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UTEP conducts COVID-19 vaccine research

Isaiah Ramirez

The Prospector

Research is underway at the University of Texas at El Paso to combat and find a vaccine for COVID-19.

The UTEP School of Pharmacy is currently using computational methods to learn more about the COVID-19, or coronavirus. The research is directed by Suman Sirimulla, an assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, who is leading a group of researchers from UTEP and the University of New Mexico.

The focal point of the research is to evolve the molecular structure of a drug that combats the coronavirus. This is very crucial considering the novel coronavirus leads to the very deadly respiratory disease COVID-19. (hyperlink <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/31/health/what-is-coronavirus-covid-19-wellness/index.html>).

A specific method is using advanced computers to piece together small molecules in order to create inhibitors of viral proteins. The inhibitors themselves will bind to the virus' S-protein. This S-protein, also known as the spike protein, will then be attached to the inhibitor, blocking the spike protein from attaching to and infecting the healthy cells in the body.

Sirimulla is also developing inhibitors of the novel coronavirus' main protease, which is considered necessary due to the proteases' critical role in processing the polyproteins that are translated from the viral RNA.

"The coronavirus targets the respiratory ACE2 and TMPRSS2 enzymes and uses the spike protein to attach itself to them," said Sirimulla in a press release. "Once the virus gets into the cell it begins to replicate and what we are trying to do is target the

see VACCINE on page 2



Managing mental illness while in quarantine

How social distancing and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic has affected my mental health

Margaret Cataldi

The Prospector



Four weeks ago, before everything got canceled, before we were all ordered to stay inside and before life seemingly came to a sudden halt, I welcomed and even hoped for the possibility of a country-wide lockdown. I saw it as an opportunity to

depress and finally get around to all the tasks piling up on my to-do list in the comfort of my own home. While I'm no extrovert by any stretch of the imagination, too much social interaction can often leave me feeling burnt out, so I find comfort and relief in staying at home to recharge for periods at a time. Still, I'm aware now more than ever that too much of one thing is hardly ever good.

Despite my excitement over the announcement of UTEP's shift to online classes, deep

down, I knew what a disaster this situation would be for my mental health, especially as someone who suffers from ADHD and depression. I knew that isolation would only worsen my condition, and that is precisely where I find myself now.

Isolation has never been a pleasant experience for me. I typically rely on structure, routine and regular face-to-face interaction with my friends and peers to maintain positivity and stability. But being stuck inside with nowhere to go has amplified my symptoms of depression and has brought all my negative and oppressive thoughts to the forefront of my mind.

The whole situation has impaired my ability to function as I normally would over the last four weeks. With each passing day, I feel more and more disconnected from myself and the world around me. I struggle to complete assignments, I fall asleep and wake up at odd and irregular hours of the day, even something as basic as remembering to eat has become a challenge for me.

To be fair, I realize that everyone in the world is probably experiencing these same emotions right now, whether they struggle with a pre-existing mental illness or not. That being said, if anyone can relate to my situation, no matter the circumstances, please understand that you are not alone. Although it may seem challenging to visualize an end to the chaos and a return to normalcy, we have to remember that these conditions are only temporary.

In the meantime, reach out to your friends and ask if they are doing OK. Talk to one another and share your experiences. Don't be afraid to have a conversation about mental health. You'd be surprised to find that the more we open up and relate to one another, the easier it becomes to cope as a collective. Acknowledge the calamities, but don't dwell on them. To those who do suffer from mental illness, I cannot stress enough the importance of taking your medication regularly as needed.

Still, if you find yourself feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, there are multiple resources

available. If you already see a psychiatrist or other mental health care/healthcare professional, notify them about your situation and schedule some remote sessions if possible. If you are a UTEP student, you can check out some of the pandemic-related resources provided by the university's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). In addition to one-on-one counseling sessions via phone call, CAPS has provided these mental health tips for managing coronavirus concerns and a coronavirus anxiety workbook to help you build coping skills and create a personal plan of action.

Another helpful resource that I've found is an article from Psycom.net, a website and project founded by the late psychiatrist and clinical psychopharmacologist Ivan K. Goldberg that, that explains how coronavirus affects the most common mental illnesses from OCD to schizophrenia and more. It also provides coping tips and resources for each.

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VACCINE from cover

virus' RNA-dependent RNA polymerases enzymes that are involved in replicating the virus."

Urgency to develop a vaccine to combat COVID-19 is of high importance, which is why Sirimulla, along with other researchers, feel they can have a vaccine or antiviral drug ready in 15 months to two years.

Vaccines are created to help develop immunity by imitating an infection, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. ([hyperlink cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-office.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-office.pdf)).

Collaboration between UTEP and the city of El Paso to conduct research to develop a cure for COVID-19 is unique in that it involves ties to the university.

"Most of the employees at the city are alumni, some that came out of our clinical laboratory Sciences program," UTEP President Heather Wilson said. "There was an agreement to collaborate and that's what we did, and it's called an interim local agreement."

UTEP has also partnered with local health care professionals to test their personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure they are properly protected while working among patients infected with COVID-19.

To speed up the design process, Sirimulla is screening large quantities of molecules, which are over a billion compounds available to synthesize through online chemical libraries.

Virologists at UTEP and other universities can evaluate Sirimulla's work through procedures in their respective labs.

Sirimulla earned his Ph.D in medicinal chemistry from UTEP in 2010 and became an assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences in July 2016, according to LinkedIn.

"UTEP faculty members advance discovery of public value," Wilson said. "We have high expectations for Dr. Sirimulla's research and look

forward to his development of therapies to combat the novel coronavirus infection."

To help develop the vaccine and evaluate himself and his work, Sirimulla is enlisting the help of the public. Volunteers who join BOINC@TACC will be able to run Sirimulla's application on their computers and help them look through billions of molecules available in online libraries. ([hyperlink to website mentioned above-https://boinc.tacc.utexas.edu/create_account_form.php](https://boinc.tacc.utexas.edu/create_account_form.php))

As of April 13, there are 300 COVID-19 cases in the city of El Paso with two reported deaths.

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Students weigh in on 'satisfactory, unsatisfactory' grading scale

Paulina Astrid Spencer

The Prospector

As classes move online across the country amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the list of colleges and universities adopting a Pass or Fail (P/F) and Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory (S/U) grading scale grows.

Last week, UTEP announced their decision to allow a temporary change in the course grading policy.

The change will give instructors the option to grade in a S/U manner instead of the standard grading scale.

But what exactly is the S/U grading scale? The short answer is it's exactly what it sounds like. Instead of a traditional letter grade based on a numbers system, the student receives a passing grade or a failing grade.

Many universities including UTEP already have courses that use the S/U grading method, for example, the senior internship course.

Often students commit to a S/U class before a course begins or early in its run, making the decision this far in the semester a one-of-a-kind experience for many students.

University provosts and administrations across the country have said expanding pass/fail op-

tions gives students flexibility during the crisis and can mitigate their anxiety.

In an e-mail sent to all students, UTEP wrote. A UTEP email addressing all students explained, "The temporary changes are in place because of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak and the transition to online courses, to provide you with flexibility and ways to relieve the pressure of this new situation," read a UTEP email addressing all students sent on (ADD DATE).

UTEPA students have different varying opinions on the matter, with some approving of the new grading option.

As UTEP moved to online teaching, the learning experienced has changed drastically in a matter of weeks. Students left their in-person classes for during sSpring bBreak, only to never return for the remainder of the semester and continue their education online.

Michael Rosales, a Sophomore sophomore studying Business business at UTEP, was faced with the reality of taking unwanted online courses.

"Going online for our classes isn't as simple as it seems," said Rosales said. "Each class has a uniqueness about it that makes transferring online possible, but possible but takes away from the experience that a face-to-face class gives."

The S/U option could help alleviate the stress that many students feel, especially if they lack the necessary sources or equipment that an online class requires, and requires and gives instructors the opportunity to grade students in a non-conventional way.

"Giving the pass/fail option allows students to still do the work but it won't tarnish their grades if going online was more harmful than helpful," said Rosales said.

Although tEven if the option to be graded on a S/U scale seems like the right choice, it does not go without its share of obstacles.

UTEPA urges that, in considering grading options, students should talk with their advisors about any impact these decisions may have on their path to degree completion, financial aid and scholarship eligibility, and international student status among many other factors.

The most notable concern among students is their grade point average (GPA) and how a S/U grading scale could affect it.

S/U or P/F classes do not count toward impact a student's GPA as it does not accumulate points from a numerical grade.

Isabel Garcia, a Junior junior majoring in communication studies at UTEP, does not agree with the S/U new grading option.

"It can mess up the GPA of people who aren't used to doing everything online," said Garcia said.

Some students are concerned about the way it would appear on their transcript and how it could affect their future if they decide to transfer universities or apply to graduate school after graduation.

"I honestly don't want a P (pass) or F (fail) letter in my transcript," said Brenda Gaytan, a junior majoring in business entrepreneurship and healthcare management at UTEP.

Before electing opting for the S/U grading option, students should inquire if the S/U grade will, negatively influence your their transcript when applying to graduate or professional schools or be appropriate if you they need to increase your their GPA, according to a UTEP e-mail.

If you should determine that the S/U option is appropriate for you, you must fill out this form and return email it to records@utep.edu.

Paulina Spencer may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

Keep Those
PICKS
UP!

FROM: MINER STUDENT-ATHLETES, COACHES AND STAFF

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UTEP art students adapt to online transition during pandemic

Jaqueline Martinez

The Prospector

In response to the city's ordinance, the University of Texas at El Paso announced it would be transitioning to online classes for the remainder of the semester to prevent the spread of COVID-19, leaving professors and students in from the art department questioning how they would continue their curriculum without having any access to the art studios.

With the rapid rise of coronavirus cases in the U.S., schools were forced to close their doors for the remainder of the semester and transition classes online. According to National Center for Education Statistics, at least 55.1 million students were affected by school closures in 19 states and three U.S. territories.

On March 24, UTEP's Department of Art (DoART) announced on Facebook that it would be closing its doors after the city of El Paso released a stay at home order. Students were told to pick up the remainder of their materials and supplies, and to clean out their lockers while following social distancing protocols.

Without studio access, ceramics students wondered how they were to continue their work without having access to the kilns. Students in

the metals program are unable to access proper machinery, gas lines, torches and soldering stations. Sculpture students can no longer use the welding station, woodshop and the studio space. Having classes that are literally hands-on, the DoART's students and faculty were suddenly cut off from their facilities and limited by the pandemic.

"I had a wise mentor who once told me that sometimes in life you just have to take the deck of cards and throw them up in the air, reshuffle them to the extreme. The deck of cards, in this case, is our class. Nature just threw the deck up into the stratosphere and cards are flying all over the place," said Ceramics Professor Vincent Burke to his students as he saw this as an opportunity to approach education from a different angle. "We're going to remain positive, help each other however we can and continue to grow and create art even if it is not at the UTEP studios."

After an extended spring break, students continued their studies on March 30 through virtual lectures and online work. For them, this has been a challenge, but studio professors have taken this as an opportunity to try new things and open new horizons for their students.

Burke took advantage of the crisis by enrolling his students in an online glaze course. The

ceramics professor is also encouraging students to practice hand building techniques and is allowing them to fire their work once everyone is allowed back on campus. Burke has kept his students busy with a traditional approach to their education and continues to show techniques that can be used at home.

"Having the setting change so quickly in the span of two weeks was hectic," said Roxana Rodriguez, a UTEP student minoring in metals. "With the shutdown, we have resorted to using alternative materials such as plastic, bags, cloth, bottles, needles, anything that we can manipulate without relying on the studio. It's rather hard considering we have to stray away soldering, which is a huge aspect of metals."

Angel Cabrales, a sculpture professor, has also given his students the opportunity to work from home by having them explore materials around them to create "earth works" with non-traditional materials that can be found in nature, as seen by artist Andy Goldsworthy's work. The project has been assigned by Cabrales in the past in his sculpture I class, where students have created these "earth works" in the mountains surrounding the UTEP Sun Bowl.

"I consider myself really lucky since I have a studio at home where I have plenty of space to

work, but not many students do," said Eber Sanchez, a painting major student. "The struggles that I am having is the discipline of working at home. Also, painting requires a lot of chemical use, such as mineral spirits, and I don't have the means to dispose of them, I have to keep them in jars."

While some students have space at home, others have been forced to get creative.

"Since the closure of campus, the impact can really be felt. As a student, we get used to having all the studio space and equipment or tools. We each adapt accordingly in our own way and create a system we get accustomed to, especially as artists, being that a huge part of our art is process driven," said John David Ibarra, a print-making major student who has had to learn how to hand-print relief prints, reminiscent of 18th century Asian practices. "It feels like a drastic change without necessary equipment, like etching and lithography presses, exposure units, acid baths, spray booths and proper ventilation."

Ibarra had to set up a studio in his home garage using a worktable and opens the garage door for ventilation when working with solvents.

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Sexual Assault Awareness Month • April 2020
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These local drag queens continue to shine on social media

Paulina Astrid Spencer

The Prospector

El Paso's stay-at-home order is expected to last until at least mid-May, but local drag queens have continued hosting drag shows — except now they're completely online.

Like many other careers and workplaces, the pandemic has been a nightmare for the drag community, even compromising the livelihoods of many performers.

Typically, drag is a live industry where performers rely on shows and performances for financial stability and a way to release their art into the world.

Drag queens and performers have taken to social media platforms like Twitch and even Zoom to share videos of makeup routines, lip-syncing and dancing.

With bars and venues being some of the first businesses to be shut down in El Paso amid the coronavirus, performers are finding creative ways to support themselves and bring entertainment to their loyal followers.

19-year-old drag queen Salem Ofax began their drag art about three years ago by posting photos on social media and participating in online drag competitions before eventually performing at bars and clubs.

"I've always sought out social media as another outlet to showcase my art," said Ofax. "I

guess me, and my followers are accustomed to online drag now."

Ofax felt inclined to continue to do drag from home as a way of expression and entertainment.

"I do take into consideration the elements of entertainment because you always have to stay entertaining and iconic," said Ofax.

For Joshua Yrrobali, 20, known by their stage name "Lavender Thug," being unable to perform made them feel like they were missing out on socializing.

The first time Thug did an Instagram Live, the interaction was low, but by their second attempt, the viewership had improved and so had the tips.

For Thug, entertaining his followers and fans during these hard times amid the lockdown is vital.

"All I want to do is entertain people," said Thug. "Bringing light to people's day is what we need right now!"

Sal Vargas, 21, known as "Lenox," was used to performing weekly, or around four times a month, but that quickly changed as clubs and bars closed.

However, Lenox did not let the pandemic keep them from doing what they love, and got in full costume, and streamed live on Instagram from a small set up in their living room.

"I wanted to give it a try because my favorite part of drag is performing," said Lenox. "If there's something I can do as a queer artist to



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAVENDERTHUG

LIKE MANY OTHER CAREERS AND WORKPLACES, THE DRAG COMMUNITY HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY THE PRESENT PANDEMIC, EVEN COMPROMISING THE LIVELIHOODS OF MANY PERFORMERS.

make someone's day a little bit more special, I would love to."

Along with being fun and entertaining, it gave Lenox a sense of normalcy and a chance to pin his CashApp and Venmo to receive money tips from viewers.

With the uncertainty of the future during the pandemic, local drag queens and performers carry on with the show and continue to provide entertainment to many.

"What keeps me motivated is a quote I heard from a podcast where the entertainer said, 'drag always finds a way,' said Lenox. "Bringing the magic to people's screens every now and then is a good distraction in these really weird and uncertain times."

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'Steven Universe Future,' An outstanding series about making peace

Hugo Hinojosa

The Prospector

The Cartoon Network series "Steven Universe Future" came to an end with its final episode that aired on March 27, and with it, the outstanding series finally finds closure.

The final episode of season five 'Change Your Mind' aired on January 2019 and it didn't leave many questions unanswered. It seemed like the show had finally gave everyone a happy ending then came "Steven Universe: The Movie" in September of that same year and it became clear that there was much more to Steven's journey.

Then the epilogue series, Steven Universe Future, was confirmed and I, quite frankly, could not see how the show could progress even more. Sure, some characters were left unseen until the series' more recent season and I could just not see what more this show can teach me, aside from finding me another series to attach to and laugh and cry as hard as I did with this one.

But lord, was I wrong.

Many, including myself, speculated on the return of villains from previous seasons. Maybe even some little cute individual closures for other characters, but nothing could've prepared me for what creator Rebecca Sugar had in store for us.

When Future began, I was not sure what direction the show would take. At first, it seemed like we were taking a tour on how things were going to be now that the universe is free. It wasn't until episode 11, "Little Graduation," where I finally understood what the show was doing — finding a closure for Steven himself.

As Future's episode 14, "Growing Pains," disclosed, 14-year-old Steven never got a chance to breathe or process all the bad experiences that befell him. Not even in the movie; not even the season five's finale. Not even at season 1, episode 1; there wasn't a single moment where Steven stopped and reflected on the traumas he was put into.

Throughout Steven Universe, we learned about Steven's selfless nature, always putting everyone's well-being first before his. We thought

that his behavior was an exemplification of his kindness and maturity. We were led to believe that because Steven was always willing to accept others' mistakes, no matter how bad it made him feel, he was the bigger person. However, none of it brought peace to Steven, and that's the purpose of Steven Universe Future.

In an interview with CBR, Sugar herself claims that Steven's biggest flaw is in fact his selflessness. We saw Steven internalizing all his experiences as his fault. He took all the blame of having been "tasked with saving the world, being antagonized by adults and having multiple near-death experiences," as Sugar puts it. This is something only in Future could be clarified.

And it did. Sugar did that.

In my review of Steven Universe, I mention that the show is internationally recognized for tackling real, emotional issues like abusive relationships, gender and sexual identity. But only did Future unpacked an aspect of mental health that the show was yet to speak about: the consequences of living under everyone's expectations at the expense of your own mental health.

'Steven Universe Future' was a chance to learn that a relationship with one's self requires maintenance. It explores burn-out, mental exhaustion and self-negligence while it helps to find ways to grow and heal. After all, Steven leaves Beach City to find peace in the end, and that's the human experience; the message of it all.

No matter the circumstances, we humans can be resourceful and possess the ability to adapt. And, as Sugar explains, "part of adapting is unlearning the idea that living fearlessly means living [...] as if nothing is going wrong." Because things will go wrong.

That is especially relevant now in times of COVID-19, where distancing is being forced upon all of us. Although traveling around the country like Steven did is particularly off limits at the moment, there's still a lot of way to heal in these difficult times.

"Whatever's doable right now, ... We're resourceful, we can improvise, we care about each other..." Sugar points out. Video chat more,

How the El Paso community is staying positive during this crisis

Jaqueline Martinez

The Prospector

Like the emitting light of the moonlight from the “Pink Moon,” light is being shined throughout the community amid the shadows of the COVID-19 pandemic through acts of kindness toward the affected, sidewalk art and funky yard decorations for daily strollers, recycled trash turned into treasure and enriching activities for pet owners. This is how El Paso residents are remaining positive during this crisis.

'El Paso Strong' tree wearing mask brings 'lots of smiles' during pandemic

On the intersection of Glengarry Avenue and Turrentine Drive in East El Paso near Cielo Vista Mall, homeowner Rene Rosales has decorated his front yard tree with a face mask to provide local residents and strollers with a laugh.

El Pasoans band together in Facebook group to celebrate graduating high school seniors

This Facebook community has joined together in these difficult times for graduating high schools students, encouraging participants in the group to adopt a high school senior and celebrate their achievements through a gift basket. Do you want to lift the spirits of a student? Join the Facebook group.

The Humane Society of El Paso offers tips on how to keep your fur babies active

The Humane Society of El Paso has closed its doors to the public, but their fur babies are still in need of mental and physical care — just like everyone else's pet. The organization has offered 'Enrichment activities,' on their Facebook page, with daily activities and read throughs that can also keep yourself and your pets entertained during quarantine.

Green Hope Project presents "Metamorphosis: Turning Trash into Treasure"

The Green Hope Project presents the art series Metamorphosis: Turning Trash into Treasure. As residents are forced to remain homebound, Green Hope Project will be showcasing the amazing art work that was submitted by students throughout the city at 2-3 p.m. April where the Recycled Art Awards ceremony and exhibit will be taking place live on Zoom, which will include prize giveaway opportunities for those who virtually attend.

Residents take to the sidewalks with chalk

After the City of El Paso and El Paso County both issued joint stay-at-home orders, some residents have been expressing their artistic skills through sidewalk chalk art. Local television sta-



ILLUSTRATION BY HUGO HINOJOSA

tion KTSM did a callout on Twitter for pictures of some of these creative pieces.

'Super Pink Moon,' biggest & brightest of 2020

On Tuesday, April 8 the world witnessed the brightest night of 2020. The sky was lit by the “Super Pink Moon,” with delicate orange and

yellow hues, emitting 100% illumination at its peak. El Paso native, Vladimir Avina recorded a brief time lapse that depicts the full moon rising above the Las Cruces, Organ mountains.

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check in to your family, text your parents constantly, watch videos on staying safe, donate. Find peace on art, self-care, gardening, cooking. Innovate, adapt, heal... “finding ways to keep ourselves and each other safe, and innovating new ways to connect. These are all incredible powers.” Sugar said.

Now that the show has ended, here is the ultimate

'Steven Universe' review.

The heartbreaking cartoon series, Steven Universe, has finally come to an end. That means now we can present the ultimate review for the show (including its epilogue season and movie.)

With the last episode of Steven Universe's epilogue airing on Cartoon Network, the emotional journey of the half-human, half-gem boy finally comes to a close.

Truly, this show is the perfect example of an “emotional rollercoaster.” The story created by Sugar is a sentimental one; filled with both hilarious and powerful moments that got nominated to five consecutive Primetime Emmy Awards.

First introduced in 2013, Steven Universe was an innocent show that depicted the lives of the Crystal Gems, a group of intergalactic aliens composed of Garnet, Amethyst, Pearl and Rose

Quartz. After being expelled from their home world for treason, Rose fell in love with Greg and gave birth to Steven by giving up her physical form so he could live.

However, a decision that was made out of love, turned into a challenge as Steven needed to prove to be worthy of being a Crystal Gem to save Earth from the Diamond Authority, in addition to fixing the mistakes his mother made thousands of years ago.

Seriously though, what started as a search of identity, became a remarkable story about acceptance, self-worth, mental health and healthy relationships. Not to mention the diversity in body compositions, gender and LGBTQ+ representation.

The show was able to portray this through its mindful plots. Each character in the show was never plain, but multifaceted. But also, In the series, Earth was expected to be a colony for the Diamond Authority, which meant that they were to kill all organic life on it to create more gems. As we learned though, the Crystal Gems were able to stop the continuation of the colony, unfortunately, many gems were able to emerge during the dispute. Including Amethyst, who emerged hundreds of years after the war. So, Amethyst must learn her origins while accept-

ing her limitations as the weakest of her kind (or so she thought).

Another way that the show was able to transmit its compelling messages was through signing. Yes, singing. Steven Universe's cast came with the brilliant voices of Zack Collison, Deedee Magno Hall, Michaela Dietz and rhythm and blues singer Estelle. Not to mention the cameos with powerhouses like Patti LuPone, Lisa Hannigan, Sarah Stiles, Nicky Minaj, RuPaul's drag race contestant Jinkx Monsoon, and many more!

But outstanding voices are empty without outstanding songs. 99.9% of the music in the show were written and composed by Sugar herself, from the intro song up to the very last ending arrangement, we hear in Steven Universe Future. But what makes these songs so special is their simplicity and sometimes sucker-punching sentiment.

And to wrap everything together is the background art style, designed by Steven Sugar, Sugar's real brother and the person who she based the show's protagonist.

His style is breathtaking. Although the animation is entirely different from the first season in comparison to the fifth season, there's no denying that it got progressively better. But enough words, I'll let the images speak for themselves.

While some argue that the show had a slow start, I feel like many of the critics' issues stem from the show's poor scheduling and long hiatuses but that doesn't take away from the show's superb narrative from start to finish. I believe that whoever starts watching Steven Universe now will find it intriguing and fun to watch.

With that being said, I believe that Steven Universe is a show that set the standard for shows to come. The series can and did resonate with many who struggle with gender identity, self-acceptance, toxic relationships, and coming out as a member of the LGBTQ+ community.

Who would have thought that a show about alien rocks from space would teach me to love being human and, above everything else, enjoy the mundane and accept the change that comes with growing up?

pickaxe rating: 4.5/5



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UTEP football players looking to earn a shot in the NFL

Michael CuvIELLO
The Prospector

It is that time of year when young athletes around the nation are hoping to hear their name called in the upcoming National Football League draft. Players at UTEP are no exception. Currently, seven UTEP alumni are playing in the league. Of the seven, only Aaron Jones and Will Hernandez got their names called on draft day. In 2019, cornerback Nik Needham, who signed as a free agent with the Miami Dolphins, was the only Miner to latch on with a team.

This year's draft will likely not have any Miners having their name called, but there is potential to get a free agent opportunity for some players. Needham's success at moving from a fringe roster player to starting 11 games this season serves as inspiration in knowing that hard work can pay off.

The two most likely players to get a chance to hook on with an NFL team are both defensive linemen. Defensive tackles Denzel Chukwukelu and Chris Richardson both have good size for their position.

Chukwukelu, a team captain, stands at 6'4, 290 pounds and can play inside or outside on the defensive line. His size suits him more at defensive end, but his timed speed seems to make him more of a tackle. Chukwukelu's lack of straight-line timed-speed will be a big reason that he will have to go the free agent path to make a team.

Playing in a midlevel conference for one of the worst teams in college football is also a factor

in not being able to stand out to scouts. Leading the team with three sacks, Chukwukelu is a high motor guy that will need to work on his technique to make it to the next level. UTEP's three-man front did little to help highlight the pass rush ability of any of its players last season and the defense was quite porous overall.

"Being able to play multiple positions on the defensive line will definitely give me more chances to get looks with NFL teams," Chukwukelu said at his pro day.

Richardson is purely an inside guy at 6-3, 298 pounds that is not known for his pass rushing. Not as versatile as Chukwukelu, Richardson must focus on getting much stronger inside. Much like his teammate, Richardson does not possess great straight-line speed but also shows an excellent motor.

Perhaps the most athletically gifted player for UTEP that is eligible for the draft will be much-maligned quarterback Kai Locksley. Standing 6'4, 210 pounds and possessing 4.6 40-yard speed, Locksley seems a man without a position for the NFL. As a quarterback, his erratic decision making and play combined with his lack of touch on his passes make him the longest of shots to get a look at that position. His overall athletic ability could intrigue a team, but nothing he did on or off the field in his college career stands out. His offseason arrest is not something that will endear him to many general managers, especially with his less than stellar career.

"He is such a great athlete that I am sure some team will take him as a quarterback. Head Coach



PHOTO BY MICHAEL CUVIELLO

UTEP NFL PROSPECT DEFENSIVE LINEMAN DENZEL CHUKWUKELO PERFORMS DRILLS AT MINER PRO DAY MARCH 12.

Dana Dimel said. and "If he doesn't work there, they will try him at another position."

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic will be a detriment for many college athletes that are trying to impress NFL scouts, especially the ones from schools from less publicized conferences.

With less than a week to go for the NFL draft, the route of former UTEP player Needham will be motivation for caring on the NFL dream for these athletes.

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My top 10 sports films to keep you in on the game

Michael CuvIELLO
The Prospector

No. 10 "He Got Game" (1998) Directed by Spike Lee

This basketball drama stars Ray Allen as Jesus Shuttleworth and Denzel Washington as his incarcerated dad, Jake Shuttleworth. Jesus is the top basketball prospect in the nation and every college wants to recruit him, as well as the NBA. Jake is furloughed from prison to try to convince his son to play for Big State. The father and son pair have a troubled history, which further complicates matters as Jesus tries to make the most crucial decision of his life. An intensely well-acted drama with a compelling first-time performance by Allen that explores the system that seeks to exploit young black athletes.

No. 9 "Hoop Dreams" (1994) Directed by Steve James

A documentary about two African American basketball players who travel way across town to play for a predominantly white high school with a prestigious basketball program. William Gates and Tommy Agee are from two of the most impoverished areas of Chicago. Both young men see basketball as an escape from their dire situations. This compelling film follows the aspirations of these two young men as they look to change their station in life with their athletic gifts and achieve the NBA dream. Thoroughly exploring the dynamics of race and class in America, "Hoop Dreams" is a must-see film.

No. 8 "The Wrestler" (2008) Directed by Darren Aronofsky

No dramatic movie has captured the essence of the past of a prime professional wrestler as well as this Mickey Rourke vehicle. Rourke stars

as Randy the Ram Robinson, an aging wrestler well past his prime. After suffering a health setback, Robinson decides to give up wrestling and is convinced to try to reconnect with his estranged daughter. Rourke's performance is the best of his career and his portrayal of an athlete that just cannot give up his career no matter what the cost makes this an exceptional film.

No. 7 "Field of Dreams" (1989) Directed by Phil Alden Robinson

A unique film about baseball overall, this fantasy film about an Iowa farmer played by Kevin Costner that hears a voice is telling him to build a baseball field in the middle of his farm. A great cast abounds with Burt Lancaster, James Earl Jones, Ray Liotta and Amy Madigan as his faithful wife. The film explores how sports can be a thread that ties two family members together with the memories and experiences of it.

A profoundly moving film that has been known to make many a strong man teary-eyed.

No. 6 "Slap Shot" (1977) Directed by George Roy Hill

Paul Newman stars as Reggie Dunlap, player coach of Charleston Chiefs, a minor league hockey team. Upon hearing that the team will be folding, Dunlap decides to go to all-out goon hockey. The fans of the town love the new style of the team, especially the enforcer trio of the Hanson Brothers. "Slap Shot" is a down and dirty comedy that is a crowd-pleaser and one of the finest of the genre.

No. 5 "A League of Their Own" (1992) Directed by Penny Marshall

Documenting a little-known part of baseball history, this film reenacts the founding of

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FILMS from page 7

the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League in 1943. The league was established due to the stoppage of Major League baseball for World War II. Tom Hanks stars as the manager of the team with a bevy of recognizable actors such as Geena Davis, Rosie O'Donnell and Madonna. A fast-paced, touching film that was one of the first to tell a sports story about women that does not focus more on romance than their love for the sport. The entire cast shines in one of the best films about baseball period.

No. 4 "Rocky" (1976)

Directed by John G. Avildsen

One of the most iconic sports films in history and the only Oscar winner on my list of the best. Sylvester Stallone stars as the title character, a journeyman boxer that gets the chance of a lifetime. Apollo Creed, played with flair by Carl Weathers, decides to give a random fighter a shot at the world title that turns out to be Rocky. A powerful story of an underdog going against all the odds to prove himself. Inspiring multiple sequels and a spin-off, "Rocky" is a hard-hitting sports drama about a club fighter who finds more within himself.

No. 3 "Eight Men Out" (1988)

Directed by John Sayles

The infamous black sox scandal in Major League Baseball is explored in this drama about

the 1919 Chicago White Sox. Allegedly, eight players on the team are paid to throw the World Series and this film explores the motivations of all involved. A star-studded cast of young actors from the '80s appears in this film and all actors give top-level performances. It paints a different era of baseball when athletes were paid much less and had little to no power to negotiate. "Eight Men Out" is an impeccably acted and shot period piece about baseball's darkest scandal and the fallout from it.

No. 2 "Bull Durham" (1988)

Directed by Ron Shelton

A tale of a past, his prime minor league catcher has spent a total of 21 days in the major leagues and is on the last legs of his playing career. Kevin Costner plays the catcher named Crash Davis that is told he must mentor an up and coming baseball prospect played by Tim Robbins named Ebby Calvin "Nuke" LaLoosh. Nuke is a talented yet immature player and Crash must help him figure out his pitching woes. Susan Sarandon is terrific as Annie, an eccentric baseball groupie who is the love interest of both characters. "Bull Durham" is a quirky comedy that is equal parts baseball and relationship wisdom.

No. 1 "Shaolin Soccer" (2001)

Directed by Steven Chow

While it is doubtful that many people have this movie at the top of their sports list, I find the sheer energy and love of film on display in



KEVIN COSTNER AND TIM ROBBINS STAR IN BULL DURHAM.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ORION PICTURES

this feature to be my favorite. "Shaolin Soccer" is a silly yet fun sports comedy about a monk that wants to find a way to help people find the spiritual and practical benefits of kung fu in their life. A disgraced former soccer pro discovers his talent and wants to coach him, together they round up his brothers who all have unique abilities to form a team taking on Team Evil in

the soccer championship. Over the top and absurd in so many ways, the film's pure comedy and top-level special effects make for one of the most enjoyable viewing experiences of any genre.

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TAKE CARE OF YOUR WATER. KEEP IT CLEAN



Do not dump waste, chemicals, paint, custodial waste, and general rubbish items (tires, old car parts, shopping carts, etc.) into storm drains, channels, or ditches.

No tirar basura, aparatos electrodomésticos, muebles, llantas, y chatarra a canales y acequias del sistema de drenaje pluvial.



Properly dispose of hazardous wastes, pesticides, and fertilizers. Call UTEP EH&S to schedule waste pickups.

Deseche correctamente los residuos peligrosos, pesticidas, y fertilizantes. Llama al departamento EH&S en UTEP y agenda fecha para recoger los desperdicios.



Storm drains are easily identified with "NO DUMPING" decals at stormwater inlets.

Alcantarillado de aguas pluviales es identificado con anuncios de "NO REVERTIR DESECHOS AQUI"



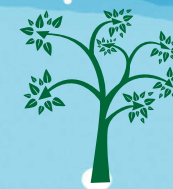
Keep material out of the stormwater conveyance system (curbs, gutters, sidewalks, streets, drains, culverts, and arroyos). Dispose of grass, leaves, yard waste, and construction debris properly.

No tapar el flujo pluvial a canales, alcantarillas y arroyos con basura. Disponga correctamente de basura vegetal (césped, ramas, y hojas) así como basura de construcción.



Recycle oil, antifreeze, and other vehicle fluids, or dispose of them properly to prevent the pollution of stormwater, groundwater and the Rio Grande.

Recicle aceite, anti-congelante y lubricantes o disponga propiamente de ellos para prevenir contaminación del sistema de drenaje pluvial, mantos acuíferos y el Río Bravo.



Leave natural vegetation in place where possible to prevent erosion.

Si es posible, deje crecer la vegetación en forma natural para evitar la erosión.



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