Division News and Standouts, September 2020

Check out Fall 2020 reopening operational updates for Division of Student Affairs’ departments.

Center for Students in Recovery

- With the help of a Division of Student Affairs intern, our team reviewed and evaluated our Recovery Ally Training, transitioning the program to a virtual platform.
- Join us for virtual events and activities during September’s National Recovery Month. More information to come on our website.

Counseling and Mental Health Center

- Our team worked with University Communications to create the How to Support a Longhorn page on the Protect Texas Together website. Check out these resources as well: virtual mindfulness and stress reduction activities, and other mental health resources for students and faculty/staff.
- We’ve also created a menu of virtual options for student groups, including organizations, resident assistants, and First-year Interest Group (FIG) mentors.
- The Longhorn Wellness Center is providing workshops and consultations virtually for faculty, staff and students. They are also hosting a series of Canvas modules about mental health and well-being topics.
- BeVocal is developing promotional materials to educate the community on the role of bystander intervention and COVID-19 preventive health behaviors.
- All incoming students received the AlcoholEdu and Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates modules on Aug. 17 via an email from Dr. Lilly. Students must complete Part One by Sept. 8 and Part Two by Nov. 20.

New Student Services

Interim President Jay Hartzell (bottom row, second from left) visits with incoming students at the First-Generation Student Welcome during Freshman Orientation.

- Our office hosted 12 virtual orientation sessions from June through August, and welcomed 10,280 new transfer and freshman students.
New Student Services staff at the virtual Orientation Advisor Banquet

- Our team thanked our 79 orientation advisors at a banquet on July 19. Students received awards and were recognized for their hard work.

Office of the Dean of Students

- The Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL) is now the Behavior Concerns and COVID-19 Advice Line (BCCAL). If you have any COVID-19-related questions or want to report COVID-19 concerns regarding students, faculty or staff, please call the recently expanded BCCAL at 512-232-5050 or submit your COVID-19 questions or concerns online.

- Safety kits containing recommended protective face masks, hand sanitizer, health literature and other items will be distributed on campus later this month.

- Student Activities is partnering with Texas Global to streamline the travel approval process through HornsLink this fall. Due to COVID-19, there are restrictions on student organization travel. For more information, email Virginia Luehrsen.

- HornsLink will offer a virtual platform for Student Organization Fairs. Features include attendance records, ability to view participating organizations, and event ratings and evaluations.

- Sorority and Fraternity Life hosted University Panhellenic Council Recruitment virtually Aug. 17–24. They developed a Virtual Chapter Resource Page which has recordings of the Summer Thursday Thoughts series calls, which concluded Aug. 6.

- Dean's Squad Public Health Ambassadors are being ramped up to educate the university community by providing on-campus support to help Protect Texas Together. They will provide public health resources, promote healthy behaviors and social norms, and answer questions about campus reopening and operations. For more information, email Cheryl Le Gras.

Recreational Sports
COVID-19 messaging at Gregory Gym entrance

- Our team worked diligently the past few weeks to prepare for a phased reopening of recreation facilities beginning Aug. 17. Staff collaborated on new procedures and signage to educate patrons on new safety measures and protocols related to COVID-19. See photos.
- We are hosting Back to School with RecSports, a Longhorn Welcome Signature Event, Aug. 25–Sept. 2, which includes a scholarship competition, TeXercise classes, Outdoor Recreation sessions, a virtual sport club organization fair, games and more.
- Our department is partnering with University Housing and Dining to launch the Active Living Learning Community. These residential communities introduce and integrate academic and social learning through faculty/staff involvement. Joe Wise is organizing monthly events and overseeing our involvement.
- Staff collaborated with New Student Services to present virtual orientation sessions about RecSports programs and activities. We were proud to engage with several hundred new Longhorns interested in learning ways to get involved in campus recreation.

Texas Parents

- Family Weekend, typically held in October, has been canceled this year to follow health and safety measures on campus.
- Now that we have resumed having one staff member in the office weekdays, our “Ship a Package to Texas Parents” member benefit is available. Parents can use this service to send their students a package for them to pick up in our office.
- Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on operations, Student Organization Grants and the Mike Wacker Award are currently under review.
- Our staff have served as a crucial campus resource for parents and families during the pandemic, offering support, sharing resources and answering questions.
- We hosted a complimentary Online Family Orientation program with 80+ pre-recorded video presentations and downloadable handouts during the summer. More than 5,500 freshman and transfer families registered, and the videos received 100,000 views.

University Health Services

- Please complete the online, interactive training program called Staying Healthy in a Changing Environment by Sept. 30. This important training for students, faculty and staff provides and reinforces valuable information for navigating the presence of COVID-19 during the fall semester.
- Interim President Jay Hartzell and UT System Chancellor James Milliken participated in proactive community testing on Aug. 28. Our team is partnering with UT Health Austin to offer testing to students, faculty and staff. You are encouraged to participate. By testing widely during these early days, the university will develop a better understanding of the baseline COVID-19 rates within our community, and be in a stronger position to limit spread and provide care.
- Please also see this checklist shared with students, and this guide for recommended protective face masks.

University Housing and Dining

- Our Student Learning and Development team will host the eighth Longhorns for a Culturally Competent Campus (LC3) cohort on Sept. 4. LC3 is a unique and specialized program that is designed to assist residential students with assessing and developing their cross-cultural communication and interaction skills. They also facilitated the University Residence Hall Association annual Leadership Conference virtually on Aug. 17–18.
• Staff welcomed 3,600 residents to our 14 on-campus residence halls during Mooov-In on Aug. 20–23. Mooov-In was spread out over four days this year instead of three to provide adequate social distancing.
• Our team began a phased reopening of facilities on Aug. 17. View dining information.
• Our Residence Life staff trained 172 resident assistants on Aug. 5–19. The training covered building community, managing situations, navigating professional behavior, and understanding standard operating procedures and policies.

University Unions

• Our staff began a phased reopening of our facilities on Aug. 17. Grubhub mobile ordering will be available to help maintain social distancing at dining locations in the Texas Union and William C. Powers, Jr. Student Activity Center.
• Texas Union Underground has reopened with a new service counter that will allow bowling balls (in addition to bowling shoes) to be sanitized after each use.
• Tower Tours are canceled until further notice, but coming soon we will have a virtual Tower Tour hosted on the University Unions website.
• The James Turrell Skyspace will be closed fall semester, but the rooftop patio remains open.
• University Unions calendars (August 2020-December 2021) are now available for sale. The expanded format includes a campus photo for each month. Departments can purchase via the TXShop and individuals can pick one up at Provisions On Demand in the Texas Union and the William C. Powers, Jr. Student Activity Center.
• Campus Events+Entertainment hosted Beat the Heat (virtually) during Longhorn Welcome on Aug. 22, with Virtual Trivia and a Mario Kart esports tournament.
• Take a moment to watch a time-lapse video of a mural being completed in the Texas Union food court. Jeff Sladcik worked with recent UT Austin graduate Roxolana Krywonos and the College of Fine Arts on the project.

Vice President for Student Affairs

• Dr. Lilly will continue to host the bi-weekly Vice President for Student Affairs Office Hours via Zoom. Please read her column for dates and information.
• Our Development team is accepting applications for the Sharon H. Justice Leadership Scholarship until Sept. 29. Encourage students to apply.
• The university’s online annual fundraiser 40 Hours for the Forty Acres will take place Sept. 15–16.

VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS
Fall 2020 Division-wide Kickoff

• Join us for the Division-wide Kickoff via Zoom on Sept. 9, 9–10 a.m., for a presentation from Interim Provost Dan Jaffe. (Meeting information: link; Webinar ID: 925 9144 0865; Dial-in by phone: +13462487799)
We’re partnering with the Multicultural Engagement Center to host Texas Talks, a speaker series on diversity and inclusion campus issues, beginning Sept. 8.

Encourage students to apply to join our team as a Student Consultant by Sept. 6. These students share their thoughts with our staff to help influence the student experience.

Dr. Lilly distributed this email message to students on Aug. 27. Read her other messages to students containing important health and safety guidance as students return to campus.

Staff Standouts

Dr. Terrance Hines, University Health Services, and Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Soncia Reagins-Lilly spoke to parents during the Longhorn Family Welcome hosted by Interim President Jay Hartzell on Aug. 28. Dr. Amy Young, Dell Medical School, and students also spoke during this development event.

Darius Jones, Office of the Dean of Students, and Q’Anteria Roberson, Recreational Sports, will serve on the Black Faculty and Staff Association’s 2020-2021 Executive Team as president (Jones) and community engagement chair (Roberson).

Dean Lilly addressed students via pre-recorded video messages at New Black Student Weekend on Aug. 25.

Carol Longoria, Vice President for Student Affairs office, represented the Division of Student Affairs at the New Faculty Symposium on Aug. 18. (photo)

Staff Shoutouts

These shoutouts are submitted by department communicators. Three per department per month. Please coordinate with your department communicator if you would like to submit a staff member to be featured.

Edward Aguilar and Melinda Mendez, University Housing and Dining, supported our essential team of maintenance/facilities staff over the summer. Their work on campus, while most staff worked remotely, helped us prepare 14 on-campus residence halls and 2400 Nueces for the fall.

Wesley Barnett, Chris Lueck, David Martinez, Dwight “Monty” Monteith and Wade Raquet, University Unions, constructed and installed over 100 plexiglass barriers at the Texas Union, the William C. Powers, Jr. Student Activity Center, and the Student Services Building (to support University Health Services and the Office of the Dean of Students).

Justin Galicz, Recreational Sports, has been integral in our efforts to visually guide and educate participants on new safety protocols. He designed all digital communication and signage, and led numerous installations at our facilities.

Clifton Murphy, Recreational Sports, and his team were back on site soon after the university closed in March, working to keep all outdoor facilities in top condition, while maintaining measures to keep themselves safe.

Albino Perez, University Housing and Dining, a dedicated employee for 25 years, went above and beyond his job duties this summer. While many staff worked remotely off campus, he supported essential building staff, stepping in to help teams clean and sanitize our facilities. (photo attached)

Robert Solis, Recreational Sports, hired days after the pandemic emerged, quickly mastered membership policies and has excelled in providing outstanding customer service to students and members. He’s a true asset to the team.

Kudos to the Division staff members below who were featured in #UTShoutouts on Texas Connect’s Twitter, Facebook and Instagram channels. Texas Connect is the official channel for the university’s Internal Communications. This university-wide campaign highlights the extraordinary work of UT Austin staff and faculty during COVID-19.

- Alice Clayton, University Housing and Dining
- Stephanie Halley, University Housing and Dining
- Neil Kaufman, University Housing and Dining
- Lara Manire, University Housing and Dining
- Faith Miller, University Housing and Dining
- Robert Reed, University Health Services

“A Tip of the Hat to…”

This section includes thank-you messages sent to our Division staff by a third party (student organization, campus partner, parent, donor, etc. not from another Division staff member). Please coordinate with your department communicator if you receive a thank-you message you would like to submit for this section.

...the Center for Students in Recovery, which received this note from a graduating senior:
“Over the past two and a half years, the Center for Students in Recovery has been central to my success and resilience. This community has the power to sustain students in recovery through the inevitable challenges they will face.”