

VENERATIO

The Honors College Newsletter

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Extracurriculars at UTA

Starting an organization at UTA

Nhi Thi Nguyen

At the start of my first semester at UTA, I dived headfirst into a world of textbooks, practice problems, and studying. The fall semester of my freshman year was spent on the third floor of the UTA library. Growing up, I was always in some kind of orchestra of some sort—church orchestra, then a youth orchestra, or even a family ensemble. Upon entering college, however, I had to dedicate all my time to studying. I missed the camaraderie and joy that I found playing in an orchestra. One day after a particularly draining exam, I thought to myself, why don't I just create an organization for other students like me? Those of us who played a musical instrument all throughout high school but had to abandon it once we entered university. I was ecstatic to see that there were many other students who also enjoyed music and were interested. Luckily, UTA had all the resources and opportunities for me to create this new opportunity for us students to bring music to the elderly.

The first thing I had to do was simply think. I had to think of an organization name that was relevant but did not include any form of 'University of Texas' in it. Then, I had to formulate the mission of my organization. I also had to find the list of requirements that would need to be met before I had a registered university organization. To find a name, I asked my friends and family for suggestions, wrote every suggestion down, and slowly deliberated which name I would choose. The name that ended up sticking was MIO—Musically Inclined Orchestra. This name is courtesy of my aunt and Godmother, who proposed the concept of bringing this love of music to the elderly at nursing homes. This made the purpose of my organization so much more than entertainment and recreation— it became a way to enjoy music while also giving back to the community.



The Interest Session: The first item on the requirement list to begin an organization is to attend a 'New Organization Interest Session.' During this virtual info session, I learned about the myriad of conditions that must be met before I could officially register my organization under the UTA Organization Website, called MavOrgs. Before submitting a new organization application, I was to complete training from two canvas courses: the 'New Organization Officer Orientation' and 'Risk Management Policy for Organization Officers.' These were two modules that highlighted the importance of professionalism, procedure, and protective measures that the leaders of a new organization must consider.

The Constitution: I had met the first requirement by attending the interest session, but I still had many more things to complete. One of the most tedious steps was drafting the Organization's Constitution— or so I thought. The step I dreaded the most turned out to be the simplest— the MavOrgs website has a constitution template that students may download and edit. That is exactly what I did, and the constitution was drafted in less than two days. When I had specific questions, I emailed the Graduate Assistant in charge of the Maverick Involvement Team. The members of the team were helpful and quick to reply. The only thing left of the constitution was to get a vote from the majority of organization and board members.

Member Recruitment: To start a new organization, UTA requires at least 10 members to be registered into MavOrgs. These ten members may include three of the executive members, who also had to be elected. The easiest part of this process was choosing members for my executive board— I knew I needed to find two other people who were dedicated to helping me lead a new organization.

Although Hetvi Patel has no interest in playing instruments, nor does she know how, Hetvi is a true friend and wanted to help me lead this organization. As the secretary of MIO, Hetvi brings into the orchestra coordination, ideas, and organization. Another friend I have known from middle school agreed to be MIO's treasurer. Valerie Bui and I have played in the same church orchestra since we were in fourth grade. I was fortunate enough to also know many other church friends who are very proficient in orchestral music, and they agreed to help support me in the startup of MIO.

I also wanted to recruit new members– people who I did not already know– so I decided to take the random route. I began by asking my friends from classes or labs if they or their friends were interested in joining. After asking every classmate I knew, I began speaking to just about anyone I met in the library. Through these methods and the help of my friends and family, I was able to find a small but committed group to begin my mission of sharing music and joy with nursing homes.

The First Meeting: The most important aspect of this new organization process was communication. I communicated with the UTA staff through email, my friends through text messaging, and registered members in a GroupMe chat. The first informal meeting I set up was done with the help of my secretary and treasurer and was the first time I was able to meet Ian. Ian Gillies, a music major, volunteered to arrange the music for MIO. During this meeting, the executive board was introduced, a timeline of events was arranged, and members voted for the ratification of the organization constitution.

Organization Advisor: Every organization at UTA needs a faculty advisor to be the link between students and staff. In choosing an advisor, I built relationships with my professors in classes and asked one of them to become my organization advisor. In choosing an advisor, the requirements are that he or she must be a professor (not TA or Graduate student) and must complete the two training modules.

Finally, the application for the new organization was ready. I now had to fill out the submission form, which required the organization name, mission, constitution, advisor name, and registered members. The most exciting step for me was uploading the organization profile picture. After submitting the form, I had to wait for the committee on student organizations approval. Now, my orchestra is ready to go and planning to host an event at the local Arlington nursing homes during the days after Christmas to bring the love of music MIO to the residents at Heritage Oaks.



Honors Involvement and Engagement

A look into the Honors College
Aarti Darji

Kicking off this semester with an attendance of 259 for our Welcome Ice cream Social, the UTA Honors College has witnessed one of its highest attendance rates at events this semester. There have been multiple events this fall such as Video Game Night, Bingo Night, Pass the Paint and Halloween Party. Despite steady enrollment numbers, engagement in events has been increasing rapidly. We've had more than 530 Honors Students obtain at least one RR point this semester. The Culture Fair had an impressive turnout of 111 students, and our 5th HCC meeting on resume building had an attendance of 122. Furthermore, the Honors College held about 30 events this semester, a striking increase from our previous semesters. With the start of a new academic year, Honors students have been excited to get involved with Honors events.

An interesting point to note, the Honors Programming Board introduced the position of Board Coordinator this semester. "It was important for me to implement this position, since these students have so much potential and can get more autonomy in planning events" – Emily Spaulding, Student Engagement Coordinator. She believes that the skills a Board Coordinator can obtain from this position are transferable to many other aspects of life. Makayla, an Honors social work and public relations sophomore found that "as a coordinator, I felt like I was able to do more since I was able to come up with a vision for a program and then actually bring it to life."

Some of the major events we had this semester were planned entirely by the student board coordinators. As part of the Programming Board myself, I found that it was an exciting responsibility to conduct an entire event on my own. I also felt more inclined to invite other Honors friends, since I had planned the event down to every little detail. This feeling was shared among other coordinators as well and boosted engagement. "Planning the Honors Culture Fair was a great experience! It was very exciting, since it was the first time we were hosting such an event, deciding on the food menu, getting people to present music suggestions – it was all super fun!" says Asmin Pothula, a sophomore computer science student.

Furthermore, we've had 266 freshmen join Honors College this semester. Many Programming Board members and general students who attended events were first-year Honors students. After two years of dealing with COVID, it made the utmost sense that our incoming first-years were excited and ready to be involved in socials all over campus. "I always wanted a small community where I know and engage with everyone. I know friends who were very excited when things started getting back to normal," says Atiqur Rahman, a first-year computer science student.

"There was a good variety of Honors events that happened this semester and having a huge number of students attending the events elevated the experience." – Khushi Piparava, a sophomore engineering student. Overall, we've received positive feedback on the diversity of events. We look forward to the upcoming semester and the fun events that the Honors College has to offer!



The Goolsby Leadership Academy

Look into the world of leadership with the GLA
Douglas Dyer

Leadership is an increasingly valued skill in the professional realm. Regardless of what field one may enter, an experienced leader is invaluable to employers. For business students, opportunities for personal growth may often be left overlooked, but one such opportunity that every business leader must consider is the Goolsby Leadership Academy (GLA). UTA's GLA is the perfect journey for those who want to be successful professionally and personally, engineered to cultivate integrity, courage and positive impact, as the academy motto contends.

Beginning in students' freshman and sophomore years with the BNSF Early Leader Program and extending to junior and senior years with GLA, Goolsby students are enrolled in exclusive, leadership-oriented courses dedicated to identifying and expanding on individuals' distinctive strengths through exploratory study, special projects, and real-world experience. An example of this is the Community Capstone Project that Goolsby scholars must accomplish in their first year to develop practical project management skills and a deeper understanding of community. In corporate America, one will always find himself working in a team, so this dive into the cooperative team environment can be a paramount advantage when beginning one's professional career.

"The Goolsby Leadership Academy will help you become more confident as a leader and find new ways of influencing the teams you lead."

– Sami Ali, junior of business analytics and current GLA scholar.

Within the GLA specific courses, students take inventory of their strengths and weaknesses and establish a map of realistic goals. These goals help students become aware of their leadership qualities and how to use them beneficially in the business world. Among the skills assessed, the importance of emotional intelligence and self-awareness are particularly emphasized, as these traits are consistently found by executives and employees alike to be the most valuable tenets of leadership. Goolsby scholars are provided with the tools and instruments needed to understand these concepts and work to improve themselves with this understanding.

As a part of this emotional intelligence training, scholars are encouraged to participate in the GLA's spring study abroad program. Open-mindedness, communication, and empathy are similar core values to leadership and stand to improve greatly by exposing oneself to environments outside of comfort zones, such as foreign cultures. As students learn and adapt to the lifestyles around them, they expand their mind and can more accurately find differences and similarities between themselves and those of varying cultures, therefore also improving self-awareness. The study abroad program also presents a critical opportunity to witness international business firsthand and become more prepared for an increasingly globalized world.

The 2023 GLA study abroad program consists of comprehensive tours of Munich, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, and Prague, offering the opportunities to visit historical sites such as castles and museums and current global business centers such as Nuremberg's documentation center.

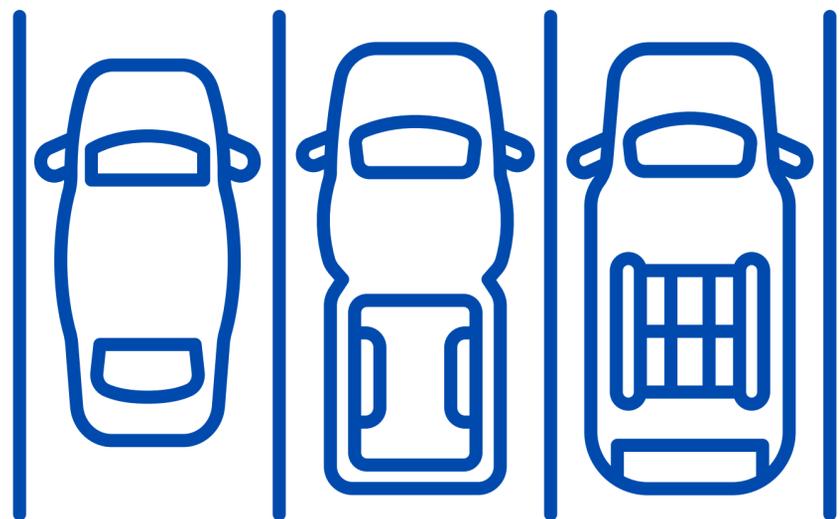
Ultimately, the GLA journey is a uniquely beneficial, but scarcely known chance to invest in oneself, understand and apply one's own talents, and invigorate conventional learning with a leadership-oriented focus.



Paying To Park

Looking into parking problems around campus
Imogen Hofer

On the first day of classes this semester, I drove to campus even earlier than my standard 20 minutes before class, pulling in a full 45 minutes early. I planned to park in Lot 49, where I have never had difficulty finding space. To my dismay, I found that not only was Lot 49 completely full, but my backup parking spots were also packed— Lot 50N and 51. I eventually had to park in a reduced-rate lot with my full price parking permit, and barely made it to class on time. After that first day, I switched to a lot on the east side of campus. As the semester advanced and more students arrived, I began to park in the furthest lot to the east. Instead of a five-minute walk to class, it was now somewhere between ten to twenty minutes. Though the platitudes from the parking office have continued, many of us students have struggled to find parking. The main questions students are asking are “Why can’t we find parking spaces and what is truly being done to fix it?”



To get to the bottom of our most pressing questions, I talked to Todd Smith, the assistant director of Parking and Transportation at UTA. According to Todd, the root of the parking problem is not necessarily that there are more students, but rather that we are back to pre - COVID parking numbers, with over 20,000 student parking permits purchased, more than the last few years where many students had online classes. He finds that most students want to park on the south side of campus, which leads to the overcrowding of Lot 49. However, he predicts that this will only worsen with the opening of the new School of Social Work/College of Nursing and Health Innovation Smart Hospital Building. Smith states that “there are available spaces on the west and east side of campus that students’ permits allow them to park in that might actually be a shorter walk to their building.”

He also urges students to “plan their trip early until they gauge the time to travel, park, and get to [their] room.” Smith also discussed the many programs that the parking office has in place to improve parking conditions, including real-time tracking, shuttles, daily upgrades for parking permits, and a plan to create signage for Lot 49 to show availability.

Although the parking office is admittedly giving its best efforts to address student concerns, students still find themselves struggling to find parking spaces. Marilyn Kim, a senior at UTA, has found that the additional reserved spaces and special parking, meant to force students to pay more, have exacerbated the parking dilemma. For Marilyn, the reserved spots and special parking forces her to park in Lot 52 to get to her 8am class on time, about a ten-minute walk. Sophomore Peyton Holder echoes these thoughts, stating that she finds herself needing to park further from campus than in previous semesters and has difficulties finding a spot that isn’t at least a 10-minute walk from her classes. Similar concerns were voiced by all the students I interviewed. The biggest complaint is not necessarily that students must walk far to classes, but rather that they are charged such an expensive fee to do so. The most commonly purchased permit, the commuting student permit, is \$210 a year. While this does not seem overpriced when you take into consideration that it comes out to about 50 cents per day, the fee becomes more substantial when you consider the fact that many students do not come to campus every day of the year. Often, students who have paid for a full price parking permit spend so long walking to their classes from lots that by distance, are just as far as many of the reduced-price lots. Some students, like myself, come straight from work to attend classes. It is an ordeal to get out of work, scramble to find a parking spot, and rush to class on time. While the shuttles offer a nice option for when students who need to park in a far lot, they are only efficient if you have extra time to wait for them to arrive and take you to your classes along their planned routes. To students, parking has become one of the biggest issues about coming to campus, and it should not have to be this way.

Now, it would be futile to pin the blame on the parking office, because this would be unfair. Instead, I would like to offer a few suggestions to improve the parking situation. Perhaps offering different parking permits for students who only come to campus on certain days could be an

option. Charging different parking fees relative to central campus rather than charging a lump sum for every lot, regardless of the distance from classes, could also amend the overcrowding problem. I believe that one of the most helpful solutions would be to create a map that displays live updates throughout the day to see the current availability of parking lots. Although I’m sure there would be many kinks to work out, this technology is used in the parking garages, and will be implemented in Lot 49 soon, so why not make it digital and more widespread? Rather than driving aimlessly through multiple lots looking for a spot, students could check these maps ahead of time and adjust to walk a little further if necessary. I believe that the parking solution exists, but if we want it to be fair, we need to make some further changes. As a commuter school, UTA and its parking situation must improve to meet the demands of this title.

Rallies Around Campus

A discussion about the recent rallies around campus
Tiffany Vargas

On Wednesday, September 28th students gathered in Brazos Park to listen to Texas gubernatorial candidate Beto O’Rourke as he addressed crucial political issues. Some of the issues included, immigration, LGBTQ rights, gun safety, serving our veterans, and reproductive freedom. The rally also served as an opportunity to register to vote and even sign up to volunteer. On his college tour, spanning over fifteen campuses, Beto spoke in hopes of obtaining support from young and potential first-time voters. One of the students who introduced him was Nathan Branson, a current Honors College student. The rally lasted about an hour, not including the long line of students who waited for a picture with O’Rourke afterwards. I was not the last to show up despite arriving about 10 minutes late, students continuously arrived with “Beto For Texas” signs and shirts to demonstrate their support. At the rally, students chanted his name and attentively listened to his plans for the state. Although there were many supporters in the crowd, counter protestors were also present, heckling and shouting things like “go back to El Paso.” O’Rourke also visited the campus on Tuesday, October 25th to accompany families and students at the MAC who were ready to cast their ballot. Throughout the election period, I often heard students in class encouraging their friends and peers to go out to

the MAC and vote. It was gratifying to see students care about the state and the current political issues that remain unsolved or ignored. Despite my family being unable to vote, I encouraged my friends to do so. I told them it was important we vote for people who cannot, people like our own families who simply don't have the right to vote .

Despite Beto's engagement and campaign, Governor Greg Abbott still beat his challenger on November 8th. This was predicted by many, due to Abbott's role as the incumbent. However, a compelling factor that many found solace from in this year's gubernatorial race was the youth engagement. The youth voter turnout was the second highest turnout rate we have seen in the past 30 years. My current sociology professor pointed this out and applauded our class, which was comforting. I think many young voters felt directly impacted by the gubernatorial race in Texas, which leads me to think it is the reason why they went out and voted. Furthermore, despite many students on campus feeling downhearted by the defeat, I think many were also left inspired and will feel compelled to continue voting in the future. As Beto himself said, "You came for the future of the state." This statement was powerful because he concluded the rally by telling the audience that voting is our opportunity to voice our opinions and concerns and that we must vote for the prosperity of our state.

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