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ASSAYER OF STUDENT OPINION

THE PROSPECTOR

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VOL. 100, NO. 22

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

APRIL 1, 2015

USE IT

Or

Mental health issues
that affect students

LOSE IT

shopping pg.7

concussion pg.15

mental illness pg.9

veterans health pg.13



APRIL 1, 2015

No dream for dreamers

BY AMANDA GUILLEN
The Prospector



Flashing back four years ago when I began searching for a university to attend, one of my main concerns was the cost of tuition of the university.

This is one of the main reasons why I decided to solely apply to Texas universities. In-state tuition is a benefit that residents have since they contribute to state taxes and funnel money into the state economy.

A citizen, national or a permanent resident of the United States can qualify for in-state tuition in the state of Texas if they have lived in the state for 12 consecutive months or have been employed in the state before they enroll at the college.

As a citizen of the United States, I am fortunate enough to have these lenient guidelines to follow in order for me to attend the college of my choice, but this is not a luxury that is afforded to everyone.

In a country where freedom, equality and democracy is an anthem, some DREAMers are being reminded that they aren't afforded the same opportunities as their peers, simply because they are undocumented.

Senate Bill 1819 is threatening the 2001 Texas Dream Act, which allows children of undocumented immigrants, who have resided in Texas for at least three years and plan on applying for legal status, to pay in-state tuition rates and the possibility of permanent residency.

If the bill passes, DREAMers will be forced to pay out-of-state tuition.

This is something that hinders the progression of equality in the U.S. and also makes no sense at all.

If citizens are allowed to gain access to in-state tuition after one year of residency, then why should these children of immigrants be denied their current deal of three years residency and the hope of obtaining legal status?

Students who aspire to attend college do so to make something of themselves, to search for education is to search for a better life, and isn't that something that we would want for everyone?

What infuriates me the most is the fact that many of these DREAMers want to stay in the U.S. and contribute to this country. Many times they consider the United States their home rather than the country from which they were born.

The Center for Public Policy Priorities estimates that in 2010, \$1.6 billion in taxes were paid by undocumented immigrants, which helped support higher education institutions in Texas.

For many of these DREAMers, in-state tuition gives them hope that they can achieve the "American dream."

By ripping away something that can potentially help them reach this goal is heartless and in my opinion un-American (who knows what values "Americans" have anymore).

I believe that the proposed bill places a barrier in front of the ladder and, in turn, leads to many potential students finding other paths to follow.

For those who claim it is not a big deal should take this into consideration, often times out-of-state tuition can average out to being triple the amount of in-state tuition.

The Chairman of the House Committee of State Affairs Representative Byron Cook, R-Corsicana, spoke about his support for the current policy. His comment is one that I firmly support.

"Number one, Texas made a commitment to these stu-

Editor's note: this letter was sent to all Mexican National students Monday, March 30.

Dear UTEP Miner:

Over the weekend an article in the El Paso Times incorrectly reported that the Texas Legislature was considering a change to in-state tuition for international students from Mexico. I want to take the time to clarify what is actually being considered.

If passed, Senate Bill 1819, which is being considered in Austin, would impact only undocumented students living in the United States often referred to as "Dreamers." The bill would not impact international students from Mexico who enroll at UTEP.

The University of Texas at El Paso has a long commitment to serving students from Mexico and extends Texas resident tuition to those students who demonstrate economic hardship. This program, known at UTEP as Programa de Asistencia Estudiantil (PASE), has supported thousands of students as they pursue their education. There is no legislation being considered at this time that would change the opportunity for qualified Mexican National students to participate in PASE. We assure you that UTEP's commitment to international students from Mexico remains strong and will not waver.

We will continue working to correct and clarify some of the information that has been reported through local media outlets. Our highest priority, however, is your enrollment and success as a UTEP Miner. Don't hesitate to contact the Office of Student Life at 915-747-5648 if you have any questions or need clarification on tuition and fees.

Sincerely,

Gary Edens
Vice President for Student Affairs



dents, and as Texans we should honor our word," he said. "Additionally, it would seem to me that having edu-

cated young people is much more productive for the economy of the state."

What was once the land of opportunity now has become the land of the All-American.

Amanda Guillen may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.

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New bill proposal aims to rid of in-state tuition for DREAMers

BY LORAIN AMBROCIO
The Prospector

A new proposal has hit the Texas Senate floor, which will affect undocumented students in the country, or DREAMers, and how they'll be paying for college or university tuition.

On April 6, the border security subcommittee of the Senate's Veteran Affairs and Military Installations Committee will hear Senate Bill 1819 from Texas Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels. This bill would repeal the 2001 Texas Dream Act, and keep DREAMers from paying for school with in-state residency tuition.

Local media erroneously reported about the bill, where it was stated that Mexican national students, including students attending UTEP who commute from Mexico, would be affected by this bill should it pass.

"They decided to change some of the language and I think they got confused and thought undocumented students were the same as international Mexican students," said Dr. Gary Edens, vice president of student affairs. "It's completely different."

Because of incorrect information printed and broadcasted in the local media, Edens said he is worried that the 1,100 Mexican national students will get confused and think their tuition costs may be in jeopardy.

"It's not. It's not at all," he said. "The bill isn't even associated with Mexican international students. It's associated with undocumented students and we have a very small population of DREAMers."

There are about 130 student DREAMers who attend UTEP.

"We don't ask students, 'are you a DREAMer?' So it's hard for us to know, but we approximate that much," Edens said. "At UTEP, we have a program called PASE (for Mexican international students)."

In 1987, UTEP implemented the Programa de Asistencia Estudiantil, which helps Mexican international students, who are in financial need and

show economic hardship, receive in-state tuition.

There is no legislation that is going to repeal PASE. The tuition rate for Mexican national students has not changed.

"Instead, what they're look-

have to follow Texas residency laws."

If this bill were to pass, DREAMer students would have to pay out-of-state tuition.

"You and I know this is a ridiculous place to debate repeal of in-state tuition. It implies

"I hate to see that happen to people because I think we all have enough drama in our lives that we don't need to react to things that turn out not to be real," she said. "I was really disappointed when I saw this story in the Times because it

body at the bridge told one of our students, 'well, I guess you're not going to get in-state tuition anymore.' It's like a wild-fire."

Phone calls were made to the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs from parents and students who were confused and worried about their tuition rates.

"I think Texas really stood proud when a decision was made to grant DREAMers in-state tuition. States like Texas need to recognize that these young people, these dreamers that is, really have proven themselves, and I'm not sure that there really is much more that they can do to be worthy of this investment in them," Natalicio said. "In the end these are talented people, who did well in school and graduated from high schools across the state, and they're going to make much bigger contributions to the state than they would otherwise. It's an investment in the future. I think it would be really sad if a decision were made not to support in-state tuition for the dreamers."

If the bill passes, UTEP will look at how it can help student DREAMers pay for school, by counseling one-on-one about the options and through scholarships.

UTEP currently offers a DREAMer scholarship, which is funded by TheDream.US and targets college-ready undocumented students who qualify under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

"These are students who really are challenged in a lot of ways, and we would try to help them, particularly if they had been good students," Natalicio said. "It would be such a shame for a junior to stop going to school because their tuition went up by a factor of three."

Lorain Ambrocio may be reached at theprospector@dailynews@gmail.com.

EVERYTHING IS BIGGER IN

TEXAS

EXCEPT

DREAMS

ILLUSTRATION BY JACOBO DE LA ROSA / THE PROSPECTOR

ing at is for DREAMers. Often times they graduated from a high school in El Paso or San Antonio, or wherever they're graduating, their parents may have come over and they just don't have proof of citizenship, even though they've lived here all their life as a student," Edens said. "That's the population that this bill is trying to deny in-state tuition to."

UTEP uses the 2001 Texas Dream Act to verify what tuition is charged to a student.

"We don't want to get these two populations confused," Edens said. "So if they're coming to us from a high school in El Paso, and they've shown us their transcript, they're living here and showing us water bills, we're going to count them as a Texas resident per the law. We're a Texas institution so we

that students going to university and college are a threat to the country, when in fact they are working to contribute even more," said State Sen. Jose Rodriguez, D-Texas, in a statement.

Edens said that what is happening in Austin is being monitored closely.

"That's really important to us as well, but it is not the same as Mexican national students, and that's what we're really trying to clarify. There's two populations here and we care about both of them."

Dr. Diana Natalicio, UTEP president, said that her big concern was the misinformation going out and that students and their families will get worried when there is no issue.

had a completely different take on who was affected by the Senate bill and completely distorted what that bill was about, which is about DREAMers."

The Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs sent out an email letter with the corrected information to all current Mexican national students, along with prospective Mexican national students who will be attending UTEP. The departments of Enrollment Services, Financial Aid and Student Life were also informed to correctly relay the information to students who may approach them.

"The bottom line for me is not discouraging any student from pursuing an education based on inaccurate information, that would really be sad to me," Natalicio said. "Some-

More than 100 bills aim to improve VA health care

BY STEPHANIE FRESCAS
The Prospector

As a response to last summer's Veteran Affairs health care scandal, where the White House reported significant and chronic system failures, more than 100 bills have been introduced in the House of Representatives to improve veteran health care this year.

Two bills were passed in the House

“We can and should always do more to make sure our veterans are cared for and that the VA is held accountable and made more transparent.”

- Rep. Will Hurd, R-Texas

earlier this month, and are pending approval from the U.S. Senate. Rep. Will Hurd, R-Texas, has co-sponsored a bill regarding veteran health care and plans to push as many bills as possible through the House to the Senate. “We can and should always do more to make sure our veterans are cared for and that the VA is held ac-

countable and made more transparent,” Hurd said. “Many people in my district are directly affected by problems at the VA, so I’m proud to fight for a number of bills this year that will help veterans receive the health care they deserve in as timely a manner as possible.” The scandal last year centered mostly on month-long wait times at VA hospitals, specifically a veteran’s hospital in Phoenix, which saw the death of 40 veterans while they waited for an appointment. Because of this, the focus of most bills has been to shorten wait times by giving veterans more options. The Long-Term Care Veteran’s Choice Act would give veterans that require nursing-home care the option to transfer to a civilian medical facility. This option would become available for three years starting in October. The second act approved this month is one of the few that take disciplinary action against VA employees. This act would allow the secretary of the VA to order an employee to give back all or a portion of bonuses if they are found to have provided substandard care to veterans. However, according to Richard Alegria, senior business administration major and president of the Military Students Association on campus, the situation in El Paso has actually worsened since the scandal. “In the beginning, I had great experiences with the VA,” Alegria said. “It had worked perfectly. In the last six to seven months, it’s been hard to get



SPECIAL TO THE PROSPECTOR

appointments, really hard, you have long waits.” He attributed the increasing wait times to the sheer amount of veterans coming in, and the fact that El Paso only has a VA clinic as opposed to a hospital. This also leads to other issues. “They (veterans) can only get certain things at the VA, it’s not a true hospital,” Alegria said. “I want to give them the benefit of the doubt, I think

they’re short-handed and they could use a bigger facility.” Alegria also said that he does believe the new initiatives will alleviate the situation. Besides the Long-Term Care Act, other bills propose giving veterans the choice to see civilian doctors. Alegria said this would be a great option since this could provide continuity for veterans. “I’ve seen one (VA) doctor, then six months later I saw another one, then

he moved and I got another one,” Alegria said. “So if you see a civilian doctor, who’s probably got his own practice here, it’ll be easier to stay with the same person.” Stephanie Frescas may be reached at theprospectordaily. news@gmail.com.

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OUR VIEW

PHOTO EDITOR
MICHAELA ROMÁN, 747-7477



Journalism students participate in Iron Focus at Ft. Bliss

see MILITARY on page 8



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MICHAELA ROMAN/ THE PROSPECTOR
1. Soldiers fill fuel containers during Iron Focus training. 2. Specialist Melika Diop and Specialist Zahra Martinez, 92G food service specialists serve food to fellow soldiers. 3. Soldiers discuss the operation of military vehicles.



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Suicide second highest cause of death on campuses

BY ALONSO MORENO
The Prospector

Suicide, often a silent and very complex human behavioral problem, continues to be a serious problem on college campuses across the nation.

With the rate having tripled since the 1950s, suicide is currently the second-most common cause of death among college students and young adults ages 15-24.

According to the American College Health Association. With 6 percent of undergraduates and 4 percent of graduate students in four-year institutions having seriously considered attempting suicide at one point.

Numbers also shows that one in 10 college students has considered suicide, with females being more likely to attempt suicide compared to males, but with males being three to five times more likely to actually commit suicide.

"You can ask almost any student and almost all of them will tell you the same thing, college can be pretty stressing," said Bianca Martinez, junior media advertising major. "There can be a lot of factors, such as grades, work or finances that can make things hard for students. So it's no surprise that sometimes people just get overwhelmed and have to cope with depression, or worse things like suicidal thoughts."

Although suicide is often seen as the result of untreated mental illnesses, the reality is that most of the time those who commit suicide are victims of preventable human behavior.

"Suicidal people are like you and me, they have problems and we have

problems. The difference between us is that, for the moment, we feel we can handle our problems," said Dr. Jorge Marquez, clinical counselor with the University Counseling Center. "For suicidal people, suicide seems to be a solution to their problems."

Marquez also points out that suicide can take many forms and that thoughts of suicide can come during times of personal crisis, unrelenting stress, or when we are confronted with a fear of failure or are haunted by an unacceptable loss. Also, although the act of suicide is sometimes an impulsive act, most people will think about suicide for days, weeks, months, or even years before they make an attempt.

Despite being strongly associated with depression, suicide is also associated with brain functions and health.

"It is important to understand that suicidal thoughts are strongly associated with disturbances in brain chemistry and that these changes can be reversed with appropriate biological and psychological treatments. Other emotional and personal problems can trigger suicidal thoughts, but these problems too can be addressed through counseling and support," Marquez said.

While those who cope with suicidal thoughts must endure a constant struggle within themselves, they also have to face the harsh criticism that follows those who attempt to commit suicide.

"Suicide has a stigma—those who commit it are seen as selfish, didn't care about others or were weak and

just couldn't keep on fighting—but that's not the case," said Rodrigo Lugo, junior biological sciences major and president of To Write Love on Her Arms chapter at UTEP.

Even if such misconstrued views are not the only factor affecting possible suicide victims, Lugo points out that they might be just as dangerous as any other factors, as 80 to 90 percent of college students who die by suicide were not receiving help from

their college. Meaning that they did not seek help from a mental health center, a psychiatrist or counselor and possibly didn't even tell their friends.

All stemming from the fear that if they admit they are struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts, they will be perceived as weak by their peers.

"A big part of what we want to do is break that stigma and let people know that depression, or any men-

tal illness, is just an illness like any other," Lugo said.

At UTEP, various student organizations such as To Write Love on Her Arms, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Campus Collegiate Recovery Program, dedicate their time and efforts to help spread awareness about mental health and offer support to students who may be experiencing distress.


Similarly, UTEP students have access to free and confidential treatment for depression or suicide from the University Counseling Center, located at room 202 in Union West. The UCC has fully licensed and trained counselors, social workers and psychologists who work with registered students, who may be experiencing emotional distress.

"As a mental health professional, I have seen how the stigma of mental illness and suicide has kept people from seeking the help they need," Marquez said. "A survivor of suicide can gain support from numerous organizations such as the Suicide Prevention Center, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention."




ANDRES MARTINEZ / THE PROSPECTOR
According to the American College Health Association, 6 percent of undergraduate and 4 percent of graduate students in four-year institutions have seriously considered suicide.

Alonso Moreno may be reached at theprospectoraily. news@gmail.com.



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Legislation could increase access to birth control

BY MARIA ESQUINCA
The Prospector

Carol De Avila was 15 and a freshman at Coronado High School, when she realized she was three months pregnant.

"In high school everybody was having sex," she said.

Although her parents had told her that sex was something married people did, De Avila's mom encouraged her kids to ask them for birth control. But as a young 15-year old, De Avila found it difficult to ask for birth control.

"That's hard to discuss with parents, especially at that age," she said.

If enacted into law, a new bill introduced to the Texas Legislature could help teens to avoid that conversation.

House Bill 468, introduced by Texas Rep. Mary González, D-Clint, would allow 15-year-olds, who have already had a child and are unmarried, to obtain contraception without parental consent.

The bill amends Chapter 32 of the Family Code and also allows 16-year-olds, who reside separate and apart from their parents, to buy contraception.

"Currently, one in five teenage pregnancies in Texas is a repeat pregnancy," said Joshua Carter, legislative assistant for Mary González, in an email. "We do not live in a perfect world where all parents are available or engaged and receptive to their teens regarding their reproductive health. This bill is a realistic approach to the issue of repeat teen pregnancy in Texas."

A 2013 National Vital Statistics report by the Centers for Disease Control on national and state patterns regarding repeat pregnancies, revealed that Texas had the highest rate of repeat teen pregnancies, where 22 percent of teens who gave birth already had a child.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, teen pregnancy rates in Texas are higher than the national rate.

In 2011 the teen birth rate for girls aged 15-17 was 25.6 percent in Texas, representing 14,057 girls, compared to 15.4 percent in the U.S. The teen birth rate for girls 18-19 was 79 percent in Texas, while the national rate was 54.1 percent.

In a national ranking of teen birth rates by The National Campaign, a non-profit organization dedicated to preventing unplanned pregnancies, Texas placed 46th in the nation with 41 births per 1,000 girls, one of the highest rates in the U.S.

In 2013 there were 37,525 teen births in the state and \$1.1 billion spent on childbearing.

"It's not necessarily fixing the problem, it's one way of removing restrictions," said Claudia Yoli, El Paso regional coordinator for the Texas Freedom Network, a non-partisan, grassroots organization.

Texas Freedom Network, along with the ACLU of Texas, Planned Parenthood Texas Votes, Texas Research Institute and Whole Woman's Advocacy Alliance, lobbied for HB 468 on Feb. 26 and other bills as part of an advocacy day at the capitol.

The organizations form part of a coalition behind a multi-year campaign called "Trust, Respect, Access," whose aim is to increase reproductive care in the state, include sex education, birth control and access to abortion.

"The main point of the coalition is to reverse the damage cause by the Texas anti-abortion laws," Yoli said.

Currently, HB 468 is sitting in the State Affairs Committee after a hearing on the bill on March 18. During hearings, one of the argu-

ments by critics is that it undermined parental rights.

Currently, one in five teenage pregnancies in Texas is a repeat pregnancy.

- Joshua Carter, legislative assistant for Rep. Mary González, D-Clint

"Many Republican-led legislations around the country do propose bills, similar to the fact, that the parents need to know what is going on with their child," said Moises Blankenship,

junior history major and president of the College Republicans. "In some districts, a child can't even get an aspirin without asking the parent's consent."

Currently, the state has focused on abstinence education. According to Christine Minn, press officer for Texas Department of State Health Services, the abstinence-centered education program at the DSH provides grants to 11 contractors, who provide abstinence-curriculum to school districts or clubs, targeting grades 5-12.

Contractors must implement evidence-based abstinence education programs, approved by DSH and are required to pre-test and post-test students in order to assess the success of the programs.

"Students reported significantly greater STD/HIV knowledge, greater recognition of STD signs and symptoms and greater number of reasons to not have sex. Students also reported lower intentions to have sex in the next year, and greater intentions to be abstinent until the end of high school," Minn said in an e-mail statement.

The contractor for El Paso is Draw the Line-Respect the Line.

According to Sue Betty, health educator at the El Paso Department of Public Health, the program receives \$125,000 per year in funding from DSH through a grant. The money funds purchasing the curriculum and training. This is the third year the program has been implemented.

The program services Canutillo, Anthony, Ysleta and Socorro Independent School Districts, and focuses on grades six through eight. The program is broken down into three parts per grade year.

"It's really not about sex, it's about resisting temptations," Betty said when describing the sixth-grade portion of the program.

In seventh grade, they teach students about relationships, how to draw a line and show respect. It also covers STD's. In eighth grade, the curriculum elaborates on relationships, and there is a lesson about HIV.

"The curriculum doesn't cover birth control," Betty said. "The message is to encourage abstinence."

However, in 2007, a federally funded evaluation by Mathematic Policy Research Inc., titled "Title V Sec-

tion 510, Abstinence Education Programs," showed abstinence education programs do not work.

The findings showed "no overall impact on teen sexual activity, no differences in rates of unprotected sex, and some impacts on knowledge of STDs and perceived effectiveness of condoms and birth control pills."

"We have to keep in mind that many people don't wait anymore," Blankenship said.

De Avila said she didn't want to have a child at 15, but she never had a doubt about having her baby.

However, De Avila, who is now 24, and her husband do agree that it might've been better to have their daughter when they were older.

"It's a huge problem now, everyone is having sex and everyone is having a child," she said. "The problem is that they're now aware that it's there (birth control). If they had education and someone to go to, I think that would help."

Maria Esquinca may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.



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Battle buddies

BY MARIA ESQUINCA
The Prospector

Sitting inside a makeshift “hill” made out of camouflage netting that is sustained by sandbags and wooden crates are two soldiers, both women, both immigrants, both united by a common task.

Before the military they were continents apart. Now they are separated by inches under the unforgiving El Paso sun, far away from the rest of their brigade, surrounded by a

vast landscape of loose dirt, weeds and the passage of the hours.

The camouflage netting is supposed to make their tent look like a hill from afar, a façade meant to trick the enemy. The beige-and-brown colored cloth is perforated by S-shaped cutouts that break their faces into fragments of lightness and darkness.

“These two soldiers are both members of the force protection team, and their job is to ensure that everyone inside...is able to work on their job by offering them protec-



MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR
Sergeant Radia McKenzie, financial management specialist and Alena Stepanova, financial management, both with the 4th Financial Management Support Unit, stand at their post during Iron Focus.

tion,” said Sergeant Adam Hinman, public affairs officer. “They’re going to look to see if there are any enemies approaching, any unidentified vehicles, and as needed they’re going to stop and engage and call it up to get help, if they need it.”

“Or kill them,” said Specialist Alena Stepanova, financial management specialist with the 4th Financial Management Support Unit.

Although they are joined by their similarities, the differences between the two are vast.

Spc. Stepanova is tough, she scored a perfect score of 300 on the Army’s physical fitness test, something Sgt. Hinman says with awe. Her home country spills out through her Russian accent. She is private and prefers not to talk about why she left Russia.

Unlike most people in the military, who join for the benefits it can

provide for themselves or their family, Stepanova joined because she wanted to become a pilot.

“I wanted to become a helicopter pilot and warrant officer,” Stepanova said. “There is no age waiver for helicopter pilots, I cannot do it because of my age.”

And the cold far-away country she was raised in provokes nostalgia and a dislike for El Paso’s hot weather.

“It’s just different (Russia),” Stepanova said.

Her partner, Sergeant Radia McKenzie, financial management specialist with the 4th Financial Management Support Unit, is from a much warmer country—Jamaica. Her native accent still lingers in small hints and traces.

She is more willing to talk about her past and says she came to U.S. when she was 16 years old with her brothers and sisters.

When she first immigrated into the U.S she went to New York and was surrounded by other Jamaicans, it wasn’t until she entered the military that she received a real culture shock.

“We love to hug people—we are huggers...In my culture we touch and it’s a sign of a connection,” McKenzie said. “When I came to the

military that’s when I experienced all these different people from different states and different places and different countries, and so you actually experience a lot of different cultures, some people they are okay with hugging...but some people they are not okay with that.”

Unlike Stepanova, she joined the military because of her son.

“After college I got married and I had my son and I decided that I need to take care of my family,” McKenzie said.

Apart from the beaches, the greenery, the sea breeze and the sense of relaxation, McKenzie also misses the discipline from Jamaica.

“The military is a very good organization because it has the same structure that I’m used to, discipline and standards,” she said. “That’s why it’s easy for me to adapt to the military lifestyle.”

And it’s what ultimately unites the two and follows every action behind their daily routine. As they wake up at 5 a.m. to be at their post by 6 a.m., and is what sustains them through the 12-hour day, it’s what ultimately dissolves the difference between Spc. Stepanova, and what Sgt. McKenzie calls her, “battle buddy.”

Maria Esquinca may be reached at theprospectordaily.news@gmail.com.

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MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR
Spc. Alena Stepanova holds a M240 machine gun while standing guard at her post.

APRIL 1, 2015

ENTERTAINMENT

EDITOR
KIMBERLY VALLE, 747-7477

Shopping as therapy—or is it an addiction?



RUBY CERINO / THE PROSPECTOR

Shopping addiction affects six percent of the U.S. adult population and is frequently linked with mood swings and anxiety, which leads to the compulsion to spend money.

BY VALERIE HERRERA

The Prospector

Shopping addiction, also known as compulsive buying disorder, has been an area of interest in recent years.

For many, shopping is a harmless leisure activity, but it can also be an uncontrollable urge related to obsessive-compulsive disorders.

Regardless of need or financial means, shopping addiction is found to be difficult or even impossible to quit.

Veronica Viani, intake specialist and health specialist coordinator for El Paso Drug Treatment Centers, said most addictions vary according to each individual's situation.

"Addiction is caused depending on the patients' specific situation, but the most common occurrences are caused by depression, anxiety and mental illness," Viani said.

Shopping addiction is frequently linked with mood swings and anxiety, which leads to the compulsion to spend money. It affects 6 percent of the U.S. adult population and most are women.

"We don't have an exact amount of statistics given that most people don't like to admit to a problem they may have and because their information is confidential," said Viani. "It's difficult to keep track of those rates, especially success rates."

Uncontrollable spending has been linked to experiences early in life, such as parental neglect or a traumatic event that may have occurred.

People who experience these life events at an early age, often feel a sense of emptiness, which results in a dependence on material objects for emotional support.

Withdrawal symptoms may vary from person to person, but many

shopping addicts will experience withdrawal symptoms that are similar to those experienced by people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Possible treatment involves becoming conscious of the addiction and admitting to the problem in order to have an effective and successful outcome.

With companies offering products as narratives to identify with in their advertisements, compulsive spending may seem like something consumer culture demands from people.

Brenda Robles, senior speech-language pathology major, said shopping has helped lighten up her mood on a bad day, but said she wouldn't call it her go-to remedy for every negative occurrence.

"I shop when I feel I'm deserving of something or for a special occasion. I don't get a sense of euphoria over it, but I can understand how it helps ease the mind after a bad experience because it takes your focus away from the situation," Robles said. "I think shopping can always help lighten anyone's mood and can be seen as a therapeutic activity-retail therapy."

Viani said shopping addiction is just a leisure activity that individuals use to manage their emotions or express their self-identity, as it can be seen as a moral issue rather than one that needs medical treatment.

The creation of a psychiatric condition such as compulsive buying has been controversial.

Research on shopping addictions has not revealed any conclusive evidence on which sort of pharmaceutical drugs would be the most helpful in treating this issue, as it is not formally recognized by the medical establishment.

However, many "shopaholics" have been able to successfully treat their

addictions by turning to anti-anxiety medications or even antidepressant medications.

"When searching for a recovery program, you should try to find a recovery program that can address all aspects of your addiction," Viani said.

Celeste Schultz, sophomore early childhood education major, does

consider herself to be an impulse buyer and only purchases items when she can afford it.

"I am a major online shopper and like to splurge occasionally on purchases that I can afford. I try to stay away from shopping if I'm in a bad mood, unless I know exactly what I want," Schultz said. "My shopping

impulses only occur when I'm in a good mood and have the extra money to spend."

Valerie Herrera may be reached at theprospector@prospectordaily.com.

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RUBY CERINO / THE PROSPECTOR

A UTEP alumnus shops at the H&M store located in Cielo Vista Mall on the east side of El Paso.

Organization on campus provides hope and education on mental illness

BY FERNANDA DE LEON
The Prospector

Removing and educating about the stigmas that exist about mental illness is the goal of the National Alliance on Mental Illness at El Paso and the NAMI branch at UTEP.

NAMI is an organization that began in 1979 with the participation of

family members of people who had a mental illness. The UTEP branch began in 2013.

Both organizations do volunteer service and offer help to their members and to people who attend their courses and trainings. They create an environment of support to persuade their members that there's hope for their illnesses and having a mental

illness is as important as having any other type of illness.

"Most mental illness cases begin in your early to mid-20s, so that's your target population," said Yareiry Alba, senior biological sciences major and president of NAMI at UTEP. "That's one of the main reasons why NAMI on campus is so important, because when people are first being diagnosed with mental illness, it is happening when they're in college."

Depression and the incidences of suicide are high among high school and college students. That is why NAMI is planning to start a program, where they will visit high schools in El Paso in order to advocate to students about mental illness.

"The most common mental illness for students are depression and anxiety," said Ashley Rodriguez, senior psychology major and board member of NAMI El Paso and co-adviser of NAMI at UTEP.

NAMI offers free classes about suicide prevention courses and trainings. Their focus is to educate people about what mental illness is.

Workshops from QPR (question, persuade and refer) training also known as suicide prevention trainings are offered for families and are open to any person who has a friend or a family member that lives with a mental illness.

Express Your Stress is a program offered during finals week and offers de-stressing techniques and is open to any student.

"We've had zumba, we've had yoga and we've had painting in the past," Alba said. "We're thinking about hav-

ing puppies this spring for the students to de-stress from finals."

Mental illnesses like depression, can be as serious as any other illness and can cause a rollercoaster of emotions causing the sufferer to disengage from others.

John, junior, asked that his last name not be used when he spoke about his experiences with depression.

The main focus of the mental illness is the treatment. It is harder to find the right treatment for mental illness than it is for any other illness since many treatments make it worse.

"My doctor prescribed Zoloft that, to be quite honest, it made me feel worse," John said. "I felt like a zombie and numb, with no feelings at all."

UTEP NAMI offers a variety of classes, called NAMI basics, which are targeted to parents of kids who are living with a mental illness. For those, the most common ones are Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

"We bring hope because some of our members live with mental illness and they're in recovery so they're able to share their stories," Alba said.

"They talk to other students that also live with mental illnesses and they give them hope."

Most mental illness cases begin in your early to mid-20s, so that's your target population,"

- Yareiry Alba, senior biological sciences major and president of NAMI at UTEP

"When I first started with my depression, it all started with me feeling very sad all the time—just wanting to cry for no reason—the things that used to make me happy didn't any more," he said. "I no longer had interest in anything and that made me feel even worse. The fact that I would share this with my family, they thought I was being dramatic and overreacting."

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Risky bodybuilding substances damage brain performance



ANDRES MARTINEZ / THE PROSPECTOR

Senior music theory and composition major, Roberto Loya lifts weights at the UTEP recreation center

JULIA HETTIGER
The Prospector

Bodybuilding, the practice of strengthening and enlarging the muscles of the body through exercise, can affect the mental and physical health of people by teaching discipline and helping people to concentrate and focus.

“From primitive caffeine and alcohol used by cyclists in the 19th century to Clenbuterol—a complex synergism of multiple, highly evolved substances used to burn fat—drug use in sport has progressed”
— David Robson, professional bodybuilder

When the body is indulged in this kind of exercise it releases endorphins that can help increase positive feelings and one’s overall feeling of wellbeing, protect against mental illness and induce feelings of relaxation. While not every student is a bodybuilder, many exercise to stay in shape and alleviate negative issues with their mind and body. Dequan Tillman, sophomore biochemistry major, said he exercises twice a week and exercising has been proven to help relieve stress and provide more energy. “I feel better mentally after I exercise,” Tillman said. “It helps relieve stress.” Bodybuilding can also help to relieve mental illnesses and problems such as anxiety.

“A lot of bodybuilders use it as therapy and stress relief,” said Sarah Shy, bodybuilder and contributor to bodybuilder.com in a live chat. “Most of us who lift are not vain and we use it as an outlet.” To enhance performance, bodybuilders may take substances that can help give them energy and enlarge their muscles at a faster pace. A common substance consumed is creatine. Creatine is a nitrogenous organic acid produced in the body to supply energy to the body, primarily the muscles. Bodybuilders will take creatine to increase their muscle energy in order to improve and lengthen their performance. Some of the negative side effects of creatine include asthmatic symptoms, muscle disorders and increases in the risk of colon, breast and prostate cancer. Another common substance that is abused by bodybuilders and people who exercise regularly is diuretics. Diuretics help the body shed water weight at a faster rate than normal. David Robson, professional bodybuilder, described the exercise scene as chemical warfare. “From primitive caffeine and alcohol used by cyclists in the 19th century to Clenbuterol—a complex synergism of multiple, highly evolved substances used to burn fat—drug use in sport has progressed,” Robson said during a live chat. Bodybuilding and the consumption of different substances to enhance performance can have both positive and negative side effects on the body. Another widely used substance employed by bodybuilders is anabolic steroids, which are synthetic variants of testosterone. Although the steroids can be used to help with muscle building and to counter hormone deficiency, many athletes commonly abuse it. Robson said he gained an insider scoop on steroids and the positive and negative effects of steroids and bodybuilding on the body when he

interviewed a pro-bodybuilder who relied on substances to increase his performance quality and muscle weight. “These substances affect the brain in a harmful way by restricting the

production of dopamine and serotonin,” Robson said. “This can lead to aggression and other psychiatric disorders.” Jesus Morales, freshman kinesiology major, exercises four times a week and said exercise can help relieve stress, but he would not use substances to enhance his performance. “Substances that are risky, or even illegal, can have negative side effects on the body,” Morales said. As a bodybuilder, Robson believes the ideal necessities to becoming a

professional are exercising, dieting and persistence. For more information about bodybuilding and fitness, visit bodybuilders.com. Julia Hettiger may be reached at thepropsectordaily. ent@gmail.com.

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Going natural in alleviating mental illness



A student meditates on open grass at Centennial Plaza.

MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR

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BY JULIA HETTIGER

The Prospector

There are many natural ways to cure and treat mental illness, such as meditation, dieting and the use of acupuncture and special herbs.

Meditation is the act of training the mind to achieve different modes of consciousness to realize a benefit or to find contentedness without attributing it to a particular object or person. Meditation has been used to relieve stress, find inner peace and alleviate illnesses.

The Healing Center of El Paso offers private meditation sessions based on scheduled appointments. The goal of these sessions is to help participants become content with their surroundings and situations and overcome any mental illnesses they may be facing.

Shanti Bhum, a meditator and healer, said meditation may help to change lives drastically.

"When you are meditating, you pay attention to your breathing and your body, and you allow your conscience to enter your body," Bhum said.

There is a wide range of meditation types, and depending on which is chosen, it can help alleviate anything from stress to insomnia.

"Every type of meditation is different," Bhum said. "It's like a recipe; the flavor depends on the different ingredients you add to the mix."

Meditation can also be used to analyze an emotion, state of being or illness, and it is one of the many natural ways to diminish mental and physical issues.

Marina Flores, senior organizational and corporate communication major, said she always tries to use natural ways to alleviate stress and other mental issues such as anxiety.

"Although many believe natural remedies are only effective in giving a placebo effect, I believe that natural methods are effective in preventing many mental issues," Flores said.

Flores began meditating a year and a half ago, and she attributes many positive life changes to it.

"Sometimes when my life feels turbulent or out of control, it's best to go inside myself," Flores said. "I now have this overwhelming peace in my life, I may not live a perfect life, but I know who I am and I know that a positive outlook makes all the difference."

There are multiple videos online that can help guide beginners through the process.

"I would advise anyone who has not tried meditation to take 10 minutes and look up guided meditation on YouTube," Flores said. "You don't have to do it every day, but a few times a week will make all the difference."

Another alternative way to alleviate mental illness is by eating healthy and choosing different diets to help alleviate certain problems. Dieting can have a tremendous impact on mental health.

Monica Saldivar, senior pre-nursing major, believes diet is important and has been a vegetarian for nine years.

"If you're not eating healthy, you probably won't feel great," Saldivar said.

Acupuncture and the use of special herbs have also been used to treat

neurological disorders, addictions, depression and anxiety.

Acupuncture and natural medicine may help neck and shoulder pain, neurological issues such as dizziness and vertigo and offer anxiety and stress relief.

"Acupuncture works on the whole person, and it doesn't matter if you believe in it or not," said Adrienne Ortega, an acupuncturist. "It taps into the body's natural resources for the mind and body to heal itself naturally."

I would advise anyone who has not tried meditation to take 10 minutes and look up guided meditation on YouTube.

- Marina Flores
senior, corporate
communication major

Acupuncture is based on the idea that Qi, a fundamental energy needed for life and health, circulates throughout channels in the body. Acupuncture accesses these channels to release Qi throughout the body whenever there is a buildup or absence in the body.

"Acupuncture reduces cortisol, the hormone that causes stress, levels, resets the fight or flight response and helps the body to be more grounded," Ortega said.

Julia Hettiger may be reached at theprospectoraily. ent@gmail.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PANEL DISCUSSION WITH VIDEO ARTIST YOSHUA OKÓN

Internationally known Mexican video artist Yoshua Okón joins a panel of El Paso artists to discuss the role of art in addressing social and political issues. El Paso artists will include Margarita Cabrera, Angel Cabrales, and Adrian Aguirre whose work is directly informed by issues of border culture and immigration. The discussion will take place 7:00 p.m. April 2 at the El Paso Energy Auditorium at the El Paso Museum of Art.

EASTER EVENT AT THE OUTLETS

The Outlet Shoppes EGGstravaganza. Join Power 102's morning Show, Patti Diaz and Mike Dee for the first annual Easter Eggstravaganza at the Outlet Shoppes at El Paso. It will take place from 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM on April 3 at 7051 S Desert Blvd, Canutillo, TX 79835.

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SPORTS

EDITOR
LUIS GONZALEZ, 747-7477

Senior golfer aims at finishing career strong



PHOTO COURTESY OF UTEP ATHLETICS

Senior Golfer Roberto Ruiz finished 10th at the Lone Star Invitational.

BY JUAN CARLOS NAVARRETE

The Prospector

With the five sports that UTEP offers for men, none may offer more individual effort for the well-being of the team as golf.

Among the leaders of the team, senior Roberto Ruiz has to be one of the best pillars of the team.

Ruiz has been a starter since day one at UTEP and is looking to close his career much like he started it, among the best in Conference USA.

Born in Torreon, Mexico, Ruiz has been playing the game of golf since he was 8 years old. It didn't take long for Ruiz to enjoy success in the sport, playing at a high level almost from the start.

At the age of 12, he reached the top of the mountain when he became the Mexican national champion for his age group.

He was a natural and his success was the incentive he needed to take the sport seriously.

"When I was 15, I was pretty good. I was invited to international team events," Ruiz said. "That's when I decided to stick with golf."

After graduating from high school in Mexico, Ruiz weighed his options for what his next step was going to be. Talking to some fellow golfers at

UTEP, he decided to make the borderland the place where he would spend the next four years and get his education.

"After high school...I saw a couple friends going over there," Ruiz said. "I wanted to go there and play golf."

I came back my senior year because I wanted to end strong.

-Roberto Ruiz, senior golfer

Ruiz made an impact at UTEP instantaneously. He was one of the top rookies in Conference USA and the best the Miners had in 2011. Ruiz was the team's top finisher in five of the 13 tournaments he participated in, in-

cluding a couple of top-10 and three top-20 finishes. He rounded out his impressive first year with a seventh-place finish at the Conference USA Tournament.

"I was excited to play with other good players," Ruiz said. "At the end of the spring, I played pretty good. I had a couple of top-10 ends."

It might seem like Ruiz regressed after his first year, redshirting his second year and unable to record a top-10 finish in either his sophomore or junior years, but his individual performance stayed consistent. He had a season scoring average of 75.2 and 75 as a sophomore and junior, respectively, compared to his 75.1 as a freshman.

A senior finance major, Ruiz is regarded as one of the most reliable players on and off the course.

"He has been a mainstay in our starting line up for the past three years," coach Scott Lieberwirth said. "He is one of the most popular players on the team. Everyone gets along with him, a lot of good things he does for our program."

Ruiz is looking to finish his career as a Miner on a high note. Of the 10 tournaments Ruiz has attended this year, Ruiz has finished among the top 20 four times.

This past weekend, at the Lone Star Invitational in San Antonio, Ruiz recorded his first top-10 finish, not only of the season but also in the past three years. He led his team to a third-place finish at the tournament and recorded a career-low with a round of 68.

He has had a turn-around season for UTEP and is one of the players that coach Lieberwirth can rely on. That's exactly what he was aiming for in his senior season.

"I came back my senior year because I wanted to end strong," he said.

Out of the 10 players on the team, four of them are seniors. Ruiz said he understands that he is in a leadership position for the team.

It can be considered an older team as there is only one junior on the team now. Ruiz and the other four seniors see this as an opportunity to be role models and set the tone for the rest of the team.

"He is a player that everyone likes," Lieberwirth said. "A lot of the younger players look to him as a role model."

With his sights set on a good performance at the conference tournament, he does not want to put the clubs away after that. Though he is close to getting his diploma, he is not interested in using his finance education after he graduates.

"I want to play golf, I see some of my friends on TV playing golf at the PGA and they get to be around the U.S, so I really want to play and I want to try to keep playing," Ruiz said.

The men's golf team has just one more tournament scheduled before the Conference USA Tournament, which will take place from April 26 to 29. The focus is to compete for the top four spots that will play for the championship on the last day.

"As a team, that is our goal since the beginning of the year and we are close," Ruiz said. "We have to play good the next couple tournaments to make it happen."

Juan Carlos Navarrete can be reached at theprospector@daily.sports@gmail.com.

COLUMN

Concussions be damned: my son can play football if he wants

BY JASON GREEN

The Prospector



Recently San Francisco 49ers linebacker Chris Borland retired after only one season in the National Football League. Borland cited recent studies, which show the adverse effects of playing football on a person's brain as the main reason. He also said that he had experienced numerous traumas throughout his career.

The studies Borland references are everywhere these days. The NFL is aware of the problem and has taken steps to improve the safety of the game, but football is inherently violent. That cannot be changed.

The NFL is in the process of paying out a rumored \$1 billion in order to compensate all of the retired NFL players who will face post-traumatic brain injury problems during their lives.

Several articles have recently predicted the impending end of the NFL as the public and players become more aware of the inherent risks. Part of the reason that people think the NFL cannot survive is that parents, who become aware of the risks, will not allow their children to play football.

I do not necessarily agree with this belief, mainly because there will always be families who see their kid's football prowess as a means of escaping poverty or escaping the middle-class life.

As a parent, I have to answer the football question myself. My son has recently become obsessed with pick-up football and asks me often to play football with him at the park. After all, I played football most of my life and throughout high school.

Why would I not want my son to pick up some of his old man's football acumen?

That is where this whole thing gets kind of tough for me. I have a very unique perspective on concussions and traumatic brain injury as a whole.

I am a retired veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. While surviving several, very close, blasts and one big fall, I came home with daily headaches, dizziness and occasional nausea. I was diagnosed with TBI upon my retirement and am still being treated for the symptoms. I have been told by several doctors that the concussions that I received playing football in my younger days made me predisposed to more concussions during my deployments.

I approach the concussion issue from a few different angles because of my past experiences. Would I let my son play football? Yes, I would.

Sounds crazy, right? Why would someone who suffers from frequent blinding migraines do that to their child? Do I not love him? Of course, I do.

I fought for the rights that every American holds sacred during my time in the Army and blah, blah, blah, blah. Just kidding. I'm not that kind of guy. I didn't fight for the right of anyone to play football.

I am very proud of how good I am at my job right now and what a great student I am. I had a work ethic instilled in me by the U.S. Army and it has carried over into my post-Army life—so have the headaches and all of that good stuff, but I wouldn't trade it for the world.

see CONCUSSION on page 15

Women’s soccer kicks off spring season



Junior midfielder Angela Cutaia leads UTEP women’s soccer in scoring during the 2014 season.

MICHAELA ROMAN / THE PROSPECTOR

BY LUIS GONZALEZ
The Prospector

It’s been more than four months since the UTEP women’s soccer team took the field. After the heartbreaking Conference USA Tournament loss in penalty kicks at the hands of Louisiana Tech, the Miners are back on the pitch for their spring season.

Unlike the fall, there is no trophy on the line for head coach Kevin Cross and the Miners. UTEP will play five games during the next month with their focus set on the future.

“We are looking forward to our challenging spring schedule,” Cross said. “The spring games are very beneficial for player development.”

The nature of the spring season is very different from that of the fall. The five-game schedule is miniscule compared to the 20-plus-game season of the fall. The spring games are also all exhibitions, meaning they are all practice. In the fall, all games played count toward the team’s post-season aspirations.

The spring season can still be very productive for the Miners and have an impact on how successful the team is for the 2015 fall season. Coach Cross will use this time to build a foundation, provide experience to younger players and begin finding replacements for the seniors who will not be on the roster next August.

The team will look quite different from the one Miner fans have become accustomed to in the last few years. Gone will be key players who formed the backbone of UTEP soccer. Goalkeeper Sarah Dilling, defenders Hannah Asuchack and Tayler O’Hayre

and midfielder Mackenzie German were all starters last season and have all played their last game for the Orange and Blue. Sophomore Keighton Allen will now draw the assignment of protecting the Miners’ goal, while others such as sophomore Aleah Davis and junior Angela Cutaia begin to adjust to even bigger roles.

“

The spring games are very beneficial for player development.

”

- Kevin Cross,
UTEP women’s
soccer coach

“We typically see a few key players grow tremendously in the spring,” Cross said. “We are hoping for the same benefits this spring.”

The spring season for UTEP started on the road this past weekend, when they traveled to Arizona for a couple of meetings with two PAC-12 members. On Saturday, April 28 Arizona State University hosted the Miners.

see SOCCER on page 15

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The UTEP women's soccer team will host three exhibition matches during their spring season.

FILE PHOTO

SOCCKER from page 14
The following day UTEP traveled down I-10 to Tucson to face the University of Arizona.
Both the Sun Devils and Wildcats were two of the nine teams the PAC-12 Conference had in last year's NCAA Tournament. Despite not being at the top of the standings in conference, both teams won more than 10 games in the season, including one at the NCAA Tournament.
"We will be tested against some of the best teams in Division I soccer on

the road," Cross said prior to the road trip.
Against the Sun Devils, the Miners came away with a tough 3-0 loss. Looking to bounce back the next day, UTEP battled U of A to a tight 0-1 loss.
After the tough tests on the road, UTEP will return to El Paso to finish its spring season at home. Games against New Mexico Highlands on April 18, Eastern New Mexico on April 25 and the University of New

Mexico on April 26 will all take place at University Field.
The Lobos are another double-digit win team who will return all but one player from the last season and are expected to compete for the Mountain West Conference title next fall.
Although nothing is won in the off-season, steps can be taken to increase the possibility of success when the time comes when games really do matter. The eight freshmen who signed letters of intent will not be on the field this spring, but Cross will

have seven returning starters with which to begin forming a foundation that will provide results in the fall.
"The spring results do not predict our fall success, but rather allow players to grow so they can help us accomplish our goals in the fall," Cross said. "We are looking forward to playing these games to see where our players and team is at currently."
Luis Gonzalez may be reached at theprospectordaily.sports@gmail.com.

CONCUSSION from page 13
I also wouldn't trade the time I spent playing sports throughout my childhood.
I excelled in my training as a 17 year old not only because of my conditioning from athletics, but also my drive to succeed. Nothing was ever handed to me in sports. Everything I wanted, I had to go take it from someone else. These are characteristics that are missing from a lot of people I run into today—the will to win, the drive to succeed, etc.
Do I want my son to choose to play football? No, I would rather not. He plays soccer, basketball and baseball right now. Would I care if down the road he decided to pick up tackle football as his main sport? No, not really.
Sports will be what helps shape him—along with my leadership.
I will tell him all about my concussions and the headaches. I will also tell him why I succeeded in my job and in college. It is up to him to decide. He will be his own man.
I would hope that I have brought him up well enough to love himself as much as Chris Borland does—if not himself, then maybe his own future son. I loved my family enough to get out of the Army when offered the opportunity and I would never fault someone like Borland—or my son—for doing what he thinks is right.
Jason Green may be reached at theprospectordaily.sports@gmail.com.

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