Isaiah Ramirez
The Prospector

With millions of jobs lost because of the pandemic, starting a career has become more of a challenge for graduates barely entering the job market.

UTEP’s University Career Center has been helping students adapt to these tough times through guidance on how to become better candidates for job openings.

"The first thing I usually tell students is that this is a good opportunity for you to really assess what your strengths are and what you can bring to your position," said Betsy Castro-Duarte, director of the Career Center. "The next thing I tell them is to use their networks and I tell students if you are not sure who to reach out for help, one easy place is the Career Center."

The pandemic has sent shockwaves throughout the economy, causing an uptick in

Career Center offers guidance amid economic crisis

Bryan Mena
The Prospector

Studio G is the first resource of its kind at UTEP and its available for student entrepreneurs who want to start and grow their own businesses. Because of COVID-19, Studio G has gone completely online but Michael Garcia, the director of UTEP’s Mike Loya Center for Innovation and Commerce, said that enthusiasm for this new program has remained strong despite a brief drop in registrations when UTEP shut down in the spring.

Studio G is known as a “business accelerator” and the services it provides are completely free of charge for UTEP students of all majors and recent alumni. It provides access to mentorship, advising, lectures, networking events and the opportunity to participate in startup workshops and business contests, among other things.

This new entrepreneurship initiative is a partnership between UTEP’s Mike Loya Center and the Arrowhead Center at New Mexico State University (NMSU), where Studio G originated. Studio G first became available at UTEP in early February after UTEP and NMSU officials held a ribbon-cutting ceremony and presser.

“We’re excited to bring NMSU’s student business accelerator to UTEP,” NMSU Chancellor Dan Arvizu said at that news conference. “We want all students to share in the benefits of entrepreneurship and business creation, which helps build a stronger economy in our region. Our region is home to individuals whose shared ambitions and commitment to economic development transcend borders.”

Studio G was founded at NMSU’s Arrowhead Center in 2011 and it has “worked with more than 1,700 student entrepreneurs and has raised more than $6 million in investments and grants,” according to a news release.

Student entrepreneurs have access to new resource at UTEP

See Job Market page 3
See Studio G page 3
There’s never been a more important time to be a journalist

BRYAN MENA, 747-5161

SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

‘It was very dead’: an empty welcoming back for the first day of fall

Paulina Astrid Spencer

The Prospector

Maximiliano Sarmiento is a 24-year-old nursing student who works at the information desk in UTEP’s Union East building for a while. He said the Union looks “very dead now.”

“We have used around 150 students on the second floor at the dining area,” Sarmiento said. “But right now, 20 would be the highest.”

UTEP welcomed only a few people back to campus, Aug. 24. With new safety guidelines in place because of the coronavirus pandemic, the university saw less traffic on the first day of classes.

From the parking lots to the hallways and stairwells, there weren’t many people at UTEP on the first day of the fall semester. The Union buildings and library, which would have been usually packed around that time, were almost empty and silent.

Cut-outs of Paydirt Pete wearing a mask were everywhere at UTEP.

There were numerous signs plastered on almost every wall informing people on campus of UTEP’s new safety rules — to wear a mask at all times and to practice social distancing, among other rules.

Earlier this month, UTEP President Heather Wilson announced the university’s plan to move forward with the university’s recovery status, opening campus under “low-density operations.” This means that only essential personnel can remain on campus while others operate remotely. Groups must be restricted to less than 10 people at a time with a mandatory separation of six feet and the use of face coverings. As UTEP shifted to remote learning, most classes are now being offered online or in hybrid mode which is a mixture of online and in-person. Only about 100 courses are being offered in person this fall, while over 2,500 courses are being offered exclusively online.

Sarmiento said all employees received training prior to the reopening of the campus, and the start of the new semester.

We had a training for sanitizing everything and getting to know the steps of customer service,” Sarmiento said. “We have to keep a six-foot distance and we are always wearing a face mask and always using hand sanitizer.”

Kayla Kuhajda, 20, a first year UTEP dance student, said this was not what she expected her first semester at college would be, but is still grateful because of the virtual classes. She attended her first virtual classes at the library and said she was content with the outcome so far.

“It’s really different but the teachers really made an effort,” Kuhajda said. “For the classes today, they really tried to interact with the students as much as they could. Especially with the other students, we met each other even through online, so it was really good.”

Aside from requiring face coverings and social distancing, to promote the health and wellbeing of everyone, UTEP is offering a free coronavirus testing program for those who qualify. For more information about testing, visit their website at: consent.utep.edu.

“There’s never been a more important time to be a journalist”

Bryan Mena

The Prospector

I never thought that I would one day be leading a newsroom as editor-in-chief during a global public health crisis.

Yet here I am — pandemic and all. Not to mention that the national economy is still in shambles and that we’re living in a time of nationwide political upheaval because of police brutality and racism.

We’re all living through some of the toughest times in history, which means that there’s never been a more important time to be a journalist.

I’m excited to be The Prospector’s new editor-in-chief for these next two semesters because our publication has a sacred duty to fulfill and it’s truly an honor to lead publication has a sacred duty to serve the student body while also covering the local community.

I have experience covering important business stories for El Paso Inc., like the unprecedented impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the local hotel industry and how ride-share drivers in El Paso with preexisting conditions were faced with the tough decision of quitting their full-time jobs or risking their health by working as COVID spread.

This past summer, I worked full-time as a reporter intern for The Fort Worth Star-Telegram — one of the largest newspapers in Texas – where my byline regularly made it to the front page. From COVID-19’s disproportionate impact on Hispanics in Tarrant County to a prestigious medical award that many critics called systemically racist, I worked to uphold so many voices and issues through my body of work at the Star-Telegram.

I joined The Prospector in the fall 2019 and I’m forever grateful and still a bit surprised that I was trusted enough to be hired as entertainment editor from the get-go.

I’m not majoring in journalism, or anything related, inc. so I will forever be grateful to Valeria Olivarres, the former Prospector editor-in-chief, for taking such a gamble on me.

I’ve taken full advantage of that opportunity and it has brought me to where I am today.

I would not have come this far if it hadn’t gotten the Terry Scholarship, which has been fully funded and will forever be grateful to Valeria Olivarres, the former Prospector editor-in-chief, for taking such a gamble on me.

“SPEAK YOUR MIND”

Submit a letter to the editor! Letters will be edited for clarity and brevity. Letters over 250 words are subject to being edited to fit the space. Please include a first name, street address and telephone number, as well as e-mail address, plus major, classification and/or title if applicable. Address and phone number will be used for verification only. Write to 105 E. Union, prospector@utep.edu, call 747-5161 or fax 747-8031.

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Job Market from cover page

unemployment rate.

According to the United States Department of Labor, the unemployment rate skyrocketed from four percent in January 2020 to 14% in April 2020. A silver lining is that the national unemployment rate has steadily decreased to 10%, data from the Department of Labor shows.

“We’ve had people come to us and tell us they have lost their jobs and besides networking we suggest simple tools such as LinkedIn, which is a professional network,” Castro-Duarte said. “If you got furloughed or maybe the project you were working on got canceled, this is the time for you to connect with UTEP alumni and maximize your affiliation with the university.”

In the early stages of the pandemic, Market Watch indicates that more than 22 million jobs were lost and so far, less than half of those people have returned to their jobs. According to Workforce Solutions Borderplex, which analyzes data from the El Paso region labor market, 4,655 unemployment claims were made from Aug. 1 through Aug. 23.

Castro-Duarte said the Career Center has been serving UTEP students through several virtual events like its new “Career Conversation Café” that takes place at 10 a.m. every Thursday on Instagram. The Career Conversation Café covers several vital topics related to career success; from tips on how to research a company to how to answer illegal interview questions. How certain industries conduct their hiring processes is another obstacle that students may face. Castro-Duarte said. She explained that due to the large volume of applications that employers usually receive, virtual interviews may sometimes be cut short.

“A couple of students told me that they were really surprised that they only got like 10 seconds to talk to somebody,” Castro-Duarte said. “It’s because they have so many people to talk to in one day virtually, but that is why it is important to have your resume ready and be ready for questions.”

The Career Center regularly helps students through career fairs like the virtual one it held on Sept. 2 where many employers accepted applications for jobs and internships.

“We’re still talking to employers online every single day and we are offering our services virtually and we’ve been able to adapt to this new way of doing things using the tools we have,” Castro-Duarte said. “We do encourage students to get on the career fair platform early because those time frames are getting eaten up by other students.”

Through the Career Fair Plus platform, the Career Center will also be hosting its Career Expo, taking place at 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sept. 18, where local and national employers will be looking to hire full-time professionals and interns.

**THEPROSPECTOR** SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

**Studio G from cover page**

300 people were hired by Studio G entrepreneurs in 2019, the release says.

Garcia told The Prospector that Studio G at UTEP was established through a gift of $17,000 by the Hunt Family Foundation.

The business accelerator currently has two people on staff – Omar Delgado, who is the full-time resource coordinator, and Mia Gurnee, who is the part-time student assistant.

According to Garcia, this kind of close-knit collaboration between UTEP and NMSU has never been done before.

“I couldn’t believe it when I heard that,” Garcia said. “Dr. Arvizu, the chancellor of NMSU, and President Wilson were so elated about this. The universities have never collaborated like this before so I’m hoping this will lead to more collaboration.”

Garcia said Studio G started out with “a steadily increasing rise of registrations” before spring break of this year.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit.

“There was a big dive in registrations during that time,” he said.

Studio G had to move its operational online, which was challenging to figure out at first, but Garcia said the transition has gone smoothly so far.

Once the dust settled, Garcia says Studio G saw a “big surprise” in June with an uptick of 79 registrations.

Before the pandemic, students were able to physically drop by at the Mike Loya Center to do the intake process, but now they can just log on to my.utep.edu and click on the Studio G icon on their dashboard to fill out the application or learn more.

One of the things that Studio G entrepreneurs have been doing since the program went completely online is their virtual “Coffee Hour” where they can network with each other and ask staff members any questions.

Garcia said it’s going to take about a year or two before Studio G can boast about any success stories because “it takes a while for ideas to be formed and businesses to be developed.”

“Then after that, you’re going to have this steady stream of ventures that eventually become successful,” Garcia said. “We’re envisioning that these ventures will become viable components of the economy here in El Paso region, and they’ll hopefully become sources of employment for UTEP graduates.”

He said that Studio G has already forged partnerships with entities like the El Paso Chamber of Commerce and El Paso County’s Economic Development office.

**The Prospector would like to thank the Scripps Howard Foundation for their support!**

Your grant will help The Prospector continue to train student journalists by providing the tools and training to better prepare them for their future careers as well as improve our student publications.

The Scripps Howard Foundation (www.scripps.com/foundation), based in Cincinnati, Ohio, is the philanthropic arm of The E.W. Scripps Company. With a special commitment to the regions where Scripps does business, the Foundation helps build strong communities and improve the quality of life through support of sound educational programs, strong families, vital social services, enriching arts and culture and inclusive civic affairs. The Scripps Howard Foundation is a leader in industry efforts in journalism education, scholarships, internships, minority recruitment and development, literacy and First Amendment causes.
UTEF estimates loss of more than $17 million amid COVID-19

Sven Kline
The Prospector

UTEF is projecting a loss of $17.2 million for the 2020 fiscal year, but officials say funding from the federal Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act has provided some relief to the institution and its students.

The university was authorized more than $12.4 million in CARES Act funds for student grants and another $12.4 million that went to the institution.

The University of Texas System (UT) Board of Regents met all throughout last week to discuss the economic impact to its various institutions which has totaled millions of dollars in losses because of the COVID-19 pandemic, among other things.

In May, UTEF projected an adjusted loss of $11.7 million, which is part of the estimated year-end loss of $17.2 million that also takes into account depreciation.

According to the financial reports discussed during the UT regents’ meetings, UTEF’s estimated loss is due to an increase in payroll-related costs, a decrease in auxiliary revenue because of the pandemic, a decrease in Conference USA income, and a decrease in sports games guarantees.

Mark McGurk, UTEF’s vice president for business affairs, told The Prospector that the amount of student refunds issued during the spring semester totals to about $803,000, he said that loss has been made up by the CARES Act.

In May, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott asked state-funded universities and institutions to reduce their operating budgets by five percent for two fiscal years, including the current one, but Victor Arreola of University Communications told The Prospector that UTEF officials said this budget reduction for the upcoming budget year is instead going to be by 10% because “the request was made late into FY 2020, (so) we could not make significant changes to this fiscal year’s budget.”

“Because our state revenue is spent on salaries during the academic year, which has now ended, a 5% reduction in bursary revenue is effectively a budget reduction of 10% in the 2021 fiscal year,” UTEF President Heather Wilson wrote to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott June 15.

Wilson told Abbott in March, when all staff and students left campus, a “flexible hiring freeze” was also implemented as a way to reduce expenditures, enabling only hiring positions of “mission critical positions” to be allowed.

As of May, UTEF spent $106.9 million in payroll-related costs which is $10 million more than the amount spent during that same period in the previous fiscal year, according to what UTEF officials told Arreola.

Many services will remain in place, but they’ll be significantly scaled back, such as UTEF’s shuttle service, which will be cut down to only one bus due to a lack of parking permit purchases for the fall semester.

Aside from being funded by student fees, UTEF is also funded biannually by the Texas legislature which accounts for 23% of the university’s operating budget.

“The University will also save expenses by curtailing travel and we are managing utilities, buildings and projects to reduce operational expenses… Because we cannot use state funds for our auxiliary enterprises like housing, sports, and student affairs,” Wilson wrote.

“Because UTEF has done more than most universities to keep the cost of college down for our students, these reductions will have (an) impact on our mission.”

Auxiliary services such as the shuttles and student housing produce independent funding through student payments. The shuttles are funded through parking fee revenue, just like how student housing has its own stream of revenue.

“We are going to end up cutting services,” McGurk said. “There’s only going to be one shuttle from Miner Canyon housing area to campus and that’s it.”

McGurk stressed that these numbers are estimates until UTEF completes its financial statements that will reflect the actual numbers. The 2020 fiscal year officially ended Aug.31.

“We understand that this is a very difficult time for families that it will require difficult decisions by our elected leaders,” Wilson said in her letter from March. “We are determined to do the best we can for the students we serve so that we keep opportunity open for all students and remain an important engine of economic growth in West Texas.”

Mark McGurk, UTEF’s vice president for business affairs, told The Prospector that the amount of student refunds issued during the spring semester totals to about $803,000, he said that loss has been made up by the CARES Act.

Network with Recruiters!

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Career Week on Sept. 14 –17

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ENTERTAINMENT
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020
EDITOR PAULINA ASTRID SPENCER, 747-5161

‘Ayúdame, Por Favor’
Student filmmaker will exhibit film in Independent Shorts Awards in Los Angeles

Exodis Ward
The Prospector

When UTEP digital media major Sergio Muñoz started writing the script for his short film "Ayúdame, Por Favor", he dreamed of the best-case scenario: it would be well-received and win awards. When he finished filming, his dream came true.

"I was in my hometown and I was trying to see what I could do with what I had. From there I started writing," Muñoz said.

The short film is an 80's inspired thriller written, shot and directed entirely by Muñoz in his hometown of Delicias, Mexico. In 14 minutes and 12 seconds, the short film takes audience members alongside the young main character as she roams around town, looking for adventure. When he stumbles upon a house with its front door open, he decides to explore what's inside.

Muñoz didn't plan for the film to be a thriller, but films such as "The Goonies", "Stand by me" and "The Lost Boys" inspired his writing.

"I started off trying to stay true to Muñoz's standard, but there were minor hiccups that occurred along the way, starting with the lead actor in the film, Santiago Muñoz. Santiago, Sergio Muñoz's younger brother, was inexperienced and needed a lot of direction.

With safety standards in mind, the fall production schedule has been adapted for audiences to enjoy while they social distance amid the coronavirus pandemic.

KTEP, the NPR station for the southwest, will host ReUnion eEvolución Radio, a partnership between the station's State of the Arts radio show and UTEP's Department of Theatre and Dance. The program, which will air throughout September, and is set to celebrate the work of local and national Latinx voices while investigating the "frontiers", or the border.

Another event includes, the College of Liberal Arts' "Teatro, Speaker Series", which will feature several speakers from across the country to discuss representation in the performing arts using Zoom.

The speakers include Anne Garcia Romo of the Art Institute of Chicago, Gregory Ramos of University of Redlands, Virginia Grise of Cara Mira Theatre, Julia Sosa of Cleveland Playhouse and Andre Sanchez-Dela O, a Huntington playwrighting fellow.

The Zoom links will be shared to the public on the college's social media accounts.

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) "Big Read", a program partnered with the Arts Midwest, is another scheduled virtual event that will take place during October to celebrate "Into the Beautiful North," a story directed by Melissa Crespo. The story centers around young protagonist, Nayeli, noticing the lack of law enforcement and men in her town. Wanting to protect her hometown from bandits, she takes it upon herself to collect the Magnificent Seven, a group of seven men that will become the Tes Camarones' warriors.

The Texas Dance Improvisation Festival (TDIF), an annual event that invites dancers to take part in classes with renowned artists through dance sessions and performances, will be conducted virtually on TDIF's website Oct 10.

Later in the semester, dance capstone performances will also be held online Nov. 6-7. This event features performances that are choreographed by UTEP senior dance majors.

Even though Muñoz didn't have the equipment he would have preferred, "Ayúdame, Por Favor" is a success.

"It was chosen to be showcased at the 2020 Independent Shorts Awards in Los Angeles, California and the El Paso Film Festival. Santiago went on to receive the gold award for Best Young Actor. "This was his first time acting, he told me previously that he wanted to act but he was kind of scared," Muñoz said. "It was big news and I'm happy for him."

Muñoz has always wanted to make films, but it wasn't until Spring 2020 that he took the plunge.

"I started a short film with my roommates because one roommate wanted to be an actor and I have a friend who always wanted to be a cinematographer," Muñoz said. "We filmed a short film that's running now at a festival, but we did that short film just to do something."

Over a period of three months, Muñoz shot his first short film, "Josefina." Despite being his first short film, it was selected as a semi-finalist at the New York Latino Film Festival and will be featured at the Indie Short Fest in LA.

Muñoz is off to a strong start in his career. While in El Paso, he interned at PBS as the editor of the show "High Q" and production assistant at Double Scope Films.

The short film is an 1980s inspired thriller written, shot and directed entirely by Muñoz in his hometown of Delicias, Mexico.

Last semester, he interned in New York with ABC News and The Walt Disney Company. Following the success of his past two short films, Muñoz said that he'll work to "improve a little by little." Currently, he's working on a short film called "Another Day at the End of the World." The film follows a man and captures what he does in his apartment one day before the end of the world.

Muñoz hopes to continue pre-production work with the film company Saeta in Mexico, once the COVID-19 pandemic improves. He also would like to go back to ABC News to focus on documentaries.

Two years ago, I was a volunteer at the (El Paso) film festival and right now, they've selected my film," Muñoz said with a chuckle as he reflected on his hard work. "I feel like I've accomplished something."

Exodis Ward may be reached at propsector@utep.edu

Exodis Ward
The Prospector

Photo courtesy of Sergio Muñoz

Theatre and Dance presents ‘Creating and Connecting in Quarantine’

A fan-favorite for many in the last two years, "A Christmas Carol en la Frontera" will be formatted to be radio-friendly. "The play puts a borderland twist to the classic tale "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens." The original story takes place in the 1800s and features Ebenezer Scrooge's journey to redemption through his spirits from Christmas past, present and future.

UTEP theatre's current director, Adriana Dominguez, and previous director, Jay Stratton, are reworking the script to better suit the new medium. This version will be directed by Greg Thompson, a lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Dance.

"Our goals are to provide opportunities for students to continue to develop their craft, both in performance and on the design and technical side of things. We also aim to provide an opportunity to connect with our community," said Rafael Perez, the department's director of audience development and Box office manager. "During these incredibly tough times, we want to find ways to still be able to share stories because it is necessary."

Further event information and dates for "Creating and Connecting in Quarantine" can be found using the Department of Theatre and Dance's social media handles on Facebook and Instagram at: @uteptheatredance.
The Prospector

Sven Kline

‘Immigration Nation’: A look inside a broken system

Immigration Nation is a six-part Netflix documentary series featuring footage filmed from 2017 to 2020 of the United States’ Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) during President Donald Trump’s administration.

The documentary, directed by Christina Clusiau and Shaul Schwarz, faced legal threats from ICE agents and eventually shifted to the testimonies of migrants and U.S. veterans trying to fix their illegal status or escaping death threats from their country of origin.

Clusiau and Schwarz, faced legal threats from ICE during their raids and showed the testimonies of many migrants crossing illegally. Some scenes seen on the documentary were filmed at the El Paso and Ciudad Juarez border and depicted the brutality and emotional distraught that comes from families who are separated. Not far from El Paso, the Tornillo facility was met with various protests to be closed back in 2018. Although the facility no longer stands, the emotional trauma parents and children will carry, is a heavy weight on the immigration system.

According to data published from the Pew Research Center, the El Paso region saw a 477% surge in migrant apprehensions in the fiscal year of 2019 compared to 2018. The city ranked number two in apprehensions in the Rio Grande sector. People traveling in families accounted for most apprehensions in the fiscal year of 2019.

Released Aug. 3, the series followed veterans trying to fix their illegal status or escaping death threats from ICE’s arrests. The powder truth the documentary holds has the potential to impact the El Paso/Juarez border region due to its demographic and the strong cultural bond both cities share. It is a series that should be seen by everyone in order to inspect and understand how we should move forward as a community and allow others to do the same.

@victoriaalmagu9 on Twitter
Season opener win over Stephen F. Austin

Isaiah Ramirez
The Prospector

For the first time more than a year the UTEP football team earned a victory as it defeated Stephen F. Austin 21-0 in front of a restricted capacity crowd in the Sun Bowl. The Miners last win came in its season opener last season against Houston Baptist Aug. 31, 2019.

UTEP has now won its season opener for the first time since the 2010-2011 campaigns. The official attendance was announced at 6,047 for the season opener as capacity restrictions were set in place due to the pandemic as a max capacity of 18% was allowed which meant 8,600 people could attend the Sun Bowl.

Health protocols were clear throughout the Sun Bowl as masks were required throughout the stadium and seats were reserved as no general admission seating was available with fans seated with distance between each other.

Behind solid performances from its young offensive trio in redshirt shophomore wide receiver Jacob Cowing, the Miners offense as a unit put up 364 yards to Stephen F. Austin’s 230. Cowing who is coming off an impressive freshman campaign where he led the Miners in receiving yards a season ago, had 116 receiving yards with seven receptions against the Lumberjacks.

Hardison made his first collegiate start after playing in two games last season and threw for 212 yards, for 116 receiving yards a season ago, had 116 receiving yards with seven receptions against the Lumberjacks. The El Paso Locomotive (5-2-3) beat New Mexico United (6-3-2) 3-2 with a goal in the 88th minute to gain victory over New Mexico United 3-2.

“That’s the most physical I’ve watched a guy run in a long time even all my years in the Big 12,” Head Coach Dana Dimel said.

With a rebuilding program that has now won three games in the last three seasons starting off with a win alongside promising performances from its young talent can only swing this Miner team in the right direction.

Hardin A. Ozuna
The Prospector

The El Paso Locomotive (5-2-3) beat New Mexico United (6-3-2) 3-2 with a goal in the 88th minute to secure its first win over the group leader this season. For the second game in a row, the Locomotive played in front of fans, increasing allowed home attendance to 1,319 people inside of the Southwest University Park.

With a very offensive-minded game featuring five goals, the scoring started at the 13-minute when United forward Amando Moreno, on an assist from midfielder David Estrada scored on a great individual play to take the initial lead. At the 25-minute mark El Paso midfielder Dylan Mares found midfielder Macaulay King after a corner kick to tie the game. Unfortunately, King, just before the end of the half, committed a foul which led to a penalty kick goal from United forward Devon Sandavol at the 48-minute mark to take a 2-1 lead.

It was not until the 60-minute mark when the Locomotive tied the match again with a great cross inside of the box by forward Omar Salgado landing a shot off United goalkeeper Austin Yearwood that resulted in a score.

As the game was winding down, the Locomotive continued to put pressure on New Mexico deep in its territory. At the 88-minute mark, the aggressive play by the Locomotive paid off with a score by Mares on a vital assist from Salgado that gave El Paso the lead for good.

For the first time in five games, the Locomotive were able to gain a victory over New Mexico with previous matches ending in two losses and ties.

“Today definitely exceeded your expectations and the whole day I was really great with the o-line opening things around me and the skilled position guys played great,” Hardison said.

UTEP sophomore wide receiver Jacob Cowing goes up high for catch against Stephen F. Austin Saturday Sept. 5, 2020.

“That’s the most physical I’ve watched a guy run in a long time even all my years in the Big 12,” Head Coach Dana Dimel said.

“Lots of learning tools from out team tonight falling behind the way we did and still playing with the same fire we did,” Dimel said.

“Today definitely exceeded your expectations and the whole day I was really great with the o-line opening things around me and the skilled position guys played great,” Hardison said.

Hankins delivered a standout performance for the miners as the backup running back to senior back Quardraiz Wadley and may have put a case as to why he could be the starting back. El Paso’s all time leading rusher hailing from Parkland High School met the end zone for the first time in his career within a rushing touchdown with 20 seconds remaining in the first half to the Miners ahead of the Lumberjacks 17-14.

Hankins would go on to lead all running backs with 113 rushing yards and tacked on another touchdown for the night.

“Today definitely exceeded your expectations and the whole day I was just visualizing myself breaking for runs,” Hankins said.

Miner senior safety Dy’Vonne Imang produced six tackles and one forced fumble for the UTEP defense.

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Miners travel to Austin as big underdogs to Longhorns

The UTEP Miners coming off a season in which the coaching staff of Stephen F. Austin University, will go on the road to play the University of Texas Longhorns Saturday, Sept. 12, for the first time since 2016.

Hoping to improve on the result of the last matchup that resulted in a 41-7 win for the Longhorns, the Miners have a monumental task at hand with the Big 12 representation. This game will be the first time the Miners will play a Tom Herman coached Longhorn team. Miners have a record of 25-15 at Texas with four bowl wins.

Texas finished the 2019 college football season at 8-5 with a victory over Utah in the Alamo Bowl that left the team as 23rd ranked in the Associated Press (The AP) year-end poll. Currently, the Longhorns are ranked 14th in the AP poll.

Offensively the Longhorns will have some new wrinkles with newly named offensive coordinator Mike Yurcich. Previously the passing game coordinator for a one season at Ohio State and offensive coordinator at Oklahoma State for five years. Yurcich’s offense is considered a good fit for the Longhorns and its power spread offense hoping to improve getting players open in space.

Leading the Longhorns at quarterback will be fourth-year starter Sam Ehlinger, who finished as an honorable mention All-Big 12 Conference selection last season. Ehlinger is currently second all-time in the Big 12 with 8,870 yards and 68 touchdowns. Playing as a junior, Ehlinger has over 1,500 yards rushing in his college career and has improved each season in passing and running.

Finishing last season with over 3,600 yards passing with 32 touchdowns and only 10 interceptions, Ehlinger will be the primary weapon for Texas that UTEP will have to focus on. Devin DuVernay has departed to play in the NFL, leaving a massive hole at wide receiver for Texas with 32 touchdowns and only 10 interceptions last season. Ehlinger will be the key to playing Texas. This upcoming game due to a recurring injury issue.

Juniour Brennan Eagles is the top returning receiver for Texas with 32 receptions with 522 yards receiving and six touchdowns. Sophomores Joshua Moore and Jake Smith move into prominent roles for the Longhorns. Both players were ranked in the top 200 players of its recruiting class.

returning its top two running backs from last season, the Longhorns have a wealth of talent and experience at the position. Leading rusher junior Keaontay Ingram rushed for 853 yards on 144 carries last season, averaging 5.9 yards a carry. Ingram is also a good receiver out of the backfield with 29 receptions for 424 yards and scored 10 total touchdowns last year. Named a third-team preseason All-Big 12 selection, Ingram is expected to have a big year. At 6-0, 222 pounds, Ingram will provide quite a challenge for the Utah defense with his versatility.

Running back back, Roche Johnson is also quite adept at catching passes out of the backfield and had 23 receptions last season. Johnson was third on the team in rushing with 865 yards and seven touchdowns last season.

Adding to the depth at running back is five-star recruit Bijan Robinson, who was the 14th ranked recruit national after three consecutive high school seasons of over 2000 yards. Robinson is the all-time leading rusher in Arizona history with 7036 yards and, like the others, is an outstanding all around player.

On the offensive line, the Longhorns are led by NFL first-round draft prospect Samuel Cosmi at tackle. Cosmi has started 26 games over his career and was named second-team All-Big 12 in 2019 in his first year at left tackle.

Senior Derek Kerstetter anchors the line at center with the most experience of all starters. Kerstetter has started 28 games for the Longhorns and was the highest-ranked pass blocker of all Power Five offensive linemen as ranked by Pro Football Focus in 2019. Like his left tackle teammate, Kerstetter is considered an NFL prospect.

The rest of the line is a talented but inexperienced group that has a significant size advantage over UTEP’s linemen.

UTEP will need to limit Texas’s big-play ability with its defense. Even getting pressure on Ehlinger will be a challenging proposition due to his ability to make plays with his legs. Both of Texas’s running backs are dangerous as receivers coming out of the flats, which will test the Miners linebackers and safeties.

Due to its experience and talent in the secondary, the Miners may be able to give Texas’s young receiving corps a better challenge than expected in its first game. In Ehlinger, the Miners are facing a very accurate quarterback that does not make many mistakes running a very potent offense that has put up points on top college teams. Lacking its top receivers may change much of that scoring early in the season.

The Miners will need to limit defensive mistakes if the team does not want to get run out of the stadium due to the talent of the Longhorns. Texas has the speed to make minor errors turn into major scores.

On defense for Texas, new defensive coordinator Chris Ash will be employing a new scheme, moving from a 4-3 alignment from the previous year’s 3-4 system. Ash, who was previously a head coach at Rutgers compiling an 8-32 win loss record, has worked with Tom Herman while he was at Ohio State, winning a national championship in 2014 with Urban Meyer.

The defensive line will be a position of strength for Texas with experience and talent to man the trenches. Senior Maxx Breigenza and Taquan Graham both bring excellent athleticism to the line at the end and defensive tackle position. Junior Joseph Osei is the standup defensive end and will be the star of the line. Osei had nine tackles with six for loss and three sacks in the Texas 38-10 bowl victory upset over the University of Utah last season. With that performance, Osei caught the eye of NFL scouts and could be in line for a tremendous season. Leading the team in tackles with 90, including 13.5 for loss along with five sacks and two interceptions, Osei will be a crucial player for the Miners’s offensive line to stop in the upcoming game.

Playing on the line in a new scheme could be a learning experience for Osei.

With the scheme coaching change, Texas will rely much less on blitzing and have a very inexperienced linebacker corps that would make it the weakest of the Texas defensive units. But with the scheme change, the mindset is to get pressure up front from four down linemen, especially with Osei at the jack position on defense.

In the secondary, the cornerbacks will be led by junior D’Shawn Jamison, who led the team in interceptions last season with three. Junior Jalen green started seven games last season but missed multiple games with injuries. Junior Josh Thompson, sophomore Chris Adurama and freshman Kenyatta Watson II all received significant playing time last season.

The strength of the secondary is the safety group, which is loaded with possible NFL prospects. Junior Caden Stearns has started 21 of 22 games in his career. He is on multiple pre-season All-American lists as well as the Chuck Bednarik Award watch list awarded annually for defensive player of the year. Joining him at safety is junior B.J. Foster, who has played 22 games in his career while starting 14.

For the Miners to be effective against the Texas defense, the running game will be the key to set up short passes against a somewhat raw group of linebackers. Freshman running back Deion Hankins was very effective against Stephen F. Austin, averaging 6.8 yards per carry. If the Miners can make the defense concentrate on Hankins, it will open up underneath passing routes to exploit versus Texas. Senior Quadraiz Wadley will not be available for the upcoming game due to a recurring injury issue.

Sophomore quarterback Gavin Harrison will need to take advantage of his quick release due to the size difference of the offensive versus defensive lines. UTEP may be able to take advantage of a team learning a new scheme that has yet to implement it into a regular season game condition.

Overall, the Miners receivers acquitted themselves quite well last weekend with both sophomore Jacob Coving and senior Justin Garret making impressive plays. The tight ends and backs will both need to be used more in the passing game versus Texas to move the chains.

Much like on defense, not being forced into offensive errors will be the key to playing Texas. This challenge should show what precisely the UTEP Miners are made of as a team and give them an idea of where they are in terms of progression from last season.

With a tall challenge like playing a top-ranked Power Five team with a limited offseason, the Miners are currently not being given much love from Las Vegas as 43-point underdogs to the Longhorns.

If the Miners can stay disciplined, they can stay under that point differential but in the end I expect a loss by at least four touchdowns.

It is tough to overcome the talent discrepancy no matter how well-coached a team is and the lines on both sides have monumental tasks to take on.

Final Prediction: Longhorns 42 Miners 14