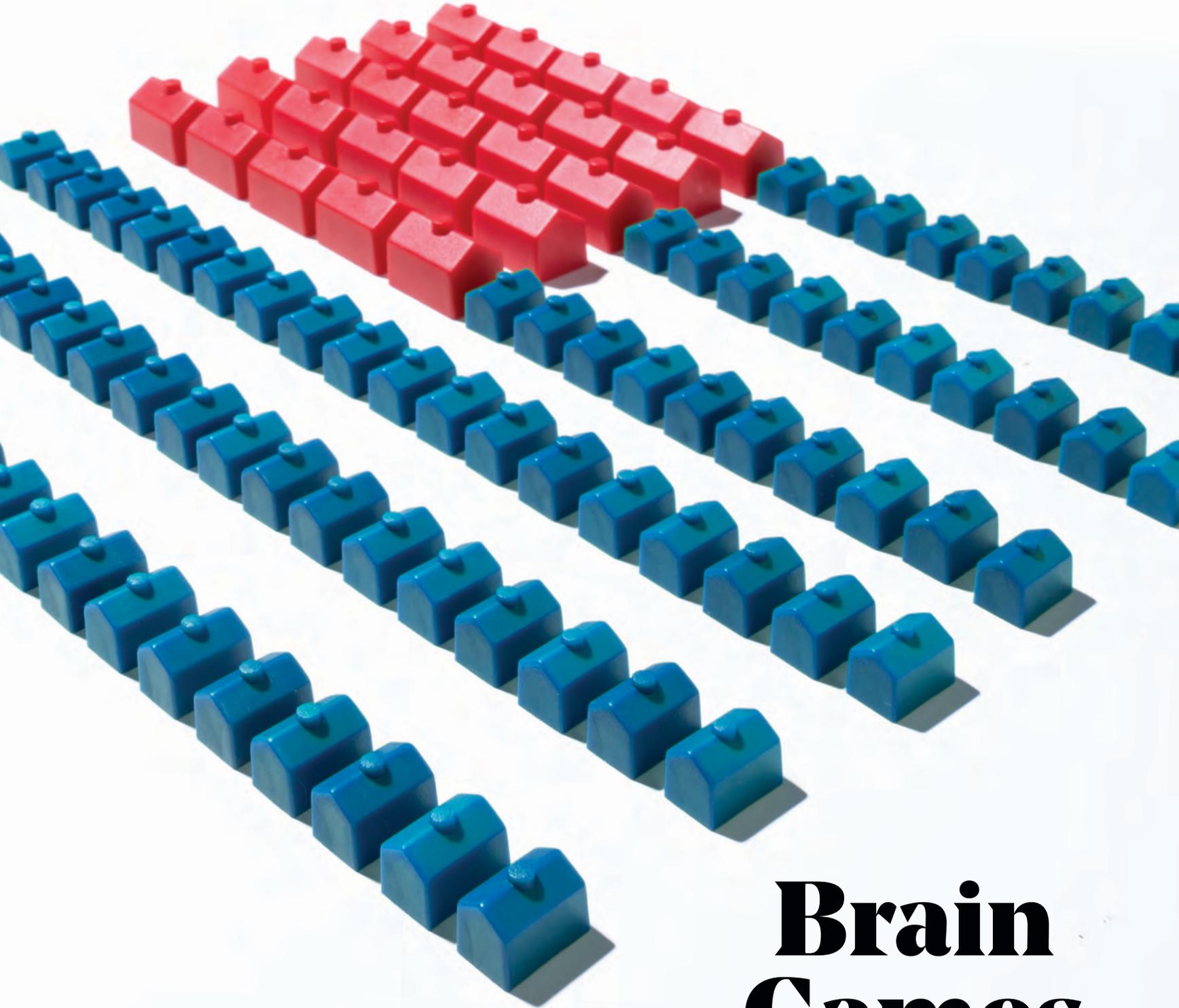


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ST. EDWARD'S UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

Spring 2019



Brain Games

AMERICAN SOCIAL WELFARE AND
6 OTHER EXPERIENCE-DRIVEN CLASSES

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Making Austin
even better

Page 22

first look

Local Color

The murals of East Austin (like this one at Native Hostel) formed the colorful backdrop for LOCAL, the entrepreneurial venture of Nahomi Gomez '17 (left) and Isabella Medford '20 (right). The two created a mobile platform to help travelers find tours of off-the-beaten path attractions. Their walking tour included Instagram-worthy art in East Austin, where rapid development has spawned the commission of new murals as well as graffiti painted in protest. Their now-shuttered venture was a test, with Austin as the perfect laboratory. "People were really open to coming on little adventures to discover new details about their city," Medford says. "And Austin is startup friendly, so when we explained we were testing the product, people were interested to try it and give us feedback."





the hilltop



BEST & BRIGHTEST

The Massacre Generation

Theater Arts major Kit Taylor '19 uses the stage to help people reflect on some of her generation's most heartbreaking moments.

BY LISA THIEGS
PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITNEY DEVIN '10

IN OCTOBER 2017, **Kit Taylor '19** was just a few weeks into her semester abroad program at the University of Roehampton in London. The Theater Arts major was meeting students from all over, seeing theater productions in one of the greatest cities in the world and trying to figure out a topic for a solo performance for her Performing Nonfiction class. That's when she heard reports of yet another mass shooting in the United States, this time in Las Vegas.

She discovered that a high-school friend had been on-site during the shooting and had made it out alive. But the incident left Taylor feeling vulnerable.

Even more than that, she wanted to explore the emotions surrounding the shootings that became the tragic reality of her generation's childhood. She began to process the latest tragedy the only way she knew how: by writing. Her stage production, *Mass Shootings: How the U.S. Failed Itself*, was born.

The production started out as a 10-minute nonfiction solo performance for her class in London. In researching the play, she spoke to people from all walks of life to gain the fullest mosaic of thoughts, emotions and stories. While she thinks it will be especially relatable for young people, she views the production as a way to engage all generations.

Taylor has since reworked the piece into a longer format inspired by playwright Anna Deavere Smith, who wrote *Fires in the Mirror* about New York's Crown Heights Riots in 1991. "I modeled my play after her style: short monologues and flash vignettes from different people's perspectives," Taylor says. "There aren't exchanges between characters; I thought it was more important to give each character a moment to share their voice than to create a plotline."

Taylor has received positive feedback along the way from students, professors and the members of the Transit Theatre Troupe (a St. Edward's University student organization that produces original or rarely produced theater), who helped her update the production and get it ready for campus performance in March with four actors. "For a long time, I was the only one who had performed it, so it was really fun to see someone else take it and put their own spin on the words I'd written," Taylor says.

Her message to her audience is not a rallying call but an invitation to reflect. "I'm not naïve enough to think that one play can

change the world, but I do hope that one play can change people's thought patterns — make them be a bit more empathetic to what our society feels," Taylor says. "Ultimately, I hope my play gets people interested in educating themselves more and learning what has and hasn't been done to change things. There's no judgment in my play. I don't condemn people who have differing opinions."

During the time Taylor wrote the play and produced it for campus, there have been more mass shootings. "This work I'm doing is still needed," she says.

Taylor appreciates how faculty members in the theater department support student-led efforts. "They treat us like professional coworkers," she says. Taylor says **Joyce Aldridge**, an adjunct professor, helped her find her true passion within the theater world. "A lot of her focus is on making sure we can run our own theater company one day, which is amazing. She inspired me to become a dramaturg, which is a theater historian who works on theatrical productions," Taylor says.

In fact, Aldridge notes that Taylor's production, which speaks out about a generation's struggles, follows theater's long tradition, dating back to the Greeks, of mirroring societal challenges. "Cultures developed national theater traditions based on ideas that resonated with people living and struggling with daily problems," Aldridge says. "Audiences benefit from witnessing events played out before them on the stage so that, while our emotions are engaged, our minds can reflect on the ideas presented in the play."

Presenting ideas and expressing creativity, whether on the stage or in the classroom, helps prepare students at St. Edward's for whatever they may do down the road. "A theater program provides the environment in which students may take risks, fail and risk again," Aldridge says. "Opportunities for student success happen every day as we study in class, rehearse after hours, collaborate in creation and network in a supportive industry that looks forward to our graduates finding their place in the world."

Taylor is confident that she has built the skill set she needs to succeed. Her advice to others? "If you have a passion, if you have a story to tell, start writing. Don't be afraid to talk with your professors and your classmates about your work, because everyone is so supportive and really wants to help you. All you need to do is ask."

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On the Cover

"This class puts you in other people's shoes and helps you understand how welfare is on the inside, instead of theorizing about it," says **Bryana Iglesias '22** about her course on social welfare. Iglesias and her classmates were challenged by Assistant Professor of Social Work **Laurie Cook Heffron** to live on a food-stamp budget for two weeks.

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The Nature of Collaboration

Wild Basin Creative Research Center works because it's a group effort.

BY ROBYN ROSS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY WHITNEY DEVIN '10

Wild Basin Creative Research Center is an interdisciplinary laboratory for student research and internships, but the preserve isn't for (or run by) St. Edward's alone. The university partners with other governmental entities and volunteers to manage the preserve, and thousands of Austin area school-children and nature lovers explore its network of trails every year.

1

St. Edward's partners with **Travis County**, which owns two-thirds of the preserve, to manage Wild Basin. St. Edward's owns the other third, including the Visitor Center.

2

The **City of Austin** owns the 205-acre Vireo Preserve immediately north of and adjacent to Wild Basin. Together, the two preserves comprise more than 430 acres of protected land. Staff from the two preserves collaborate on various research and education programs.

3

Wild Basin is part of the 31,000-acre **Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP)**, a network of lands in western Travis County that protects habitat for endangered species including the golden-cheeked warbler. The City of Austin and Travis County jointly hold a permit from the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** to manage the BCP as mitigation lands for development allowed outside of the preserve network.

4

The **Lower Colorado River Authority** co-owns with the county a tract of land in Wild Basin and collaborates with St. Edward's on water-quality assessments in Bee Creek, which runs through the preserve.

8

The **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)** provided funds to establish the preserve in the 1970s, and in return required that the land be maintained as a wilderness area open to the public for recreation. Wild Basin staff members collaborate with the TPWD on citizen science efforts.

7

With the help of the **Hill Country Alliance**, Wild Basin is applying for the "Urban Night Sky Place" designation from the International Dark-Sky Association, which works to protect the natural night sky from light pollution.

5

Volunteers were critical in establishing Wild Basin and remain integral to its programs, doing everything from rodent-proofing a research storage building to repairing trails. Others help with education and preserve management.

6

Many of the private landowners who are Wild Basin's **neighbors** hike and volunteer at the preserve and collaborate on projects like the Austin Wildlife Watch, part of a national study that uses game cameras to document species that frequent the area.

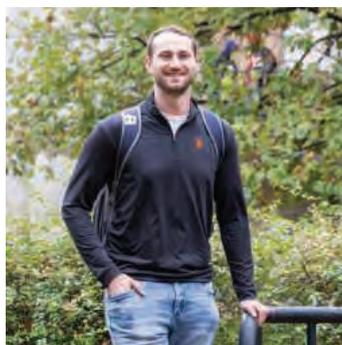
"Wild Basin is an urban oasis supported by many amazing partnerships."

BARBARA DUGELBY
DIRECTOR, WILD BASIN CREATIVE RESEARCH CENTER

Ready or Not

Three seniors tell us how their time on the hilltop has prepared them for what's next.

BY LISA THIEGS
PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITNEY DEVIN '10



▲ Raymond Corbett '19, Accounting

How he hit an internship homerun: When Corbett transferred to St. Edward's, he had his sights set on joining the baseball team and getting a business degree. He played for the Hilltoppers — first base and pitcher — and decided to pursue a major in Accounting. Last year, he found the sweet spot between his loves of baseball and business:

an accounting internship with the New York Mets. He walked the halls with baseball bigwigs and gained business insights from the likes of COO Jeff Wilpon and other top executives. **Why he's still knocking it out of the park:** Corbett landed an internship with KPMG in Houston, which he's completing while wrapping up his degree. Even when he's in a business setting, he still calls on skills he picked up on the baseball diamond, such as teamwork and time management.

How his professors have coached him along the way: Corbett credits professors at St. Edward's with other valuable tools he's taking to the workforce, including a sense of self-confidence and the ability to take a risk. "I had to learn to push myself and take the chance to talk to people. That's how you build connections," he says.



▲ Elizabeth Ucles '19, Writing and Rhetoric

Why she loves radio journalism: Ucles spent last summer at WNYC, New York's National Public Radio (NPR) affiliate, as part of the selective Knight Diversity Internship program. As the elections intern, she followed the campaigns of high-profile New York and New Jersey congressional candidates during the primaries. She brought her big-city experience back to KUT, the Austin NPR affiliate, as a newsroom intern.

How St. Edward's has bolstered her values: Ucles also serves as the Life and Arts co-editor for *Hilltop Views* and is a resident assistant. She says she is grateful to have been influenced by both academic and social experiences at St. Edward's, and she values an environment that promotes empathy. "Accepting people for who they are is really important, especially with all that's going on in the world right now," she says.

"My internships definitely shaped what I want to do after graduation."

ELIZABETH UCLES '19



◀ Christopher Azaldegui '19, Chemistry

How he seized a great opportunity: Azaldegui's freshman-year chemistry professor asked if he'd be interested in summer research. Instead of heading home, he and a couple of students teamed up with **Raychelle Burks**, assistant professor

of Chemistry. Azaldegui, who is also interested in criminology and forensics, helped Burks set up her research on designing portable colorimetry sensors. He worked with her again the next summer.

Why he's a student to watch: Last summer, Azaldegui took part

in the National Science Foundation's Research Experiences for Undergraduates program in chemistry at the University of Michigan. The experience confirmed that he wanted to pursue a graduate degree in chemistry.

His advice to students: "Don't be afraid to be curious. Don't be afraid to ask questions," Azaldegui says. And be open to different experiences, even those you are unsure about. "My first research opportunity was what initiated the path I'm on right now."

MY HILLTOP

La Belle Vie

Stephen Reyes '21 — along with 31 other students from St. Edward's — immersed themselves in French culture for a semester, including talking politics with strangers.

BY ROBYN ROSS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSHUA RIOS '20

ON A TYPICAL WEEKNIGHT during his semester abroad, **Stephen Reyes '21** eats dinner with his host family in Angers, France. Everyone reports on their days: Reyes; his host parents, Sophie and Romain; and their 12-year-old twins, Augustin and Anatole. The conversation begins in French but occasionally meanders into English or Spanish if Reyes is having trouble keeping up. After dinner everyone gathers in the living room to play cards or dominoes.

“My host family has welcomed me with open arms,” says the International Business and Digital Media Management major. “I consider them my second family.”

In addition to French, Reyes is taking Culinary and Economic Botany with Professor of Biology **Bill Quinn**. The class visited local gardens, vineyards and the “troglodytes,” caves in the Loire Valley where locals cultivate mushrooms. In his Intercultural Communication course, taught by Professor of Business Communication **Catherine MacDermott**, he's studied the French economy, the country's attitudes toward the environment and its business practices. “We talk about how to adapt to other cultures to be successful abroad,” Reyes says.

The French have no qualms about talking politics with people they've just met, which

Reyes says was jarring at first. “Every French student, every French person you meet, they're always asking, ‘How do you feel about your president?’” he says. “They love talking about it.” Now he starts his day with a political discussion over breakfast.

Reyes has adapted to another French practice: the two-hour lunch break. He initially marveled at the Université Catholique de l'Ouest students who lingered over sandwiches in the park. Now he takes advantage of the break and rides the bus from campus into downtown for lunch at his favorite café, the Empanada Factory. The owner, Camille, starts making his regular order as soon as he comes in the door.

On the weekends, Reyes explores other parts of France. The 32 students from St. Edward's traveled together to Omaha Beach and the American cemetery in Normandy; the port city of St. Malo; and the gothic abbey on the tidal island Mont-Saint-Michel. Reyes and his best friend, Melvin, have visited Paris and nearby Nantes, where his host family's older children attend college.

Reyes says his time in Angers has helped him feel more open-minded, responsible and confident. “I was too shy to participate in class my freshman year, but studying abroad has given me the confidence to voice my opinions to my professors,” he says.



Stephen Reyes' host mother, Sophie, joins him for breakfast every morning, and they discuss the day's political news.



Reyes' host family lives an easy 5-minute walk from the Université Catholique de l'Ouest campus.



The owner of the Empanada Factory starts preparing Reyes' order — a Mexicano and a Carne Picante — as soon as he walks in the door with his friend Melvin.



Breakfast is usually bread with Nutella or butter and jam, plus a pot of tea.



In the living room, Reyes answers email, goes over his schedule for the day and checks the news from home in the *Austin Business Journal*.



In Professor of Business Communication **Catherine MacDermott**'s Intercultural Communication class, Reyes learns how to adapt to other countries' business environments.



Reyes and his classmates Lynnwood, Daniel and Dariela go over their résumés and mock interviews for Business Communication.



Riding the bus and tram in Angers has opened Reyes' eyes to the environmental benefits of public transit – despite the frequent strikes by French transit workers.



Reyes eats dinner with his host family three times a week, and after dinner everyone plays cards or board games.

THINKING BIG

WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

Associate Professor of Mathematics Jason Callahan and Omar Dominguez '19 study redistricting and racial gerrymandering.

BY ROBYN ROSS
PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITNEY DEVIN '10



▼ Omar Dominguez '19 presented his gerrymandering research at the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) Texas Section Meeting in March. He and Callahan will also submit their paper for publication in MAA's *Math Horizons*.

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT TX-35, currently held by U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, is an odd shape that stretches from the east side of Austin into south San Antonio. It cuts through cities and splits up neighborhoods, even carving out a chunk of South Austin that stops just south of campus at Woodward Street. The district map was drawn by the Republican-dominated state legislature after population growth reflected in the 2010 census — mainly among Latinos — netted Texas four new congressional seats. But in spring 2017, a panel of federal judges ruled that TX-35 violated the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act. Their reason: it intentionally suppressed the influence of minority voters by packing Latino voters into TX-35 to reduce their voting power in surrounding districts.

The State of Texas disagreed and appealed to the Supreme Court, which upheld the maps. At issue were the questions of whether the district maps discriminated against minority voters, and whether they were drawn with discriminatory intent.

Math offers ways to detect whether districts are racially gerrymandered. Mathematics major **Omar Dominguez '19** and Associate Professor of Mathematics **Jason Callahan** developed one approach that compares the racial composition of a district to that of the region around it.

In their study of TX-35, they first found the district's convex hull — the smallest

polygon that could be drawn around the district — and compared the demographics of the convex hull to the district itself. According to 2010 census data, 63 percent of TX-35's population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. In contrast, Dominguez and Callahan found that only half of the population in the convex hull identifies as Hispanic or Latino.

The next step was to determine the probability of drawing a population sample from the convex hull that matches the demographics of the district. In other words, how likely is it that a random population sample from a polygon that is 50 percent Hispanic or Latino would be 63 percent Hispanic or Latino? Dominguez and Callahan thought that if the probability of that happening by chance is very low, it could be evidence that the district was drawn with discriminatory intent based on race or ethnicity.

In fact, Dominguez and Callahan's analysis found that probability to be essentially zero, even though the Supreme Court did not find that TX-35 was drawn with discriminatory intent. Dominguez is now applying the model to other districts in Texas and beyond. The project is a way to use math to help people become politically engaged, he says. "Right now, a lot of people think, 'My vote doesn't count because of gerrymandering.' My goal is to find out if people are being diluted in their voting power by racial gerrymandering."

Around Campus



ACCESSIBLE COUNSELING

Austin's newest counseling center will soon open in East Hall. The St. Edward's University community counseling clinic will offer services to Austin residents on a low-cost, sliding fee scale: The most anyone will pay is \$20. Students in the Master of Arts in Counseling program will staff the clinic, which will serve as a teaching lab for courses like group counseling and a site for practicums and internships. The program is being developed by Assistant Professors of Counseling **Kerrie Taylor** and **David Carrington** and Associate Professor of Counseling Education **Bill McHenry**, who calls it "an amazing gift to the community and a wonderful teaching tool."

\$200K grant

IN FOCUS

Students in senior-level cell biology labs can take their research to the next level with the department's new Fluoview FV3000 laser scanning confocal microscope. The \$200,000 piece of equipment was purchased with a National Science Foundation Major Research Instrumentation Grant — a highly competitive award — written by Professor of Biological Sciences **Andrea Holgado** and Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences **Daniel Gold**. The microscope removes out-of-focus light that appears as a blur, allowing students to view a more accurate representation of subcellular structures.



BETTER NATURE

Spicewood Ranch owner Chris Harte has spent the past three decades restoring the ecosystem on his property west of Austin and creating an unofficial wildlife reserve. Now, through an agreement for an ecolab, researchers from St. Edward's will be able to study the impacts of conservation practices on his property. The partnership will allow faculty members like Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Policy **Amy Concilio** and Assistant Professor of Biology **Teresa Bilinski** to create a research program that involves students in studying the effects of invasive species and drought on ecosystem structure and function.



fireside chats

HIRE TECHNOLOGY

Successful hires at Dell are problem solvers who have the courage to share their ideas with company leadership, says Jeff Clarke, the technology company's vice chairman of products and operations. "We're not mind readers — we don't have that algorithm yet," he told a packed house at a Bill Munday School of Business Speaker Series fireside chat with interim dean **David Altounian** in November. Clarke reflected on his three decades with Dell — and the tech industry's future — a month before the company went public for the second time.



VISITING WRITERS SERIES

On April 16, poet Jericho Brown will read from his new collection, *The Tradition*, in the final event of this year's Marcia Kinsey Visiting Writers Series. Brown's poems, which often focus on experiences of being African American and gay, have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *TIME* and *Buzzfeed*. Brown is also a powerful, engaging performer, says Assistant Professor of Creative Writing **Sasha West**, who coordinates the series. "I've seen people leave his readings feeling like their lives have been changed in some way."

"The ecolab is an inspiring story of the impact one person can make."

AMY CONCILIO

Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Policy



▼
Jeff Miner '11 returned to the hilltop in early November to deliver the keynote "Marketing in the Age of Distraction" and visit three classes in The Bill Munday School of Business.

HILLTOP NEWS

On Brand

Jeff Miner '11 helps companies harness the power of Google.

BY ROBYN ROSS
PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITNEY DEVIN '10

IN A WORLD WITH infinite distractions on smartphones, how does a company catch a potential customer's attention?

It's a puzzle that **Jeff Miner '11** solves every day in his work at Google's Unskippable Labs. There, he helps brands improve their digital strategy with a combination of better storytelling and data analysis.

Miner, who considers himself a natural salesman, played basketball for the Hilltoppers and majored in Finance. When now-retired Finance professor **Amy Burnett** suggested his people skills, combined with his ability to crunch numbers and recognize patterns, would make him a good analyst, he decided to find a customer-facing job that would hone his pitching skills.

Within a year of graduation from St. Edward's, he started working at Google Offers, a competitor to the deal site Groupon. Miner cold-called as many as 80 businesses a day — mostly beauty and nail salons — to pitch them on Offers. The job required a move to New York and then to San Francisco, where he shifted to working with small businesses who were already Google clients and wanted to find new advertising opportunities. "That's where I started to understand advertising strategy, rather than just making a sale," he says.

Miner next moved into an account manager position back in New York with luxury brands, like Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior, that worked with Google. He encouraged them to shift advertising dollars from print or TV to digital video, a powerful storytelling medium that also generated extensive data about viewer engagement.

After four years he made the leap to Google's Unskippable Labs. "My role is brand strategist, but I really think of myself as a storyteller," he says. "I figure out how to help brands tell their story."

When Ford decided to reintroduce the Ranger pickup truck in 2019 after an eight-year hiatus, it called on Unskippable Labs for help. Ford wanted to reposition the Ranger from its "built tough," work-oriented reputation to being known as the best truck for outdoor adventure. The

company planned to highlight the truck's off-road capabilities but worried about competing with the Toyota Tacoma, which dominated the off-road market.

Miner studied the videos on Ford's YouTube channel and compared their content with Google's data about how long viewers watched them before clicking away. He realized that when the videos focused on tech features, like in-vehicle wireless hotspots, viewers stayed longer than when the videos emphasized off-roading.

Miner combined that information with results from Google Surveys and data about Google search terms related to trucks. The latter showed that searches for tech-related features far outpaced those for off-road capability in trucks. All the research pointed to the same strategy: Ford needed to focus on its tech features, an area where it excelled and that mattered to customers.

"All the guesswork's taken out of it," Miner says. "You just have to respond to what the data's telling you."

Miner spends an hour each day reading outside research that influences his work. When he's facing a challenge, he draws on that, as well as his experience performing under pressure as a college athlete.

"You want to find a balance between the confidence to perform and the humility to prepare," he says. "My confidence comes from knowing I've done the work."

TAKE ON YOUR WORLD

AN ELECTRIC LADY

Hailey Williams '18 started an organization that empowers women in their careers and at the polls.

BY LILLI HIME '19
PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITNEY DEVIN '10

GROWING UP, Hailey Williams '18 was surrounded by strong women who inspired her commitment to serve others. Williams wanted that theme to continue in college. During a visit to St. Edward's the summer before her freshman year, she heard Teri Varner, associate professor of Communication, give a speech that was powerful and poised — and reminded her of the women she'd grown up with. In that moment, Williams knew St. Edward's was right for her.

With Varner as her faculty advisor, Williams founded the student organization Electric Lady Coalition — its name is a nod to a popular Janelle Monáe song — her junior year. Her goal: to provide women with the same opportunities for personal and professional growth that she'd received growing up and on the hilltop. The coalition organized events like a tour of advertising agency GSD&M with co-founder Judy Trabulsi and a speaker series that featured female CEOs of Austin businesses, such as Melinda Garvey, founder of *Austin Woman* magazine and audio newsletter On the Dot.

Williams has turned Electric Lady Coalition into a nonprofit to expand its reach beyond the hilltop. In September, she hosted the organization's first event, Power to the Polls. The pop-up market at Space 24 Twenty in Austin registered local voters for the midterm elections and featured companies run by students from St. Edward's, like Africivvies, which sells African-made wares, and Lunchroom Anxiety clothing.

Here, Williams shares how she turned Electric Lady Coalition from an idea into a student organization and finally into a fledgling nonprofit.



JOT IT DOWN

"I write all of my ideas down until they grow to be something. I had the name Electric Lady Coalition written in a journal long before the organization came to be."

10

events hosted to empower women's professional and civic development

HAVE A PURPOSE

"Most of our events focus on women's development. I want to provide women with the opportunity to get in the right rooms, ask the questions and talk with important people."

83

voters registered at Electric Lady Coalition's first event as a nonprofit, Power to the Polls

PAY IT FORWARD

"I am proud of how the university community supported Power to the Polls. I know the stories of those businesses, and the event was a chance to support them."

9

different organizations with which the Electric Lady Coalition has partnered



How to Draw Your Future

The lessons students learn in a college class can extend far beyond the subject matter at hand. Drawing Methods, taught by Associate Professor of Art Alexandra Robinson, shows how.

BY STACIA M. MILLER MLA '05
PHOTOGRAPHY AND ILLUSTRATIONS
BY DENNIS BURNETT

Bright-yellow apricot flowers bloom on balconies. Eggs sizzle in the well-worn woks of bánh mì vendors dotting the sidewalk. Scooters zip between lines of cars packing the narrow roads. Always bustling and never quiet, Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City inundates the senses. Especially when you're 3 years old, says **Vy Nguyen '20**.

To keep her focused on childhood tasks — finishing breakfast, putting on her socks, reciting the alphabet — Nguyen's mother and brother would draw for her. The pencil sketches of princesses and Japanese anime characters feature in her earliest memories. Eventually, she started drawing. She came to St. Edward's University in 2015 as an international student and Art major. And last fall, that passion led her to Room 114 in the Fine Arts Center for Associate Professor of Art **Alexandra Robinson's** Drawing Methods class.

After taking Foundation Drawing, Visual Studies and a clay class last year, Nguyen thought she knew what to expect: a focus on fundamentals, a deep dive into specific artists and mediums, and lots and lots of practicing traditional techniques. So she wasn't quite prepared for Robinson's pronouncement on the first day that the more uncomfortable students felt in class, the more successful they would be.

"Hearing that definitely made me uncomfortable," Nguyen says with a laugh. A glance at the syllabus did, too — the final project would be a series of 20 drawings, each one created in no more than an hour. Throughout the semester, the students would also visit local studios, take a walking-drawing tour through their neighborhood while home for Thanksgiving break, and build simple drawing machines.

"I want to get students questioning and rethinking," says Robinson, who has taught the class for seven years. Experience has helped her refine the projects so that each one is a perfect balance between stretching students' minds and helping them gain confidence in their fledgling abilities. "They have already had technical drawing training, so how can they adapt that training to their own way of creating?" The end result is that students develop a unique artistic process: no matter what they're asked to do, they start to follow the same steps to develop their work. A growing familiarity with their own process helps them learn to trust their artistic instincts and embrace mistakes. It also makes the uncertainty of challenging assignments manageable, even exciting.

"I try to help students trust the process of drawing the thing, whatever it happens to be, and to find that ritualistic mental space where their work is made," says Robinson. "I don't provide answers, which are what students want at first."

Graphic Design major **Shelby Charette '19** hurried across campus one balmy morning last October pondering that uncertainty. She knew something different would be happening in class that day, but Robinson had been intentionally vague, saying only that they would be experimenting with ways of making marks on paper. When she walked into the classroom, Charette immediately noticed something new: piles of sneakers, slippers and roller skates in the center of the room. *Here we go*, she thought.

First, Robinson asked the students to draw the shoes without

looking at their papers. Then to draw with their nondominant hand. Then with their pencil in their mouths, and then with their toes. Charette didn't hesitate. She slipped off her black Chuck Taylors, got on the floor and wedged her pencil between her toes. "I just went for it. Why not?" she remembers. "It opened my eyes to all the possibilities, all the different ways of expressing what I was seeing."

Helping students find the courage to move toward the gray areas that dominate art, science, politics and society is the point of experiential learning, the education world's term for learning by doing. "The idea is to make classroom learning come alive," says **Jennifer Jefferson**, director of the Center for Teaching Excellence at St. Edward's. "Bringing real-life situations into the classroom deepens students' understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of life."

While there are multiple definitions of experiential learning, Jefferson says, successful projects usually have three components: preparation, activity and reflection. Assigned readings and class discussions give students the background or context before they jump into the experiential component. Afterward, the opportunity to reflect helps them assess how they did, what they learned, and in what ways the experience might be applicable to other areas of learning and life.

"It's about looking at the world through the lens of the classroom and then bringing all those experiences back to campus to inform future learning," says Jefferson. Students can adapt the knowledge and skills from one experience — how to problem-solve, how to collaborate, how to present, how to listen — to other experiences. Ultimately, she says, "students start to think about what they want their place in the world to be."

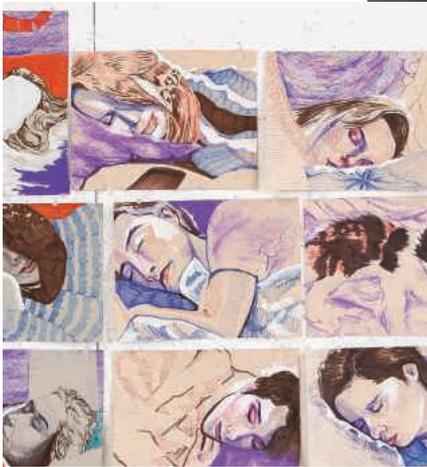
Creating experiential projects and activities that cultivate that kind of intense self-discovery isn't easy. "You start by asking, 'Where do I want my students to be at the end of this? All right, how do I get there?'" says Jefferson, who taught in the Department of University Studies before becoming director of the Center for Teaching Excellence a year ago. Professors often have to embrace the same uncertainty and risk they ask of their students. "The planning is time-intensive, there are lots of moving parts, and it might not even work," she says. "You're introducing new variables and opening yourself up to the class not going the way you thought it would. You have to be ready to bring the learning back around if something happens that you didn't anticipate."

In Jefferson's experience, St. Edward's professors are more than ready for the challenge. "We're all mission-driven — that's why we're here," she says. "We care about our students, and we want to help guide their experiences while they're with us so that they're informed about lots of different life paths they can take once they graduate." To recognize professors who create those kinds of learning environments, the Center for Teaching Excellence annually bestows the Delayne Hudspeth Award for Innovative Instruction. A committee of faculty members from across disciplines and schools reviews and selects each year's winner — the professor who demonstrated the greatest level of innovation.



▼
In-class drawing projects force experimentation and mark making, says Associate Professor of Art Alexandra Robinson. She encourages her students to use a combination of materials to render the same subject with varying degrees of control, like Jenna Buchanan '21 (center), experimenting here with technique.

▼
The Drawing Methods course culminates in a final project of 20 drawings in 20 hours. Students develop an entire body of work around a single theme or set of rules.



“You can never fully predict what’s going to happen, and you have to find new angles to be successful.”

HANNAH CANTU '19

In 2017, the honor went to Robinson and Professor Emeritus of Photocommunications **Bill Kennedy**, who together helped their students produce an installation of Texas children’s artwork about the Holocaust for the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum. The project won a 2017 Leadership in History Award, the highest distinction bestowed by the American Association for State and Local History. In that project as well as the ones for her Drawing Methods course, Robinson wants her students to build on their art training for another purpose: “to question and rethink.”

Hannah Cantu '19, who took Drawing Methods with Robinson last year, was sitting in Molecular Genetics when she first started to see the connections Robinson tries to make semester after semester. As she looked at indigo-dyed cells under a microscope, “I thought about how much a hypothesis is like an art project,” says Cantu, who has studied water quality and macroinvertebrates in local watersheds while at St. Edward’s. “You can never fully predict what’s going to happen, and you have to find new angles to be successful.”

The Environmental Science and Policy major decided to explore that idea in her final project for Robinson’s class — 20 themed drawings created in just 20 hours. Cantu chose garlic as her theme. “It seemed like the perfect symbol for what was going through my head. You can always go deeper and peel away another layer, whether it’s a molecular microprocess or a charcoal drawing.”

Cantu researched garlic cells and rendered them on paper; created abstractions of garlic cloves as taste buds; depicted the pungent smell in chaotic reds and bright yellows; and sketched the papery outer layers. By the end of the semester, “I had exhausted myself and my creativity,” but she understood that was exactly Robinson’s point: “Drawing had always been very straightforward for me,” she says. “In Alex’s class I came to realize that the creative process has less to do with art and more to do with instinct — what decisions do I make in the moment, and why?”

Robinson’s in-class critiques after every project push students to answer those questions. “You quickly learn that there is no ‘correct’ with Alex. You leave class thinking, *What does she want me to do?* and you know she’s not going to tell you,” says Cantu. “But you can’t fully own your work until you make those decisions for yourself.”

Last fall, Robinson’s Drawing Methods and Advanced Drawing courses — the latter of which enrolled two students — were combined into a single class period. Cantu took Advanced Drawing, while Nguyen and Charette were among the larger group in Drawing Methods. When Cantu showed up to class one day and saw the

small pink bike — bedazzled with daisies, streamers and a basket, kickstand-down in the center of the room — she knew exactly what was in store for the Drawing Methods students. She knew that Robinson didn’t just want the class to draw the tiny pink bike. She wanted them to draw it 10 times, filling the whole sheet each time and turning the paper 90 degrees every four minutes. Draw, time’s up, turn. Draw, time’s up, turn.

She remembered her own drawings from the year before: “My paper was a mess on a mess. It felt ruined from the start, so I couldn’t help but build ideas along the way to try to salvage something from it.” This time, as she worked on her advanced independent project, Cantu studied Nguyen and Charette as they studied the bike. She remembered feeling the same intrigued confusion that she could see on their faces. But she also knew they would draw their way through it, just as she had.

“I really didn’t like that my drawings got to be so dark and overwhelming,” says Nguyen. “When we did the critique, Alex asked me why I felt that way and how I could change the feeling.” They talked about technique and intuition, how much mental weight to give each one, and how feeling in control (or out of it) could affect what showed up on the paper. “We really had to just draw without thinking, to draw what we saw, not what we knew,” says Nguyen. “It became all about letting our inspiration and ideas take over, and then we could go back and re-render our drawing using more conventional techniques.” In the end, Nguyen turned her 10 bikes into a garden, using color and collage to transform what she initially saw as “a dreary mess.”

Charette kept wondering, *How did we start off drawing bikes, but end up with drawings that looked nothing like bikes?* She decided to balance the overlapping dark marks with eraser marks, ending up with what looked to her like charcoal strands of hair. “I figured out that I had to look at my drawings in a more abstract way, and see not failure but creative opportunity.” She took that lesson with her to an internship at a music promotion company, where she makes videos to advertise upcoming shows. “Alex’s class has taught me that there’s value in failure,” she says. “Failing, or feeling like I failed, just means that I get to try again. I get to push myself to see the problem a different way the next time.”

Nguyen, too, has embraced the uncertainty. “Drawing is a pretty complicated process, and I’m learning that in the moment, or the series of moments, I can be really surprised by what I end up with,” she says. “I love the surprises that come from my brain.”

She calls it the “let-it-go technique,” and she recently added an Education minor so she can teach children to uncover and embrace what’s inside their own brains. “I realized when I was growing up in Vietnam that I didn’t want to waste the feeling I have when I draw — the concentration, the mental outlet. In Alex’s class, I’ve learned to trust that feeling and let it take my art wherever it wants to go,” she says. “It’s helped me in ways that have nothing to do with drawing,” like handling the culture shock that comes with speaking English all day, navigating Austin’s hilly roads and breakfast taco phenomenon, and grappling with Americans’ need for instant gratification.

Even though Robinson’s class is about making marks on paper, her students have learned just as much about how to make their mark in their world — local watersheds and campus labs, elementary classrooms, Austin’s design scene. That’s what they’ll carry with them after their sketchbooks are graded and slipped onto a shelf.

“Every project in Alex’s class seems to focus on two questions,” says Charette. “*What does this mean to me? And where do I want to take it?*”

It’s that questioning approach, that complexity, that deepens learning and makes the experience more meaningful for the students. And *that* can propel them anywhere.

Brain Games

Here's a sampling of classes at St. Edward's that emphasize learning by doing across campus. We asked students to share what blew their minds the most. Documentary filmmaking? Child's pose? How do we sign up?!

1



Marketing Management in a Digital Environment

Instructor: Assistant Professor of Marketing
Juli James

Learning: Traditional marketing techniques combined with social- and web-based strategies, with primers in ethics and corporate social responsibility

Doing: Assume the role of marketing director for a camera company, compete with classmates as you create digital marketing campaigns to maximize clickthroughs and conversions, and analyze metrics, build landing pages and interact with customers

If this class had a hashtag: #therealdeal

2



THE PRINTED PAGE AND THE SILVER SCREEN

Instructor: Professor of English Barbara Filippidis

Reading: *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (Faulkner Award for Fiction winner) and *Exit West* (Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Fiction winner)

Watching: *Psycho*, *The Big Sick* and *El Norte*

Doing: Write, shoot, edit, produce and present an original three-minute film that tells a story, uses a variety of camera shots, includes music or dialogue, and conveys a style or mood

3



Social Welfare: The Historical Response to Need in the U.S.

Instructor: Assistant Professor of Social Work
Laurie Cook Heffron

Learning: American social problems – and how federal and state governments have responded to them – from the Colonial period to today

Doing: Try living on a SNAP (food stamps) budget for two weeks. Then create an elevator pitch (and more) to convince your classmates to support or oppose a certain social welfare bill or policy

If this class had a hashtag: #staywoke

4



Chemistry in the Environment

Instructor: Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Policy Amy Concilio

Learning: Concepts from chemistry that can help solve environmental problems caused by climate change, fossil fuels, nuclear energy and more

Doing: Test Travis County tap water samples and collect survey data on lead contamination

6



ADAPTING INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Instructor: Associate Professor of Special Education Leslie Loughmiller

Learning: How to adapt lessons for students with mild learning and behavioral problems in the classroom

Volunteering: In classrooms at Valley View Elementary

5

SEEKING LIFE BALANCE THROUGH YOGA, MEDITATION AND CHOCOLATE

Instructor: Professor of Biology Trish Baynham

Learning: The history, use and scientifically documented benefits of yoga, meditation and chocolate and how they help im-

prove life balance and resilience

Reading: “The Guest House” by Rumi, “Dear You” by Kaveri Patel and “What to Do if You Meet a Thought,” adapted from a pamphlet on bears

by Colorado Parks and Wildlife

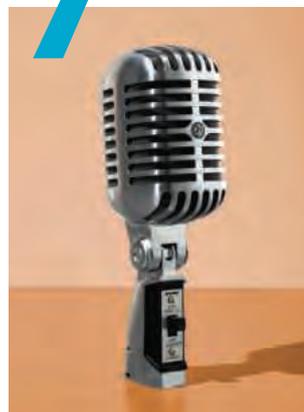
Doing: Practice integrative restoration meditation based on yoga nidra methods and used by veterans coping with PTSD, and

sample antioxidant-rich chocolates from around the world

If this class had a hashtag: #stressreliever



7



DIGITAL MEDIA PRODUCTION AND DESIGN

Instructor: Associate Professor of Journalism and Digital Media Jena Heath and Visiting Instructor Curt Yowell

Learning: Digital storytelling through multimedia techniques that lead to a deeper understanding of the world

Doing: Identify an issue or trend, go out into the community and report on it, and then produce an interactive story that incorporates photos, videos, audio and graphics



projectconnect



BOOM TOWN

As Austin continues to grow, the city faces the challenges that come with a bigger population. Alumni from St. Edward's are uniquely positioned to be part of the innovative solutions shaping the city they love.

BY ROBYN ROSS
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID SPARSHOTT

ROUGHLY 110 NEW residents settle in Austin every day. But the growth trend isn't new. Since the 1800s, the city's population has doubled every 20 years — a trend that puts the metro area on course to reach 4 million people by the year 2040.

Can Austin handle that kind of growth? Can it even handle all the people who live there now? Six St. Edward's University graduates and Austin leaders weighed in on how Austin's growth is influencing their work and the people they serve. Like pieces of a puzzle, the topics — public safety, education, mental health, the millennial workforce, transportation and services for the suburban poor — all connect to form a larger picture of the city. And each subject connects to others: Police need mental-health training. A strong workforce requires good education. Public safety depends on roads that aren't perpetually clogged. Austin is changing, and its rapid growth is straining its infrastructure. That growth is also yielding innovative solutions, and graduates from St. Edward's are leading the way.



▼
**Margaret Gomez '91,
MLA '04**

"I had really good mentors and supporters who said, 'You're doing fine — keep going.' That makes you feel good, for someone to say you're doing all right."

TRANSPORTATION

Decades ago, Austinites rationalized that if they didn't build roads, people wouldn't move to town, says Travis County Commissioner **Margaret Gómez '91, MLA '04**. "I guess we were naïve or idealistic," Gómez says. "People came here anyway, and now we don't have capacity to handle the traffic congestion."

Like many cities, Austin used to have a streetcar system, but the tracks were removed in the early 1940s as cars became ubiquitous. Now the city is scrambling to create a public transit system that can accommodate its growing population.

In 1985, citizens of Austin and outlying areas like Leander and Manor voted to create Capital Metro, the region's transportation authority (Gómez served on its board for 12 years). With that vote, they opted to channel a portion of each city's sales tax to the agency. That sales tax funds two-thirds of Capital Metro's budget, and the rest comes from federal grants and fares.

The agency remapped its bus network last June to reduce wait times along many major routes within Austin. And, in October 2018, it unveiled Project Connect, a regional transportation plan for the next two decades. That plan involves dedicated pathways — that is, separate lanes — for public transit, which make travel time shorter and more predictable. It envisions a fully electric fleet of buses and light rail, as well as autonomous rapid transit. The latter cutting-edge technology could take the form of bus or rail cars that operate as a unit but can be expanded (by adding cars) or condensed (by removing them) as demand varies throughout the day. The first car might or might not have a driver.

Voters will likely decide whether to fund the projects via a bond election in 2020. While light-rail proposals have been defeated in 2000 and 2014, Austinites will have to invest in serious transit infrastructure sooner rather than later, says **Eric Bustos '12**, Capital Metro's government relations manager. "The city doubles its population every 20 years," he explains. "If we don't make transportation infrastructure investments, we won't be able to sustain the quality of life in Austin."

In the meantime, Bustos says Capital Metro takes an all-of-the-above approach to addressing the region's transportation woes. Cycling? Go for it. Carpooling? Yes. Telecommuting? Definitely. Scooters? Everywhere. "All of these options are complementary to what we do, and some percentage of people will always drive their cars," he says. "We want to give people options, so we can manage congestion and grow with the least disruption."

PUBLIC SAFETY

Austin is one of the nation's safest major cities when it comes to violent crime, and property crime is at a 20-year low. Austin Police Chief **Brian Manley MSOLE '04** celebrates those accomplishments but says the city's booming population and famous festivals present challenges for law enforcement. "The immense growth we've had taxes a police agency," he says. "The Austin police department has to consider things today that, when I started almost 30 years ago, were not as prevalent of a threat to the Austin community."

For instance, Austin's downtown has grown vertically, concentrating more people — and thus a higher volume of police calls — in a smaller area. And in an age of active shooters and terrorism, events like the Austin City Limits music festival and University of Texas football games require a level of vigilance unimaginable a few decades ago.

It takes more police to keep an expanding population safe, Manley says. That line item can be a tough sell at city council meetings when public safety, including police, fire and EMS, already takes up 67 percent of the city's general fund budget. But, Manley says, the department needs enough officers so that each one can spend time building relationships in the community by attending neighborhood meetings or stopping at a park and tossing a football with kids playing there.

National standards say at least 35 percent of an officer's time should be spent on that kind of community engagement. In recent years, APD's numbers have been as low as 17 percent, but Manley says the department has now reached 27 percent. Building relationships in the community is critical, he says. "The community has to see their police department as legitimate, and they have to trust their department. The only way you can build trust and legitimacy is through relationships."

This is especially true when policing is under scrutiny across the country, Manley says. That scrutiny is amplified on social media, where people can share articles or videos about incidents that happened in other cities but nevertheless influence perceptions of the local department. "The leadership challenge is leading your agency to the highest standard you can," Manley says, "realizing you'll be held accountable for those departments that may not rise to the same level."

In late September 2018, Manley rolled out the department's new brand, "One Austin, Safer Together." It's an acknowledgement of the city's segregated past and of APD's work to engage and serve all communities — especially those, like immigrants, who might fear law enforcement. And Austin residents, Manley says, are the department's best resource. When people take basic precautions like locking their doors and looking out for their neighbors, the police can focus on bigger issues. "With almost a million people in the city limits, if we can harness the community to partner with us, that will allow us to continue to keep people safe."

EDUCATION

As president of the Austin Independent School District board of trustees, **Geronimo Rodriguez '90** has a lot on his mind — namely, the question of how to balance the budget. As anyone who pays property taxes in Austin knows, land values in the city continue to rise. But that doesn't mean Austin schools receive all that tax money. Under Texas' "Robin Hood" school funding system, in which funds from property-rich districts

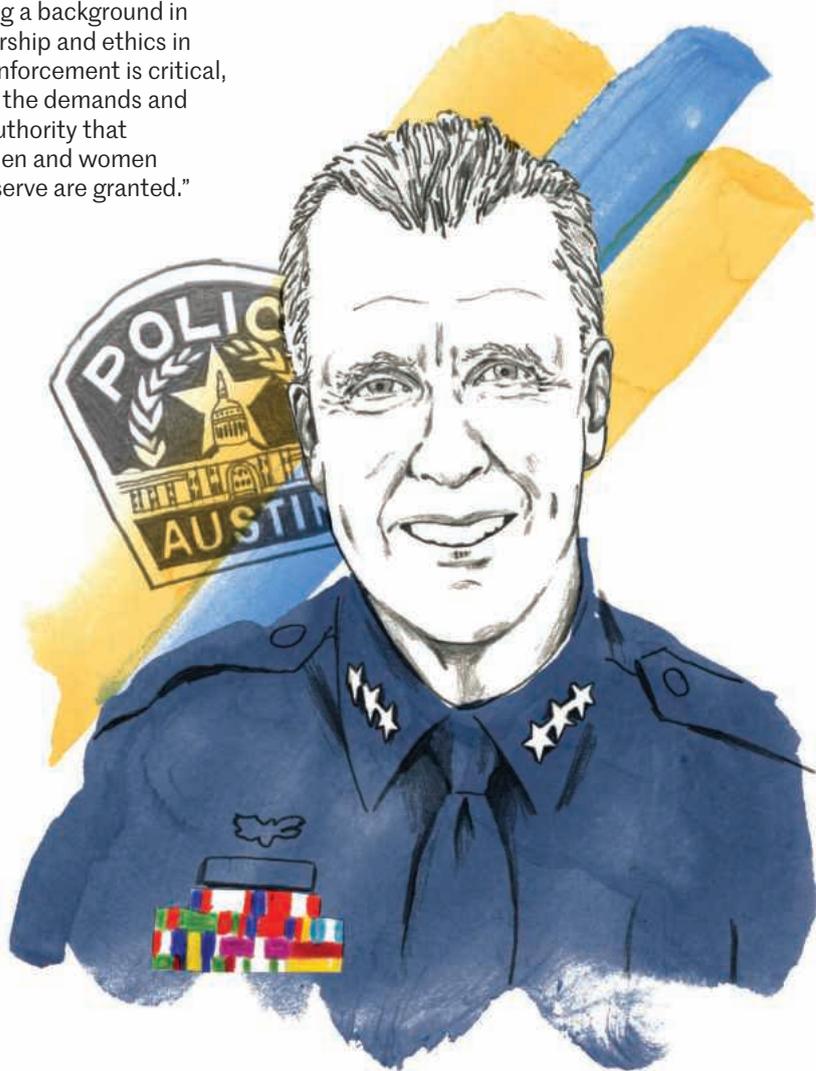
are shared with poorer districts, Austin sends just over 50 percent of its property tax revenue to the state for redistribution. Yet more than half of AISD students are economically disadvantaged, and a quarter are English language learners. In other words, Austin's property values are high, but its students also require extra resources.

Meanwhile, as revenue from property taxes grows, the state has reduced the amount of general revenue it budgets for education. The money the state does distribute to local districts is based on enrollment numbers — which is where AISD faces another problem.

For the past three years, the district's enrollment has declined by a thousand students a year. That's partly because of demographics: Many people moving to Austin are waiting longer to have children, so the city's growth doesn't necessarily translate into growth in the school-age population. Housing prices in the urban core continue

▼ Brian Manley MSOLE '04

"Having a background in leadership and ethics in law enforcement is critical, given the demands and the authority that the men and women who serve are granted."





▼
**Geronimo
Rodriguez '90**

"We have an obligation and responsibility to not only co-create the world we live in, but also to advocate for the poor and vulnerable. To me, this work is a part of giving back and being grateful for the life I've had."

to rise, sending many home-buying families to the suburbs. Plus, Rodriguez says, competition from charter schools that offer a private-school experience without a tuition bill cuts into the district's enrollment.

The result is that the district is in a precarious position, using money from its reserve fund to fill the gap between revenue and expenses. But it can't do that much longer.

"I think we're going to have some incredibly hard decisions that will require us to look to the next 20 or 30 years and think about what's in the best interest of the school district," Rodriguez says.

The key, he says, is to adopt a mindset of abundance rather than a mindset of scarcity — and to be creative.

For example, students generally attend the school closest to their home. But the district could add attractive new programs, like dual-language education, to under-enrolled schools near downtown. Parents who work downtown could then transfer their kids to one of these schools much closer to their workplace, making drop-off and pick-up easier.

To tackle skyrocketing housing costs — one driver of the declining AISD enrollment — the district could build affordable

housing on property it owns. This move could help both families and teachers who struggle to pay Central Austin rent.

A more radical strategy, Rodriguez says, is to merge the property-rich Austin school district with a nearby district that's property poor and receives property-tax money from the state rather than sending it. That way the consolidated district would be able to keep more of the money it collects in tax revenue. It would be a tricky process. But, Rodriguez says, "I've learned not to make assumptions about whether ideas work or not, but to actually work through them and see if they have merit. It's a way of thinking creatively and adapting to the environment we're in. The students' well-being and academic success are at the core of what we're trying to accomplish."

MENTAL HEALTH

In the past few years, Lady Gaga has spoken publicly about her struggle with anxiety and depression. Singer Demi Lovato has been open about her substance-abuse problems. The deaths of Anthony Bourdain and Kate Spade in 2018 sparked a renewed push for suicide awareness and prevention. And social media has allowed people to reveal their personal struggles to their circle of friends — and encourage friends to ask for help when they need it.

All these developments have helped reduce the stigma around mental-health issues, says **Ellen Richards '92**, chief strategy officer of Integral Care, a local government agency that supports people living with mental illnesses, substance-use disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities. "What has also helped is the recognition that mental health doesn't discriminate. Everyone is touched by this issue — either themselves, or they have a family member or a friend."

As Austin grows, the number of people with mental-health conditions also grows. And like any local infrastructure, Integral Care struggles to keep up.

Most people enter the mental-health system through a crisis, Richards says. They might have symptoms of a problem, but it isn't diagnosed until the crisis episode, which could involve hallucinations, extreme anxiety or suicidal thoughts. It might be triggered by a drug interaction, lack of sleep, stress or underlying mental illness. Integral Care operates a 24-hour helpline, a mobile crisis outreach team and an urgent care walk-in clinic for people in crisis. The agency also treats a crisis as an episode, rather than a distinct event, and offers follow-up help for 90 days to ensure individuals get connected to the care they need.

Friends or bystanders often summon the

▼
Ellen Richards '92

"One of the important roles that St. Edward's has played in Austin is emphasizing the value of community service. That was reinforced for me as part of the educational process."



police to crisis events; in fact, in 2016, the Austin Police Department received at least 12,000 calls for help related to a mental-health emergency. Integral Care helps train APD officers to understand what's happening when they encounter someone in crisis and to respond appropriately. Integral Care's Expanded Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (EMCOT) works with APD or other law enforcement to respond to 911 dispatch calls.

When a police officer arrives at the scene of a mental-health crisis, if there is no security threat (such as a person brandishing a weapon), the officer can dispatch EMCOT. Clinicians from Integral Care can take over the call and help the person get stabilized and connected to mental-health care. Meanwhile, the officer can get back on the beat. The program has helped police focus on law enforcement and people in crisis find the care they need.

Richards is optimistic about the prospects for Integral Care at a time when the public has a better understanding of mental health, and when Texas has increased its budget for related services. Over the past few legislative sessions, lawmakers have directed more funds to mental health and have advocated for what Richards considers better models of care.

Just as law enforcement relies on ordinary citizens to look out for their neighbors and report suspicious behavior, Integral Care is training ordinary citizens in its daylong Mental Health First Aid courses. "It's like CPR, but for mental health and

substance use," Richards explains. "It gives you the tools to know how to respond to someone in crisis and get them the help they need as quickly as possible." The agency has trained more than 5 thousand Austinites in mental-health first aid, equipping them with empathy and skills to help their fellow citizens.

SUBURBANIZATION OF POVERTY

Austin's skyrocketing housing costs have led many families to move to suburbs like

Hutto and Manor, where land and homes are cheaper. But that move isn't a panacea. The displacement of lower-income families from the urban core brings its own set of challenges, including a hike in other costs of living and decreased access to services.

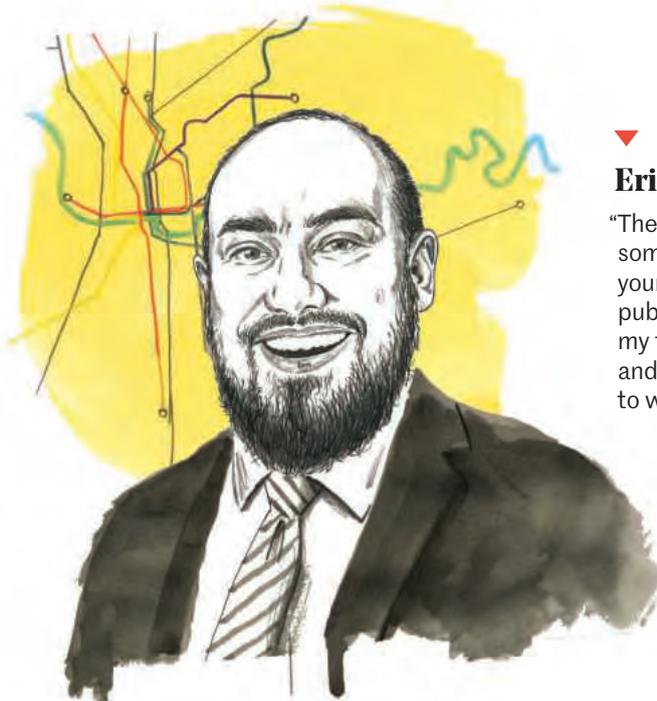
For instance, a move outside Austin lengthens commute times and increases transportation costs.

"Maybe your family used to be a one-car or zero-car household, and now you must own a car or two," says Eric Bustos of Capital Metro. "While you might have saved \$300 or \$400 a month on your rent, you've just shifted that cost to transportation."

To help commuters in outlying areas, Capital Metro is working with suburbs to add transit into downtown. The agency has partnered with the City of Round Rock on an express bus service that allows people to park in Round Rock and ride the bus into downtown Austin in tolled express lanes, which save about 20 minutes of travel time. Plus, bus riders don't pay the toll. Ridership is up 65 percent, and the City of Round Rock is increasing its budget for the program.

Leaving the city can have other hidden costs, says Travis County Commissioner Margaret Gómez. Her Precinct Four covers the unincorporated communities of Del Valle and Elroy, where housing options are often limited to manufactured homes. Without city utility services, residents contract with private water and septic companies, which can be expensive.

Neighboring counties outside Travis County follow the state guideline for providing indigent healthcare, which limits services to people who don't qualify for



▼
Eric Bustos '12

"The mindset of serving something bigger than yourself, of providing a public service, ran through my time at St. Edward's, and it put me on the path to what I'm doing now."



▼
**Alyssia
Palacios-Woods '05**

"At St. Edward's, I was in classes that pushed the needle on traditional ways of doing things and traditional thinking."

Medicare or Medicaid and whose income is at or below 21 percent of the federal poverty guideline. For a single person, that amounts to an annual income of no more than \$2,549 per year. In contrast, Travis County offers healthcare to people who make 100 percent of the federal poverty guideline. "It's like we're pushing them into an area where they're not going to get any help," Gómez says of people who leave Travis County.

Such state policies are out of Gómez's control. But she would like to see the city and county do more to keep people from leaving Travis County. For instance, the city could require any company receiving tax incentives to offer job training and well-paying jobs to residents who've had limited opportunities. And the city and county could work together to build more affordable housing on publicly owned land — using money from the bond that Austin voters overwhelmingly passed in November. "Let's do whatever we can to keep these families here," Gómez says.

MILLENNIAL WORKFORCE

Austin is often portrayed as a playground for millennials, a city with a thriving tech scene and nightlife to match. But, playfulness aside, those same young people are poised to take on positions of leadership in the workplace and in Austin's civic life. The Austin Young Chamber ensures they'll be prepared.

The AYC was founded 10 years ago by three young professionals who noticed that, because of their age and worldview, they were different from most of the workforce. Now, those same millennials are part of the largest segment of the nation's labor force.

"I think a big misconception about millennials is that they're all about 'me' — the selfie comes to mind," says **Alyssia Palacios-Woods '05**, the AYC's executive director. "Our members are so community focused. They want to work together and be open to new ideas."

As Austin has grown, the number of groups for young professionals — service groups, leadership training, networking clubs for specific career fields — has increased. But it can be difficult, especially for newcomers, to find the organization that's the best fit. The AYC is working on ways to help Austin natives and transplants alike connect with the right opportunities.

While some people join the AYC for the professional networking, the group also has a strong civic edge. It engages members in regular volunteer opportunities and teaches them what it takes to be on a nonprofit board. It invites guest speakers who explain how to support diversity and inclusion, both at work and in the community at large.

"We're trying to create a pathway to leadership roles," Palacios-Woods says. "We're always thinking about how we can help them develop as local talent and who they need to be for Austin's future."

The millennial workforce doesn't exist in a vacuum. It needs transportation infrastructure, affordable places to live, a community that values diversity and good schools for the next generation. Those four concerns occupy the AYC's economic development committee, which studies local dilemmas like the Austin Independent School District's budget shortfall and reports back to the membership at large.

The Austin Young Chamber has supported education bond proposals in both the Austin and Round Rock school districts. Not all AYC members have children. But, Palacios-Woods says, "We look at it as a way to invest in education today for the children that our members will have in the future. We want to ensure there's a good infrastructure in place to make sure our schools stay strong."

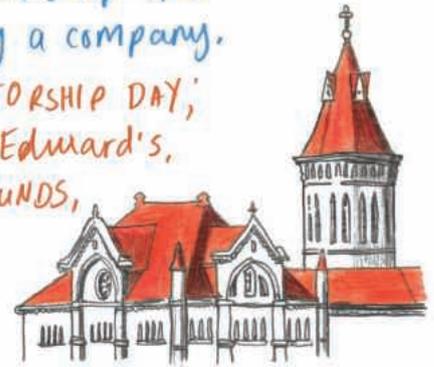
THE NEXT GENERATION



PARTNERSHIPS WITH SOME OF AUSTIN'S BIGGEST NAMES IN BUSINESS AND MOST RESPECTED NONPROFITS CONNECT STUDENTS TO MENTORS AND IMMERSE THEM IN REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES.

1. Austin entrepreneurs offer feedback on students' business ideas at 3-Day Startup, a weekend workshop that immerses students in the experience of starting a company.

2. AT THE ANNUAL 'DELL MEDICAL SCHOOL MESH MENTORSHIP DAY,' MEDICAL STUDENTS ADVISE UNDERGRADUATES AT St. Edward's, PARTICULARLY THOSE FROM UNDERREPRESENTED BACKGROUNDS, ABOUT HOW TO STRENGTHEN THEIR CANDIDACY FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL.



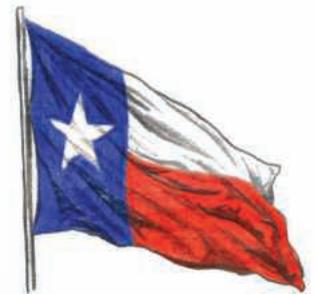
3 The Bill Munday School of Business partners with Univision Austin to give students access to POSSIBLE ATX, a one-day bilingual entrepreneurship event.



4 GRADUATING SENIORS IN SOCIAL WORK COMPLETE INTENSIVE FIELD INTERNSHIPS AT ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING THE TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE VICTIM SERVICES UNIT, THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER COLLEGE READINESS NONPROFIT CON MI MADRE, AND LIFEWORKS, AN AGENCY THAT SERVES YOUNG PEOPLE AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE.

5 Capital Factory provides co-working seats for seven students in The Bill Munday School of Business and the School of Natural Sciences each semester, giving them access to some of the city's top entrepreneurs, investors and startup resources.

6 EVERY SUMMER, A GROUP OF St. Edward's STUDENTS IS FUNDED BY H-E-B GROCERY AND ENTERPRISE RENT-A-CAR TO COMPLETE PAID INTERNSHIPS AT LOCAL NONPROFITS.



7. Education students from St. Edward's lead Saturday workshops and a summer academic enrichment program for kids in Breakthrough Central Texas, which supports students from low-income families who will be the first in their families to graduate from college.



Brenda Vallance
SCHOOL OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Gary A. Morris
SCHOOL OF NATURAL SCIENCES



Glenda Ballard
SCHOOL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION



Sharon Nell
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Big Questions

We wanted to know how professors from different disciplines would answer the same questions. Read on for some insight – and a little fun – from the deans of the five academic schools at St. Edward's.

BY STEPHANIE ELSEA MLA '05
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHIL KLINE



David Altounian
THE BILL MUNDAY SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



DAVID ALTOUNIAN

*The Bill Munday
School Of Business*



GLENDA BALLARD

*School of Human
Development
and Education*



GARY MORRIS

*School of
Natural Sciences*



SHARON NELL

*School of Arts
and Humanities*



BRENDA VALLANCE

*School of Behavioral
and Social Sciences*

What is the biggest challenge facing society?

Access to resources drive civilizations – everything from food, water and shelter, to education, information, good jobs and health-care. So, I would say income inequities and the access, or lack of access, to resources afforded by income or even geography are major issues impacting our society today.

One of the biggest concerns I see is our inability to communicate around complicated, fractious issues. We've lost our ability to allow for differences of opinion, perspectives, attitudes and ideas about issues. The inability to communicate is exacerbated by the absence of actually listening to one another and the inevitable personalization of these important issues.

Climate change, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering will likely have the most significant impact over the next century. Each of these issues will require a substantial investment of intellectual capital to identify a path forward for how humanity copes with these changes in ways that include moral and ethical considerations.

The lack of education – as well as a lack of respect for education – is a root cause for the growing political division in our country. And it's no accident: Fostering an uneducated electorate has been a political strategy at both the state and federal levels. It is so important that we show up to vote armed with facts to make good decisions at the ballot box.

We've lost our ability to hold critical conversations in a respectful way, in which we both hear and listen to one another. Ultimately, when we can't respect another's opinion, we also can't engage in healthy discourse.

How is St. Edward's part of the solution?

I choose to teach at St. Edward's because the faculty and administration are concerned with impacting students for the long term. I believe we achieve that by engaging and educating students in both heart and mind. We help students see and understand our individual and collective responsibility to do well but also to do good.

Our students are the future helpers – educators, physical therapists, social workers, counselors – and they are looking to us for understanding and insight but also to model how to react to certain situations. As leaders, we have to demonstrate tolerance, respect and a willingness to anticipate ambiguity.

Computer analyses are only as good as the codes written to produce them; likewise, the codes are only as good as the people who write them. So the question becomes: Who is writing the codes? Because of the moral and ethical responsibility in computer science, there's a great case for why St. Edward's graduates need to be the leaders of the coding workforce.

St. Edward's demonstrates its responsibility by making education accessible for first-generation scholars, as well as creating a diverse campus community. There's always room for improvement, of course, and I am especially interested in improving our ability to recruit, hire and retain a diverse faculty to mirror our student body.

Our students learn a set of skills – scientific methods – to approach critical questions. The important thing is to remove emotional opinions and to investigate facts. We stress thorough research using reliable sources to help students draw conclusions based on solid information.

<p>What is your best advice for students?</p>	<p>What do you think about chasing dreams?</p>	<p>What would you be doing in an alternate reality?</p>
<p>I have two standard pieces of advice: Be prepared, and always take that one extra step. Most people won't do the basic work, much less anything extra, so be the exception.</p>	<p>I'm not a fan of "chase your passion" because passion alone doesn't provide access to resources. I am a fan of "do what interests you." My advice is to find something that keeps your interest and where you can continue to learn. Sometimes everything aligns, but sometimes you take a job that gets you resources to have a great life.</p>	<p>This is my alternate reality! I was a tech executive, a marketing guy and entrepreneur who started a couple of companies. I fell into academia and discovered how much I love teaching. I enjoy working with young people, but the part I really love is the sense-making we do through research. This is my second career and my passion and my vocation.</p>
<p>I try to follow the Golden Rule – do unto others as you would have others do unto you – and it is my go-to advice for anyone. The other thing I tell students is to never stop learning. With these two ideas in mind, it's pretty hard to go wrong.</p>	<p>I honestly believe chasing your dreams is one of the keys to happiness and success. If you enjoy your job – or it may be in the form of a vocation – and get up excited to go to work or to pursue that passion, you'll feel most at ease and most comfortable being yourself. I think that, in and of itself, is worth never giving up the dream.</p>	<p>In another life, maybe I would have been a dancer. I absolutely love jazz, tap and ballet but am mesmerized watching jazz dancers. The realist in me would say I would definitely have to be helping people in some capacity. Maybe I would be a dance teacher because I would still be teaching and helping people.</p>
<p>You discover the most interesting things when life – and research – doesn't go as planned. This has rung true throughout my career, when the most exciting findings were almost always unexpected.</p>	<p>The questions we ask at St. Edward's are: <i>What do you want to do? How can we support you to get there?</i> I think we have proven time and again with the right support structure, students with the desire and hunger to do so can achieve their dreams. They might even surprise themselves by achieving more than they ever thought possible.</p>	<p>I was an undergraduate when I first had the idea that I'd like to be a professor one day. If I had to choose something else, I'd probably be writing computer code, which I do for fun as part of this job. I love writing computer code. I suppose I could have made a lot more money had I gone in that direction, but I am very happy where I landed!</p>
<p>Always, always, always talk to your professor. I can't emphasize it enough – if you're having any kind of issue, talk to the professor and ask for help. Also, get involved; participate! Take advantage of everything St. Edward's offers to nurture your success.</p>	<p>I tell students "The sky is the limit, but you're going to have to work for it." They're going to experience failure and will have to look for the lesson in those setbacks. Failure doesn't mean you shouldn't chase your dreams, but it may offer important clues on how to get there. You may need to change your tactics or approach and then try again.</p>	<p>I would put my French expertise to use as a tour guide. I've been to France numerous times for research and work, but only recently went on my first vacation there with my husband and several members of my extended family. In addition to my useful knowledge of French and France, I'm pretty good being a travel guide and planner!</p>
<p>Don't be afraid to ask the question. College is the time in your life for exploring, so if you're not sure you chose the right major, are having trouble understanding a concept or need help with an assignment, ask.</p>	<p>I tell students, "Let's see how we can make that happen." I help them outline the steps required, but I also tell them to stay open to the adventure. Often, in the pursuit of one dream, you can stumble upon something even better. I use my own experience as an example because I never thought I would be a dean in academia.</p>	<p>If I wasn't teaching, I'm fairly certain I'd be in government. Given my background and interests in Russia and Russian politics, I'd probably be working for the State Department at an American embassy in Europe.</p>

red doors

TOP OF THE GAME

YOU'RE HIRED

Suzanne Quintana Scaramuzza '98 helped put Austin on the map as a recruiting hot spot for Google.

BY LISA THIEGS
PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITNEY DEVIN '10

Suzanne Quintana Scaramuzza '98 has a great view of the St. Edward's campus when she eats her lunch on the top floor of Austin's Google office. It's a reminder of how far she's come since graduating — she never would have guessed that she would find her dream job as a Google recruiter just 3 miles from her alma mater.

Q: Can you describe your career path?

A: St. Edward's University required us to complete two semesters of an internship during senior year. Just as the dot-com boom was taking off, I got an internship with a technical recruiting firm. I fell in love with the recruiting industry, and I was lucky to find my passion early. Upon grad-

uation, I got an offer with Vignette Corporation, a pre-IPO software company in Austin, where I recruited for three years. When the dot-com bust happened, I took a position as a clinical recruiter for Seton Healthcare Network, which was in a steady but slower industry. When I got a call for a recruiting job at Dell in 2003, I took the opportunity to get back into technology — where I stayed until 2010. That's when I found out about a contract opportunity to be part of a four-person recruiting team for Google in Austin. It was a big leap of faith, for sure. But after a few years, Google leaders agreed that Austin would be a hub for recruiting talent. The People Operations team in Austin has now grown into the hundreds.

Q: You see a lot of résumés. What stands out?

A: I want to get a good understanding of how someone's experience and expertise fill the gaps we have. I've seen five-page résumés with every keyword you could imagine. Instead, candidates should focus on their contribution to a team's success. If your team won a huge deal, what was your part in that win? Are you an engineer whose team launched a product? Share your contribution to this success. That's really what differentiates an average player from a really strong hire. Not everyone is good at selling themselves, either. Minorities and females aren't the best at marketing themselves. It typically takes me seeing enough in their résumé to get them on the phone, and

then I have them tell me their story. I then have the privilege of sharing their story with our leaders.

Q: How can people stay competitive in a volatile market?

A: It's been a strong hiring economy, but things can change. Some people might want to find an industry that isn't affected as much by the economy, like medical. But wherever you go, you need to bring a really solid background to lend to that industry. Find a way to refocus and continue doing great work, because your reputation follows you. My biggest point is: Your network is your net worth. Finding people who are able to speak to your work ability and work ethic follows you in your career no matter what industry you're in.

Suzanne Quintana Scaramuzza '98, Communications

HILLTOPPERS GET HIRED

1

Stand out in a sea of résumés by highlighting your past contributions to a team's success. Emphasize your part in a win.

2

Work ethic and work ability stay with you throughout your career. Cultivate relationships with people who can speak to that.





PHOTOGRAPH BY COLIN CONCES

▲
Adam Conley
'02, Biology

**THE DOCTOR'S
NOTES**

1

“Professors would work with us one-on-one to help with interviewing for medical school, understanding a topic in class or talking through career decisions.”

2

Conley is still awestruck at how operating on a 25-week-old fetus with severe spina bifida can greatly improve that child's mobility once it is born.

Driven by Compassion

As a kid, **Adam Conley '02** wanted to be either a chicken farmer or a doctor. Although he can't remember when medicine beat out agriculture, he had decided by the time he started his Biology degree at St. Edward's. Conley eventually landed at Children's Hospital & Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska, as a pediatric neurosurgeon. While Conley's career is a scene of new developments in drugs, technology and techniques, his biggest teachers have remained constant. “I am astounded by how much my patients teach me about the emotional aspects of care,” he says. “They fight so hard not to be sick, and it's such a rewarding experience to treat them.”

Hilltopper Connection



Dedicated employees, many whom stayed on the hilltop after graduating, play important behind-the-scenes roles to make students feel at home. Lucie Perez '92 is one of them. For 35 years, she has worked with alumni, donors and students. "My work on the hilltop fuels my personal passion to help others any way I can," Perez says.

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ALUMNI EMPLOYEES

account for more than 25 percent of all full-time faculty and staff, who work tirelessly to deliver the St. Edward's experience to nearly 5,000 students.



Sergeant Nic Delgado '98 joined the University Police Department in 1988 and earned his

Criminal Justice degree 10 years later. Delgado's wife, Elisa, is a 1993 alumna, and daughter Lianna, graduated in 2016. Delgado celebrated his 31st anniversary as a staff member this year.

#SEUHERO

Tell us who most shaped your St. Edward's University experience as an unsung hero and follow the Alumni Association @seualumni on Facebook and Instagram.

ALUMNI EVENTS

LET'S CATCH UP

➤ Connect with St. Edward's families, alumni and students at three signature events.



CELEBRATE EASTER

Join us for our first family-friendly Easter event.



HILLTOP SENDOFF

Celebrate with the Class of 2019 just before they graduate.



RAISE A GLASS

Join alumni near you for national happy hour.

5 MORE UNsung HEROES

Here are five more long-time staff members who make the university feel like home for students.

Denise Rocha '99, MLA '07

Rocha runs the show for alumni and donor events. She has a knack for creating memorable, fun events, but most of all, she shows guests that St. Edward's hospitality.

Greg Noble

Noble has inspired us with his efficiency and unflappable dedication to students, faculty and fellow staff members. Starting as a grants accountant, Noble is now assistant to the dean of the School of Natural Sciences.

Suzanne Rogers '06, MLA '17

Since 2001, Rogers has created a richer campus experience through her service in Residence Life. She also instructs GroupX spin classes and is proud mom to Jackson King '17.

Patrick Hobbs

For 18 years, Hobbs has tended to everything that grows as a groundskeeping expert. Hilltoppers love his friendly smile.

WHO ELSE?

➤ We couldn't fit every unsung hero on the page. Tell us who your #seuhero is and follow the Alumni Association @seualumni on Facebook and Instagram.

Andrew Harper '03, MLA '08

Harper encourages employers to recruit students from St. Edward's. In addition, he guides students in their professional development and serves as an instructor.

moments

OF HUMILITY

"I spent the summer in South India assisting in oral and maxillofacial surgery as a Johnson-Turpin Scholar through the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). It was my first time traveling abroad. The experience of shadowing doctors made my passion for dentistry stronger and more humble. I appreciate what I have. I want to spend my summers going to other countries to help, and once I am a dentist, I plan to travel back to India again and volunteer."



◀ **Alejandro Torres '20**
Biology major,
Sharer of smiles

OF RESILIENCE

“My internship at the *Colorado Springs Gazette* tested my resilience because I was in a new state, I didn’t know anybody, and I was stressed that I wouldn’t perform well at my job. I was used to campus reporting for *Hilltop Views* but not reporting for an entire city. The staff gave me advice on what to report on, and I became an asset to the team. Journalism is not just facts and stats. We’re telling stories of everyday people, and journalism is about educating the heart and mind. It makes me happy to be a journalist at St. Edward’s and to pursue a career while applying the values of a Holy Cross education.”



◀ **Andrea Guzman '19**
Digital Media Management major,
Journalism and Digital Media minor
The storyteller

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

Art with a Bigger Purpose

Students in the Drawing Methods course may spend the semester making marks on paper. But they're also answering big questions.

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"Drawing is a pretty complicated process, and I'm learning that in the moment, or the series of moments, I can be really surprised by what I end up with. I love the surprises that come from my brain."

VY NGUYEN '20

