Beto O’Rourke returns to El Paso

BY ITZEL GIRON

U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar (D-El Paso) grew up with her parents and four brothers in El Paso’s Lower Valley. They did not have much money, but they found their way with what they had. The congresswoman’s unwavering dedication to the region shines through in her commitment to keeping young talent in the area, create high-skilled jobs to help retain them, and usher the city into economic growth and prosperity.

Congresswoman Escobar graduated from William H. Breugh High School and then attended The University of Texas at El Paso, where she received a bachelor’s degree in English Literature. She earned a master’s degree in literature from New York University (NYU). After she graduated from NYU, she knew she did not want to pursue a doctorate in New York, deciding instead she would prefer a school in the University of California system. That plan was not to be, as she had a stopover in El Paso that resulted in Escobar becoming an English lecturer at UTEP and El Paso Community College to save for her doctoral degree.

“I thought I was going to be an academic and I was ready to pursue a doctorate; I wanted to be a professor for the rest of my life. I never imagined my life would take this kind of journey,” said Escobar in a sit-down interview with The Prospector.

In 1993, Escobar recounted that during her time as a teacher, she heard then-Border Patrol Chief Silvestre Reyes (who later served as Congressmen for 16th District from 1997 to 2013) publicly state that he wanted to build a wall between El Paso and Juarez. This event inspired her to join the Border Rights Coalition, now known as the Border Network for Human Rights, where she became a self-described “hardcore activist.” According to the congresswoman this is where she found her passion for “civic engagement and wanting to help a vulnerable population but also wanting to make sure that our community did not become a xenophobic community.”

In 1996, she got involved with her first political campaign with Jose Luis Sanchez for the 16th Congressional District; she opposed was Silvestre Reyes. After the election, Escobar continued to volunteer at political campaigns for the next decade until she ran for El Paso County Commissioner. She served from 2007 to 2011 and then became El Paso County Judge from 2011 to 2017. Escobar originally ran for Congress in 2018 as a Democrat after former Congressman Beto O’Rourke (D-El Paso) decided to run for United States Senate. During the interview, Escobar detailed some key issues on which she is currently working.

Military Reform

Escobar is currently on the Committee of Armed Services and Committee on the Judiciary in Congress. She is focused on creating a safer environment for military individuals across the nation as she aims to change a toxic culture embedded into many military bases as part of the culture, she said. “I have had service members tell me ‘I’m not even going to bother reporting sexual harassment because I see my peers who report sexual assault and not get justice,’” Escobar said. One of the ways the congresswoman is working to change the culture is by changing the way mentorship programs work in the military, making sure they are well-funded and inclusive rather than dependent upon volunteers. She hopes to see an increase in diversity among leadership and overall to make the military a safer space for service members.

Immigration Reform

One of the biggest issues Escobar is trying to shed a light on in Congress is the border and the

Escobar aims to improve conditions for military and immigrants

BY ALBERTO SILVA FERNANDEZ

The Prospector


The Prospector
Opinion

New Editor-in-Chief Alberto Silva Fernandez aims to ensure that students voices are heard

By Alberto Silva Fernandez, editor in chief

When my parents originally moved from Chihuahua to Ciudad Juárez, my dad immediately focused on finding a way to provide my sister and I with the best education possible in the United States. He believed that the best way to ensure a better life was through obtaining a higher education. My father continues to push me to always seek new ways of learning and to look for new perspectives.

I come from a family who always encouraged me to pursue a higher education as both my parents did not have the same opportunity. My biggest encouragement during my educational journey is my sister, who I watched become the first in my family to attain a bachelor’s and master’s degree.

As a first-generation college student, the idea of graduating from college always seemed like an impossible hill to climb, but after graduating high school during a pandemic and receiving a summer internship with the El Paso Times, I knew college was the best route for me. Thanks to The DREAM US scholarship I was given a full ride scholarship, and can focus on my studies and my work here at The Prospector.

I discovered journalism when I was a freshman at Montwood High School when I joined my first journalism course because I had a small interest in photography. I later joined the high school’s yearbook staff, my sophomore year. My small interest steamed into a passion that has guided me for the past six years. Photography has become my main form of self-expression and artistic expression while conveying emotion and telling the stories of my community.

At my time here at The Prospector I have served as a contributor, staff photographer and photo editor. This has given me the chance to meet new people, attend events across the border and in the United States to capture every moment on film.

I grew up with such a supportive family and followed in my father’s footsteps as a photographer. I started my journey in my sophomore year at Burges High School when I joined the yearbook staff. I really fell in love with photography and knew this was something I wanted to keep just as a hobby, but instead make a career out of it. Going into my first semester at UTEP, I applied for a staff photographer position at The Prospector and was grateful to have experienced events such as Betx O’Rourke’s rally for governor, meeting Congresswoman Veronica Escobar, covering a WFE event and meeting Dolores Anguiano, one of UTEP’s oldest graduates.

As the new photo editor, my goal for this semester is to one of UTEP’s oldest graduates. I plan on increasing the quality of our content and ensuring that feedback, as it is greatly encouraged. I plan on increasing the quality of our content and ensuring that

Alberto Silva Fernandez

Annabella Mireles

Photography is a looking glass

By Annabella Mireles, photo editor

I believe photography is not only artwork, but also a looking glass for people to view perspectives of events they might not have even noticed. Photos paired with an enticing story enhance the readers’ understanding of what is happening in their day-to-day lives. As a photojournalist, I strive to capture news, sports and entertainment events for the student body and pull to highlight events by showing the plethora of emotions events can bring out.

I like to think that photographers are storytellers, and their photos are the story, from shooting crowd shots of fans cheering for a favorite player to an action shot of that same player scoring a touchdown – from getting a wide shot of athletes at the Don Haskins Center receiving their diplomas, to from college always seemed like an impossible hill to climb, but after graduating high school during a pandemic and receiving a summer internship with the El Paso Times, I knew college was the best route for me. Thanks to The DREAM US scholarship I was given a full ride scholarship, and can focus on my studies and my work here at The Prospector.

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process of attaining asylum. She said she has brought roughly 20% from the members of Congress to El Paso to tour the ports of entry, to show them the perspective of law enforcement, attorneys and human rights activists. Escobar said she wishes to put Border Patrol back on the front lines, while also making the asylum process safe and where asylum seekers have access to child welfare, legal, and adult welfare services. The bill seeks to remodel ports of entry to make them more welcoming, while also making it so asylum seekers can be processed there instead of being moved from port to port, she said.

For individuals under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), Escobar wants comprehensive immigration reform, which would open up legal pathways for those seeking citizenship. The Build Back Better Act, a bill part of President Joe Biden’s Build Back Better Plan, passed the U.S. House in November, and is currently awaiting a vote in the U.S. Senate. The bill, Escobar said, focuses on providing resources for family leave, immigration, and healthcare, as well as addressing climate change. The bill includes help for immigrants with work and travel permits, and relief from deportation for DREAMERS (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors), DACA recipients, farm workers, essential workers, and temporary permit holders, Escobar said.


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*Escobar is on the ballot in the Democratic primary March 1, running for reelection of her seat in the 16th Congressional District of El Paso. O’Rourke is currently a member of the state House of Representatives. O’Rourke ran against incumbent Ted Cruz in the 2018 Senate race, and even though he lost, that race got him close [dur- ing the Senate Race]. Young people turned out at a rate that was 500% greater in 2018 than the previ- ous midterms,” O’Rourke said. “All those UTEP and community college students and young people who don’t go to college but are enlisted or maybe working a job turned out in record numbers in 2018. It got us within a little more of 2% of the sitting U.S. Senator. I’m very confident that if we con- tinue to see that leadership from young people, we are going to win this race.”

In Texas, Beto O’Rourke hopes to bring more young adults to the polls and quite possibly allow him to take the win and become Texas Governor unlike his Senate bid. “It was actually those students at UTEP that got us that close [dur- ing the Senate Race]. Young people turned out at a rate that was 500% greater in 2018 than the previ- ous midterms,” O’Rourke said. “All those UTEP and community college students and young people who don’t go to college but are enlisted or maybe working a job turned out in record numbers in 2018. It got us within a little more of 2% of the sitting U.S. Senator. I’m very confident that if we con- tinue to see that leadership from young people, we are going to win this race.”
NEWS BRIEFS

UTEP’s COVID-19 vaccination clinics and testing sites continue their operations

Prospector Staff Report

As positive cases for COVID-19 spike again in El Paso, the clinics are free and open to the public. If you’re a UTEP student, faculty, or staff there will be a dedicated line, make sure to bring your Miner Gold Card to access this line. Participants are eligible to receive the booster five months after their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, and two months after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

You can receive your free booster shot at the Undergraduate Learning Center’s lobby from 9:30am to 2:00pm on Wednesday and Thursday for the following three weeks:

Wednesday Jan.12 and Thursday Jan.13
Wednesday, Jan. 19 and Thursday, Jan. 20
Wednesday, Jan. 26, and Thursday, Jan. 27

UTEP Library announces hours of operation for Spring 2022

Prospector Staff Report

As the beginning of the semester approaches, the UTEP Library announced via email their operation hours, in which their services will be available to cover students’ needs. The library will continue to work with students to ensure the best academic experience possible, despite the circumstances, providing their service with the University Writing Center, librarian assistance, study rooms, interlibrary loans, etc.

Jan. 18-May 13
• 7 a.m.-6 p.m., Mon-Thurs.
• 7 a.m.-5 p.m., Fri.
• 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturdays
• Noon-10 p.m., Sundays

Spring Break
• Closed, Sunday, March 13
• 8 a.m.-5 p.m., March 14-18
• Closed, Saturday, March 19

Cesar Chavez Day
• 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday, March 25

For additional information, call the library at 915-747-5672 or email ask@utep.libanswers.com.

Uncertainty overwhelms the El Paso community as COVID-19 infections rapidly increase across the borderland region.

Students discuss UTEP’s safety protocols amid COVID-19

BY VICTORIA RIVAS

The Prospector

Uncertainty overwhelms the El Paso community as COVID-19 infections rapidly increase across the borderland region. Despite the arrival of omicron, a new highly infectious COVID-19 variant, UTEP has announced that students, faculty and staff will be returning to campus for in-person classes starting Tuesday, Jan. 18.

“We are planning for the spring semester to start as planned. There will be no delayed start or shift to online classes at this time,” UTEP President Heather Wilson said.

UTEP’s announcement comes as the city of El Paso’s Public Health Department reported its first 12 confirmed cases of omicron Monday, Jan. 3.

“As has been the case throughout the pandemic, the levels and patterns of the disease are different in El Paso than they are in East Texas. We monitor data daily and will continue to do so,” Wilson said.

COVID-19 infections have increased in El Paso County since November 2021 as families gathered to celebrate the holidays.

As of Saturday, Jan. 8, El Paso city officials reported 702 new cases compared to 599 new cases at the same time last year. Currently, there are 9,442 active cases of COVID-19, with 462 patients hospitalized, including 132 patients who were placed in ICU. “We are deeply concerned with the current rising trends we are experiencing on the number of positive cases, hospitalizations and deaths due to COVID-19,” said El Paso Public Health Director, Angela Mora, in a press release. “It is imperative that the community isolates and quarantines if they are experiencing symptoms, have been exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual or are awaiting test results.”

The Texas Department of State Health Services reported on Jan. 8, 43,255 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, raising the total of active cases to 524,720 across the state.

Amid the recent announcement by UTEP, several students feel the university lacks the necessary safety protocols and fails to accommodate high-risk individuals or students who have family members with underlying diseases. Veronica Camacho, 33, a UTEP creative writing student, feels unsafe going back to school and urges the university to go back to hybrid or remote learning since her sister is a long-haul COVID-19 survivor. “We just don’t want to die or become sick,” Camacho said. “We should be given options to protect ourselves.

Other students like Daniela Ruiz, a cellular and molecular biology student, consider not returning to school this semester or transferring to another university for their safety.

“I got COVID from attending lectures, and I would get emails three times a week about recent exposures,” Ruiz said. “I rather lose my semester or switch to New Mexico State University (NMSU).”

Compared to UTEP, NMSU requires all employees, including student employees, to become fully vaccinated by Jan. 4. All students need to provide proof of vaccination or submit their COVID-19 test results weekly.

NMSU also requires all students and staff to wear face masks indoors. At this time, masks and vaccinations are not required for UTEP students and employees, but they are strongly encouraged to practice social distancing.

“We are working with the city to host more vaccination clinics on campus early in the semester,” Wilson said.

Other UT System schools are delaying the start of their semester for a few weeks or transitioning to remote learning like the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and the University of Texas at Dal (UTD).

UTEF offers students COVID-19 testing at the Student Health and Wellness Center located on the first floor of the Union Building East. Students can also use the two dedicated drive-up lanes at the CO- VID-19 Mega-Testing Site at 3333 N. Mesa at Kern Drive.

As COVID-19 infections increase in the borderland, the city’s COVID-19 testing mega-sites deal with staffing shortages causing El Pasanos to wait between three to five hours to get tested.

“Right now, they’re about 20% staffing out due to COVID, whether they’re positive or in quarantine. So that’s a big hit to the operation,” El Paso Emergency Management Director Chief, Mario D’Aagnosto, said during a city council meeting.

El Paso’s Public Health Department recently announced Thursday, Jan. 6, they will follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidelines to reduce isolation restrictions from 10 to five days for those who test positive for COVID-19.

“We continue to urge the community to get vaccinated or get their booster shot, in addition to following all health and safety precautions to include frequent hand washing, wearing a face cover, and practicing social distance,” Mora said.

Victoria Rivas is the Arts and Culture Editor at The Prospector and may be reached at vrivas7@miners.utep.edu; @VicRivas_18 on Twitter.
Grammy award-winning artists perform in El Paso

**BY VICTORIA RIVAS**
**The Prospector**

**Ricardo Arjona**
Multiple award-winning Guatemalan singer-songwriter Ricardo Arjona will perform at the Don Haskins at 8 p.m. Friday, April 1. His performance is part of his new tour, “Blanco y Negro,” as he promotes his two new albums release during the pandemic. With more than 20 million records sold, Arjona is one of the best-selling Latin American artists of all time. He is known for his ballad, rock and Latin pop music.

Tickets are still available, starting from $54 and VIP packages from $632.

**Bad Bunny**

To start the year, international superstar Bad Bunny, a young Puerto Rican urban artist and rapper, will perform at the Don Haskins Center at 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11. He is a multi-platform recording artist, Grammy Award winner and multiple Latin Grammy Award winner. The show will be his second performance of his highly anticipated North American tour “El Último Tour Del Mundo.”

Bad Bunny will perform hits from his latest albums such as “YHLQMDLG,” “La Que No Baila A Salir” and “El Último Tour del Mundo” in one show. Only a few tickets are available, and prices range from $339 to $1,564.

**Tyler, the Creator**

Tyler, the Creator, a Grammy- winning rapper, will perform at the Don Haskins Center at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 14, on the “Call Me If You Get Lost” tour. Kali Uchis, Vince Staples and Tezo Touchdown will join Tyler, the Creator, as the opening acts.

The tour is named after his latest album, released in June 2021, and debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 charts. The tour will kick off Feb. 10 and end April 8, as he performs in 34 different arenas including El Paso.

Tickets are still available and range from $32 to $269.

**Rage Against the Machine**

Rage Against the Machine, an American rock band, will perform at the Don Haskins at 8 p.m. Thursday, March 31, with special guest Run the Jewels, after they postponed their tour twice because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rock band will start their reunion tour “Public Service Announcement” in El Paso, and all tickets purchased for the initially scheduled date are still valid.

Few tickets are still available, and prices range from $150 to $547.

**Members of the UTEP Volleyball team cheer during the first annual UTEP Gold Rush at Centennial Plaza, Aug. 23, 2021. The Prospector**

**UteP’S Miner Welcome is back to kick off spring semester**

**BY VICTORIA RIVAS**
**The Prospector**

UTEP’s 2021-2022 concert series brings big names in spring

**Ricardo Arjona**
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see ARTISTS on page 6
Jef Dunham

Jef Dunham is ready to make the public laugh as he performs his comedy show along with his irreverent cohorts, Peanut, Walter, Jose Jalapeño, Bubba J, and Achmed the Dead Terrorist at 8 p.m. Sunday, April 24.

Dunham is a comedian and ventriloquist who has gained a unique space in the comedy world for more than 30 years and has participated in standup specials on Netflix, NBC and Comedy Central. His upcoming show is part of his international tour “Jef Dunham: Seriously!?”. Ticket prices range from $48 to $357.

J Balvin

Latin sensation J Balvin will perform at the Don Haskins for the third time at 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 4. J Balvin is a Columbian reggaeton superstar, a multi-platinum recording artist and Latin Grammy winner.

He is coming to El Paso for his highly anticipated “José Tour,” named after his fifth album. J Balvin will visit 25 cities across North America. Ticket prices range from $61 to $375.

Tickets for all concerts can be purchased at Ticketmaster or UTEP’s Ticket Center. All tickets that were purchased before postponement are valid for the new dates.

“We are currently following state mandates and are not requiring proof of vaccines, nor are we requiring masks, only encouraging them,” Brandon Martinez, event and marketing manager at UTEP’s Office Of Special Events, said. For more information about the upcoming concerts and performances at UTEP’s Don Haskins Center, contact UTEP’s Ticket Center by phone at 915-747-5234 or through email at utc@utep.edu.

Victoria Rivas is the Arts and Culture Editor at The Prospector and may be reached at vrivas7@miners.utep.edu; @VicRivas_18.
UTEP women’s softball team prepares for season

BY KATRINA VILLARREAL

The Prospector

UTEP softball kicks off its 2022 season this spring with the UTEP Invitational.

The Miners have a weekend of doubleheaders Feb. 10-11, which wraps up with a game Feb. 13. UTEP is set to begin its season with a home opener against Idaho State Thursday, Feb. 10 and concludes the weekend of the UTEP invitational with a game against Abilene Christian Sunday, Feb. 13. UTEP softball is set to host 11 of its 28 non-conference games and will participate in tournaments such as the Littlewood Classic Feb. 18-20 and the Lobo Classic Feb. 24-27. The Miners are set to take on four Power 5 schools, including Big 10 affiliate University of Minnesota and PAC-12 affiliate University of California, Berkeley, Arizona State University and University of Arizona.

UTEP will reignite the rivalry of the Battle of I-10 when the Miners travel to New Mexico to play New Mexico State University at 6 p.m. Mar. 2; UTEP will later host NM State at 6 p.m. Apr. 5. In conference play, the Miners will host four of its eight conference games beginning March 11 when UTEP comes down to the Sun City for a three-game series. UTEP will also host Louisiana Tech March 25-27 and Middle Tennessee April 22-24 and it will close out conference play against UAB May 6-8.

During the fall season, head coach T.J. Hubbard added additional talent to the 2022-2023 roster. UTEP welcomed infielders, team-mates, Martin Crowell (C/1B) and Hunter Harkrider (SS) from Odessa College, Virginia Tech transfer Kaylee Hewitt, Cal State Northridge transfer outfielder Savannah Farre, and infielder from Gramion College Cheyenne Stark (C/UTL). For the 2023 season, Hubbard added pitcher Breanna Ford from Caldwell High School. "We are excited to welcome Breanna to UTEP," Hubbard said in a news release from UTEP Athletics. "She is a talented lefty that will add a new dimension to our pitching staff. Breanna comes from a well-coached high school and travel team. Her skill set and competitiveness will be a welcome addition to our team. We can’t wait to see her in El Paso next fall." Along with welcoming some talent to UTEP, Hubbard also added Ohio State alumna and pitching coach Lena Springer. Springer spent two years at Delaware State leading the pitching staff.

Springer brings a Power-5 playing experience at UCF (2013-14) and Ohio State (2014-17), participating in three NCAA Regional Tournaments, once with UCF and twice with Ohio State. Springer completed her senior season with a 2.74 ERA, 8-4 record, and ranked second on the Buckeyes with 74 innings pitched.

"Springer has experience at a high level playing in the Big 10 and even on the international stage," Hubbard said. "I believe her experience as a player, as well as an instructor, will help lead some of these newcomers that we have as well as the program itself to a whole other level within Conference USA and even on a regional scale. UTEP starts its 2022 season when it hosts Idaho State University in a doubleheader game at 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10. All stats and quotes for UTEP courtesy of UTEP Athletics.

Katrina Villarreal is a staff reporter and may be reached at villarrealk@utep.edu.

UTEP softball will start its 2022 season on Thursday, Feb. 10. The team will introduce several new players and Pitching Coach Lena Springer. Photo by Alberto Silva Fernandez/The Prospector.
Danny Lopez is a staff reporter and can be reached at dalopez23@miners.utep.edu.

Defensively, the Miners are able to rattled the Miners. UTEP couldn't take control of the game early and turned the Miners. UTEP was able to pull off an 85-57 victory.

The Miners' defense also played well by forcing turnovers and getting steals. Then came adversity when the Miners traveled to take on a tough opponent that was New Mexico State University (NMSU). NMSU took control of the game early and rattled the Miners. UTEP couldn't find their offense for the majority of the first half and struggled defensively. But UTEP only trailed 30-35 at the end of the first half. At the start of the second half, NMSU increased their lead 32-41 three minutes into the second half. The Miners again would struggle on offense and defense, and would go on to lose this contest 77-71.

When continuing their non-conference play, the Miners would have up-and-down results. UTEP pulled off two straight wins after their loss at the Pan American Center. Those two wins came against the University Of the Pacific and Northern New Mexico College. The Miners participated in the Cal Poly Sports Turkey Classic Tournament and the West Bank Tournament. The Miners were able to win one game in both tournaments, but they would go on to lose in the second round of both tournaments.

The Miners lost to the University of Kansas and NMSU. UTEP losing to the Jayhawks would be the largest loss this season so far with a final score of 52-78. Then they lost 69-72 to NMSU in heartbreaking fashion.

In conference play the Miners have continued to struggle. They currently have losses to the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Louisiana Tech University, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The only win the Miners have so far in conference play is against the University of Southern Mississippi.

The Minors tend to struggle on the offense, whether it's struggling to shoot consistently from the 3-point line or just finishing a lay-up at the rim. There seems to be an issue just scoring overall with this unit. Defensively, the Miners are able to pick up the slack when the offense struggles. The Miners defensive play is aggressive, denying the lane pass, taking a charge, or getting a steal and pushing it in transition for a bucket. But when the team looks overmatched, they are not able to play defense as well and at times let the game get away from them and have to play from behind.

The struggles are due to a new offensive system that is being put in place, and players having to adapt to new habits. Coach Golding is trying to get them to learn in practice that playing hard and fighting for extra possessions will help them succeed on the court.

Overall, I believe this will be a year the Minors struggle a lot. In the long run, they will learn from their struggles and become a better team, whether it be this season or in due time.