The Prospector

Alyson Rodriguez
The Prospector

Local nonprofit empowers women

Iris Lopez recalls hearing the same advice from her mother growing up, “Mija, yes you can.” The words rung in Lopez’ head throughout her education as a Montwood High School student and graduate at UTEP. They have followed her throughout her six years as a local news anchor for KX Prince, maintenant, she utters the same four words to women in the El Paso community as founder of the nonprofit organization Mija, “Mija, yes you can.”

Mija, Yes you can, is a nonprofit organization created by women for women to provide a platform that allows all women to come together to learn from each other, relate to each other, and achieve their ambitions in life, “Lopez said. “That’s what lit the fire under me to create a blog for women, so they can share their stories with other women, because you never know how much you can relate to others until you share your experiences with the world.”

Throughout the 11 months the organization has been around, it has accomplished various projects. These include donating Mija, Yes you can shirt sales to multiple local nonprofits like El Pasoans Fighting Hunger.

The organization also partnered with the University Medical Center’s Compassionate Care Fund by donating $400. Soon after, it partnered with GPSi’s Playhouse of El Paso and made another $400 donation to the organization.

In August 2020, Mija, Yes you can held a Buck-to-school Supply Drive for The Center Against Sexual and Family Violence, alongside a $250 Target gift card donation. Most recently, for Valentine’s Day, the nonprofit created “Abrazo” packages with socks, blankets, a T-shirt, to deliver to residents at Sunridge Cielo Vista Community.

Future projects for the organization, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, include branching out to other cities and have chapters across the country. Upcoming events from the organization is teaming up with Kendra Scott to have a Mija Pop-Up event to celebrate its one-year anniversary and raise funds.

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Fight against feminicides at the border continues

Hilda Ontiveros-Arrieta, is a UTEP professor in the Women’s and Gender Studies Program where she teaches several courses relevant to gender theory and analysis. Her current research interests include curriculum development for Latino students, contemporary feminist issues, masculinities and policy making and global women’s health issues, among others.

In the mid 1990s, international media started to focus on thousands of feminicides happening in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, mostly pertaining to women of low income with their bodies being found on the Chihuahua Desert. Three decades later, the border continues to be the subject of feminicides and the now growing movement that follows it. Hilda Ontiveros-Arrieta, is a UTEP professor in the Women’s and Gender Studies Program where she teaches several courses relevant to gender theory and analysis. Her current research interests include curriculum development for Latino students, contemporary feminist issues, masculinities and policy making and global women’s health issues, among others.

In 2020, Juarez had more feminicides than any other city in Mexico. According to data released on Jan. 27 by the Secretary Executive of the National System of Public Security, in the past year 3,723 women were victims of feminicides and homicide, with 940 and 2,783 deaths respectively.

According to the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, the term feminicide corresponds to the aggravated homicide due to gender. In other words, it is the intentional killing of women or girls because they are female, which could be in the form of domestic violence, or sexual aggression.

Being a student in UTEP and living in Juarez has given me the
A feminist perspective in times of confinement

The pandemic has affected us all at some level. Some of us have family and friends who have been infected by the virus, or others we know who have been known as the corona, nova, and "el virus." For working women with children at home, the overlap of roles and duties that will take a few years to assess. For UTEP staff, faculty, and students, being at home has brought on overlapping realms of work, school, and other duties associated with their very own greatness. And this usually involves caring for others. There is also the fourth shift—caring for self and self-love on the front burner as we strive to exist.

I have been reading about the life and works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a woman who decided to live a life that she chose to have the right to think and write in 17th century Mexico. At that time, women were not allowed to leave those realms, mostly to become wives, mothers, or—nun—she opted to become a nun. She chose to go into a convent to find the space to think, write, and create a variety of works, including plays, poems, speeches, and even recipes. I have also been working in collaborative work with two colleagues on translating and editing works of Margarita Lagarde y de los Ríos, a feminist anthropologist, who has several topics that are quite relevant to feminists during a pandemic. Lagarde is known for themes such as cautionaries (contenimientos). Spending months, days, and so many hours at home has been a form of captivity. Staying at home during this pandemic has been life changing. For those of us studying and working at home, we have had a lot of time to see through many windows that we've become a feminist lens because it is practical in examining and constructing the new realities that we work and learned to take on. This is a great time to analyze, question, and redefine gender roles. This is the time to uncover the hidden labor we have grown accustomed to doing, while inviting our partners to share duties and responsibilities. This seems like a pertinent moment to have been working in our lives so far, what would we like to start doing to get back to a new reality, and to stop doing what no longer works for us. I have learned to stop stressing about what I cannot control, like snowstorms, broken pipes, and broken water heaters at home. I have started doing yoga and meditation. I plan to continue looking for ways to bring the arts into this I do. I past fall, I intentionally added a week of poetry into my course, as we read Pablo Neruda and wrote to it. I have become a feminist foods. I have since added drawing activities in different meetings on Zoom to break up the monotony of hours of meetings in front of the computer screen.

As entered 2021 with much conflict, we also did so with hope. We have the first woman vice president in our country. Kamala Harris is a first lady with a Doctorate in Environmental Studies. Little girls will grow up seeing great women leaders as role models and look at women of color as our equals. Women will celebrate great women leaders. As I past fall, I intentionally added a week of poetry into my course, as we read Pablo Neruda and wrote to it. I have become a feminist foods. I have since added drawing activities in different meetings on Zoom to break up the monotony of hours of meetings in front of the computer screen.

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La Mujer Obrera creates jobs for women

La Mujer Obrera, an independent labor-representation and culturally representative organization in El Paso, attests to the unswerving spirit of the border city’s tenacity in its continued mission to create communities defined by overcoming the obstacles brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Founded in 1981 by Chicanx activist garment workers, the organization structured itself upon the principles of employment, education, health, and political liberty as basic human rights for all. At the forefront of their charge for equality were, and still are, the working women of Mexican heritage and the community who sought to amplify the voices of the marginalized and combat the cycle of oppression and exploitation through their charitable and cultural practices.

La Mujer Obrera was formed as the garment industry in the south-central district of El Paso exploited mechanization that disregarded labor laws and protected the corporate abuse of Mexican women who were often impoverished and lacked a formal education. This abuse often entailed the denial of decent housing and human rights, wage theft, and hazardous working conditions.

In the fight to redress injustice, La Mujer Obrera assembles to promote educational, economic, and community development through their literacy, health, and leadership programs. Ultimately, the organization functions as a system of interrelated programs that taught self-sufficiency while improving individuals’ financial and emotional stability and strengthening the bond between community and culture.

Among the most significant of these programs is Café Mayapán, founded in 2001 and dedicated to providing authentic Mexican cuisine that celebrates opportunities for women. Ana Gomez is among the women who were welcomed and trained by La Mujer Obrera. In 1999, she and fellow coworkers were let go from their jobs at American Garment Company, where La Mujer Obrera had provided laundry and garment services for five years. This was part of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement, which established a free-trade zone that resulted in manufacturing jobs moving from El Paso to Mexico.

Gomez recalls directing La Mujer Obrera to visit the factory to inform the unemployed workers, the options and support that awaited them to establish the organization. Two years later, Gomez was part of the group who welcomed the public to Café Mayapán.

“I began as a waitress,” Gomez said. “Then I began to really enjoy working outside the kitchen and through experience and training I was able to later become a cook’s assistant.”

Fast forward to today, Gomez has been serving as the manager of Café Mayapán for the past 17 years. Here, she teaches women who just like her, once was, are eager to learn and work.

As a social enterprise, Café Mayapán provides work training and stimulates economic growth through its contracting of local vendors and buying local produce for food. According to Gomez, its menu and food preparation is in honor of the borderland’s Mexican heritage, which is why all ingredients are fresh.

“We try to prepare our dishes as ancestral as possible,” Gomez said. “Almost everything that we serve is made by hand by us, we rarely use canned goods.”

It’s most popular dish, the roasted mole, is a grilled cactus filled with adobo cheese and mushrooms with chipotle, served with a side of rice.

“Despite most of us having connections with Mexico, we don’t really appreciate the value of our foods,” Gomez said. “By cooking and eating from the root of food, you create a connection that has especially been lost today.”

Through the years, Café Mayapán has become an emblem of the borderland’s rich Mexican culture, by hosting events aimed at celebrating traditions and history. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Gomez recalls the restaurant was home to UTEP students and other members of the community who hosted study sessions and meetings.

“I’ve always seen the restaurant as a place for the community,” Gomez said. “It’s a friendly atmosphere where children can run around, and students can work. It’s where people can feel at peace, at least that’s how it was before COVID-19.”

Since October 2020, Café Mayapán has had to adjust to the limitations and obstacles brought by the pandemic by only serving carryout and losing customers like the employee’s nearby businesses that have closed due to COVID-19.

“It’s been difficult because you can’t work like you used to, like interacting with your coworkers,” Gomez said. “But people have shown their support by coming in and realizing they are not just eating good food, but they are also supporting an organization that works for the people.”

Gomez said she doesn’t know when her journey with La Mujer Obrera will end, as her involvement with the organization has come to mean more than just a job.

“Never seen this restaurant as a job. Gomez said. “This restaurant has taught me a lot about how to learn and share with others.”

Expanding on the organization’s celebration of traditional cultural practices, Proyecto Verde and Tierra es Vida are programs that connect students with the earth’s resources and the ancestral practices of Mexican and Indigenous women with artistic expression and healthy food. Proyecto Verde cherishes the teachings of the Chichime culture as they integrate language and visual arts into their agricultural customs to further connect their heritage with and nature.

La Mujer Obrera’s Familias Unidas stand as a beacon of awareness regarding education, racism, and political independence. Its mission is to provide the necessary resources and avenues for low-income women workers to advocate for themselves, as well as push back against the injustices faced by the children and marginalized members of El Paso. Rayito del Sol Daycare and the collaborative textile social enterprise with the national network Niu Matap Nawaqikta epimotiz Mujer Obrera’s efforts to assist every asset of the underserved population. Rayito del Sol nurtures the social and academic needs of children from primarily Mexican and low-income families and the garment workers displaced and exploited by NAFTA. The program fosters creativity and language skills through a Spanish-immersion curriculum to connect them with their cultural heritage and nature. The organization’s fair-trade textile company, Lummetik Trading Co., initiated work to help individuals remain in their chosen communities and not be displaced by NAFTA. The Niu Matap Nawaqikta network national, also launched by La Mujer Obrera, collaborates with indigenous women across Mexico, and was founded to assist women with beginning small businesses.

To this day, La Mujer Obrera remains an active force in conjugating pride and civil rights activism in the El Paso community with protests, meetings and celebratory events. As La Mujer Obrera believes that for all those that it represents, it is only to keep remaining persistent.

To learn more about La Mujer Obrera, visit http://www.mujerobrera.org/.

Feminicides come from page opportunity to know and feel how woman who is not in an organization life city like El Paso. But also, it opened my eyes that there are a lot of women who are being killed, kidnapped and I can do something about it,” said Carla Montoya, an industrial engineering student at UTEP who is part of the collective movement in Juárez called Hijas de su Maquilera Madre. The organization is independent, anti-capitalist, and against femicide, forced disappearances and human trafficking. It is organized under democratic horizontal assemblies where everyone has a voice and vote. In the past, the collective has defied the police struggle for women’s rights, sex-affection diversity, ecocentrism, gender equality and also denounced femicide, and the forced disappearance of women.

According to UNTAC activists, the start of the pandemic has created a record in the fight for women’s rights, as system stagnation can become victims of domestic violence.

“As we are in lockdown with our activism under threat and families, there tends to be a raise of domestic violence and violence against women and right now it’s happening in Mexico,” Ontiveros-Arrieta said. “The thing is 90% of those cases are dismissed, they are not followed through, and nothing comes out from them.”

Ontiveros-Arrieta said being part of an organization like Hijas de su Maquilera Madre is not the only way in which one can help women experiencing violence in the borderland. El Paso and Juárez is one thing Ontiveros-Arrieta has encouraged among her students, who donate time, money and supplies.

Ontiveros-Arrieta also encourages students to not listen to stereotypes because they are just there to scare people away from activism.

“I encourage students to take our classes on gender studies, if you look to the border, they mention that they are happy they took those classes because it opened their eyes to a new academic life they have never experienced before,” Ontiveros-Arrieta said.

Montoya agreed with Ontiveros-Arrieta, by also encouraging fellow students to speak up when they see injustice being done.

“If you know a friend who is being abused psychologically by her partner, or if some of your friends have a low self-esteem, this is someone who can be vulnerable to this type of violence,” Montoya said. “A way in which you as a man or as a woman who is not in an organization can help, is by raising your voice in the little things on the daily life.”

To read more stories, visit theprospectordaily.com

UTEP prepares for Maluma’s world tour in September

El Paso Young Black Leaders set to raise awareness for women’s health

Mija from cover page competition for the Estrella Jalisco Beer company, which honors locals the bond between community and culture.

The connection that has especially been lost today”

Mija, Yes you can is located at the Outlet Shoppes at El Paso. People can become involved with the organization by visiting their website at www.mujerobrera.org/.

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**Students administer second dose of COVID-19 vaccine**

Sané Klein

A critical point has been reached in pan­dem­ic pro­gress as UTEP, with the uni­ver­si­ty begin­ning to admin­is­ter sec­ond doses in the past two weeks.

“Till date, UTEP has immu­ni­zed a mil­lion people with either one or two doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine,” said Saná Vasquez, UTEP’s associ­ate prin­ci­pal in the provost’s office. “UTE­P is now admin­is­ter­ing sec­ond doses of the vac­cine to those who rec­og­nize their first dose at UTEP.”

At the biv­er­se vac­cine clin­ic, a group of vol­un­teer stu­dents, com­posed of med­ical field mas­ters, have lent their help­ing hands to dis­tribute the COIVD-19 vac­cine to eli­gi­ble fac­ulty, staff and stu­dents who meet the cri­te­ria for group 1A or 1B.

With­out the vol­un­teers’ efforts, the sec­ond vac­cine shots would not be admin­is­tered and those need­ing sec­ond doses would not be able to receive them.

“UTE­P hos­pi­tal­ity has been one of the big­gest obstacles we’ve had,” said UTEP’s sec­ond vac­cine admin­is­trator, Saná Monzon. “But with­out the vol­un­teers, we would not be able to admin­is­ter sec­ond doses.”

SANÉ KLEIN

**Profes­sors receive half a mil­lion-dollar grant**

Andrew Velez-Roig

Two UTEP prof­es­sors received a $586,392 grant from the National Science Founda­tion to study abiotic carbon dioxide (CO2) dynamics in rai­gned agri­cul­tural sys­tems in the El Paso region dry­lands.

As UTEP’s sec­ond vac­cine admin­is­trator, Saná Monzon, put it: “This is much more than what we need. This is what we are trying to do.”

For Christian Monzon, put­ting the vac­cine in the hands of those who need­ed it was a “huge step for­ward.”

Saná Monzon, a phar­ma­cy major, said: “I am so hon­ored to con­trib­ute in any way pos­si­ble.”

“Be­ing a stu­dent in the healthcare field dur­ing a pan­dem­ic has cre­ated many oppor­tu­ni­ties for us as stu­dents, and we get to take a huge part in history,” Monzon said.

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Seismologist connects students and scientists

Marianne S. Karplus, Ph.D., is a seismologist and geophysicist at the Department of Earth Sciences at UTEP. She is also a professor of geophysics and a research associate at the University of California, Berkeley. Karplus is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Geophysical Union. She has been awarded numerous grants and fellowships, including a Fulbright Scholar Fellowship and a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship. She has published over 100 scientific articles and co-authored several books on seismology. Karplus is also a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion in STEM fields. She is a member of the American Association of University Women and the Society for Women in Geology. Karplus is dedicated to mentoring and inspiring the next generation of seismologists and geophysicists. In her free time, she enjoys hiking and cycling in the mountains of the western United States.

Photo courtesy of Marianne S. Karplus

Review: The Expanse season five has a slow kick off

The Expanse, the hit sci-fi show set in humanity's far future, returned to Amazon Prime in December 2020 with a new action-packed storyline and stunning visuals based on astronomical science.

In the hour-long episodes, The Expanse delivers jaw-dropping narrative expanding upon two main characters: Naomi Nagata played by Dominique Tipper and Amos Burton played by Wes Chatham, whilst focusing on new tensions and conflicts between planetary governments. A Syfy channel original for its first three premier seasons, The Expanse has received numerous awards and nominations, such as the Dragon Award and Saturn Award, for its depiction of accurate science in its cinematography. It was picked up by Amazon for its fourth, fifth, and upcoming sixth season.

I’m going to analyze this season, so beware of spoilers. The season returns to the main character’s split up after the incident caused by Belters on the newly colonized exoplanet. Belters is a group of people native to the Asteroid Belt between Earth and Mars.

We join James Holden, played by Steven Strait and Naomi Nagata beginning their lives together when Naomi finds information about the location of her long-lost son who was stolen by her ex-husband, and main antagonist of this season Marco Inaros, played by Keon Alexander. The reunions are promptly interrupted when her son turns on her and Naomi is taken. This triggers a series of events leading James and his crew aiding in a dire rescue mission. This is about a secret group course and a geology course. This led her to earn a bachelor’s in earth sciences, Mathematics from Dartmouth College in 2004 and a Ph.D. in geophysics from Stanford University in 2012. Karplus is not unaccustomed to being the only woman or one of the few women in her field, so she does service projects for UTEP and often gives speeches to high-school and college-aged women to encourage them to stick with their science focus.

It can be hard being a member of an underrepresented group in science. In addition to seeking out good mentors, be a mentor. Listen and help each other,” Karplus said. “Do what you can to support people from underrepresented groups interested in science.”

Karplus encourages mentees to talk with people with different experiences in their field. She believes opportunities in research are key and that any help they need will find students if they’re doing what they love.

“Remember when you are learning, it is okay to struggle and okay to fail” Karplus said. “Those are sometimes the best learning opportunities.”

Heriberto Perez may be contacted to reach at prospector@utep.edu

Review: The Expanse season five has a slow kick off

The crew of the good ship Rocinante: Naomi Nagata, Amos Burton, Alex Kamal and James Holden.

Photo courtesy of SYFY
Handmaid’s Tale dives into history of women’s rights

Edsel Ward

Recently, I began watching “The Handmaid’s Tale” on Hulu. My initial thought was, “Wow. This is bizarre. Like surreal,” so I set out to find the book and read it.

Some notes before I review the book. The author Margaret Atwood wrote it in 1984 while in West Berlin. This book is heavily influenced by the tension to curtail our Soviet rule and the instability she saw growing up during World War II. With that said, here are my thoughts below:

The Handmaid’s Tale follows Offred, a handmaid in a dystopian America now called The Republic of Gilead. Gilead is post-coup America where democracy was replaced with a “literate-minded theocratic dictatorship,” in the words of Atwood. Gilead is based on 17th century Protestant roots, which means that a lot of laws are literal Bible verses.

Offred is a handmaid, which means she is sterile. Her job is to help reduce the low birthrates. She is assigned to the Commander and his wife and child. This book is an absolute ride.

The extremity in their society was very jarring. Everyone lives under constant fear of “The Eyes,” the secret police that suppresses the smallest acts of rebellion. There is a place called “The Wall” were the dead bodies of people who committed infractions were stacked up to not let the hot sun as a reminder to everyone. Handmaids are held in a place called Red Center and are indoctrinated before being shipped away like cattle.

Overall, the book is very heavy. There aren’t very many moments that allow readers to breathe.

I had one constant thought while I read the book: “Isn’t this a bit extreme?” The answer is yes, but remember, nothing starts out that way.

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I had one constant thought while I read the book: “Isn’t this a bit extreme?” The answer is yes, but remember, nothing starts out that way.

I think in a book where one of the main goals is realism, June is expertly written. So many main characters are the heroes and I appreciate June because she isn’t the harshest one. That’s her best friend, Moira. Everyone likes to think they’ll be Moira, but Moiras are very far and few between. If we had more Moiras, we wouldn’t have half the issues we have today.

I appreciate that June struggles with morality throughout the book. Because it adds to the realism of the book. She makes decisions that she regrets and tries to legitimize others because in a past world, she wouldn’t have ever thought of making such a choice. On a spectrum of black and white, June is very gray, and I think it’s a wonderful way to depict a character. People are not good or bad; they’re just trying to live.

Ironically, one of the things I didn’t particularly enjoy about the book was the realism. While it made the book easy to immerse myself into, it was a little too close to home. America experienced a coup on Jan 6. We weren’t very successful, but even that became false because nothing became of it but those in Myanmar weren’t as lucky. The thought of what could’ve been devasted me.

The hierarchy between the women in the book was irritating. At the top of the hierarchy in Gilead are menconsists of men on top, then women. Between women, there are sub levels from most power to least: Wives, Auntis, Handmaids, Econowives and Unwomen. The system is set in a way that the women self-regulate. It made me giggle the way Wives would go out of their way to make Handmaids lives harder as if the Wives weren’t oppressed themselves. Internalized misogyny is a big thing. Like in a pot, we’re all struggling but I’m going to make your day worse than mine.

The parallels of the book were a little bit uncomfortable as well. The idea of following an oppressive belief system blindly. Women don’t have bodily autonomy, while being reduced to their sexual organs. Women having their names taken to be labeled with the name of the man who “owns” them. The idea of being unemotional. Victim blaming. Systemic rape.

Overall, The Handmaid’s Tale is quite an intriguing and relevant book. However, being written during the Cold War, it shouldn’t be relevant at all. I’d say the book is a great read, if you’re into dark and twisted stories. This book is a great read for anyone who wants to challenge your perspective on modern day politics and women’s rights. I’ll say this is the one to do it.
**SPORTS**

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**UTEP wins most games since 2015-16 season**

Michael Cuviello

The UTEP Miner (16-7, 13-5) women’s basketball came back from 8 points down in the final quarter to get a 71-68 must-win conference game over the Charlotte 49ers (19-4, 8-4) on the road Saturday, Feb. 27.

After not being able to overcame a 40-22 halftime deficit Friday in a 62-53 loss, the Miners bounced back to split the two-game series with a great fourth quarter effort in the second game of a weekend doubleheader.

We didn’t play very well (Friday), all we wanted was the opportunity to play back-to-back,” Head Coach Coach Kevin Baker said. “We look at the film, but the biggest thing we needed to correct was our mentality. We had to be a little more focused, a little more determined, a little more stubborn. All those things make you say this was a character game and that’s what it was.”

The Miners survived a hot shooting 63% shooting quarter from the 49ers with smothering defense down the stretch, not allowing a field goal in the final four minutes of the quarter as UTEP clung to a 17-16 lead.

Senior Michelle Pruitt got hot in the second, scoring six points in the first three minutes of the quarter as the Miners jumped out to a 10-point lead. After three more minutes passed, the Miners were still handing onto a 9-point lead after a layup from freshman Emily Akins.

The Miners next three-pointer within a two-minute stretch, Charlotte guard Mariah Linney narrowed the Miner lead to three points at 33-30. A layup by teammate Octavia Jett Wilson as well as a block helped the 49ers close out the half, only trailing by a single point.

At halftime, both teams were shooting well over 50% from the field. Mariah Linney hit a 3-pointer following a Jett -Wilson layup that gave the 49ers a 39-35 lead with 7:31 remaining in the third quarter. With four minutes remaining, Jett Wilson hit a 3-pointer to provide Charlotte with its largest lead of 7 points.

Junior Destiny Thurman hit a clutch 3-pointer with three seconds left in the quarter to close the gap with the 49ers to 51-49.

Charlotte started out strong in the fourth period jumping out to a 59-51 lead with 7:30 remaining in the game.

A minute later, sophomore guard Destini Lopes accounted for 8 of the 14 points of the run as the Miners led by 65-59 with three and half minutes left in the game.

With a minute and 24 seconds left in the game, the Miners led 68-63 after Pruitt’s free throw. Jett Wilson’s jumper cut the Miner lead back to 3 points with just over a minute left in the game.

Leading again by five, a Linney 3-pointer once again victimized the Miners with 12 seconds left on the clock. The Miners forced the 49ers to foul as Sophomore Katie Gallegos closed out the game with a free throw to put the 71-68 UTEP win.

Lopes’ 12 points in the quarter were vital for the Miners as she led UTEP with 19 points on 7 for 11 shooting from the field. Lopes hit 3 of 5 three-pointers.

The Miners out-rebounded Charlotte 40-22 halftime deficit.

“We were on a roll, we made them hit some tough shots,” Baker said. “We held them to 47 shots; they are a team that’s been scoring from 75 to 80 points each night. We defended them well.”

The Miners outscored the Rice North Texas matchup results this coming week to see where the team’s seeding is confirmed to be. If North Texas does not sweep Rice, then UTEP gains the No. 2 seed in the West Division, which earns the team a bye in the conference tournament. The Miners has its best record since the 2015-16 National Tournament quarterfinalist team that finished 29-8.

“UTEP’s game will be at the Conference USA tournament starting March 10 in Frisco, Texas.”

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**Assistant athletic director stands out in a male dominated field**

Michael Cuviello

In a field once predominantly dominated by men, UTEP’s Anna Claire Thomas sticks out as a rising star in the UTEP communications staff. She is currently serving as the Assistant athletic director for UTEP, a position she has held since 2019 after leaving her role as a multimedia coordinator for Louisiana Tech.

She was the assistant director of athletic communications for the previous seven years.

According to Higher Education Publications Inc., the number of women enrolled in the NCAA has nearly doubled since 1990 from around 10% overall to about 20% currently. The numbers, though, are skewed at the lower tier division representing 30% of total directors, while the upper tiers have approximately 13% of women’s positions. Much like minority coaches, women get more opportunities in the mid-major athletic conferences over the Power Five conferences, with only four women out of 65 positions in this role.

Originally from Monroe, Louisiana, Thomas grew up in a family of athletes, the youngest of four children. Thomas played softball and soccer growing up. Two of her brothers played and her dad played baseball at Louisiana Tech, located in Rustin, just 30 minutes from her hometown. Her mom currently works for the university.

“Growing up around all sports was my experience,” Thomas said. “My parents, grandparents all played sports. We spent so much time around the ballpark and learning the language I feel that helped me put a lot in my current field.”

Following the family tradition of attending Louisiana Tech, Thomas majored in journalism and was the sports editor for the school newspaper from 2010 to 2012 and editor and chief in her final quarter. She credits a sports writing class she took in college to fine-tune her sports writing skills.

Thomas stressed that to work in her field, one needs to be proactive and that started for her as an undecided junior when she began working for the video department. Her love of sports and writing she felt could be a vital tool with the sports department. She stressed reaching out to the departments about helping out in whatever manner she could get the experience that could help her build relationships with the administration department.

Once she graduated, she interned with the communications department covering baseball, volleyball and bowling and after three years was hired to a staff position. In 2018 Thomas was named the youngest female Division I primary football contact at the age of 26.

“When I first started out, there were not many women in the field. At the time, I believe there were only 12 women in the position in the country.” Thomas said. “I think the stereotype of men in sports is not the same as it was maybe 10 to 20 years ago with more women having more knowledge and awareness about this industry. We are trying to change that stereotype.”

Thomas credits her journalism degree and her experience on the paper to prepare her for her current job. She feels that a knowledge of public relations would be beneficial in being proficient for this job.

“There are so many public relations in this field, with

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**Miners strike gold on offense versus 49ers at home**

The UTEP Miners (2-2-1, 1-0-0) beat the Louisiana Tech Bulldogs (6-3-0, 1-0-0) 61-26 Saturday afternoon in the Don Haskins Center. The Miners are now 2-0 at home this season.

The Miners started strong in the first half, leading 20-16 after the first quarter. UTEP was able to cut down on turnovers and shoot better from the field, finishing the half with a 35-18 lead.

Odigie and Williams scored all the Miner points in the second half. The Miners would not allow one score the rest of the half. Charlotte would not get a field goal until 10 minutes had passed in the half. The Miners would not score in the final three minutes as it went on to a 10-5 advantage in the second half.

UTEP senior Tessa Carlin goes on the offense against a Louisiana Tech defender in a 2-1 overtime win, Feb. 28.

The Miners on defense were highly active, denying scoring opportunities for the 49ers. At the six-minute mark, redshirt junior forward Tydus Verhoeven went underneath to score, giving the Miners a 26-18 lead.

From this point on, the Miners defense smothered the 49ers and did not allow one score the rest of the half. Odigie and Boum scored all the Miners points to seal the win after halftime with a 35-18 lead. The 49ers would have a total of 11 turnovers early in the first half, compared to the Miners’ three turnovers as UTEP’s smearing defense kept Charlotte from getting open shots.

To open the half, junior guard Jamal Bieniemy hit a 3-point shot to extend the Miners lead to 20 points. After six minutes of play had elapsed in the second half, the Miners extended its lead to 29 points on a Verhoeven layup. After back-to-back jumpers by Boum and Williams, the Miners now led 32-13 with 12:45 left in the game. The Miners’ scoring would continue as junior guard Christian Agnew sank a 3-point shot to give the Miners a 62-26 lead.

With three minutes left in the game, the Miners led 70-28 and cleared the bench to get the full movement from juniors Vic Boden and Kristin Prevosto, set up a Carlin score on a right-footer to win the match. Carlin now has two goals on the season.

Sophomore goalkeeper for the Miners family friendly, had five saves in six shots on goal from Louisiana Tech. The Miners were only able to get six shots on goal but two of the kicks made it into the opposing net.

The UTEP Miners had six corner kicks and 11 total shots compared to Louisiana Tech, which had three corners and eight total shots.

“I thought we did well to grind out a win today,” Stewart said. “LA Tech made it tough for us because they defend really well. They are very compact, so we didn’t get a ton of chances. You have to capitalize on the few that we did make, and I’m really proud of the effort. To come off two weeks of not playing and to get into a rhythm is tough, so they did well to do that. Maybe it took us a little bit longer than we wanted to, but there are three points and that is all that matters.”

The Miners’ next game will be on the road at Southern Miss noon March 6 before returning Sunday, playing at 5 p.m., March 14, to host the University of Kansas, 5 p.m.

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much of it being hands-on training,” said Thomas. “You need to be as accurate as possible. You need to have very good people skills and know how to form good (working) relationships with people. We work with every sport, different athletes and with marketing. One of my favorite parts of the job is traveling across the country and get to cover and be shared with the media or public.

Situation that Thomas thought may be the only female athletic director in the country and get to cover and be shared with the media or public. One positive from the current situation that Thomas thought may be the only female athletic director in the country and get to cover and be shared with the media or public.

“Thomas said. “We had seven turnovers in the first half, and it was the turnovers that was leaving points for those guys that we didn’t need to give up. We came out in the second half and did a little bit better job taking care of the basketball. We came out and did a little bit better job taking care of the basketball. The Miners had its fourth win in a row. We did well to do that. Maybe it took us a little bit longer than we wanted to, but there are three points and that is all that matters.”