything and learn every song you love, you think, 'OK, I've gotta pick a direction. I've gotta focus, so I can build something progressive.'"

Now, he plays with Austin Samba, one of the oldest samba schools in the country. Crandell plays surdo, a giant bass drum, and is learning the djembe.

"I think the language is equally beautiful [as the music]," Crandell said. "They developed alongside one another. Neither developed independently."

Through Austin Samba, Crandell met Abou Sylla,

a percussion teacher from Guinea, a small country in West Africa.

"I met [Crandell] when he was playing the guitar," Sylla said. "He saw me playing the djembe and said he'd like to play the djembe too, so that's when I start teaching him how to play."

Sylla took a class of his students, including Crandell, to Guinea over the winter break. Crandell said he dove deeper into his instrument while in Guinea and witnessed firsthand what Sylla did for his people and their community. The money for the trip went to people in Sylla's home village. They brought bikes to transport water. The year before, Sylla brought food and

money to give to his family members and neighbors.

"We didn't go anywhere in the three weeks I was there where he didn't give money or food to someone," Crandell said. "We need more people like [Sylla] in this world."

Crandell's interest in Afro-Latin cultures has brought him all over the world, including England, Jamaica, Mexico, Costa Rica, Brazil and Guinea. For many of these trips, he applied for scholarships and studied abroad. He's currently applying for a Fulbright scholarship so that he can further his travels and become more involved in international relations.

To support his pursuits, Crandell is a licensed massage therapist. On top of all of this, Crandell is a UT Service Scholar, often participating in community development projects around Austin.

To balance his myriad interests and passions, Crandell searches for and puts effort into things he truly loves, allowing him to make time for everything.

"Every day I'm doing homework, I'm practicing music," Crandell said. "I meditate. I exercise. I garden. These are just part of my daily routine. Above all, I enjoy doing them, so there's an automatic appeal there. It helps me not lose my mind."

CAMPUS

Fashion show to premiere 26 student designers

By Eleanor Dearman
@ellydearman

Clothing patterns, scraps of fabric, garment bags and completed outfits fill the design studios of the second floor of Gearing Hall. Students sit at sewing machines and mannequins, perfecting the collections they have been working on all year.

They are preparing for the University Fashion Group's "Spectrum" fashion show Thursday, an event that showcases the designs of 26 students in UT's fashion design program.

While most of the designers are textile and apparel juniors and seniors, the event pulls in both fashion students and students outside the program to help run and promote the show.

Since University Fashion Group, the show's coordinating organization, is open to all students, there are opportunities to be involved in areas including public relations, advertising and model coordinating.

"[Spectrum] is pretty much University-wide because we have so many other majors coming and helping us, such as the communication school, art school, business school and all these other students involved," said Ockhee Bego, textile and apparel lecturer.

Textile and apparel seniors Haleigh Clark and Natalie Poche are both designing collections for this year's show. Each was responsible for a sports-wear look, a ball



Jenna VonHofe / Daily Texan Staff

Haleigh Clark and Natalie Poche, textile and apparel seniors, pose with their designs for their senior show "Spectrum."

gown or wedding dress and three outfits that make up a mini collection.

Both girls' designs were inspired by history. Clark focused on the history and style of Ivy League architecture and clothing.

"All of my colors are inspired by the colors of the pennants for, like, Dartmouth and Yale," Clark said. "I used contemporary styling that I could imagine walking Ivy League campuses today."

Poche, who is also the University Fashion Group's president, chose to focus on Germany's Bauhaus art movement, which took place from 1919-1933.

"It was a time in art when things kind of reverted back to geometric shapes and things in their most natural form, so that really resonated

with me the most," Poche said. "I kind of took that and ran with it and designed what I thought resembled that time in art."

The two both learned to sew from their grandmothers. Clark said, when she was 12 years old, her grandmother would teach her to sew during visits by creating little projects that taught the basics of sewing.

"I would watch Project Runway and take what I knew about sewing and challenge myself with little things," Clark said. "Like, I would take an old skirt out of my closet and start sewing little trims that my grandma gave me onto that."

In preparation for Spectrum, every few weeks came with a deadline for one of the outfits. After receiving critiques, designers would adjust and improve their creations.

SPECTRUM FASHION SHOW

When: Thursday, 5:30 p.m.

Where: Frank Erwin Center

Cost: Free

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"There are times where that's really tiring and emotionally draining," Clark said. "But, at the same time, you come out of it feeling a lot stronger about your artistic vision."

Poche said the end product made all of the preceding work worth it.

"Putting it on a mannequin is way different than putting it on a human being," Poche said. "So, when you have that for the first time it's almost like, 'Oh my goodness, this could be sold somewhere.'"

First lady to skip over president's trip to Asia

WASHINGTON — When President Barack Obama travels abroad, sometimes it's not enough for just the leader of the free world to show up. People in other countries want the first lady, too.

But Michelle Obama won't join her husband when he heads to Asia next week, and her absence is likely to sting, especially in image-conscious Japan. It's the first of four countries on Obama's travel schedule and one of two that are welcoming him with official state visits.

"If Madame Obama could have come, it would have been better," said Mataka Kamiya, a professor of international relations at the National Defense University in Yokosuka, near Tokyo. "But the most important thing is that President Obama accepted this is a state visit. From an expert point of view, it's sort of worrisome why Madame Obama isn't coming."

That Mrs. Obama recently spent a week in China with her mother, Marian Robinson, and daughters, Malia and Sasha, also is sure to be noted in Japan, a close U.S. ally and rival of China.

Mrs. Obama's China visit last month was partly seen as making up for her not accompanying the president to California last year for the visit by President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan. The meeting fell days before Sasha's 12th birthday, and Mrs. Obama's office said at the time that she stayed back in Washington to be

with family.

In public, Beijing muted its hurt feelings over Mrs. Obama's absence in California, but deep disappointment was registered in some Chinese mainstream and social media.

Many Chinese had looked forward to comparing Peng, an unusually visible and fashionable Chinese first lady, to her glamorous and high-profile American counterpart. Liyuan holds the rank of major general in the People's Liberation Army and was a popular singer on state television.

Mrs. Obama made up for her absence in California with a well received, widely reported visit to three Chinese cities last month. She jumped rope, dabbled in tai chi, walked a section of the Great Wall with her daughters, fed pandas, met with Jinping and ate dinner with Liyuan.

The Japanese are putting a good face on Obama's upcoming solo stop, noting that his stay will be short. One high-level Japanese government official chalked up the first lady's absence to a new "American style" of travel.

Mrs. Obama's most recent overseas trip with her husband came last summer, when they visited three African countries with their daughters, shortly after their stops in Northern Ireland and Germany. Since then, the president has traveled without her to Sweden, Russia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Saudi Arabia.

—Associated Press