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FASHION ISSUE

Handmade face masks *The business behind the art and craft*

Andrea Valdez-Rivas
The Prospector

Wherever there's demand, there will always be supply, at least that's what local experienced seamsters found to be true as homemade mask businesses boomed amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout the past year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended people wear a face covering to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Seamsters like Maria Teresa Morado, 53, who works in housekeeping at El Paso's University

Medical Center (UMC), took the opportunity to provide an essential product and make extra cash at the same time.

Morado began selling homemade masks to her coworkers at the hospital when COVID-19 cases were rapidly increasing in April 2020.

Before, working at UMC, Morado spent eight years making U.S. Army soldier uniforms.

"I thought, 'If I can sew a soldier's uniform together, then I can make a mask,'" Morado said. "It's super easy for me."

Morado makes sure to double up on fabric for extra filtering and protection when creating her masks. Each customer can choose from the diverse patterns Morado offers, from Disney princesses, animal prints, and sports teams' logos to solid colors.

But people are especially drawn to Morado's masks because of her unique design technique.

"Most masks out there have nose clips," Morado said. "My masks don't need the nose clip because I sew on a piece of fabric that's shaped to

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Photograph by Hugo Hinojosa

Local fashion boutiques adjust to COVID-19 pandemic

Nicole Lopez
The Prospector

Despite the challenges COVID-19 has approached businesses with, local boutiques in El Paso are making adjustments to in-store and online sales to keep their operations up and running.

Between March and July of 2020, more than 120 businesses in El Paso closed for good, according to data from Yelp.

Gesuina Legaspy, owner of GAL Boutique, understood the possibility of losing her business, just as more than 120 other business owners did in El Paso. Her persistence is what allowed her to keep GAL Boutique afloat.

"I thought to myself, 'I'm not going to go down like this,'" Legaspy said. "There is no way that I'm just going to let this kill my business."

Business did indeed slow down

for Legaspy at the beginning of the pandemic. It was during spring of 2020 that she took advantage of the spare time she now had, to learn more about how she could help her business grow.

From attending online pop-up sales to purchasing designer gowns, Legaspy got creative. She began to investigate lower price products offering high-quality fashion for customers alike.

"People still need accessories, they still wear sunglasses, jewelry, masks, and now they're wearing more loungewear," Legaspy said. "I changed my structure. That way, people could purchase what was trending."

Legaspy also considered efficient means of delivering her products to her customers.

"Since we (employees at GAL Boutique) weren't yet allowed to come to the store, I was constantly

either shipping or going to people's houses to deliver stuff," Legaspy said. "I did what I needed to do to save myself."

On Next Sunday, a boutique located at The Fountains at Farah, experienced similar problems.

"I took a step back because I really thought we were going to have to close," said Erika Lee Williams, owner of On Next Sunday.

Come May 1, 2020, Williams realized people were buying more than she expected, considering the stay-at-home order.

"I saw this trend as an opportunity to not give up just yet," Williams said. "We revamped our online store and made it more user-friendly."

Williams experienced a 200% customer growth with her online store after she decided to freshen it up.

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Rocketbuster Boots takes the boot capital of the world by storm

Victoria Rivas
The Prospector

Rocketbuster Boots is a locally owned business that has been selling custom handmade boots around the world for 31 years.

The shop is located in a 100-year-old building that used to be a fur trappers' warehouse next to the El Paso downtown train station at 115 Anthony St. It takes pride in being in El Paso, who gained the title of the 'Boot Capital of the World,' due to its long history with cowboys, boots and ranches that dates to the 1800s.

"There were more boot companies in this town than any other town, and that goes way far back," Nevena Christi, who also refers to herself as the "boss lady" and owner of the Rocketbuster Boots, said. "We have a rich history in the making of the American cowboy boot, as far as more companies."

Christi is not originally from El Paso. She studied in Europe and New York at École des Beaux-Arts de

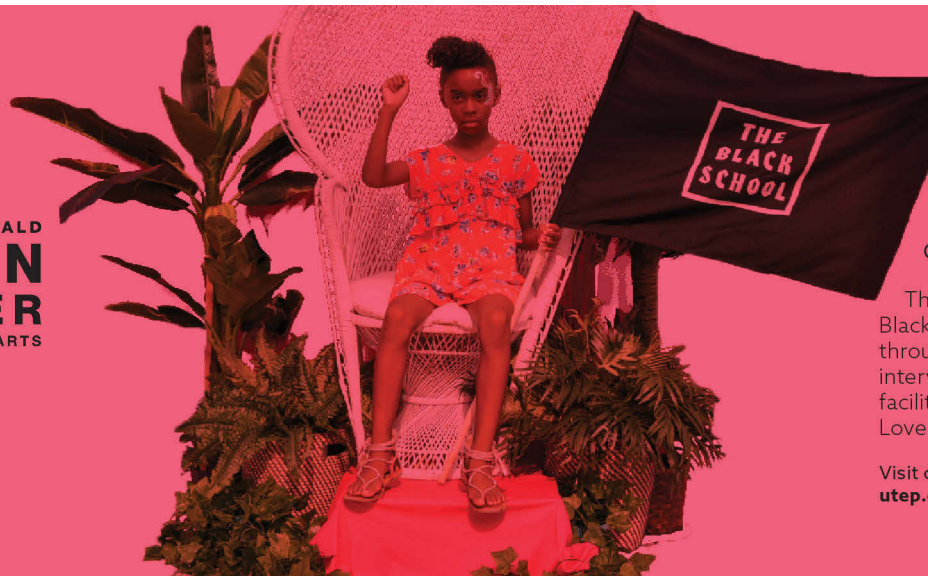
Paris and The New School. She had 15 years of experience working as an artist, graphic designer, and fashion designer before moving to El Paso in 1997 with her husband, Marty Snortum, to work together on the Rocketbuster Boots business.

Rocketbuster's is home to the world's largest boots certified by Guinness World Records. It makes boots for all major holidays, including the Fourth of July, Easter, St. Patrick's Day, and even U.S. elections.

"This year because we knew the election was going to be insane, we did like a vintage fight poster, so Biden had his dukes up in one side and Trump on the other, and it was 'Go out and vote,'" Christi said. "We did it with Hillary and Trump. It's become something we do now every election."

El Paso's borderland culture serves as inspiration for everything

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Join us for a virtual talk on
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Self Determination & Solidarity: Towards Love Centered Futures
Featuring Joseph Cuillier III and Shani Peters,
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The Black School (TBS) is an experimental art school teaching Black/PoC students and allies to become agents of change through art workshops on radical Black politics and public interventions that address local community needs. TBS has facilitated over 100 workshops and hosted three annual Black Love Festivals to date.

Visit our website for more information and Zoom link for the talk
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Should I get rid of my skinny jeans?



Anahy Diaz
The Prospector

March 11 marked one year since the United States declared the COVID-19 pandemic. Just like last year, the video-sharing app TikTok continues to be the app many people have turned to during quarantine. The app remains a space where

people go to share opinions on various topics, including fashion. Through recent TikToks, those who fall under Generation Z (1997-2012) have been criticizing the style of Millennials (1981-1996), mainly their affection for side-parted hair and skinny jeans. As a member of Gen Z, I must admit the comments about what is considered to now be an “outdated” style should be taken lightly considering some of our middle school photos. Millennials all around have not been thrilled by the comments. Why? Perhaps these “outdated” trends mark the end of Millennial mainstream influence. But first, we must give credit where credit is due. Gen Z learned from the best, from its early 90s inspired prints to its obsession with cycling shorts and hoodies, the generation's style

is heavily influenced by Millennial trends. However, Gen Z does it its own way. Yes, we are into tie-dye garments, but specifically pastels and preferably oversized. In an interview by BBC Style, Gen Z researcher and author Corey Seemiller clarified that the most significant difference in style between Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z, isn't about a particular garment or look, but rather the ethics of consumption. "Gen Z like to buy used clothing, both for their ability to personalize it, and as a way to demonstrate their environmental commitment in keeping items out of landfills," Seemiller said. Gen Z's own take on the future of the fashion industry is a reflection of the generation's prominent beliefs. When it comes to fashion trends, Gen Z leans into sustainably sourced fabrics and brands with social

messaging. According to McKinsey and Business of Fashion's State of Fashion Report 2021, nine in 10 Generation Z consumers believe companies have a responsibility to address environmental and social issues. The report addressed the future of fashion, where the recent increase of digital consumption showed fashion companies need to take an active stance on social issues, satisfy consumer demands for radical transparency, and have the courage to “self-disrupt” an old identity of success that no longer works with new generations of customers. Among this self-redefining change, comes a strong wave of inclusion past sizes, which is gender-neutral clothing. According to Insider, some members of Gen Z look to brands skirting the rules of typical “gendered” clothing, opting

instead for unisex or gender-fluid options, allowing a person to dress as they please without necessarily conforming with society's expectations of gender. Furthermore, Gen Z is making the definition of “gender-neutral” clear: a gender-neutral collection that doesn't include dresses and skirts is irrelevant. Although most people dislike being left out of a trend, having style distinctions within generations is a good sign for the future of fashion. So, should you get rid of your skinny jeans? No, because if there's something you can learn from Gen Z, aside from making TikTok transitions while simultaneously writing to your state representative, is that fashion trends are always changing but never fully ending.

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Comics



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Businesses near UTEP react to Gov. Abbott’s no mask mandate

Victoria Rivas
The Prospector

On March 10, business across Texas were allowed to reopen at 100% capacity and with no mask requirements, per Gov. Greg Abbott’s newly executive order.

“With this executive order, we are ensuring that all businesses and families in Texas have the freedom to determine their own destiny,” Abbott said during a news conference on March 2. “Today’s announcement doesn’t abandon safe practices that Texans have mastered over the past year. Instead, it’s a reminder that each person has a role to play in their own personal safety and the safety of others.”

Businesses near UTEP are doing just that, as some continue to implement safety protocols and limit

capacity at their own discretion.

El Rincon de Cortez, a Mexican restaurant located at 3415 Sun Bowl Drive, disagrees with Abbott’s decision to fully reopen Texas.

“We are going to continue using our masks as employees because we all agreed on it,” said Lilia Hogon, a cashier at El Rincon de Cortez. “We disagree with his decision, but this restaurant will continue separating all tables and use our face masks.”

Abbott said state mandates are no longer necessary due to the increase of COVID-19 vaccinations, reduced hospitalizations, and enough equipment to perform over 100,000 COVID-19 tests a day.

“We’ve put up a sign on the entrance saying that we recommend our clients to wear a face mask once they enter the building for our safety and their safety,” Hogon said. “But it

is just a recommendation.”

So El Paso, located at 2717 N Stanton St, acknowledged the freedom Abbott’s changes bring, but it will not change its current mask policy.

“I love that we live in a state that allows freedom of choice,” said Anne Mitchell, owner of So El Paso. “With that said, our team will continue to wear masks, and we will require our guests to, as well.”

UTEP Housing and Residence Life residents, who mostly rely on stores near campus, also disagree with the new changes.

“Although the numbers of infected people have gone down, and there is a vaccine now, it is too sudden to remove the restrictions that have helped us slow down the spread of the virus,” Fernando Dominguez, an electrical engineering student and

resident assistant at Miner Canyon, said. “I hope many businesses still keep their social distance and face mask policies.”

Bars located at the Cincinnati Entertainment District were contacted, like Lost and Found, Good Times at 2626, and Champagne Villain but did not respond. The Palomino Tavern bar refused to comment.

“Many residents do not want to expose themselves to the virus not only for their health and safety but also for the safety of their friends and family,” Dominguez said. “Here in housing and residence life, we will continue to encourage students to take the necessary precautions, such as masks and hand sanitizers, when going anywhere outside their apartments.”

The executive order allows county

judges to use COVID-19 mitigation strategies and limit capacity to 50% if any region in Texas goes above 15% of hospital bed capacity.

El Paso Mayor Oscar Leeser wrote a personal letter to Gov. Abbott on Thursday, March 4, asking him to allow local leaders to impose their own mask mandates based on individual challenges each community faces. However, it is unknown if a response has been given.

As of March 22, El Paso has reported 2,325 COVID-19 related deaths, with 212 people currently hospitalized and 2,563 active cases.

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Boutiques from cover page

“Thankfully, my business has been able to make some upward growth during the pandemic,” Williams said.

Because of the customer growth, Williams decided to hire more people to help keep up with the business of On Next Sunday.

“Just in December, I hired someone to do all the social media and she does a good job of having a plan,” Williams said. “We’re very flexible with what we post and how much we’re posting.”

Business also grew for Dos Femmes, a local boutique operated by Lexi Johnson. By investing more in packaging, the content on the Dos Femmes website, and its social media, the quality of its products and its customer service, it has been able to keep business on par.

“Our business has exploded since the outbreak of coronavirus because we had extra time to focus on perfecting everything,” Johnson said. “We raised the bar on every aspect of our business during COVID.”

According to boutiques such as GAL, On Next Sunday, and Dos Femmes, jewelry has been a popular accessory as of recent. As an easy way to style and accessorize at home, these businesses decided to sell more jewelry to appeal to more customers.

According to the boutiques, clothing will always be in demand, but with more people at home, earrings, rings, necklaces, and bracelets are on the rise.

Dos Femmes is currently working to expand its jewelry line considering how much it has helped the boutique.

“We were very lucky to have our website up and running way before COVID hit,” Johnson said. “We were able to transition our business to home and operate from there.”

Legaspy, just like Johnson, understands the power having an online presence provides her boutique with. GAL Boutique, in addition to its website, utilizes story posts and videos on Instagram because it wants to provide more interaction than just the minimal interaction from feed posts.

Legaspy feels the more she utilizes video and audio for her boutique’s social media account, the more people can gain a sense of the products her boutique has to offer.

Legaspy also has her employees and herself model the clothes at GAL Boutique to show customers her products are suitable for everyone.

Denisse Olivas, marketing lecturer at UTEP, emphasized how much virtual services, social media, and websites can help these boutiques and their target audiences, especially during this virtual time.

“Small businesses are learning more about what they can do with technology,” Olivas said. “It is critical for businesses to become nimble by providing products in a digital way so that they can be found more often online.”

Olivas also mentioned how creating advertisements, working on search engine optimization, and understanding where your target audience is at, is what has helped these boutiques not only keep up with the struggles of the pandemic but also grow.

“At this point, going digital or having that presence in addition to in-person services, is the best way to connect with a consumer,” Olivas said.

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Masks from cover page

completely cover and seal the nose.”

Morado said her 100% cotton fabric masks are more comfortable to wear than conventional masks because they’re less bothersome on the nose and they don’t leave pressure marks.

The special nose feature also makes it easier to speak when wearing the mask, according to Morado, it creates some space between the fabric and the lips for unconfined movement.

“It stays in place,” Morado said. “You can talk and talk and talk, and the mask just won’t move.”

Aside from her sales at the hospital, Morado sells her masks on Facebook’s Marketplace, where users can list products or services for sale and gain access to a local audience. She would sell up to 15 masks per day when the pandemic began at \$6 to \$7 each.

Between the months of June and December 2020, when El Paso saw a significant rise in active COVID-19 cases, she’d get about 15 to 20 orders a week, but business has slowed down since then.

Since Texas Gov. Greg Abbott lifted the statewide mask mandate on March 10, Morado expects demand for masks to decline.

For 34-year-old Nora Ochoa, who sells her mother’s handmade masks on Instagram, a decline in mask sales has already begun for their business. Their business is small and regular customers are the only ones sticking around.

“This past month we sold about 15 masks,” Ochoa said. “Most of our sales are from friends, relatives or friends of friends. A lot of the people that buy the masks are repeat customers.”

Her mother, an elementary school custodian also named Nora, began selling masks amid the pandemic. When cases reached record highs

during the Fall, the mother-daughter team went as far as offering free masks to anyone who needed one.

“At the end of the day, we just want to support people wearing masks and staying safe,” Ochoa said.

Ochoa’s mother began sewing as a teenager. Nora would make her own clothes, from bell-bottom pants and blouses with puffy sleeves to dresses. Whenever times are tough, financially, she sews her way out of it.

Nora also worked as a part-time job as a caretaker, but when the pandemic hit El Paso in March and her school shut down, Nora resorted to what she knew best: sewing.

“(My mom) found herself with a lot of free time and made many masks to pass the time,” Ochoa said. “But after a few months, in July, she found herself with too many masks so I offered to post them on my personal Instagram profile to see if they would sell.”

And just like that, the mother-daughter business took off.

“I try to choose fabrics that I think people will like and wear,” Ochoa said. “My mom picks out designs with everyone in mind—kids, men, solids, holiday fabrics.”

Nora has also made evening masks with sequins and fabrics that give off some sparkle.

“We know people are going to parties,” Ochoa said. “Might as well wear a mask that matches your dress and keeps you safer than nothing at all.”

Business for Ochoa and her mother has slowed down, so they’re finding ways to adapt. That includes venturing into the pet-wear industry, considering selling bandanas for dogs. But the uncertainty of how business will look after the pandemic, remains.

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Photograph by Jasmin Campoya/ The Prospector

GAL Fashion is a local boutique located at The Shops on Mesa. The shop sells woman’s clothes, handbags, and accessories.





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UTEP officials address network shutdown

Julian Herrera
The Prospector

UTEP President Heather Wilson and university computer science professors give insight to campus operations following a site-wide outage that affected every facet of the university’s operations.

On March 5, students lost access to the MyUTEP banner page and, consequently, all information and services accessed therein. Blackboard, payroll, library services, financial aid, enrollment, and email, among others, were rendered completely inaccessible by what UTEP’s Information Technology (IT) team later defined as a “potentially malicious intrusion.”

UTEP’s social media accounts became the primary avenue through which the University connected with students and staff to provide updates on the outage.

With a number of upcoming midterm assignments and tests due before spring break, students were apprehensive about the inability to contact their professors. While the University stated professors should be flexible with students, this did not quell all concerns.

Ashley Rodriguez, professor of political science at UTEP, resorted to commenting under the periodic UTEP announcements on social media with class numbers and her name in hopes that her students would see her posts.

“If any of my pols 2310/2311 students see this, please rest assured you will not be penalized for this weekend’s assignments,” Rodriguez posted on UTEP’s Instagram comment section.

Vladik Kreinovich, Ph.D., professor of computer science at UTEP, expressed his gratitude towards UTEP’s IT team and their persistent efforts to restore the University’s site and services, as well as insightful opinions and

observations surrounding the event.

“The fact that — as all of us learn from the news— serious military and government websites are periodically hacked, and sometimes, successfully hacked just by young kids, this fact shows that it is not possible to completely avoid such attacks,” Kreinovich said.

In January alone, UTEP analytics indicated Information Resources mitigated 22,000 attacks.

Kreinovich praised IT for being prepared for the attack and acknowledged the resiliency of UTEP students and their ability to adapt to complex situations at a moment’s notice.

“Such situations are not a pleasant experience, but they show that students have the skills and the drive to survive and excel in the real world, where unusual situations happen all the time,” Kreinovich said.

Deepak Tosh, Ph.D., professor of computer science at UTEP and specialist in cybersecurity and blockchain systems, weighed in on the frequency of cyberattacks and UTEP’s response to the outage.

Attacks such as the one UTEP experienced are typically the result of highly skilled adversaries that navigate laterally towards critical servers after probing for vulnerabilities in the system, Tosh said. He explained that while most organizations, the University included, operate to ensure any vulnerabilities in the system are patched and analyzed, sometimes a hacker can find the area first and exploit it.

“The past incident was of this kind, where the malicious actors found a security bug in Microsoft Exchange Server (mail) and then exploited additional vulnerabilities to create a backdoor remote access,” Tosh said. “The cyber-threat landscape is quite vast and difficult to keep up as the state-sponsored attackers are constantly targeting

to exploit weaknesses in the applications.”

Tosh said that while the outage was a manageable inconvenience, UTEP’s infrastructure and programs have security as their top priority and IT exercised their protocol commendably. Although UTEP has yet to fully discuss the technical details of the intrusion, according to University officials, there is no evidence that suggests personal information has been compromised.

Wilson addressed faculty and student concerns regarding the site outage during a virtual town meeting Friday, March 12, including its cause and the executive decision to limit the dissemination of information.

Wilson said the standard procedure in the event of an unauthorized intrusion is to shutdown the entire network system and request assistance. However, according to Wilson, the cabinet had performed a cybersecurity exercise within the last three months and coordinated a planned practice attack eight months ago from another university to give system administrators experience about how to handle a real threat.

After UTEP became aware of the cyber-intrusion, according to the university, it followed standard procedures and received help from one of the top 10 companies in the country in cyber-security to focus on subsequent recovery actions.

“The intrusion happened at 4:30 in the morning on Friday, and the last time the University management systems were backed up was at midnight, so there was only a gap of about four and a half hours,” said Wilson. “The backup servers were not compromised. We have looked very carefully to see if personal information was found or compromised, and we have found no evidence of that and no evidence of exfiltration of information.”

Blackboard was considered the

priority system to recover so students and faculty could communicate with one another. Other priority systems included campus Wi-Fi, Goldmine, Pete’s Payment Options, and HVAC.

As many of the social media updates reminded students, the Information Resources team must undergo the arduous and time-consuming process of running a software program across the network to find compromised machines or files on campus, checking each individual computer throughout the colleges and departments, according to priority, for any possible interference or compromise.

The Technology Implementation Managers (TIMS) of each college, deans and department chairs, as well as the specialist external company have gathered with Information Resources to work through the process of checking and restoring every computer in the network, with each department going up one at a time.

Multiple questions taken during the town hall expressed acute frustration with the lack of information given during the outage, claiming UTEP officials were seemingly not present and unresponsive, which resulted in stress for faculty and students alike.

Many demanded a concrete plan for facilitating faster responses, proper communication, and what proactive steps the university is taking to prevent such a disruption from occurring again.

Wilson took responsibility for the lack of communication but explained there was a significant purpose behind the silence.

“We had limited communication capability and we also didn’t know initially what we had, so we had to assess that,” Wilson said. “The strong advice from one of the top companies in the country was, ‘Do not overcommunicate early, because the criminals are watching you.’ We

don’t want to tip them off in a way that could cause more damage to our systems and could prevent our ability to recover.”

According to Wilson, the goal was to strategically let people know there was a network outage of some kind, but not say where the University was in the process of repairing it.

“I take full responsibility for making the decision not to fully communicate on Saturday and Sunday to all of you because I did not want to simultaneously communicate to the criminals who were still trying to impede our operations and steal things from you,” Wilson said.

John Hensgen, a senior in English and American Literature, said he was confident in UTEP’s IT team and, while inconvenienced and slightly stressed by upcoming due dates, appreciated the adaptability of his instructors.

“I believe UTEP handled the breach well since our information was protected. The security of our social security numbers is much more significant than grades that can be waived or adjusted,” Hensgen said. “Students need be mindful that exceptions will be made since websites are going down due to circumstances out of their control.”

Wilson said individuals with a special expertise in cybersecurity are encouraged to offer their help, as the University is open to suggestions as to how to reduce the likelihood of this occurring again.

“The best thing you can do to help protect our network is to be cyber-aware yourself,” Wilson said.

As of March 16, all email accounts have been restored, while UTEP continues to recover central systems and applications as well as beginning to check every computer on campus.

Students resumed classes after Spring Break on March 22.

Julian Herrera may be reached at prospector@utep.edu.

Rocketbuster from cover page

Rocketbuster Boots creates, from the siestas with the ancient man and lady and people dancing to designs celebrating Day of the Dead.

“We do have an incredible amount of desertscapes,” Christi said. “I love old Mexican pottery, so I have done a bunch of them.”

Christmas time for Rocketbuster’s starts in June since each pair of its handmade boots can take up six to eight months to complete, with customers ranging from college students to 95-year-old individuals.

“If someone saw how many steps it takes to make a pair of handmade boots, they would just roll their eyes and say, ‘oh, my gosh, why do they even bother?’” Christi said.

Rocketbuster Boots has been featured in various fashion shows. According to Christi, artists like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Rascal Flatts, Julia Roberts, Oprah, Taylor Swift, Thalia, Ethan Hawke, among others, have ordered a pair from the business.

“Traditional cowboy boots just don’t waver... Fashion just evolves and revolves, it goes around and comes around,” Christi said. “But it’s really fun for me personally when high fashion decides to put some boots on the runway because that means we’ll get noticed by a larger audience.”

People interested in visiting the shop and getting a tour must first set up an appointment. Rocketbuster Boots also offers summer internships to artistic students.

“It’s a big part of what we are doing to try to keep the art of boot making alive and to train people because it doesn’t have to be someone who is into footwear,” Christi said. “I mean, I studied fine arts, and I graduated in fashion. It doesn’t matter as long as you like to make stuff, and you’re good with your hands.”

People can learn more about Rocketbuster Boots and their designs on Instagram at [@rocketbusterboots](https://www.instagram.com/rocketbusterboots).

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Professor receives NASA research grant

Julian Herrera
The Prospector

UTEP professor of mechanical engineering, Amelia Greig, Ph.D., has been awarded the prestigious NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts (NIAC) grant to fund the development of lunar exploration and water extraction technologies.

NIAC is a research funding grant dedicated to developing significant concepts predicted to benefit NASA’s space exploration programs and every facet of its future research.

“A lot of research grants tend to focus on the immediate near-term, they want to see immediate results, whereas these grants are more for technologies that you might see in possibly 20 years’ time,” Greig said.

The central focus of Greig’s project is to effectively separate ionized water molecules from other elements and matter from unconsolidated superficial deposits on the surface of the moon known as a regolith. Decades of research by NASA and other universities confirmed in 2018, there is frozen water in the surface of the moon.

Unlike the Earth, which has ice sheets on top of the surface, the water on the moon is frozen into the rocks and soil, making it difficult to detect, Greig explained. The success of Greig’s project would in effect make the transportation of water from Earth unnecessary when commencing lunar exploration.

“Water is very heavy, and it’s difficult to get anything off the

surface of the Earth. If we could find water there, we’d have to carry a lot less,” Greig said.

Greig explained the functionality of her project would increase the efficiency and amount of water capable of being collected from the moon’s surface. Rather than evaporating the water by heating it, a high voltage plasma arc would create a cloud full of ionized particles on the surface full of water, nickel, carbon, and other matter. These water molecules would be charged and therefore can be separated using electric and magnetic fields.

According to Greig, water is collected by putting the molecules through a magnetic field, which results in a curvature of their line of travel. While there will be multiple types of molecules in the cloud, a mass spectrometer will be able to determine the different masses and can therefore separate the water molecules alone by their mass. A reservoir is then placed where the field is directing the water movement and a much greater amount can be collected.

The UTEP lunar exploration program began about 18 months ago as part of the Center for Space Exploration Technology Research, referred to as the UTEP Aerospace Center, under the direction of Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D.

The program was a result of UTEP’s relationship with the NASA Johnson Space Center, which has continuously provided support for the program and its development. In

collaboration with the Johnson Space Center, students and faculty at UTEP can create and expand the necessary technological advancements that can assist with sourcing and collecting the water from the moon’s surface.

Work on Greig’s project will begin in a few weeks after NASA releases the funding to the grant recipients, at which time Greig will be able to select two undergraduate and two graduate students for paid positions on the team.

According to Greig, there are three stages to the award:

Greig described the first phase as a “feasibility study,” essentially submitting the concept to NASA for them to determine if the project is promising in its beginning stages and can provide funding to further develop the idea over the course of nine months.

The second phase begins after this period, when Greig will submit another proposal with a more advanced rendering of the project for NASA to analyze. If it is determined the project will almost certainly work, further funding will be allocated for development and completion.

If the first two phases are successful and approved, the final third phase is the real-world implementation of the project.

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UTEP staff and students react to network shutdown

UTEP SELC supports students coping with grief amid pandemic

ENTERTAINMENT

MARCH 23, 2021

EDITOR EXODIS WARD, 747-5161

Ever Clay expands sale of handmade accessories

Noelia Gonzalez

The Prospector

Ever Clay, a local business founded by UTEP kinesiology student, Genesis Valdez, has found a niche in El Paso's homemade community. The company, launched online on August 2020, focuses on polymer clay earrings and accessories.

Initially, Valdez didn't start working with polymer clay with a business in mind. It started as a quarantine hobby that grew in popularity when family and friends began liking her products. Valdez then decided to share her new hobby with the rest of the community.

"I did my first pair, and it was actually a gift for my godmother, and I really liked the outcome," Valdez said. "Because we were in the pandemic, a lot of people were doing online shopping, so I incorporated the website to my business. I think that's something that helped me get on the right track."

According to Valdez, it was thanks to her website and social media accounts that her business blossomed in just five months and has continued to grow ever since. Valdez's best-selling accessories are the stud packs, but she has plans to expand the products she has available for sale.



Photo courtesy of Ever Clay

Ever Clay is a small brand in El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, selling handmade jewelry by Genesis Valdez. In the photo, Ever Clay displays its jewelry collection in Luna Bazaar, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

"I had a few customers ask for keychains and I did it for them. It's a trial and error method," Valdez said. Valdez currently takes orders from

both El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, but she would like to expand her audience and incorporate more than just earrings in the future.

"I don't see it as a job; it's my hobby. I do see it as a long-term thing because it has been well received within my community,"

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Photograph by Jasmin Campoya/ The Prospector

Each Melanni bag is handmade with yam and canvas, creating bright colors.

Old family practice inspires new company

Julian Herrera

The Prospector

Grappling with unemployment from the pandemic, a local family revived an old family practice to start its very own fashion company from home. The result was Malenni, a brand-new fashion company based in El Paso. The company specializes in crafting handmade and customized purses and accessories online.

The company was founded on Instagram two months ago by a family of three after Malena Melgoza, after whom the company is named, was forced into unemployment as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her two daughters, Lucia and Karla Rodriguez, sought ways to occupy their mother's free time, and drew inspiration from a childhood memory.

"We were looking at pictures of us when we were kids and my mom used to make us do purses like this because we had a lot of energy," Lucia said. "When we saw the pictures, we thought it was a great idea because it's not only making the purses but it's also a stress reliever for us."

Crafting purses together has brought back many nostalgic emotions for the family. What was once used as a means of keeping the kids busy, purse making has become an activity that is engaging and profitable. It's brought the family closer together and sparked inspiration in the process.

While the purses Lucia and Karla made as children were large and not intended for sale, the company's purses are made of higher quality materials, modelled after popular

See Malenni page 6

Sunny Folds El Paso Thrift encourages up-cycling

Alyson Rodriguez

The Prospector

Thrift shops have become popular in recent years. It not only helps local businesses, but it also helps the environment. According to experts, by buying recycled clothes, shoppers reduce waste in landfills. Mimi, a UTEP senior majoring in education, started her own online thrift shop in November 2020 called "Sunny Folds El Paso Thrift." She was inspired to create her store because of her love for upcycling.

"I tend to hoard things that I am emotionally attached to, but I know that I need to let go. Sunny Folds has helped me part ways with clothing items and other objects in order to make room for new things or to clear up my living space," Mimi said. "I also know some things that I have that I want to get rid of can be useful

to other people for them to upcycle."

Sunny Folds El Paso Thrift sells all sorts of items. There's clothing in all different styles and sizes, even for children. The price of items ranges between \$1 and \$55. There are more luxurious, vintage items, but customers usually buy the trendy clothing items.

Mimi not only has to deal with the challenges the pandemic brings, but she also competes with larger and more well-known thrift shops.

"In all honesty, I try not to worry about what everyone else is doing. I'm happy doing trial and error and learning from my mistakes or ideas that didn't work out so well," Mimi said. "If I had the money to open a storefront, I would do it in a heartbeat just because I enjoy what I do."

Mimi's small business is growing and gaining more customers from

each social media post. She recently just shipped a couple of clothing items to New York.

For now, Mimi runs her store virtually from her own home and only takes online payments.

A potential customer interested in purchasing an item from Sunny Folds can look on the company's Instagram. There, one can find items posted for sale along with a picture of the item, the size, and the price. When shoppers find something they like they can direct message the account.

Those interested can find out more about Sunny Folds El Paso Thrift or purchase items on its Instagram at [@sunnyfoldsthrift](https://www.instagram.com/sunnyfoldsthrift).

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Photograph by Jasmin Campoya/ The Prospector

Sunny Folds El Paso Thrift is an online thrift store on Instagram. Mimi, the account owner, runs her business with the help of her husband from El Paso.

Malenni from page 5

contemporary styles.

The first few bags Malenni produced were inspired by purses and handbags trending on social media, but as they began to fully invest in their craft, they began creating models of their own. “We have sold around ten in the two months we have been doing this, and we have made 15 in total,” Lucia said.

Melgoza is expected to retire this year but is anticipating the freedom to explore the potential of her company. Her daughters embrace the fact that the company has rejuvenated their mother’s spirit and are optimistic about the longevity of their brand.

“We are hoping we can keep doing this for as long as we can. We not only want to make the designs that we have, we want to expand to different things,” Lucia said. “Our company wants to make as many handmade things as we can in different styles.”

The two sisters have been brainstorming the variety of products they can create. Some ideas range from bracelets and rings to a large backpack design and keychains.

Melgoza finds herself contemplating the scope of her company and the ways she can assist others in the same difficult position she once found herself in. She hopes to grow as a recognizable name and employ others to benefit her craft and the community.

Lucia is grateful for the opportunities that beginning this company has afforded her and her family.

“It’s really hard (during this time) for people to earn income like my mother when she lost her job, but I guess the little things are what matters,” Lucia said. “People can find passion and peace in even the smallest things.”

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Museum of Art “Refresh” its exhibitions

Andrea Valdez-Rivas

The Prospector

The El Paso Museum of Art (EPMA) renewed its second floor gallery in 2019. It was the first time in 20 years the museum had done something like this.

The museum’s newest exhibition, “Refresh,” features more than 300 new art pieces in its second floor gallery. Also included in this refresh is new flooring, a new ceiling, and new walls in the area. The new walls allow for 26% more space for art displays.

The new exhibition area features five diverse styles of art, said EPMA’s art school coordinator, Stephany Garnica.

“(The exhibition space) highlights the Latin American art from the Spanish Colonial era, the early American painting and sculpture, Mexican Retablos, early Texas art and contemporary art,” Garnica said.

Garnica said the museum hasn’t decided when it will be open to the public again, but in an exclusive walk-through of the EPMA’s second floor gallery, The Prospector saw four amusing pieces and exhibits.

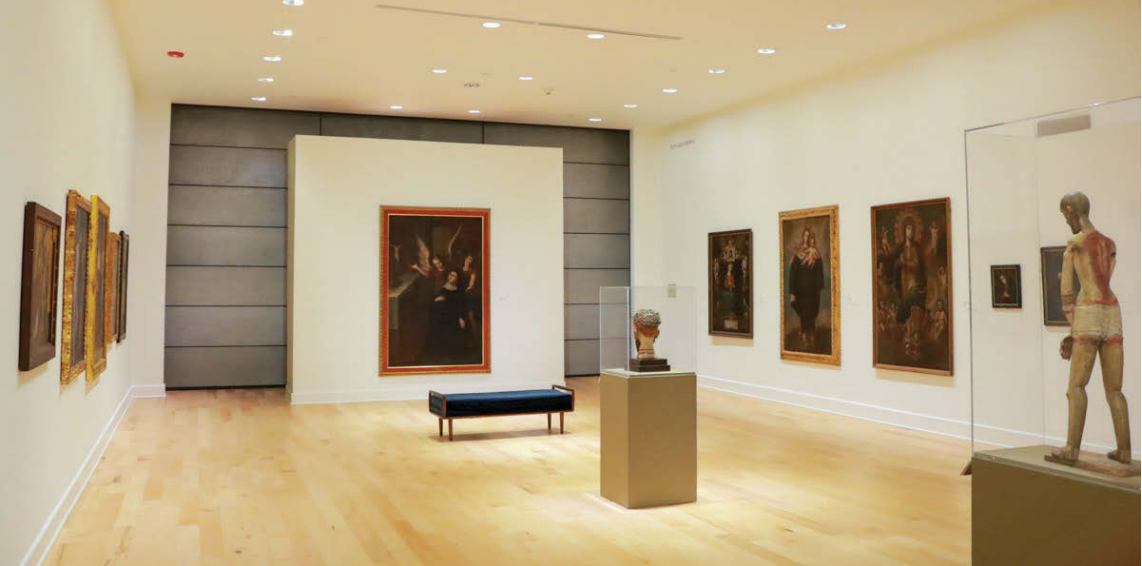
An augmented reality experience

Walking into the “Early Texas Art” exhibit, patrons can see an art painting come to life before their eyes—all through the screen of a smartphone.

The art piece capable of such thing is none other than “David Lawrence,” a 1935 oil on canvas painting by American painter Henriette Wyeth.

The painting is that of a young black man, David Lawrence, who was Wyeth’s brother’s best friend. By downloading the “Augment El Paso” app, people can see David grinning and blinking his eyes, as the history of the painting and the artist is narrated.

Wyeth and her husband frequently visited El Paso to watch polo matches and crossed the border southbound to Ciudad Juárez to see bull fights, according to the narrative given in the AR app. Wyeth’s paintings are



Photograph by Andrea Valdez-Rivas/ The Prospector

The Latin American exhibit at El Paso Museum of Art’s features paintings and sculptures from the Spanish Colonial Era.

recognized by the painter’s signature irises, which are included in the “David Lawrence” painting, as David holds the flowers in his hands.

Celia Álvarez Muñoz’s contemporary piece from a collection called entitled “Postales” was painted with acrylics on canvas and features metal street signs. This piece is also available in an AR experience. It’s in the form of a giant storybook, Álvarez Muñoz said in the AR narration.

Álvarez Muñoz included El Paso street name signs of Campbell Street and El Paso Street. But each street name is written in the ways they are pronounced in the Borderland’s two major languages, English and Spanish. El Paso, in Spanish, is written “El Paso,” as it would be pronounced in English. Campbell, in English, is written “Kiambol,” as many pronounce it in Spanish.

Leo Villarreal’s LED light art

“Lightscape,” by Albuquerque artist Leo Villarreal, is a wall-bound sculpture made with LED lights, created in 2002 and mounted on the museum’s walls in 2019.

The piece stands alone in a room south of the Early Texas Art exhibit. Upon entering, patrons

are immediately engulfed with the reflection of colorful lights that bounce off the white walls. The sculpture of lights makes shifts in colors, from blue and green to purple and red hues.

“I think it kind of reminds me like, like streets in New York, or Vegas, during the night,” Garnica said.

Villarreal is known internationally for his LED light pieces. “Lightscape” will not permanently sit on the exhibition floor, but it will be part of the museum’s gallery forever, as it was gifted to EPMA last year.

Contemporary art with a sarape

EPMA’s new exhibition also features El Paso-based artists—one of them being Adrian Esparza. His “One and the Same” is a geometrical piece made from yarn, connected a colorful Mexican sarape mounted on the wall. The minimalist piece depicts an architectural design. It was constructed in 2005.

Latin American art from the Spanish Colonial era

Paintings and sculptures from this theme date back to the 16th and 19th centuries—it’s evident from the way

the paint has darkened over time. The paintings are oil on canvas.

“Spanish colonizers introduced Catholicism as well as European artistic styles across the Americas, igniting religious and cultural exchange between the two continents,” EPMA said. “Artists combined Catholic and indigenous traditions and subjects to create distinct and sometimes new religious icons, as in the case of the Virgin of Guadalupe.”

Photographs and virtual tours of the “Refresh” exhibition and new renovations are available on EPMA’s website. The museum has been closed to the public since March of last year, as the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the Borderland.

There will be virtual art classes during the Spring.

“We have the painting class and we have the sculpture class. We have (classes) for kids to teens,” Garnica said. “This is actually the first time we’re going into this classes virtually live via zoom, where the kids can interact with the teachers. They can ask questions. They can participate.”

For more information on virtual art classes, visit www.epma.art.

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In Review: Machine Gun Kelly is a renaissance artist in 2021

Isaiah Ramirez

The Prospector

A constant criticism in music is staleness or saturation, in that all music may sound the same. Machine Gun Kelly is not the case. Throughout his career, he has proven that musicians can evolve and expand their artform as time goes on.

Machine Gun Kelly, born Colson Baker, is a Cleveland, Ohio, native. His work includes his Billboard chart-topping album “Tickets to My Downfall,” which is a testament to how underrated his artistry truly is due to his ability to venture exceptionally well into multiple genres.

Kelly broke into music through the rap genre by creating his platinum, career-rocketing single “Wild Boy” Kelly started out with a recording contract with Bad Boy, founded by music mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs and Interscope Records in 2011. His rap direction slowly began turning into a more pop/punk feel with the release of his fourth album “Hotel Diablo.”

One of the most notable tracks off the album is “I Think I’m Okay,” featuring English artist Yungblud and legendary Blink-182 drummer Travis Barker. The track is filled with classic pop-punk harmonies and pent-up aggression that compliments Kelly’s

ability to translate well in the genre.

Fast forward a year later, Kelly generates one of the best pops/punk albums of the decade with Barker being featured on the entire album. “Tickets to my Downfall” is an album that is full of storytelling. The single “Lonely” describes Kelly’s feelings of loss and despair due to the death of his father, who died just days prior to the release of the album, or “Play This When I’m Gone” which is the last single of the album that is a message to Kelly’s daughter that details Kelly’s struggles with addiction and suicide.

Kelly went from a rap to a pop-punk style in 2020. Considering his past work, which include a diss track and negative comments towards rap icon Eminem, some people feel that feud caused Kelly to move over genres, leaving the rap game.

“I wanna start out by saying that I would like to normalize how we think about doing multiple types of music,” Kelly said in a cover story interview with Kerrang. “I didn’t switch genres. I’m versatile; the wall isn’t boxed in.”

The lead single of the album, “Bloody Valentine,” features Kelly’s girlfriend and actress Megan Fox in the music video. It is one of the most reviving pop punk singles with lyrics that can resonate with the causal



Photo courtesy of Aliina S.

“Machine Gun Kelly | 30/08/2019 | O2 Institute Birmingham” by Aliina S. is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

listener. “I’m overstimulated and I’m sad I don’t expect you to understand/ “It’s nothing less than true romance or am I just making a mess.”

Reaching number one on the Billboard Top 200 Albums is not an easy feat to accomplish, but “Tickets to my Downfall” succeeded at doing that with five of its songs reaching top-ten Billboard singles.

Kelly’s talents span further than

the music scene. In the film “The Dirt,” Kelly appeared as Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee. In the Netflix production, viewers and fans can see that Kelly is much more than just a rapper.

With a budding acting career appearing in films such as “Bird Box,” “Project Power,” and “Big Time Adolescent” alongside his real-life best friend Pete Davidson, Kelly is

a multi-dimensional artist that can succeed in both spectrums of the entertainment industry. This album has added more diverse layers to his career, proving Machine Gun Kelly is just scratching the surface.

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SPORTS

MARCH 23, 2021

EDITOR MICHAEL CUVIELLO, 747-5161

Men’s basketball: Is the glass half full or empty?

Michael CuvIELLO
The Prospector

Following its second consecutive first-round conference exit, UTEP Miner basketball has completed its uninspiring third year under Head Coach Rodney Terry with a 12-12 COVID-shortened season.

In year one, Terry had a very young team with no depth but had convinced his top big man at Fresno State, where he coached prior to UTEP, Bryson Williams, to transfer along with 6-11 Eric Vila. Terry also convinced Fresno bound recruits Efe Odigie and Deon Stroud to come to UTEP. Adding to the mix were transfers, Keonte Kennedy from Xavier and Anthony Tarke from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. With the exception of Odigie, all of these players would have to sit out for what would seem like a breakout year two.

On Jan. 25, Terry added one of the top prospects ever to set foot on a UTEP campus in Kaden Archie, a four-star recruit transferring from Texas Christian University. Archie had initially had multiple scholarship offers from basketball powers Kansas, Illinois, Virginia, Texas Tech and Texas.

While Terry’s first season ended with the Miners as the worst team in Conference USA (C-USA), the future looked bright with UTEP set up to become a Conference-USA title contender and possible NCAA invitee in his second season. In the conference preseason poll, UTEP was ranked fourth in the conference.

Starting year two, the Miners beat NCAA Championship runner-up Texas Tech 70-60 in a charity game at the Don Haskins Center, which pushed fan expectations to return to previous glory days. The Miners started 8-1, but issues arose with multiple players deciding to leave the team and one current player missing a team flight. After a promising start, the Miners finished the season 9-14 the rest of the way to finish 17-5 on the year culminating with a first-round tournament loss to Marshall.

Even more damaging than its mediocre season, the Miners lost six players to transfer by the end of the season.

Stroud, Tarkie, Jordan and Archie, who were all considered key building blocks for UTEP, had already quit the program for various reasons and headed to new college teams. Tarke went on to greener pastures at Coppin State, where he was named MEAC Player of the year averaging 16 points and eight rebounds a game. Stroud went on to average 12 points a game for Fresno State.

UTEP, in its offseason, added transfers Jamal Bieniemy from Oklahoma, Kristian Sjolund from Georgia Tech and Christian Agnew from Northern Alabama. Bieniemy and Sjolund were considered the prize transfers coming from Power Five schools and Agnew gave the team more depth at guard.

UTEP returned all-conference candidates Bryson Williams and Souley Boum as its core players. Tydus Verhoeven had earned a starting nod late in the previous season with hard-nosed defense. Kennedy was considered an ascending player to take over as a starter, with Bieniemy as the team’s



Photo courtesy of UTEP Athletics
UTEP junior guard Souley Boum drives to the basket in traffic versus Florida International, Feb. 13.

true point guard, Terry felt the team lacked previously.

So while the Miners had taken a step back in talent, the coach seemed very confident about better team chemistry, especially with a proven floor general like Bieniemy leading the team. Bieniemy was not eligible to play until the Miners’ third game this season against St. Mary’s.

UTEP started the season with two easy victories over lower-division teams before taking on perennial 20 game winners St. Mary’s and Arizona on the road. The Miners lost to St. Mary’s 73-61 and played Arizona close before losing 69-61. UTEP followed up with its biggest win of the season to that point over preseason ranked Arizona State 76-63 to move to 3-2 in the season.

Unfortunately, the Miners would be unable to carry the momentum of that win into C-USA play as the team started 2-4 in conference play and found its record sitting at .500 after 12 games. Current NCAA Tourney and C-USA champion North Texas embarrassed the Miners with a 63-33 blowout that was the low point of the season.

From that point on to the rest of the season, the Miners were an up and down team but were able to finish the conference season with four straight wins to salvage a tournament berth. The Miners now sat at 12-10 and were able to work out an extra game with perennial Big 12 powerhouse Kansas on the road. UTEP gave 17th ranked Kansas all the team could handle, leading by 14 points at the half. Leading for 56 minutes of the game, the Miners saw the slipper fall off Cinderella in the final minute of the game as UTEP came up short 67-62. After this game, fans were optimistic that UTEP was much better than its record as it headed into the C-USA Tournament.

Once again, the C-USA tournament showed UTEP’s inconsistency as the team lost a hard-fought game to Florida Atlantic 76-70. For the season, the Miners finished 12-12 in another frustrating year for the Miner faithful.

Boum and Williams were the only consistent players for the Miner over the season and often were the Miners only scoring options. Boum finished

the year third in C-USA, scoring with 18.8 points a game on 38% shooting from the field, including 68 3-pointers. Williams, who was a preseason all-conference selection, averaged 15 points and seven rebounds a game. Both players were selected third-team all-conference on the season.

Keonte Kennedy showed promise with his play in his first season, averaging 8 points and six rebounds a game. Tydus Verhoeven played well defensively but was a liability on offense outside of the paint.

Bieniemy struggled with his shot all season at point guard, shooting only 37% from the floor and saw his 3-point percentage fall a full 10 percentage points from his previous season at Oklahoma as he shot 31%.

The team’s bench underachieved all season, with Agnew, Sjolund and Odigie being the primary components used. Agnew was the team’s main spark off the bench once he became eligible for the last 20 games but struggled mightily shooting the ball, especially from the arc where he only hit 20% of his shots. Odigie, who as a freshman, seemed to have a bright future in orange and blue, only was able to play 14 games due to concussion protocol and only averaged 11 minutes in the games he did play. Every season, Odigie has seen his role regress after a freshman year that had him become the first Miner since the 1981 season to average double figures in rebounds and scoring. Sjolund showed promise in his 14 minutes per game, shooting 48% from the field and a team-leading 47% from the 3-point line but at this point is considered a defensive liability.

Outside of the main rotation, the only other Miner to get any significant minutes was Vuk Vulikić, an international freshman from Serbi. Vukilic took 21 total shots.

Unlike last season there is only one expected departure from the Miners this offseason. While nothing is official due to players being granted additional eligibility due to COVID-19, Williams, in all probability, will test the professional water at some level as a soon-to-be 23-year basketball player. Williams has solid size and bulk at 6-8,

230, along with a good midrange game that could give him some opportunities in the G League or overseas.

“We’ve said purposefully that we weren’t going to deal with that until the end of the season,” Terry said about Williams. “We wanted to play the season out and concentrate on what’s at hand this year. Between he and his family, we will sit down and determine what’s best for his career moving forward. He’s been terrific for us for two years.”

The Miners will likely retain four of its five starters this offseason but losing Williams will be a huge hole to fill. Nobody on the roster has William’s all-around game, so the offense would most likely become even more guard-dependent than it already is now.

Boum has shown that he is an elite scorer, especially from the outside and that he can play high amounts of minutes averaging 35 a game this season. Better shot selection and movement of the ball would ideally elevate his game this coming season as the team will be squarely on his back.

After showing much promise in his first season playing for the Miners, Kennedy needs to take a big jump for the team to succeed. An athletically gifted player Kennedy has had some dominant rebounding games with the Miners with three games in double figures this past season. Most likely, Kennedy will be tasked to take up much of the team’s scoring if Williams departs.

At point guard, Bieniemy needs to find consistency and improve his shooting if he is to be the floor general that Terry desires to lead this team. Agnew showed hustle and energy but none of that matters if he continues to shoot poorly as UTEP’s main reserve guard.

At the forward position, Sjolund is the shooter that the team desperately needs to get more production from but needs to work hard in the offseason to improve his defense. Verhoeven needs to become more of an offensive threat expanding his range from beyond the paint and play fewer minutes overall. Terry needs to find a way to get Odigie more involved in the offense as he has always been a promising inside

player but remained an afterthought over the past two season.

Rounding out the Miner bench is Vulikić, who played more than expected as a freshman, guards Adam Hess and Cam Claridy. Emanuel White, a high school teammate of Sjolund and Bieniemy, had to sit the season out after transferring from junior college.

Canadian high schooler Khalfani Hill signed a letter of intent with the Miners in November. Hill is a forward that averaged 22 points and 10 rebounds at Crawford Academy in Ontario and played with Excel Hoops Prep this past season.

“We are really excited about adding Khalfani to our program,” Terry said. “Khalfani is a high character kid who comes from a great family and support system. He is just starting to scratch the surface with how good he can be. Over the past few years, he has grown 6 inches and is now

6’9 with a 7’2 wingspan. His versatility and skill set at his size gives him a high ceiling and an ability to affect the game in a variety of ways.”

Also announced March 21 by CBS Sports’ Jon Rothstein, Illinois State graduate transfer Keith Fisher III will be coming to UTEP after sitting out the past basketball season. Fisher is a 6’8” forward who averaged 9.6 points and six rebounds the previous season and a former three-star recruit from Los Angeles. Expect Fisher to take Williams’ spot in the lineup with a similar build but he is not the scorer or rebounder that Williams is.

Due to forfeiting some of his salary for COVID-19 budget cuts, Terry was extended for a sixth season on his contract, so there is no immediate danger to a coaching change for the next couple of years. Terry’s promising team built on transfers has never delivered much more than a slightly above .500 record in his second season and no tournament wins.

The upcoming season will most likely be a make or break season for Terry and his rebuild. Another subpar season will probably hurt his ability to recruit and further disenfranchise Miner fans rabid to see a winner on the court. The team needs to find an offensive identity and not continue to play down to its opponents. With Williams’ probable loss, the team will need to shoot much better from the arc and will not win shooting in C-USA’s bottom rung.

Time is running out for excuses as to why the Miners cannot be at least an upper-tier team in C-USA. Terry seems confident of where the team is heading and has overcome the turmoil from the past season with no players at this time in the transfer portal, although that could change quickly. In his short time, Terry has brought some tremendous recruits on campus but none of that matters if UTEP continues its struggle in C-USA. At some point, results are what matters and to this point, the Miners have underperformed expectations significantly.

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UTEP soccer loses at Oklahoma State

Heriberto Perez and Michael Cuvillo
The Prospector

The UTEP Miners (3-4-1) were unable to generate any offense Saturday against the 15th ranked Oklahoma State Cowgirls (OSU) (10-2-1), conceding five goals in a 5-0 shutout loss to the Big 12 power in its worse loss of the season.

Taking a huge step up in competition, the Miners acquitted themselves well in the first half after giving up a goal at the eight-minute mark to OSU's Grace Youchum on an assist from Morgan Charm. For

the rest of the first half, the Miners were able to keep the Cowgirls off the scoreboard and were down only 1-0 halfway through the match. Youcham now has nine goals on the season.

UTEP's defense became quite porous quickly as the Cowgirls scored less than two minutes into the second half to take a 2-0 lead on a goal from OSU's Kim Rodriguez.

At the 52:44 mark of the match, OSU once again snuck a shot past UTEP sophomore goalkeeper Emily Parrot on a kick from OSU's Megan

Haines assisted by Hannah Webb to expand the Cowgirl lead to 3-0.

Continually pressing the Miner defense, the Cowgirls broke through with back-to-back goals within seconds of each other at the 61-minute mark from Shyann McCary and Olivia Dowell to increase the OSU lead to 5-0.

While trailing by a wide margin, the Miners were able to keep OSU from scoring for the final 29 minutes of the match.

UTEP, at no point during the match, gained any momentum on

offense as the team only took three total shots with none on goal. On the other hand, OSU shot early and often with 18 total shots, 11 on goal and five reaching the UTEP net.

UTEP's Kristen Prevosto was able to get two shots for the Miners and Vic Bohdan got the Miner's only other shot on the day. Miner goalkeeper Parrot ended the game with six saves and allowed five goals on the 18 total shots from OSU.

The Miners were also unable to get a corner kick for the entire match while the Cowgirls had eight kicks.

The next game for the Miners will be on the road once again, 1 p.m. March 27, traveling to San Antonio to face UTSA before returning to University Field to play the team's final home game against North Texas.

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Photograph by Alberto Silva/ The Prospector
UTEP sophomore forward Tessa Carlin fights off a UAB defender near Blazer goal March 14.



Photograph by Alberto Silva/ The Prospector
UTEP sophomore defender Emerson Kidd fends off an opposing defender on a long kick March 14.

Softball loses three games, wins its first at Lubbock

Heriberto Perez
The Prospector

The UTEP softball team went on the road to Lubbock, Texas, to play three games against Texas Tech and one against Tarleton State, in which they lost three and won the last one against Texas Tech.

On day one, the Miners lost both games against Texas Tech and went scoreless at the Jeannine McHaney Memorial Classic at the Rocky Johnson Field. Both games on Friday afternoon ended 8-0 in favor of the Red Raiders and left UTEP 4-10 and 0-0 in C-USA.

In game one, Texas Tech had nine hits over just one from UTEP, in which sophomore Zaylie Calderon started in the rubber.

When the Miners were losing 5-0, Calderon was not allowed an extra-base hit until the third inning

and ended up with a two-run homer from Karli Hamilton. Later the team scored its last run of the game off an RBI double later in the inning to end the first game 8-0. The Miners' only hit of the game came from redshirt sophomore outfielder Idalis Mendez in the fourth inning.

Game two was the same result and the same number of hits for the Miners with just one to ten from Texas Tech. Sophomore Ellie Bailey had her first career home run and led the Red Raiders to add one more run in the first inning to make it 5-0. The Miners' only opportunity to break its scoreless streak came in the third inning, but after an error from Calderon, they couldn't change the scoreboard. Then the Red Raiders had a pair of runs and a walk-off from Collins and led the leftfield line to score two more runs and ended 8-0 again.

UTEP returned to the Rocky Johnson Field for its third game of the weekend and failed to win once again, but now it was against Tarleton State (10-15, 0-0 WAC), 6-4. The Miners had a quick lead in the game after a solo homer from Mendez in the first inning and a 3-RBI double to put UTEP up 4-0. The orange and blue had the lead until the top of the fifth inning, but the Texans had a three-run homerun, and then they had another two runs in the following two innings to make the game 6-4.

The fourth and last game of the weekend was the good one for UTEP and recorded the win over Texas Tech (now 14-9, 0-0 Big XII), 9-8 on Saturday afternoon, and it was the first win of UTEP in Lubbock, Texas and the first win over a Power-5 and Big XII foe since 2015.

The Miners now recorded nine hits in its first win of the weekend, loaded the bases with its first three batters, and recorded a 5-1 lead in the first inning. UTEP's first three batters were junior infielder Pate Cathey, redshirt sophomore Idalis Mendez and sophomore utility Zaylie Calderon.

Junior infielder Kasey Flores gave the Miners its second lead of the game at the top of the sixth inning with a solo homerun. Freshman pitcher Mackenzie Collins sent down the first two Texas Tech players that were against her in the seventh inning. Then Head Coach T.J. Hubbard brought sophomore pitcher Isabella Kelly who had the

final out after she sent a groundball out to Cathey to win the game. Kelly allowed two runs before on the first three innings.

Now the Miners (5-11, 0-0 C-USA) will open the Conference USA, April 2 and 3 against Southern Miss (18-9, 0-0 C-USA) at the Helen of Troy Field. The Miners return home for its first games in El Paso since March 6, after seven games were canceled.

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Photo courtesy of UTEP Athletics
UTEP first baseman, Arianna Valles receives a throw for a put-out of a Texas Tech batter March 20 in Lubbock, Texas.



Photograph by Michael Cuvillo/ The Prospector
UTEP senior outfielder Ilena Santos races towards home plate as freshman second baseman Lexi Morales drives in her first run as a Miner Feb. 19.