

UT

**New Science Research
Labs Open Their Doors**

**International Athletes
Make a Splash**

**Courage Under Fire:
An Alumna Risks Her Life
to Save Another**

JOURNAL FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA

FALL 2020



Drawn Into a New Reality

**Persevering Through
a Pandemic**



HANGING OUT

The mask graphic above was created by Brianna Dresbach '21, a graphic design major, this past spring in her Graphic Design II class. She made it with Adobe Suite on her computer and used one of her favorite fonts — “Wes Wilson” — which was named after the famous psychedelic poster maker from the 1960s.



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Unprecedented Times

By now you've heard more than your fair share of pronouncements about COVID-19 from politicians, experts and university presidents. I don't know that there's more to be said that hasn't already been said. What I can share is the place of this crisis in UT's history, and its impact on the institution we all hold so dear.

Simply put, the COVID-19 pandemic is as bad as anything in our history. Beyond being founded during the Great Depression, UT survived enrollment losses during wartime, it nearly closed due to financial instability and economic downturns, and its minarets have stood tall through countless hurricanes.

But never in our shared history has a crisis ever threatened our core educational mission as squarely as COVID-19. In fact, it threatens higher education as we know it. It's an invisible foe that may be with us for a year, or two, or five or more.

As you read this, you'll be reassured that we have opened UT's 89th year of higher education. We remain committed to providing an excellent educational and co-curricular experience, but we are doing it in a way that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 to our students, faculty, staff and

visitors. Doing that has forced us to look at every aspect of the University, from facilities to playing fields to campus events to teaching modalities.

UT prides itself on a face-to-face, engaged style of teaching and learning that challenges students in and out of the classroom. Despite COVID-19, I am committed to keeping this as part of our mission. While this fall's collegiate experience won't be the same as before, we will work to make it full and rich with activities and engagements presented in new ways. We are all learning how to respond to COVID-19, and we will be learning how to navigate this new normal together.

But we cannot do this alone. We've made so much progress, and we simply cannot reverse the University's upward trajectory. In fact, we must continue to improve. We need to keep teaching, building, creating, dreaming and transforming. We need to continue educating students so they can solve problems such as the one we're experiencing right now.

In a time when many institutions have suffered furloughs, layoffs, reduced benefits and pay cuts, I have been committed to preserving our most precious commodity — our people.

But this is a huge challenge. Returning to campus this fall has required an unprecedented commitment by faculty and staff, and we hope UT alumni, friends and donors will also step up to make a difference. Many already did in helping fund student scholarships during virtual Give Day last May. I'm confident the UT community will keep UT in their thoughts and respond in creative and positive ways.

This is an uncertain period for higher education, in general, and I am hoping you will be certain in your support for your alma mater and will be more engaged than ever. Together we can preserve the UT experience for future generations.

RONALD L. VAUGHN, PH.D.
*President and Max H. Hollingsworth
Professor of American Enterprise*





18 Lending a Hand

As COVID-19 began gripping the globe, UT faculty, staff, students and alumni helped in inspiring ways.

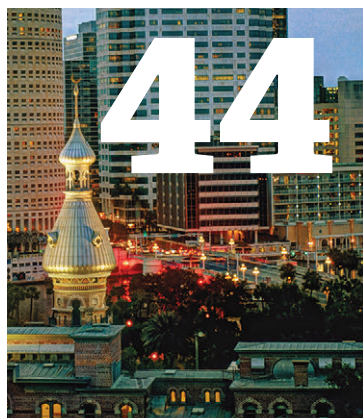
24 International Athletes Make a Splash

Four of UT's 58 international student-athletes share how they've acclimated to their new environment.



30 Courage Under Fire

Lt. Amy Judy '92 risked her life during a rescue, and her community honored her in unexpected ways.



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ON THE COVER: The UT community perseveres through a pandemic.

ILLUSTRATION: Mark Smith

NEWS OF NOTE

HAPPENINGS IN OUR COMMUNITY



Good Chemistry

Construction of the state-of-the-art Science Research Laboratories was completed in July.

When biology and chemistry faculty and their students want to conduct research, they now have a beautiful new space to do it. The Science Research Laboratories, located just west of the corner of West Kennedy and North boulevards, are open.

The 4,000-square-foot space holds up to 12 faculty members and their students. It contains three labs: molecular biology, analytical chemistry and synthetic chemistry.

The labs are equipped with sterilization tools, incubators, freezers, centrifuges, biological safety cabinets, deionized water, a generator for backup electricity and more. There are numerous safety features built into the laboratories, including fume hoods (see the hanging snorkel, right, and the large cabinet behind it) to allow extra ventilation when working with noxious chemicals.

Let the experiments begin!





UT addresses
racial injustice.

UT Affirms Its Core Values

The following is part of a statement that was sent to the UT community in June from Ronald Vaughn, president; David Stern, provost and vice president for academic affairs; Stephanie Russell Krebs, vice president for student affairs and dean of students; and James MacLeod, chair of the Board of Trustees.

"We are witnessing the pain, sadness and frustration that many in our community and across the nation are facing. We are simultaneously outraged and confounded at the inhumanity witnessed in the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbury, Nina Pop and many others.

We continue to face outward displays of racism, implicit bias, violence and racial injustice. Many of us in higher education have worked for years to promote diversity and social justice. But much work remains. We will continue to promote self-reflection, community-wide dialogue, and

mutual understanding and respect, but we recognize we cannot meet our goals without more robust student, faculty and staff participation.

Our new reality of living with COVID-19 has been challenging, and the social isolation and distancing has further divided our society. While we work toward our coming together for Fall 2020, we must be more committed than ever to live up to our shared values that are articulated in the Spartan Code."

For the rest of the statement, visit ut.edu/news-and-ut-life/ut-affirms-its-core-values.

STUDENT SUPPORT

There are two new UT support groups: the expanded Students of Color group (formerly called Women of Color) and the Allies Against Racism group.

Each group contains a maximum of six to eight students, meets either in person at the Dickey Health and Wellness Center on campus or virtually and is moderated by two clinicians at UT's Counseling Services — either licensed mental health counselors or psychologists.

"We help students cope with emotions like anger, anxiety and depression," says Connie McCullough, counseling services director. If you know a student who is interested in joining, email counseling@ut.edu.



Two new UT groups
support students of color.

Remote Teaching at Its Best

On March 16, UT faculty and students — just like faculty and students at colleges and universities across the country — had to quickly transition from face-to-face instruction to online delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Not only did faculty rise to the challenge of educating students from afar, but they delighted their students with creative instruction that kept them engaged. Here are just a few examples.



Mary Anderson, professor of political science, is pictured with fellow faculty member Kathryn VanderMolen, assistant professor of political science, and students during a virtual meeting with U.S. Representative Kathy Castor.

ARRANGING “TRAVEL” TO D.C.

Mary Anderson, professor of political science, reimagined her PSC 208 course, Political Networking: A Travel Course to D.C., by making it entirely virtual. She got in touch with all of the places the students were supposed to see in person and arranged a remote tour, some of which included: a meeting with The Atlantic Council, a think tank; an American University graduate school tour; a lecture by Lara Brown, director of the Graduate School of Political Management at George Washington University; and a meeting with the Pew Research Center.

CREATING A PODCAST

Casey Arnold, a part-time faculty member, created a podcast for her Introduction to World Religions course to help her students learn remotely. Her partner, Lance, a professional musician, wrote an instrumental theme song, helped produce it and also joined each episode to ask the kinds of questions her students would typically ask during class.

HOSTING TRIVIA

Alyssia Miller, professor of instruction I, Spanish, and Megan Lopez, lecturer I, first-year studies, hosted three successful Zoom trivia nights for first-year students that averaged 32 students per event.

CONNECTING GLOBALLY

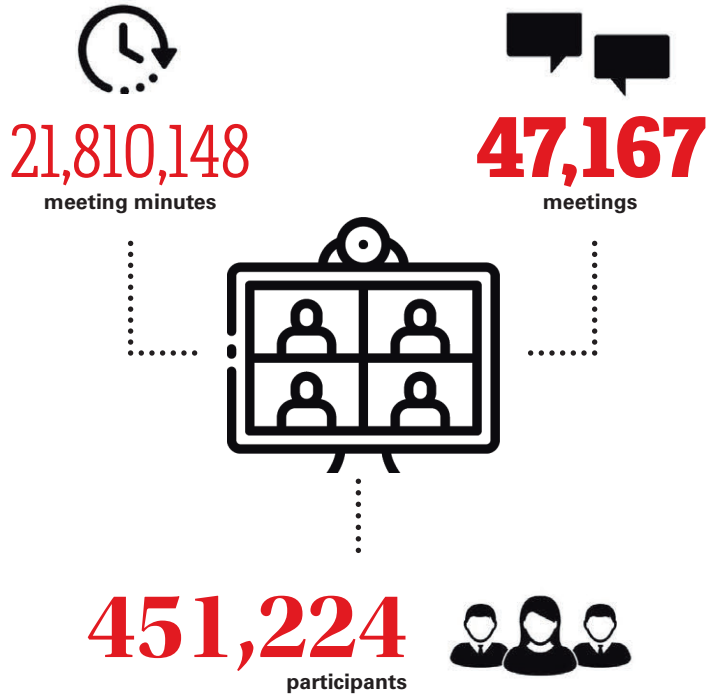
Vanessa Rukholm, assistant professor of languages and linguistics, got creative with students studying Italian. She used TalkAbroad, an internet-based telecollaboration program that allows language learners in North America to converse in real time with native speakers of the target language they are learning.

HAVING FUN WITH PETS

Lopez and Jenna Polizzi, also lecturer I, first-year studies, hosted a “Pet Show-and-Tell” for their first-year classes. They also invited students to participate in “Spartan Seconds,” where students created a weekly video made of several one-second posts (one from each of the past seven days) and shared it with the class.

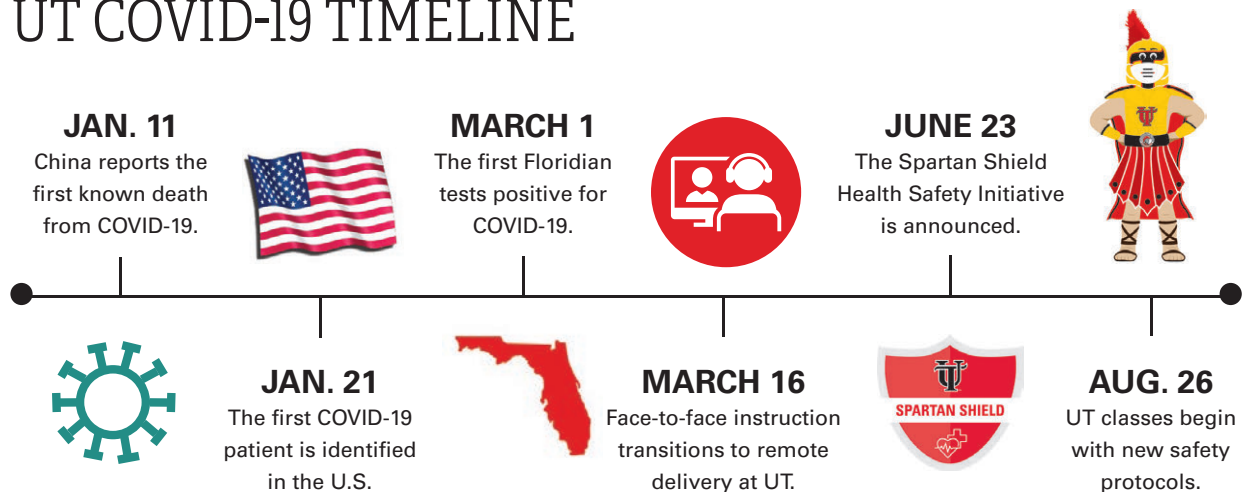
Hello, Zoom!

See just how much the UT community has used the videoconferencing technology. From March 13 through July 7, there were:



UT has enacted Spartan Shield, a health and safety initiative that offers guidance to all members and guests of the University community in the era of COVID-19. To read the full plan, visit ut.edu/fall2020.

UT COVID-19 TIMELINE



5 MINUTES WITH

Alexsandra Wolfe '22

Wolfe, a finalist in the 2020 Schulze Entrepreneurship Challenge, is launching a business: selling jewelry that helps prevent sexual assault.

What inspired you to start Puresipity?

The idea of getting drugged through a drink at a social event and then sexually assaulted was terrifying. With no practical product on the market to help prevent this problem, I came up with the idea to create jewelry with a date-rape drug tester inside a locket. A user can open the locket, dip their finger in a drink, press their finger on the tester and wait a few minutes. If the drink contains a date-rape drug, the tester will change color, and you can replace the tester after each use.

How did you create the product?

The only products available that tested for date-rape drugs were things that you had to carry in a purse. Since nobody carries a purse to a club or party anymore, I thought putting the tester in jewelry was the perfect answer. I developed prototypes and am currently working to license drug testers that are 99.9% accurate at detecting commonly used date-rape drugs like GHB and ketamine. With the help of my mentor, Kevin Moore, assistant professor of management, I also filed for a patent.

What is the Schulze Entrepreneurship Challenge?

It's one of the premier pitch competitions in the country, hosted by the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Exchange. Undergraduate entrepreneurial students from colleges across

North America compete. I submitted a video pitch and slides detailing my business plan. Each of the 25 finalists received \$3,000, and a \$1,000 grant was given to their school. I was honored to be the first UT student to make it to the finals.

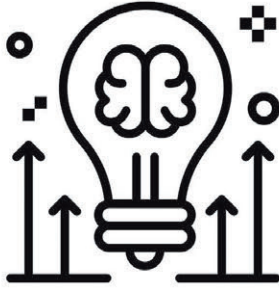
What kind of an impact do you hope to make?

I hope to bring awareness to the issue of drug-facilitated sexual assault and help keep people safe from predators. Obviously, one product isn't going to completely fix the problem, but if it can help prevent even just one person from becoming a victim, that's enough of an impact for me.

What are your next steps?

I'm working on having the testers manufactured to fit the jewelry. I'll continue to seek funding to move forward with production and test runs. I hope to officially launch products in the spring of 2021. Stay tuned!





BRAIN GAINS

You've likely heard of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a serious brain condition that's linked to repeated hits to the head and dementia. It can affect people like football players and those in the military. As of now, there's no treatment.

But two people in the UT community hope to change that someday. Megan Ashworth '20 has been conducting research on this topic with Pavan Rajanahalli, assistant professor of biology.

Here's the gist. A protein in brain cells changes shape with each hit to the head. When the shape of the protein changes, its function changes. After a while, the protein begins to clump and form a toxin that strangles the brain cell from the inside out, killing it. Once a brain cell dies, a human is not able to produce a new one.

The UT research team is hoping to grow new brain cells that could, perhaps someday, be inserted into the brain.

They're growing two types of cells right now: human umbilical cord stem cells and specific brain cells called oligodendrocytes in separate flasks in a lab. When brain cells grow, they secrete a microscopic cellular element called an exosome. Exosomes tell a cell what to be. So they're taking the secreted exosomes from the brain cells and placing them in the flask with the stem cells. In doing so, they're creating an environment that will hopefully allow the stem cells to grow into oligodendrocytes.

If this is successful, the ultimate goal in the future would be to turn this into a treatment, like a nasal spray that could be easily and quickly administered to those who experience concussions to help treat possible CTE. They're in early talks with a biotech company and plan to publish a research paper when they have more data.

The Secret to Explosive Strength

Having strong legs while playing soccer might be the difference between your team scoring a goal and not scoring a goal — which could determine the entire outcome of a game. So how do you make your legs as strong as possible? Could the quantity or quality of your sleep have anything to do with it?

These are questions that two UT faculty members explored with Allison Zaccheo M.S. '19. Zaccheo co-authored "The Effect of Sleep on Explosive Strength Gains in Female Collegiate Soccer Players During Off-Season Training: A Pilot Study" with J.C. Andersen, director of the UT athletic training program and chair of the department of health sciences and human performance, and Nauris Tamulevicius, associate professor of health sciences and human performance. The study was recently published in *The International Journal of Sports Physical Therapy*.

They examined 11 female collegiate soccer players who participated in an off-season resistance-training program three days a week for five weeks. The research team used a jump mat and software to measure explosive strength (ES), defined as the maximum vertical jump height in three tries. Sleep quantity in hours and sleep quality (1 = poor quality and 5 = great quality) were self-reported by the athletes.

The results? There was only a weak correlation between sleep quantity and ES (though the average sleep quantity reported was one hour below the recommended amount for college athletes), but there was a moderate correlation between sleep quality and ES. The bottom line: High-quality zzz's matter.



Branch Out

In between the historic buildings, residence halls and athletics facilities, there are roughly 2,492 trees on UT's 110-acre campus. Stroll around and you'll find students studying in the shade of an oak, lounging near the resort-style palms by the pool or hanging hammocks on the palms along the Hillsborough River. There are about 48 varieties of trees, and here are five of the most popular.



WASHINGTON PALM ■

This type of tree — which can grow as tall as 120 feet — is used when height is necessary (think: softening the look of a multilevel parking garage).



SABAL PALM ●

Here's some good trivia: The Sabal Palm is the state tree of Florida. When you need a cluster of palm trees to fill an area, this inexpensive and common tree does the job.



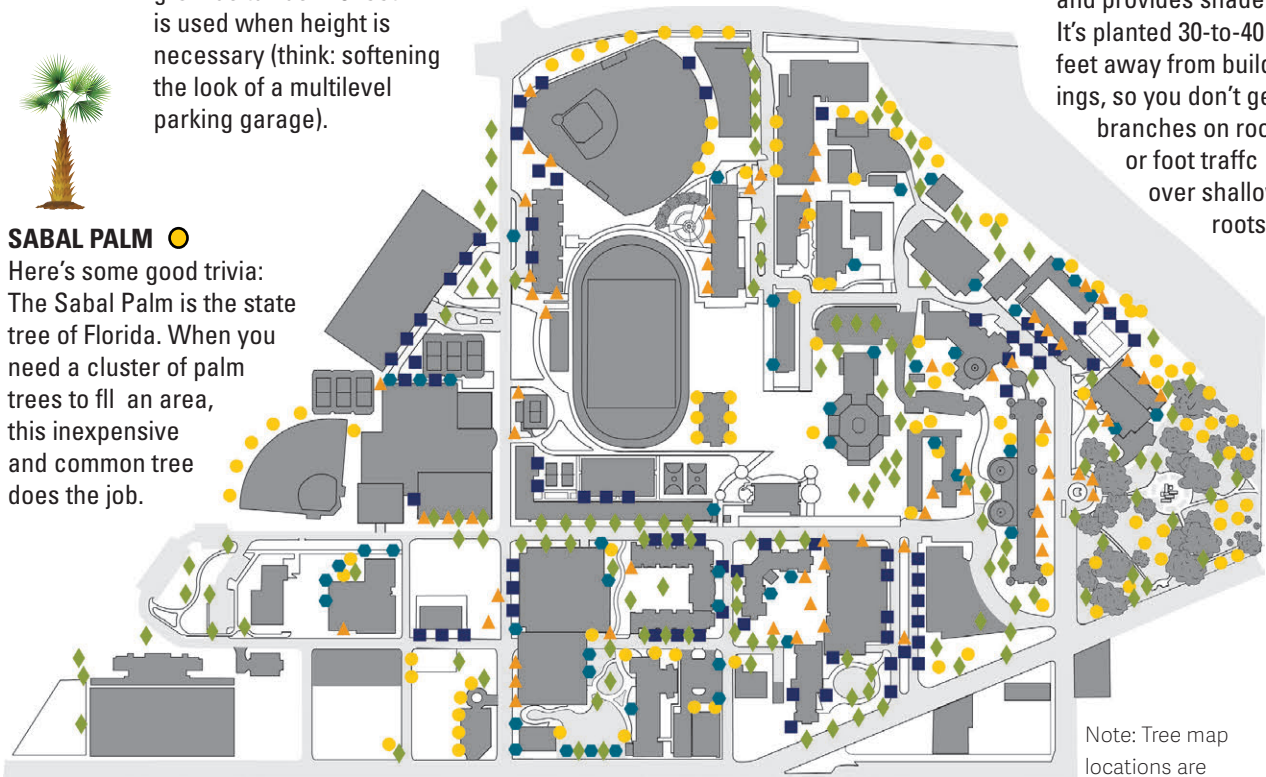
PYGMY DATE PALM ▲

These are not naturally multistemmed trees, but doubles and triples (as in the illustration) can be grown in a nursery. Triples are perfect for covering corners.



LIVE OAK ◆

This fills a large area and provides shade. It's planted 30-to-40 feet away from buildings, so you don't get branches on roofs or foot traffic over shallow roots.



Note: Tree map locations are approximate.



LIGUSTRUM ◆

Landscape architects keep safety in mind when designing. Since this tree spreads out at the top, but is thin toward the bottom, potential intruders have nowhere to hide.



UT was recognized for supporting first-generation and transfer students.

Rankings Galore!

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Study.com has named UT's Sykes College of Business as the No. 2 best international business school in the country. The ranking is based on academic and career resources for international business students, the quality of education and program accessibility.

DEPARTMENTAL SHOUT-OUTS

Three UT programs were recognized in the inaugural 2020 PLEXUSS Global Rankings. Specifically, UT was ranked:

- No. 3 in Florida for Best Marine Science Program
- No. 4 in Florida for Best Criminology Program
- No. 4 in Florida for Most Prestigious Private College or University Offering a Political Science Program

EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

In its first annual rankings, QS Quacquarelli Symonds, a global higher education research company and publisher of the "QS World University Rankings," has named UT as a top university for excellence, equity and employability. UT was ranked the 11th top university in Florida, and in the 251-300 band nationally.

HELPING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS

UT was one of 77 universities accepted into the 2020-2021 cohort of First-gen Forward institutions. This designation recognizes institutions of higher education that have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students.

MORE ACCOLADES

The Sykes College of Business's part-time MBA program and UT's master's degree in nursing were named among the best programs in the country in the 2021 edition of Best Graduate Schools by *U.S. News & World Report*. The master's degree in nursing program was ranked 152nd and the part-time MBA program was ranked 141st.

Additionally, in a ranking of MBA programs compiled by *CEO Magazine* that stressed "fact-based criteria," UT's MBA program was placed in "Tier One" out of 161 schools in 27 countries worldwide. Also, UT's Executive MBA (EMBA) program was ranked 64th out of 87 schools in Tier One of global EMBA programs.

SUPPORTING TRANSFERS

UT has been named to Phi Theta Kappa's 2020 Transfer Honor Roll, which identifies the top four-year colleges and universities that create dynamic pathways to support transfer students. UT is one of only 122 institutions nationwide selected to receive this honor, and it is awarded to the top 25% of colleges that earned the highest transfer-friendliness ratings.

The Gift of a Lifetime

The Macdonald-Kelce Library recently received a large collection from Tim Kennedy, professor emeritus of communication, that includes 626 periodicals, 534 photography books, 42 contact sheets and 30 photographs. Some of the photographs are from the Farm Security Administration (part of the Library of Congress collection), and some were taken by the esteemed French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson. Some are on display in the Florida Military Room in the library. Michael Wells, librarian emeritus, says it's the best donation he's seen in 30 years.



Two of the 30 donated photos

Opening Later This Fall

The construction of the Ferman Center for the Arts is in its final stretch.



The southwest corner of North Boulevard and Spaulding Drive



ROCKING THE VOTE

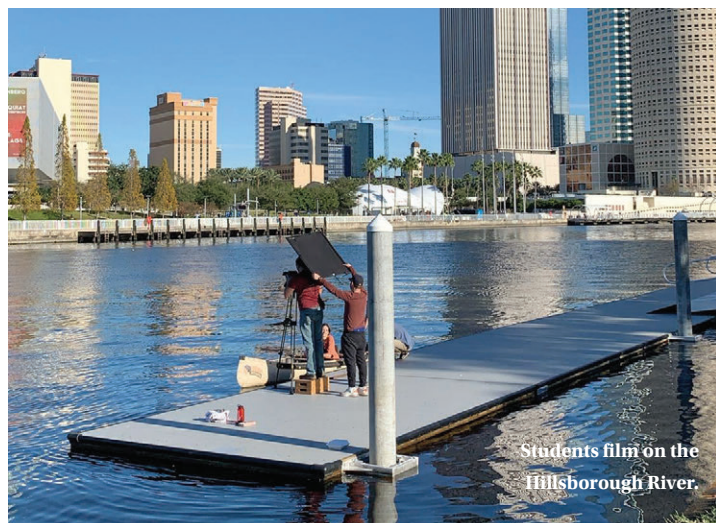
A new collaboration between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs launched this spring called the All in Democracy Challenge Coalition. Members of the coalition include faculty, staff, students, alumni and community partners from the Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections office. Their goal: to increase UT's student voter registration rate and voting rate from the last presidential election year.

ALUMNI WEEKEND UPDATE

Due to COVID-19, Alumni Weekend (originally scheduled for this fall) has been postponed. Stay tuned for exact dates and details by visiting ut.edu/alumniweekend.

Lights, Camera, Action

Warren Cockerham, media production coordinator for the College of Arts and Letters, directed students in the production of a music video for a song called "Desert Wanderer" by the Chicago-based band Fran. The music video was part of a winter intersession cinematography course in the Department of Film, Animation and New Media. Nine students took part in the three-day shoot, which involved flying drones over the Hillsborough River and going on a Tarpon Springs dolphin cruise.



IN OUR THOUGHTS

On June 6, Thomas Terrell Sessums passed away. He was a member of UT's Board of Trustees 1978-1991 and chair 1988-1989. Sessums was 89, a UT donor for more than 40 years and a member of UT's Legacy Society. There's an endowed scholarship named for him and his late wife: the T. Terrell and Neva S. Sessums Endowed Scholarship. He was an attorney, a former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and a champion of improving public education in Florida.

John Wolfe '68, a longtime donor who served on UT's Board of Trustees 2002-2004 and 2006-2012, passed away on April 26. He was 76 and a lifelong resident of Tampa. Wolfe came to UT on a full music scholarship, earned a B.S. in Economics and later earned an MBA from the University of South Florida. Beyond his commitment to UT, he started several businesses within the construction and building industry.

PITCH PERFECT

The Tampa Tones a cappella singing group was named one of five South Quarterfinal Champions in the Varsity Vocals International Competition of Collegiate A Cappella in February. This win qualified them for the semifinals and means they're one of the top 50 groups (out of 450+) in the country.





Zoe Jarvis '21 crossed the finish line in first place at the 2019 Sunshine State Conference Women's Cross Country Championship last fall.

ATHLETICS HIGHLIGHTS

Defying the Odds

UT cross country and track star Zoe Jarvis '21 doesn't let autism hold her back.

Stuff that feels ordinary to most people can be super stressful for Zoe Jarvis '21: making small talk and knowing when someone is telling a joke, taking a standardized test in a timed environment or driving a car while loads of overwhelming stimuli are coming at her at once.

Growing up, making friends was also difficult. Born in North Carolina, Jarvis moved around a lot (Japan,

South Carolina, California) because her father is a U.S. Marine who has been on active duty for 22 years. And young kids weren't always nice to her. They saw her as quiet or quirky, she says. One negative comment (like "I'm better at this than you are") could send her into a shame spiral. She'd persevere — repeat something from memory that made her feel uncomfortable — for years.

But during her first year of high school, something changed. After joining the cross country team at the suggestion of her speech pathologist, she realized that she wasn't just enjoying running long distances — she was soaring past people in races. Her confidence in herself grew.

By the end of her first season, she was the top runner on her team. Suddenly, classmates didn't see Jarvis as an odd girl who didn't say much. They saw her for who she was all along: a strong, capable young woman who happens to have high-functioning autism.

"Running has helped me find my place, and I feel as though I fit in," Jarvis says. "When I run, I only focus on running. It clears my mind, removes stress and puts me in a good mood."

FAST FEET

Several universities offered scholarships to Jarvis, but she was drawn to UT because she wanted to remain close to her family (her dad was heading to MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa), and she had a great conversation with Jarrett Slaven, UT's women's cross country and track coach.

"Coach Slaven is incredibly supportive, and the program feels like a family. Coach is patient and cares so much about our team and the running program," says Jarvis, who continues to sprint toward success. Some memorable athletic moments to date include being invited to compete individually in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division II Women's Cross Country Championship (also known as "nationals") as a sophomore and being named "All-American" and "All-Conference" in cross country — as well as the Sunshine State Conference (SSC) Runner of the Year — as a junior.

This past year was particularly spectacular for her. As a junior, she earned a first-place finish at the SSC Women's Cross Country Championship with a 6-kilometer time of

22:18.02, and in track, she broke UT's 5-kilometer record at one of only two meets in 2020 with a blistering time of 17:07 (that's roughly 5:31 per mile).

Though distance running can be grueling, Jarvis is no stranger to pushing through discomfort and overcoming obstacles. "It's 90% mental," she says. Her grit and determination have certainly impressed her coach. "Zoe is a joy to coach. She is hardworking and motivated and has set high goals as an athlete and as a student," Slaven says.

A CREATIVE SPIRIT

Jarvis doesn't just shine while wearing sneakers. In the classroom, her academic accomplishments are equally noteworthy. The animation major has a cumulative GPA of 3.6 and has been on the SSC Commissioner's Honor Roll all three years, which is no small feat. Before college, she had a one-on-one aide at school who helped her take notes and understand assignments. At UT, she feels comfortable texting classmates or emailing faculty members if she has questions, and she takes untimed tests in a quiet environment at

UT's Academic Success Center.

Her degree — which is essentially a combination of art and computer science — focuses on creative coding projects that include 2D and 3D computer animation, motion effects, CGI, and visual and advanced software applications (like Dreamweaver, Cinema 4D and After Effects). As with running, Jarvis loves tasks that she can do on her own, without having to communicate with others. She can funnel her energy into one thing and get into a zone.

In classes taught by Santiago Echeverry, associate professor of film, animation and new media, she has earned a perfect score on five different projects, which has landed her in what Echeverry dubs UT's Digital Media Arts Hall of Fame. This means that some of her projects are now used as models for inspiring other students.

She's excited about her senior year and what her post-UT life will look like. Maybe a career in animation? Maybe some marathon running? Whatever she decides to pursue in the future, she's sure to accomplish it all — in record time. —EMILY STOOPS

A STROKE OF LUCK

The UT men's and women's swimming teams both had an incredible 2019-2020 season. Take a look at just some of the accolades they racked up.

- 22 swimmers (11 men and 11 women) were named All-Americans, the most in school history.
- The men's team went undefeated for the first time in UT history, with a perfect 7-0 record in dual meets.
- The men's team captured the program's first-ever Sunshine State Conference (SSC) Championship.
- Jimi Kiner '01, the head coach of both teams, was named the SSC Men's Coach of the Year.
- Brett Saunders '19, M.S. '20 was named the SSC Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year, which is presented to the top over-all student-athlete across all conference sports. The winner is chosen based on scholarly excellence, athletic prominence and involvement within the school and the community.

—TOM KOLBE '01





Faculty member Jody Tompson (left) at TECO's Manatee Viewing Center with (clockwise) Angelina Lantieri '21, Miller Hoskins '20, Christopher McPherson '22 and Ashley Massicott '21

SPARTAN READY PHILANTHROPY

Manatee Mania

Students at the Naimoli Institute for Business Strategy partnered with TECO's Manatee Viewing Center to create an online store.

One tourist attraction that's becoming iconic is watching the manatees gather by TECO's Big Bend station in Apollo Beach. It's led to a rewarding, hands-on assignment for some marketing students at UT's Naimoli Institute for Business Strategy (NIBS), which was established by the late Vincent Naimoli, founder of the Tampa Bay Rays and a longtime UT donor.

Jody Tompson, professor of management and entrepreneurship and director of NIBS, had partnered with TECO on class projects in the past. This past academic year presented a new opportunity. TECO's Big Bend station discharges warm water into a Tampa Bay canal, which beckons up to 850 heat-seeking manatees to frolic every winter. Over the years, TECO has set up a viewing area, concession stand and shop for visitors who come to see these

adorable creatures, which look as if they were created by a Disney animator.

The energy company asked UT for help in taking its retail business online, selling plush animals, manatee mugs, tees and other souvenirs. "We have up to 400,000 visitors a year who want to watch the manatees, but our viewing area is only open for five and a half months, when the weather's cool, each year. We wanted to develop our online store to serve the ongoing interest," says Stanley M. Kroh, TECO's manager of land and stewardship programs.

The junior and senior students stepped in with "fresh ideas we wouldn't have considered otherwise," says Kroh. Four students per semester identified the 10 most popular items, built a Shopify store for them, photographed samples and established pricing and shipping.

Ashley Massicott '21, a marketing major, loved the mission of a web shop from the very start. "TECO's Manatee Viewing Area welcomes visitors from all over the world, but often they are getting on a plane home and don't want to carry souvenirs. Our goal was to create an easy, convenient way for customers to remember their Tampa experience and share it with family and friends," she says.

Designing the site and photographing the products were the most fun for Massicott, who's minoring in film and media arts. And wrangling a project for a large, regulated corporation proved deeply valuable. "We learned how to communicate with and as business professionals, how to gain consensus and how to get work done during an emergency (the COVID-19 pandemic)," she says.

Another perk of the aquatically oriented assignment: The students networked with the MacDonald Training Center, a nonprofit that trains and empowers people with disabilities. Its trainees will manage stock and fulfill orders for the web store. The group is finalizing contracts and looks forward to launching the website soon.

—JANET SIROTO

A Local Legend's Gift of Music

Tampa piano player Carolyn Waller Hardin Heagey, who has performed at UT, was given a remarkable 90th birthday gift from her children: a scholarship for a music student in her name.

For 70 of her 90 years, Tampa resident Carolyn Waller Hardin Heagey has been part of the city's soundtrack. She's hit all the right notes as a piano teacher to hundreds, principal accompanist for the Tampa Oratorio Society and organist/pianist and music director at Bayshore Presbyterian Church. It was that gig (she plans to retire on her 50th anniversary in 2021) that led to her current duet with UT.

About eight years ago, Heagey needed a substitute for a Sunday service, says her daughter Karen Fedor. Through a choir member, she met her sub: Grigorios Zamparas, professor of music and director of piano studies at UT. That small favor led to their teaming up for performances at venues like the Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values, as well as a remarkable friendship.

Heagey and Zamparas frequently play four-hand at the keys and then chat at a local Starbucks. Not even the COVID-19 crisis could interfere. When Heagey's retirement community forbade visitors, a new ritual was composed.

"Grig now hands off a cappuccino for Mom to a staffer at her building who brings it up. She then sits on her balcony, Grig positions himself outside so they can see each other," explains Fedor, "and they continue their visit by phone al fresco." Zamparas wouldn't miss those talks for anything: "She's such a lively person; every moment with her is wonderful. I love sharing in her wisdom."

As Heagey's children planned their mom's

90th birthday celebration, the idea of establishing a scholarship for a promising piano student in their mother's name was orchestrated. "We all agreed it would reflect her lifetime commitment to sharing music with others," says Fedor. The siblings — Fedor plus Dianne Hardin, Ken Hardin, Cheryl Johnston and Deborah Wagner — knew that UT was the right fit "because of her connection to Tampa," she adds, "and the



Carolyn Waller Hardin Heagey playing as a teen



Faculty member Grigorios Zamparas and Carolyn Waller Hardin Heagey after a recital

personal connection we all felt with UT because of Grig."

And so the scholarship was created, with help from Marc Brechwald, UT's director of development. On Heagey's April birthday, which was spent in self-isolation due to the pandemic, family members had a framed certificate and frosted, piano-shaped cookies delivered as they gathered outside with signs and songs. Happy tears were shed, and Heagey says, "I can't even imagine a more perfect gift."

The Carolyn Waller Hardin Heagey scholarship, established for a music student, with a strong preference for a deserving young pianist, debuts this fall. Lucas Glenn, an incoming first-year student from St. Petersburg, is the lucky recipient of the \$5,000 per annum award.

What's especially harmonious about this, says Zamparas, is that Glenn shares Heagey's "joy and enthusiasm, that absolute love for music." It's a tremendous way to recognize a woman whose contribution to Tampa's musical life certainly deserves a standing ovation.

—JANET SIROTO





LENDING A HAND

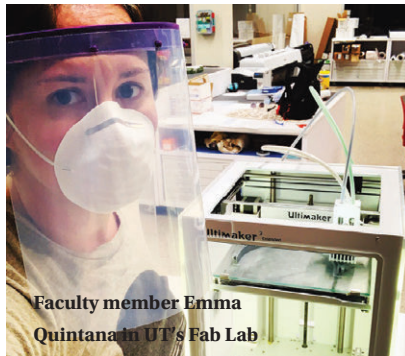
As the COVID-19 pandemic began gripping the globe this past spring semester, many faculty, staff, students and alumni came up with creative — and inspiring — ways to help.

BY JANE BIANCHI

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARK SMITH



3D PRINTING FACE SHIELDS



Faculty member Emma Quintana in UT's Fab Lab

When health care workers in the community faced a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), Emma Quintana didn't panic — she got creative. As the coordinator of UT's Fab Lab (a workshop equipped with digital fabrication tools for students in the arts to foster innovation), she had an idea.

Using free instructions she'd found online through the global fab lab community, elastic bands, and the lab's laser cutter and six 3D printers, she made face shields — visors that wrap around the head and include a plastic shield that is long enough to cover health care workers' faces.

Since mid-March, she has produced more than 3,000 and distributed them to local medical centers such as Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa General Hospital, AdventHealth Centers and two COVID-19 testing sites — as well as medical providers with high demand in the Bahamas.

To help continue this effort, community partners have stepped up financially, including Citi, which made a \$10,000 donation. Another donor is an anonymous member of the UT College of Arts and Letters Advisory Board.

"It's a way to give back to our real heroes, medical workers," says Quintana. "The idea that we don't have to wait for factories abroad to deliver these life-saving objects is pretty incredible."



A THREAD OF HOPE

Lisa Hoernlein Culberson '87, an educational consultant in Tampa, was inspired to spend hours sewing washable, cotton masks whenever she wasn't working — even though she hadn't sewed in many years. "I felt like I was doing something that was necessary," says Culberson. She got a free kit with red and white flower fabric from JOANN Fabrics and Crafts, bought lining and elastic, and then followed the video instructions online. After, Culberson dropped them off at JOANN, which distributed them to a local hospital.

Donating PPE to Those in Need

Also stepping up to the plate were several UT departments, which donated extra PPE that is normally for students and faculty to Tampa General Hospital. Those departments include nursing, physician assistant medicine, biology, chemistry, health sciences and human performance, and art. Health care workers were delighted to receive gear such as surgical masks, isolation gowns, N95 masks, gloves and other items.

SHARING EXPERTISE

Eric Freundt, director of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry, is an expert on viruses. After earning a doctorate in virology from the University of Oxford in England, Freundt was a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at Stanford University School of Medicine before arriving at UT. So it's no surprise that UT has called upon this thought leader during the pandemic.

How have you been helping the UT community stay informed?

I've done presentations about COVID-19: one for the UT emergency operations committee, one for first-year students, one for the UT Board of Trustees and two for local Rotary Clubs. I've also done media interviews, and I'm one of 20 faculty and staff members on UT's COVID-19 Health Safety Task Force, which recommends procedures for the safe return of staff, faculty, students and visitors.

One of the viruses you studied was SARS-CoV-1, which causes SARS and is in the same viral family as SARS-CoV-2, the virus that's now running rampant. How are they different?

With SARS-CoV-1, even though it caused 10% mortality, it only caused about 800 deaths and about 8,000 cases globally — and it was extinguished from the human population solely through public health measures like contact tracing and quarantines. With that virus, you could only transmit it when

you were pretty sick. I remember the day that I read that SARS-CoV-2 could be transmitted before (or without) symptoms, and I thought: That's a game changer.

Because that's what happens with influenza, and that's one reason it spreads across the globe every year. So SARS-CoV-2 is much better at spreading from person to person than SARS-CoV-1, and that makes containing it through public health measures much more difficult.

What are the best ways to help prevent infection?

The greatest risk is breathing the same air as someone who's infected. So wearing a mask and keeping your distance are very important. Hand washing and sanitizing surfaces will also help to keep you from becoming infected.

What do you wish more people knew about this pandemic?

This is going to take a united effort. In some people, this virus is not going to be a big deal, but in others, it could be fatal. I hope that in the U.S., we can do the things that are necessary to bring this virus to its knees. And remember that flattening the curve is not all or nothing. There are degrees of social distancing that will flatten the curve but allow you to live your life in a way that's not too burdensome.

Eric Freundt, director of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Inquiry, has a doctorate in virology.



WRITING LETTERS TO THE ELDERLY

While scrolling through Instagram in March, Jessica Scott '21 noticed an interesting post from one of her favorite comedians, Heidi Gardner of *Saturday Night Live*. Gardner had written a card to a senior citizen in a nursing home who had been isolated from family and friends during the pandemic, and she encouraged others to do the same.

Scott, a marketing major, was one of many followers who took her advice to heart. Over the next four weeks, she crafted 101 cards — each containing either a cheerful note, quote or drawing — and mailed 100 of them to strangers in two nursing homes (one card went to her grandmother).

“I know it can be really hard not to be able to see loved ones for long periods of time, especially if you’re used to seeing them every week. I just wanted to make them feel that they weren’t alone, and everyone is in this together,” says Scott. “I wanted the letters to be more than just saying hello. I really wanted to let them know that they were loved and that this will hopefully get better soon.”

When Scott shared her project on Instagram and tagged Gardner, she got an exciting surprise: a private message from her idol that read, “You’re amazing!!!!!! Thank you for doing this. Wow!!!”

OPENING HIS MOTEL’S DOORS

After a couple of decades of working in college counseling and mental health counseling, Kevin Johnson '82 pivoted to a career that was inspired by being a resident assistant at UT. Since 2002, he’s owned the Gale River Motel and Cottages in Franconia, NH.

During the pandemic, he announced that any local resident with a doctor’s note (explaining that either they have COVID-19 or they live with someone who has COVID-19 and can’t isolate at home) can stay at his motel for free during quarantine. Each room at his motel has a private entrance, and any infected guests are not allowed to use any of the shared outdoor amenities to protect any healthy guests.

“The old adage of ‘Do for others as you wish that they would do for you’ and those types of moral values were ingrained in me from a very early age, and I’ve tried to raise my kids with that philosophy,” says Johnson. “Hopefully what I’ve done is set a standard so that other people can be conscious about going out and doing their little bit. I hope some people hear about this and think, ‘Hey, we could do something too.’”

This isn’t the first time Johnson has thought of others. He’s well known for volunteering on the town’s Water Commission, on the board of directors for a homeless shelter called the Bancroft House, on the board of directors of the Franconia Notch Regional Chamber of Commerce and with Meals on Wheels.





Doug Weigelt '13 (left) and colleagues in Texas on Feb. 20

LIFE AS A QUARANTINE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

“After graduating from UT, I was a public health associate at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and got a master’s in public health from the University of Pennsylvania. Now I’m a quarantine public health officer for the CDC in Philadelphia.

In January, I set up screening operations at airports in San Francisco and Chicago. We focused on people who were getting off planes from Wuhan, China (where the novel coronavirus originated), and might have COVID-19. I led a team that took their temperature, assessed their risk, gave them educational materials and helped them find medical care if necessary.

In February, the Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Japan due to a COVID-19 outbreak, and the U.S. government flew American passengers to various U.S. Air Force bases to isolate them. I helped manage the quarantine of the passengers who were sent to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, TX.

They lived in dorms, and we’d visit them twice a day in PPE to do medical evaluations and see what they needed. It became a national news story, and they’d see themselves on their TVs. Many of them were scared and confused, so we spent a lot of time answering questions. Since then, I’ve been back in Philadelphia doing contact tracing.

All in all, it feels like sprinting a marathon. I feel numb, exhausted and frustrated all at once. It’s challenging knowing how overwhelmed our public health systems are. But I’m still hopeful. I hope this pandemic inspires people to work in public health. We live in a world where there are infectious diseases, and they’re not going away. There are still problems to be solved, from the smallest to the largest scale.”

—DOUG WEIGELT '13

ON THE FRONT LINES AS AN ICU NURSE

“I’m a surgical ICU nurse at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City, and when NYC became the epicenter of the pandemic in March, we faced a shortage of PPE and had to reuse some of it. I felt apprehensive. My job was caring for the most critically ill COVID-19 patients on my shifts, which run from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.

At one point, we were so overwhelmed with patients that I was assigned to three, rather than two, and often volunteered to work overtime. Nurses also had to take on extra jobs like taking out the trash and changing linens because it was important to limit the number of workers in each patient’s room.

Most of my patients were on ventilators and, unfortunately, didn’t make it. It was heartbreaking, but I was at least able to make their last moments as comfortable as possible and arrange video chats with their families on the hospital’s tablet.

It was difficult, but there was one beautiful part to all of this: the support. Everyone I knew was calling me to check in. Organizations were coordinating deliveries of food, gifts, money and PPE. If I walked down the street in scrubs, strangers would stop to say thanks. And I got to hear NYC clap and cheer for essential workers every night, which made me feel emotional.

The whole experience has given me a greater sense of gratitude. Every day I get to leave the hospital and go home, I’m thankful.”

—KELLY MCGANN '18

UT's International Athletes

Make a





Splash

Imagine being 18 years old, uprooting your life and hopping on a plane (or two, or three) to fly to not just a new country but a new continent to attend college. Not only are you traveling far away from family and childhood friends, but you're suddenly surrounded by a new language, new foods, new clothing, new music, new traditions and more. Taking that chance requires courage and an adventurous spirit.

About 12% of UT student-athletes are international and help make the campus beautifully diverse while they pursue their dreams abroad. Here, four of UT's 58 international student-athletes — from Chile, Italy, Spain and Sweden — share how they've acclimated to their new environment, overcome obstacles and broadened their horizons.

BY DANIEL PAULLING
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRIFFIN DEMPSEY,
TODD MONTGOMERY AND MIKE WATTERS



Hugo Bustamante

Sport: men's swimming

Class: junior

Studies: marketing major, economics minor

Hugo Bustamante '22 still doesn't believe it.

With his teammates cheering around the pool, he looked at the scoreboard following his 100- and 200-yard backstroke events at the annual Sunshine State Conference Championship meet this past February for his times: 49.33 seconds in the former, 1 minute, 48.77 seconds in the latter. Those are times he wouldn't have dreamed of accomplishing while growing up in Chile — and they're times that helped his team win that championship for the first time in school history.

"Saying it out loud, it's actually crazy," Bustamante says. "I surprised myself."

His success comes after spending his last year of high school reaching out to coaches across the U.S., the only place where he wanted to attend college. Just one took him seriously: Phil Murray, assistant swimming coach at UT. Murray's interest, along with UT's impressive ratio of faculty to students, made Bustamante want to become a Spartan. "I thought: the smaller the school, the more family-like it'll feel," he says.

But leaving home was difficult.

"It was a very bittersweet feeling that I was in the right place doing what I loved to do, doing what I was supposed to do, but at the same time just missing family from back home," he says.

After attending the same school for grades K-12, he left behind a bunch of lifelong friends and faced an enormous amount of uncertainty. But he was delighted to find a new, welcoming community on the UT swim team.

On his first day at the UT pool, his then-teammate Dominic Russo '20 introduced himself and immediately took him under his wing. "He opened my eyes to what I was capable of accomplishing at UT," he says. Soon, he bonded with other international swimmers from England, Norway, Canada and Switzerland.

Being chosen as a co-captain by his teammates for this school year when he's only a junior has meant so much to him. "It gives me so much more confidence moving forward," he says.





Giulia Tatini '22 credits her teammates with helping her transition to life at UT.

Giulia Tatini

Sport: tennis

Class: junior

Studies: international business and finance major, criminology and criminal justice minor



Distance From Home:
5,080 miles



Hometown:
Florence, Italy

As a teen, Giulia Tatini '22 came to Naples, FL, as part of a one-year exchange school program and had originally planned to return to Italy to complete grade school and college. But as her friends began getting recruited by U.S. coaches and she learned more about UT, the tennis player changed her mind.

In Italy, she says, she would have been forced to choose between academics and a full-time tennis career, but going to UT allowed her to earn a degree and keep playing. "There is no other country in the world that is able to offer the same experience and the same opportunities that the U.S. does for athletes," she says. "In the U.S., athletes are the heroes. I love the importance that is given to sport in the U.S."

What's made her transition to UT simple? That's easy: her teammates. During a March tournament in South Carolina, she and four teammates competed against five other teammates in a cooking competition that Al DuFaux, head

coach of women's tennis, ruled a tie. In fact, cooking is one of Tatini's passions. She has made her teammates popular Italian dishes like pasta carbonara, pasta with clams and the dessert tiramisu. In return, they've taught her how to make American staples like mac and cheese and cheesecake.

"All of the girls on my team, I consider them my best friends," she says. "It's not easy to find a group of people who get along like that." When they're not practicing, competing or cooking together, they're eating out together — usually at Mexican restaurants, which is exciting to Tatini because there aren't as many of them in Italy.

Tatini, who had a 3-1 record in doubles play this past year, has enjoyed meeting students from all over the world at UT and looks forward to what the future will bring. "I love learning from different cultures and also sharing my knowledge with them," she says.

Petronella Hjort

Sport: women's golf

Class: sophomore

Studies: international business and entrepreneurship major, finance minor

Hometown:
Malung, Sweden

Distance From Home:
4,751 miles

Petronella Hjort '23 looked out one of the windows of her home in Malung, Sweden, during the middle of May and was quickly reminded why she decided to attend UT. It was nearly summertime, and it was still snowing.

When looking for a college two years ago, she wanted to be somewhere warm, somewhere she could play outside year-round — rather than practicing her driving into a net indoors or putting artificial turf in her family's garage for nearly eight months a year. Hjort narrowed her search to Florida because she has family members in Orlando and Fort Lauderdale.

What convinced her to go to UT was a conversation with Missey Jones, head coach of women's golf. "She is the nicest person I have ever met and supports our team 100%," says Hjort. "She is a great coach who cares about us and makes us better people and golf players."

There were obstacles at first, such as getting past the language barrier. "In math class, when the professor asks what's 5 + 5, I know in my head that's 10, but I have to translate it,"

she says. "You're like one second behind everyone else, or two."

Some of her favorite moments at UT have included teaching phrases from the Swedish language — like "Hi, how are you" and "My name is" — to her teammates. "Swedish is a very funny language. Have you seen *The Muppets*? The Swedish Chef? They get surprised by how it sounds. Most people laugh at me when I'm on the phone," she says.

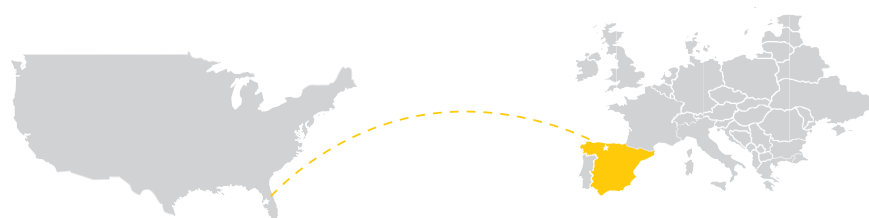
On the golf course, Hjort shot an average of 81.5 during her first year (including a season-low 76 in the third round of the 2020 Lady Moc Classic) and hopes to become a professional once she graduates. After all, going pro is in her DNA. Her brother, Benjamin, plays in the Nordic Golf League, and her aunt Maria McBride plays on the LPGA Tour.

Connecting with an instant support group of teammates is one of the most fun aspects of her life now, because before coming to UT, Hjort had played only individually. She's invited all of her teammates to visit Sweden — during the summer, of course.



Petronella Hjort '23, who is from Malung, Sweden, loves that the Tampa weather allows her to play golf outside year-round.

Juancho Fernandez



Sport: men's soccer

Class: senior (academically), junior (athletically)

Studies: international business and management major

Distance From Home:
4,279 miles

Hometown:
Oviedo, Spain

While Juancho Fernandez '21 was in high school, a recruiting advisement agency filmed him playing soccer and pitched him to various U.S. universities. "To be honest, that makes it seem easier, instead of starting from zero," he says. Soon enough, the agency got back to him with several scholarship offers and photos of campuses and cities. He decided on UT without even visiting.

"Being 20 minutes away from the coast — in Spain I live 10 minutes from the beach — it had everything I was looking for," Fernandez says.

His biggest challenge during his first year at UT was improving his English. When opening a bank account, he was nervous. So Zach Soufl '18, the men's soccer team captain at the time, kindly offered to go with him and translate.

After he settled in, he was thrilled to scratch his travel itch by visiting locations that are a little easier to get to now, like Cuba, Colombia, Panama, Guatemala and New York.

He's noticed many interesting differences between living in the U.S. versus Spain. With academics, he never had syllabi in Oviedo, so he loves how organized his coursework is. "I also feel like I was so much more advanced in some aspects, such as in mathematics. However, I was fascinated by how most of my American classmates and coaches felt comfortable with public speaking," he says.

Observations abound on the soccer field too. "I realized how my American teammates focus on details such as punctuality and respect to the coaches. This prepares you for the real world. In our culture, we learn to fight and show courage when you compete," he says. Plus, there have been surprises when wandering around Tampa. For instance, everything in America is bigger, like buildings, cars and portion sizes. Speaking of mealtime, he's had to get used to eating earlier — lunch in Spain is 2-3:30 p.m. and dinner is 9-10:30 p.m.

But once he puts on his cleats, everything feels familiar. The forward scored a team-high eight goals during the 2018-2019 season before suffering a knee injury that kept him from playing last season. He's a captain this fall, so he can pay it forward and help first-years adjust to UT life.

Adrian Bush, head coach of men's soccer, is impressed by Fernandez's work ethic and commitment. "During the pandemic, he returned to Spain for UT remote learning. That

meant taking classes from midnight to 4 a.m., which is no easy task. Despite that, he had a 3.63 cumulative GPA this spring — not too bad for a young man who spoke very little English when he arrived on campus," he says. 📍



Juancho Fernandez '21 is now a captain of the men's soccer team.



After saving an unconscious woman in a home fire, Lt. Amy Judy '92 was awarded the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor.

Courage Under Fire

Lt. Amy Judy '92, who risked her life during a rescue, doesn't want to be called a hero. But her community honored her in two unexpected ways.

BY JEN A. MILLER '02
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEX MCKNIGHT



In her nearly three decades working for the Charlotte County Fire and Emergency Medical Services department in Punta Gorda, FL, Lt. Amy Judy '92 has responded to a lot of distress calls. But the one that came in very early on the morning of Jan. 20, 2019, felt different. This didn't seem like a false alarm. "It felt more urgent," she says. And it was: A one-story home was on fire.

When she went into the house, the smoke reached from 2 feet off the

ground all the way to the ceiling, so she had to crawl for better visibility. She wanted to check all the rooms for a woman who hadn't gotten out in time. A hose full of water should have followed Judy into the house but didn't, making the mission significantly more dangerous. Still, she kept going.

Judy opened every door in the house except one — which was stuck. So she grabbed another firefighter, who helped her force open that door. Then they found out why the door

had been stuck: The missing woman, lying unconscious on the floor, had been blocking it. Judy and two other firefighters carried the woman to the lawn and gave her oxygen and other medical care until she was taken to a medical center. The woman regained consciousness and lived.

Despite her heroic effort, the ever-humble Judy is hesitant to accept praise. "You're just doing your job," she says.

FROM SPARTAN TO FIREFIGHTER/EMT

Judy, who spent her early childhood in upstate New York before moving to Florida, came to UT based on "a vibe," she says. "I loved how it felt when I walked into Plant Hall." She thought she'd study communication in the beginning but switched her major to business management. While she was one semester away from graduating, her boyfriend at the time was studying to be an emergency medical technician (EMT). She looked at his books and told herself, "Wow, I want that."

After graduation, she gave up a prestigious sales job and instead went to EMT school at what is now Florida SouthWestern State College's Port Charlotte campus. She was first hired at a non-emergency transport service and later hired by Charlotte County, where she's been for the past 27 years and is now a lieutenant.

Within a few months of being hired as an EMT, Charlotte County announced that it was merging the EMS and fire departments, and she was encouraged by the county to go to fire school. While female firefighters are still rare (only 4% of career firefighters were female as of 2018, according to the National Fire Protection Association), that wasn't the case locally, because all of her county's EMTs who were physically able to go to fire school were prompted to do so. She now manages a team of four to five people.



Only 4% of career firefighters in the U.S. are female — and Lt. Amy Judy '92 is part of that small group.

On being called a hero: "You're just doing your job."

-LT. AMY JUDY '92

Lt. Amy Judy '92 was invited to fly with the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds as a "Hometown Hero."



Most of the time, being a firefighter is a job like any other. At the start of her shift, Judy's team is briefed on what happened on the last shift, including EMS updates, any fires and calls, and what daily duties they have on tap. "It's a job that's not so terribly exciting until it's very exciting," she said. Fires like the one described are rare: It was only the second "save" of her long career — but a monumental one.

A HERO'S REWARD

In the weeks and months that followed the fire, Judy was recognized in a couple of major ways that took her by surprise.

In February 2019, she and the three firefighters who responded to the call were given the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor, which is the equivalent of the military's Medal of Honor but for firefighters, law enforcement officers, civil defense officers and emergency services officers. And guess where she keeps it? In her closet. "It's an outward symbol of an inward reward," she says. "Maybe someday it'll live someplace, but for now it's tucked away."

The accolades didn't stop there. The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, which is an air demonstration squadron and the third-oldest formal flying team in the world, regularly honors people through its "Hometown Heroes" program.

Before an air show, they ask the local community to nominate people worthy of a guest flight. Judy was one of about a dozen people nominated for a flight before the Florida International Air Show in November 2019 — and she won.

It wasn't as simple as hopping into a plane for a joyride. The Thunderbirds fly F-16s, which can climb 30,000 feet per minute and reach speeds of over 1,500 miles per hour. In an orientation, she learned how to eject herself from the plane, deploy her parachute "and all the things that can go wrong," Judy says, with a laugh.

Judy also met with a doctor to learn how to breathe and stay conscious during the flight. That's because the Thunderbirds fly so fast and accelerate so quickly that anyone inside faces an additional pressure: that of extreme G-forces. We all feel G-forces just by being on the Earth — it's the planet's gravitational pull. But because of the F-16's speed, and the maneuvers the pilot makes, those inside the plane can feel G-forces up to 9Gs, meaning nine times the gravitational pull of the Earth. It's not uncommon for inexperienced flyers to pass out.

Unlike what she expected, take-off was "not like getting shot out of a

rocket," but smooth. Once they got up in the air and broke through the clouds, "it was absolutely beautiful," she says. Her pilot did a series of stunts: roll overs (where he spun the plane through the sky like a moving pin-wheel), inversions (flying upside down) and a 9G climb. Her stomach wasn't happy the entire time, but she didn't pass out, which makes her proud. The pilot even let her fly the plane for a bit. "It was exhilarating," she said.

BACK ON THE GROUND

Life hasn't changed too much since Judy's brush with the clouds. It's mostly back to the usual routine — except that her day-to-day duties now include handling COVID-19 calls. "We're the first responders for people calling in saying they have a fever," she says. "We're exposing ourselves to people who maybe haven't been tested yet and don't know whether they have it, so we are trying to make sure that we're keeping ourselves as safe as possible."

She's proud of her work and her family too. She's married with two children: one son is a nuclear engineer with the U.S. Navy and the other is an accountant. "At least somebody in the world does numbers. That's not my forte," she says.

Just saving lives. And flying at 9G. 🚀

ALUMNI REPORT

Even in difficult and uncertain times,
the Spartan spirit will lift you up.



PHOTOGRAPH: COLTON MORGAN

CLASS NOTES

1950s

Joyce Newell Sundheim '56 has written two nonfiction books. One is called *Rolling Thunder: Stomping Out Existence*, a biography about her father. The other is called *Escape to Alaska*, about a 15,770-mile journey from Florida to Alaska with her then-husband, Edward Sundheim, in a 10-year-old Nissan truck. She's researching her next book, *Remembering the 1950s at The University of Tampa*, which will include history and personal stories from contributors.

1970s

The American Legion Department of New Jersey was honored by the New Jersey Communications, Advertising and Marketing Association. They received a gold award of excellence in print media for their newspaper with a print circulation of 40,000, the *New Jersey Legionnaire*. Managing editor of the publication, **Gary Cooper '70**, accepted the award. Cooper is also the commander of Lt. John Farnkopf American Legion Post 401, Monmouth Junction.



"Officially graduated! It has been such an honor to attend The University of Tampa. I will be forever grateful for this amazing opportunity. It saddens me how fast it ended, but I feel very excited for what comes next. I could not have done it without the love and support of my family. Gracias, mamá y papá!"

—VIA LINKEDIN IN MAY 2020 FROM
LUCIA RODRIGUEZ KRETZ '20

Jerry Headley '72 was recognized by his hometown newspaper, *The Winchester Star*, as the most decorated soldier in the Northern Shenandoah Valley region in Virginia. He served in Vietnam and was awarded five Silver Stars, three Bronze Stars, three Purple Hearts and an Air Medal.

Rick Thomas '72 wrote an article for *Tampa Bay Business & Wealth* in January about protecting yourself and your employees in case anyone becomes disabled. Thomas is the CEO of Thomas Financial, a financial services agency that provides life insurance, retirement planning, wealth management and employee benefits to high-net-worth individuals and businesses.

Terry Grantham '75 was inducted into the Florence Athletic Hall of Fame in January. He graduated from McClenaghan High School in Florence, SC, in 1971 as a three-sport star.

1980s

Kevin Johnson '82 owns the Gale River Motel and Cottages in Franconia, NH. Even though it closed to paying customers during the pandemic, he decided to offer free rooms to local residents who either test positive for COVID-19 or live with someone with COVID-19 and can't keep their distance from them at home. This provides them a safe place to quarantine. Read more about Johnson's story in "Lending a Hand" on page 22.

H. Wayne Huizenga Jr. '85, of Delray Beach, FL, was reappointed by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to the Board of Governors of the State University System for a seven-year term.

Lisa Blackburn Ullven '86 wrote the soon-to-be-published book *Secrets to Sustainable Solutions: Tips From Business, Science and Non-Profit Experts*. It is dedicated to the late R. Jack Munyan, professor emeritus of computer science, and other mentors she met at UT.

Kim Morris '88 is a consultant for Lord Green, a Dallas-based sustainable-building consultancy that was part of *Inc. Magazine's* Best Workplaces article.

FROM THE OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS

Show the world your Spartan spirit by switching to a UT specialty license plate. The UT plate can be purchased for \$27 (in addition to the regular tag fee) at your local DMV any time of year, regardless of your plate renewal month (Florida residents only). For each \$27 spent on the license plate, \$25 goes toward funding scholarships and University improvements.



1990s

Davelis Goutoufas '90 is running for property appraiser in Hillsborough County. He's a cigar shop owner and former banker.

Lori Pillsbury '93 was promoted to laboratory and environmental assessment division administrator for the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Zach Ramos '93, an art department coordinator and set decorator who works in the film and TV industry, was featured in a Q&A in the *Times Square Chronicles* about coping with self-isolation during the pandemic.

Gail Sadler '95, MSN '98 was named Nurse Practitioner of the Year by the Florida Association of Nurse Practitioners. She's been a nurse practitioner for more than 22 years and owns West Coast Family Practice in Tampa.

Cathy Salustri '95, a freelance writer and former *Creative Loafing* editor, is under contract to purchase *Gabber*, a weekly newspaper in Gulfport, FL. The deal was in the *Tampa Bay Times*.

2000s

Erradame "Papo" Morales '00 was interviewed by HorseRacingNation.com in April about his switch from working in finance in Florida to working for AmWest Entertainment, a private advanced deposit wagering company based just outside Louisville, KY. He's a program coordinator who directs the company's simulcast operations.

Charles F. Scherer '02 was appointed as the regional executive director in Broward and Palm Beach Counties for the Children's Home Society of Florida, a statewide nonprofit organization founded in 1902 with a mission of "building bridges to success for children."

Stacy (Estes) Yates '02 worked with Jacqueline R. A. Root and the Scarfone/Hartley Gallery to organize a first-of-its-kind "Art-Lovin' Ladies Event." The women explored the Meridian Scholar and Friends of the Gallery patron print collection vaults, and purchased some of these treasures for their art collections to support future gallery programming.

Tampa Mayor **Jane Castor '81** was in attendance.

Maj. Richard Farnell '04 is a U.S. Army active duty officer who works in the Pentagon. He's traveled to a myriad of countries around the world (including two combat tours in the Middle East), led large organizations, published many articles and built programs that maximize efficacy and cohesion.

Tyler Martinolich '05, executive director of the Tampa Hillsborough Film and Digital Media Commission and a part-time faculty member at UT, helped bring a production of the film *Lady of the Manor* to campus. The belated coming-of-age movie, which is directed by Justin Long and features actor Ryan Phillippe, filmed scenes in Fletcher Lounge and the Registrar's Office.

William Franchi '06, an attorney at Franchi Law, has created a podcast called The Lawfather Podcast. One recent guest was Keith Todd, UT vice president of development and university relations, who discussed UT's annual Give Day fundraiser.

Carina Homann-Santa Maria '07 was honored by the Delta Zeta national sorority as a "35 Under 35" honoree. The first-generation American is a licensed clinical social worker and the executive director of Shelter Inc., which provides housing for youth in crisis. Since taking over in 2018, she has doubled the organization's foster care program, expanded the utilization of their emergency group homes by 80% and implemented evidence-based policies to provide services to the community's most vulnerable population.



Roxanna Gandia-Laforet '08 and her family

Roxanna Gandia-Laforet '08 welcomed a new addition to her family, Catalina Estela, on Jan. 4 at Northside Hospital in Atlanta, GA.

AHOY, MATEYS!

Join the UT Tampa Bay Alumni Chapter for its annual pirate-themed brunch before the Gasparilla Day Parade on Saturday, Jan. 30. This festive event welcomes more than 500 alumni and friends back to campus each year around Plant Hall.



SPARTAN SPOTLIGHT

Commander in Teeth

Elizabeth Nuñez '92

Dentist Elizabeth Nuñez '92 has dedicated over three decades of her life to public service. Today, she leads two national programs within the largest integrated health system in the U.S. — the Veterans Health Administration (VA).

Her path began as an undergrad. "I saw a group of ROTC cadets running and thought I'd join them to get in shape," says Nuñez, the daughter of Cuban and Ecuadorian immigrants. During boot camp, the biology major nabbed a competitive Guaranteed Reserve Forces Duty Scholarship, which covered full tuition for her last two years at UT.

In the decade or so that followed, she earned two advanced degrees from the University of Florida — a Master of Science in Teaching and a Doctor of Dental Medicine — and served in various locations as an Army officer in the National Guard, in the Reserves and finally on active duty. As a captain, one of her tasks at Fort Stewart in Georgia was to make sure soldiers were "dentally ready" to deploy to Iraq.

In 2003, she returned to Tampa, where she grew up, to work for the VA. Within a few years, she was promoted to two prestigious leadership roles.

One of her not-so-small jobs is running the National Homeless Veteran Dental Program. Since 2006, she has overseen and advocated for the delivery of quality dental care for over 230,000 at-risk veterans and managed a multimillion-dollar budget. It's work that she finds deeply meaningful — because her job is about more than just protecting people's pearly whites.

Nuñez has published research about the positive impact that oral health care has on homeless vets. "Aside from increased self-esteem, we've shown that the provision of dental care makes it more likely that they will gain employment and permanent housing, and complete their

VA-sponsored rehabilitation programs," she says. The VA is at the forefront of ending homelessness among veterans, and Nuñez feels honored to be part of that effort.

In 2008, Nuñez was tapped to take on a second role as the founding national director of dental education, promoting lifelong learning for the more than 3,400 VA dental professionals.

Somehow, she still finds time to do hands-on, clinical dental work twice a month for homeless veterans at the James A. Haley VA in Tampa, while maintaining a busy family life.

Her achievements were recently recognized by Tampa Hispanic Heritage, an organization that inducted her into its 2019 Hispanic Leadership Class. "I'm very proud to dedicate my life to public service," says Nuñez, who adds that a dream "third career" would be to teach at UT. "It has been the right path for me."

—AMANDA PRISCHAK



Rebecca Wike Malone MSN '08 has joined Sharon Hospital Medical Practice's primary care office in Sharon, CT, as an advanced practice registered nurse. She most recently served as the director of nursing at High Watch Recovery Center in Kent, CT.

Tom Cunningham '09, vice president at JPMorgan Chase & Co. in Manchester, NH, participated at a panel in February, alongside other finance and banking professionals, to give advice to Keene State College students in Keene, NH.

2010s

Stephanie Doppelt '10 joined the Miami Beach office of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices EWM Realty, one of the nation's largest residential real estate firms, as an associate.

Cassie Greatens '10, M.Ed. '12, co-founder of the CASS

Contemporary gallery in Tampa, was named as one of the "Top 10 Under 40" by *South Tampa Magazine*. The article highlighted the community's brightest rising stars in business, entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Amber Hardy '10, an athletic trainer with the Taipei American School in Taipei, Taiwan, was interviewed by the National Athletic Trainers' Association for an online article about the COVID-19 pandemic in Taiwan.

Ryan Thompson '10 was interviewed by TheWorldNews.net about his professional soccer career. He's an assistant coach and player with Austin Bold FC, part of the United Soccer League.

Sarah Gottlieb '11 joined the Tampa law office of Freeborn & Peters LLP in April. She's an associate in the litigation practice group and

a member of the insurance brokerage team.

Shannon Kenny '11 wrote an article for MindBodyGreen.com in March called "The Top 6 Sources of Waste in Your Kitchen and How to Avoid Them." She's the founder of Mama Eco, a platform to help eco-conscious people and businesses make better decisions for the environment.

Sean Murphy '11 is the owner and co-developer of Paddock1 Premium Garage Condos. Construction has recently started in Tampa on the 66-unit garage condo complex for luxury cars, and it's expected to be completed in late spring of 2021.

Felipe Ramirez MBA '11 has been promoted to senior vice president at Bank of America.

Michael Rodriguez '11 starred in *The Man of Destiny* as Napoleon Bonaparte in

February through the Archive Theater Company at Pioneer Farms in Austin, TX. He was also featured in the theater's inaugural show, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, in September 2019.

Carli Todd '11, director of player development for the University of Texas baseball team, helped Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Chris Archer deliver 18 boxes of coffee (as well as bagels, muffins and coffee cake) to more than 200 staffers at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg. Archer, who has a home in St. Petersburg, and Todd both used to work for the Tampa Bay Rays.

Bianca Burrows '12 spent more than 15 hours creating a 6-by-8-foot mural honoring Kobe Bryant's life. It included newspaper clippings about him and his daughter Gianna shortly after their passing this past January.



Bianca Burrows '12 created a mural honoring Kobe Bryant.

SHARE YOUR NEWS!

Want to be in Class Notes? Submit your update at ut.edu/alumni/alumni-updates.

CHECK OUT THE UT JOURNAL ON THE WEB!

Visit ut.edu/alumni/ut-journal for links to each issue's feature articles and Spartan Spotlight profiles — and then share them on social media to show your school spirit.

Denise Birungi Evans '12, youth coordinator at the Hillsborough County Anti-Drug Alliance (HCADA), was profiled in an HCADA e-newsletter. One of her focuses is the Students Working Against Tobacco program, which trains students to raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco use (including vaping) among their peers.

Jeff Fiore '12 led his former high school swim team at St. John's Preparatory School in Danvers, MA, to its fifth-consecutive state championship title in his first year as the team's coach.



Yehuda Galili '12 and his wife, Meghan, pose above.

Yehuda Galili '12 began a new job as a hematology and oncology fellow and was named internal medicine chief resident at Orlando Health. He and his wife, Meghan, also had a daughter, Madeleine Abigail Galili, in September 2019.

Jason Hague '12 has been promoted to first vice president at Marcus & Millichap, the largest national commercial real estate brokerage firm. Hague has worked at the company, which is based in Tampa, FL, since 2014 and specializes in multifamily

properties. He's been involved in 70 transactions with a total value of \$224 million.

Joshua Helms MBA '12, COO of Physician Partners of America in Tampa, was named as one of the "Top 10 Under 40" by *South Tampa Magazine*. The article highlighted the community's brightest rising stars in business, entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Melissa Santell '12 released her debut cookbook, *Hi, I'm Hungry: Recipes Inspired by Everyday Moments*, this past March.

Mike Trobiano '12, co-founder of Dash Creative Group LLC, was profiled by the *Tampa Bay Business Journal*.

Douglas Weigelt '13 is a quarantine public health officer for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Philadelphia. He's been responding to the pandemic through screening people for symptoms, providing educational materials, developing contact tracing protocols and more. For more information about his work, see "Lending a Hand" on page 23.

Liz Anthony '14, M.S. '15 was featured as "One to Watch" by *South Tampa Magazine*. She created protein bites that are now sold at 10 Publix locations in Tampa and St. Petersburg and in Fitlife Foods across Florida.

Chris Fuhrman '14 was featured on the Tampa Bay area's Bay News 9. He was furloughed from his job as a high school athletic trainer when COVID-19 caused Florida schools to go remote, so he joined AdventHealth to help screen patients outside their urgent care locations to gauge whether it was safe for them to enter the clinic. This fall, he'll begin UT's physician assistant medicine graduate program.

Chelsea Catherine MFA '15 spoke remotely to UT students in April as part of the "Writers at the University" series. She's the winner of the Mary C. Mohr Award from *Southern Indiana Review* and the author of the forthcoming book *Summer of the Cicadas*, which won the Quill Press Award.

William Lloyd '15 was a featured speaker in a webinar

titled "U.S.-Japan Cooperation on Vocational Training and Education in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations" in April. It was organized by the East-West Center, an organization that promotes better relations and understanding among people and nations of the U.S., Asia and the Pacific through cooperative study, research and dialogue. Lloyd is a visiting fellow at the center and has a master's degree in American Foreign Policy from the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

Logan Clemens MBA '16, CEO and co-founder of WanderSeat, was written about in the *Tampa Bay Business Journal*. WanderSeat is a Tampa startup that helps fill empty seats on airlines.

Olivia Daniels '16 and Matt Mangini '16 are engaged. They met in a mathematics class in Plant Hall and plan to take their wedding photos on campus, because the University means so much to them. Daniels is a staff assistant in the Lowth Entrepreneurship Center.



FIND US ON FACEBOOK

Did you know that there's a thriving and growing community of more than 5,800 UT alumni who follow The University of Tampa Alumni Association's Facebook page? It's a great place to find information about upcoming alumni receptions and stories about alumni who are making a difference.

SPARTAN SPOTLIGHT

Cooking Up a Cure

Chris Whitney '06

Former UT baseball pitcher Chris Whitney '06 makes things happen.

Take the Tampa native's 2018 decision to launch Whitney Transport, a company that hauls bulk materials like asphalt. When COVID-19 arrived, he quickly pivoted to a touchless delivery system that earned him recognition in an April *Tampa Bay Times* article.

But this isn't the first time his accomplishments have made headlines; he also co-founded a successful, Tampa-based fundraiser called Pig Jig that will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year.

That journey began in 2008, when his long-time friend Will Wellman was diagnosed with FSGS, a rare and debilitating kidney disease with no FDA-approved treatments and no cure. Wellman lives without kidneys and undergoes seven-hour dialysis sessions three nights a week to survive.

Looking to help, Whitney and three friends held two benefit walks in 2009 and 2010 for

NephCure Kidney International (a charitable organization that provides education and support to patients and funds research for kidney diseases) that raised a total of \$30,000.

It was a start, but "a walk just wasn't inspiring to us," Whitney says. The fundraiser needed more ... flavor. He and his friends thought about their love of grilling and hatched a new plan: They'd host a contest to see who could make the best-tasting barbeque. In 2010, the first Pig Jig was held in a backyard during a football Saturday.

The event was so popular that they needed to move to larger locations over the years: Armature Works, then Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and they plan to move their next event to Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park. Last year's event alone drew about 8,000 attendees and featured live music and games. In the past decade, Pig Jig has raised more than \$4 million — becoming NephCure's top annual fundraiser.

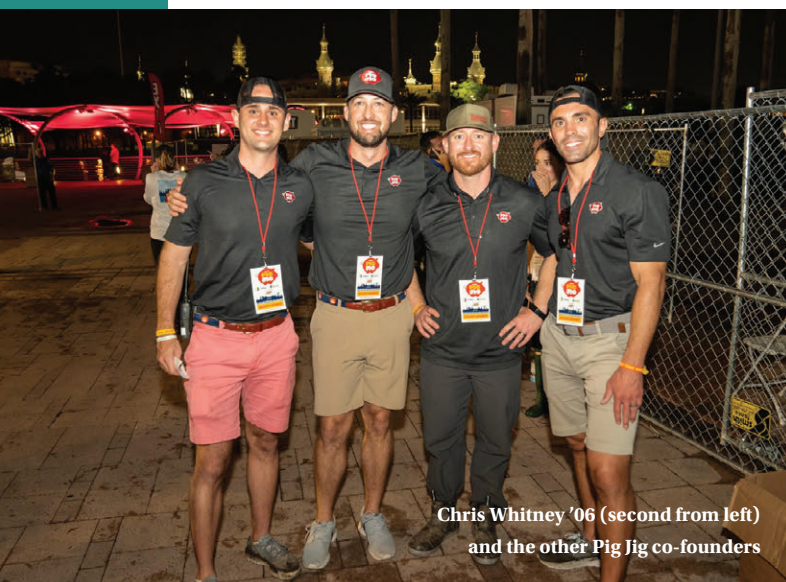
In fact, Pig Jig has been such a hit that he's created a "playbook" for other fundraisers. Now there are two other Pig Jigs — in San Jose, CA, and Colorado Springs, CO — and Whitney, a married dad of two, serves on NephCure's board of directors.

Whitney is grateful for the large number of UT students who volunteer to help at the event annually. While this year's Pig Jig is sidelined due to COVID-19, the organization has committed to deliver a \$100,000 check to NephCure and hopes to raise \$1 million at next year's event.

"When we started Pig Jig, there were no drugs for FSGS," he says. "Today, there are 22 drugs in trials with the potential to better treat and cure this disease."

To learn more and get involved with this fun and worthy cause, visit tampapigjig.com.

—AMANDA PRISCHAK



Chris Whitney '06 (second from left)
and the other Pig Jig co-founders

Tiffany McEachern MBA '16 was invited to be the featured speaker at the American Marketing Association Tampa Bay's event, "Developing an Effective Content Strategy to Grow Your Business," in March. She's a marketing consultant at Tech Data Corporation and has worked in the marketing departments of several Fortune 500 companies.

Garrett Mitchell '16 — also known as Cleetus McFarland on YouTube — has purchased the once-thriving DeSoto Speedway racetrack in Manatee, FL, in the hopes of bringing back Saturday night car racing excitement for the local community.

Jennifer Kveglis '17, a native of Mount Olive, NJ, joined the NBC2 team as a Collier County Bureau reporter in February. She began her career as a morning multimedia news journalist and afternoon anchor at WSNN in Sarasota. At UT, she interned for WTVT/FOX 13 Tampa Bay and City of Tampa Television.



Cody Liner '17, MBA '19

Cody Liner '17, MBA '19 started an exciting new job as a creative specialist for the Tampa Bay Super Bowl LV Host Committee.

Donna Koros Stramella MFA '17 published her first novel, *Coffee Killed My Mother*, in January with Adelaide Books. The novel tells the story of a recovering alcoholic mother, now addicted to coffee, and her anxious 17-year-old.

Hassani Watson M.S. '17 is a strength and conditioning coach for various Chinese Olympic teams, training world-class athletes.

Brittany Bing '18, M.S. '19 was invited to present at the TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) 2020 International Convention and English Language Expo in Denver, CO. Her game, "Make Learning English Fun and Educational With the Alphabet Jungle," motivates users to select their character and embark on a quest to find objects throughout the game that correspond with letters from the English alphabet.

Morgan Lumb '18 was highlighted in an article in *The Eagle-Tribune*, a newspaper in North Andover, MA, about local women's basketball players who excelled in both high school and college.

HCP Associates welcomed **Shirley Babu '19** as a content development specialist in January. She was formerly a communications intern with HCP and focused on developing social media content for clients.

Patria Liz Casaldue '19 was featured on WFLA Channel 8 News as part of its Highlight-

ing Heroes segment. She's a registered nurse at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa.

Caroline Forester '19 was featured in a *Michigan Live* article highlighting the five most accomplished athletes from Marian High School in Bloomfield Hills, MI, since the year 2000. As a senior lacrosse player, she helped lead her school's team to the 2015 Division I state finals and became the first player in state history to score more than 300 goals in a high school career. In college, she was one of the top three highest goal scorers in UT women's lacrosse history with 114 career goals, and she helped UT earn a No. 1 seed in the 2019 NCAA tournament.

Myles Hammond '19 is pursuing a doctorate in genetics and genomics at University of California, Davis.

Andrew Kew '19 was recognized as the catalyst for the New England Black Wolves' 16-to-10 win over the Halifax Thunderbirds in February in front of 5,502 fans at Mohegan Sun Arena in Connecticut. Kew, a rookie, scored three goals and had four assists in the National Lacrosse League game.

Rachel Sutton M.S. '19, assistant director of admissions for graduate and continuing studies at UT, and her wife were written about in *The New York Times*. The article is about how they met and fell in love.

Katy Todd '19 was interviewed in a [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)

article called "Are You Ready For Generation Z?"

Tutit, an on-demand tutoring app created by **Nicholas Villa '19**, offers virtual tutoring to assist students. During the pandemic, LaunchLife — the company that operates tutit — announced it would reduce its price and not take any profit through the end of the spring semester. This announcement was featured in *The Ridgway Record*, a Pennsylvania newspaper.

IN MEMORIAM

Frances M. Saxon '49
Henry Bernat '53
Homer E. Hunnicutt '53
Jack Lamb '55
Charles D. Nabors '58
Jill B. Studstill '58
Jack E. Espinosa '59
Rodney Thompson '59
Luis Garcia '65
Charles D. Burkett '67
John Wolfe '68
Frank Permuy '70
Michael Skaletsky '73
Ernest R. Meredith '74
Willie Simmons '75
James D. Ruyle '76
Edward V. Ford '78
Judith Gammonley '79
James D. Schiefelbein '79
Andrea P. Krysienski '81
Robert J. Slaymaker '86
Susan A. Jones '92
Ellen M. Leatherman '00
George D. Annunziata '03
Katrina M. Prokop '04
Elizabeth A. Rheaume '08
Kristofer L. Getty '09
Countiss P. Williams '13

Faculty

Wing Barfoot
James Fesmire
Patricia Schult



UT CLASS OF 2020

EVERYWHERE ... SPARTAN STRONG





For the first time ever, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, UT hosted a virtual commencement on May 9 to celebrate 1,752 graduates. Various members of the UT community came together quickly to create this unique event, which included remarks by President Ronald Vaughn (immediate left, center); Jim MacLeod, chair of the UT Board of Trustees; Stephanie Russell Krebs, vice president for student affairs and dean of students (immediate left, bottom); the academic deans; David Stern, provost and vice president for academic affairs; and student challenge speakers. Graduates also received personalized videos with a unique diploma presentation (immediate left, top). Congrats to all the new alumni!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT RONALD L. VAUGHN





COVID-19 AND BEYOND

Despite a worldwide pandemic that required unprecedented decisions and actions, UT has remained committed to strengthening the educational and co-curricular experience for students. Here's a broad look at UT's varied accomplishments over the past academic year.

No matter how you look at it, the 2019-2020 academic year will forever be defined as the year we had to evacuate campus — not because of a hurricane — and provide remote instruction, as well as services, to students at home around the country and globe.

Fortunately, the UT community rose to the occasion with resiliency, adaptability and determination. It's very similar to how UT has faced many challenges throughout its history. While hurricanes, world wars and economic depressions have thrown obstacles in its path, UT has always stayed true to its mission to provide an excellent educational experience to deserving students. With continual development — and the commitment of so many faculty, staff, administrators, parents, alumni, students and friends — we've steadily built UT into a model, independent, metropolitan university.

But now we are challenged by a severe health and safety crisis combined with a dramatic economic downturn. Since March 16, when the University had to close the campus and pivot to remote learning, we have worked tirelessly to balance a return to campus with implementing important safety and health measures for the UT community.

Today we are all learning how to respond to COVID-19, and we will be learning together how to navigate this new normal. Learning can and does occur through multiple modalities, and our vibrant campus community will support those many ways of *learning by thinking and thinking by doing*, which are all part of the UT mission.

Despite COVID-19, there was plenty to boast about in 2019-2020. We have stayed focused on surviving, thriving, moving forward and improving our educational experience. While the 2019-2020 academic year came to a surprising conclusion, it was a successful year. No matter how long COVID-19 has the world in its grip, UT will persevere, and we will continue to adapt and improve, and provide students the education they need to be successful.

Face masks — part of UT's Spartan Shield Health Safety Initiative — can now be seen all over campus.



UT's full-time enrollment has quintupled, and total enrollment has quadrupled since 1995.

NEW SPARTANS

UT began Fall 2019 with a new full-time enrollment record of 9,628. UT's full-time enrollment has quintupled, and total enrollment has quadrupled since 1995. We've had 23 successive years of

all-time enrollment records, and we've done this while so many schools are struggling and shrinking.

Of course, this past year has been quite a battle, as we have worked

within the dynamic pandemic environment. There has never been as much uncertainty in the college decision-making process, yet we hope to continue the University's steady enrollment growth as we help students achieve their educational goals.

UT was recognized as one of 77 universities accepted into the 2020-2021 cohort of First-gen Forward institutions. The First-gen Forward designation recognizes institutions of higher education that have demonstrated a commitment to improving experiences and advancing outcomes of first-generation college students.

UT was also included in Phi Theta Kappa's 2020 Transfer Honor Roll, which identifies the top four-year colleges and universities that create dynamic pathways to support transfer students. UT is one of only 122 institutions nationwide selected to receive this honor, and it is awarded to the top 25% of colleges that earned the highest transfer-friendliness ratings.

UT'S REPUTATION SOARS IN RANKINGS

UT's quality educational brand continues to be recognized with many high rankings, recognitions and distinctions.

■ For the 13th year in a row, UT's Sykes College of Business was named as an outstanding business school by The Princeton Review and recognized as one of the 248 best business schools in the world. For the fourth year in a row, UT has also been named to *Bloomberg Businessweek's* Best U.S. Business Schools of 2019-2020.

■ UT's speech communication program was considered the nation's top undergraduate communications program this year after receiving the Rex Mix Program of Excellence Award at the 2019 annual convention of the National Communication Association.

■ UT was also named to *Kiplinger's Personal Finance's* list of the 400 Best College Values for 2019, based on objective measurements of academic quality and affordability.

■ In 2018, UT was one of only about 100 select institutions invited to join the Coalition of Access, Affordability and Success. This elite membership continues to positively impact UT's student academic profile.

■ More than 40 million visitors a month use [study.com](https://www.study.com) to research potential schools. The site selected UT's finance program as No. 4 in the U.S. based on academic and career resources for finance students, the quality of education and program accessibility, among other factors.

■ UT was named as one of the top 50 schools in the country for entrepreneurship studies by The Princeton Review and *Entrepreneurship* magazine.

■ UT's RN program was ranked No. 1 in Florida out of 154 programs by [RegisteredNursing.org](https://www.registerednursing.org), a nursing advocacy organization.

■ Several UT programs were recently recognized in the inaugural 2020 PLEXUSS Global Rankings:

- No. 3 in Florida for Best Marine Science Program (In addition, [BioExplorer.net](https://www.bioexplorer.net) recently ranked our marine science program in the top 10 for marine biology within the U.S.)
- No. 4 in Florida for Best Criminology Program
- No. 4 in Florida for Most Prestigious Private College or University Offering a Political Science Program



UT created new undergraduate-level academic programs in actuarial science, and communication and speech studies.



UT had a 100% pass rate on the national NCLEX nursing licensing exam for the past two years.

ACADEMICS

UT remains focused on advancing existing programs, developing new academic programs, improving educational facilities, recruiting talented faculty members, pursuing the highest program accreditations, supporting faculty innovation and making enhancements to the academic environment.

For Fall 2019 we added 22 full-time faculty positions, and over the past academic year, we also recruited 18 new full-time faculty members who will begin this fall. This large infusion of intellectual talent bodes well for UT's future.

As always, we've continued to focus on education quality improvements and accreditation initiatives. In Fall 2019 we received new accreditation approval from the National Association of Arts and Design (NASAD). This new accreditation positively impacts 10 of our academic programs, and UT is only the second private university accredited in Florida by NASAD. We also received new accreditation for our teacher education programs from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and for our forensic science program from the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC). Only 49 of these programs are accredited nationally.

Importantly, we continued our efforts to develop new academic programs for a more secure enrollment future for students and the institution. We created new undergraduate-level academic programs in actuarial science, as well as

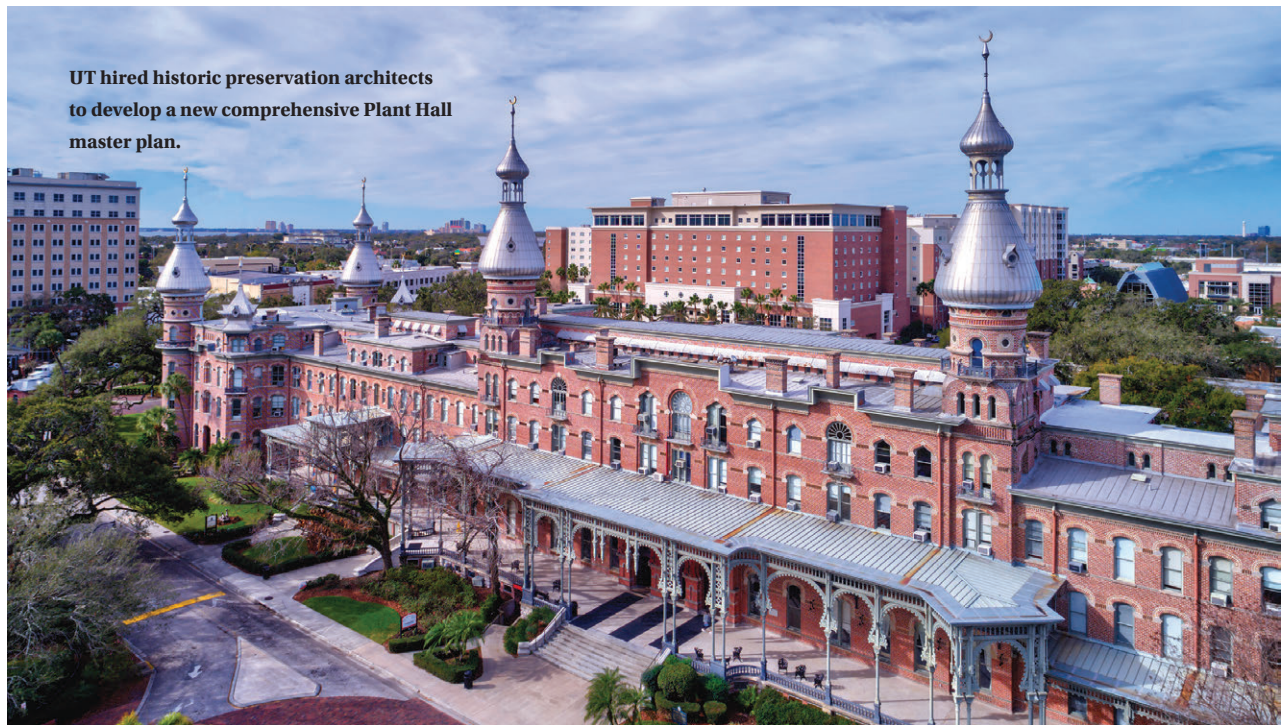
in communication and speech studies, and we also created new graduate-level academic programs in business analytics and professional communication.

Students in UT's academic programs continue to excel. While I can't list all of the departmental accomplishments, the following are a couple of examples:

■ UT's nursing program continues to shine. UT had a 100% pass rate on the national NCLEX nursing licensing exam for the past two years — one of only 87 nursing programs out of 2,123 in the U.S. to achieve this in 2019.

■ UT was again ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* in the top tier in the category Best Regional Universities (South) in its "Best Colleges 2020" guidebook. The Sykes College of Business was also named as a top undergraduate business program. Noteworthy this year is that UT was named in six lists, including: 1) Best Value Schools; 2) Most Innovative College; 3) A+ Schools for B Students; 4) Top Performers on Social Mobility; 5) Best Colleges for Veterans; and 6) Best Undergraduate Teaching.

Due to COVID-19, we prepared for and implemented the sudden shift to remote learning, which included remote student support and services. We also successfully executed four virtual commencement programs (one for each University college), which included a personalized virtual message and students' virtual diplomas presented in a minaret.



UT hired historic preservation architects to develop a new comprehensive Plant Hall master plan.

CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION

The University continued with physical campus transformations that eliminated more of the old, hand-me-down buildings and improved our overall education and service environment.

Construction of the Ferman Center for the Arts continues, and completion is targeted for late fall. This 90,000-square-foot facility is a game changer for the College of Arts and Letters and its 50 major, minor and certificate programs. They'll soon have one of the best facilities in the country.

The new Science Research Laboratories building — located on West Kennedy Boulevard — was designed and constructed this past academic year, just in time for the 2020-2021 academic year. These labs will accommodate growth and development in the natural sciences.

We also continued planning for upcoming building projects, including phase II of the Fitness and Recreation Center, a proposed new parking garage and a new technology building. Despite economic and pandemic disruptions, we were ultimately successful with our bond issues. In fact, our bond offerings were over-subscribed and investors made numerous comments about the UT success story. These new bonds, along with financial support from donors, will help secure our future for important new facilities and eliminate the 100-year-old fairground buildings that still exist on campus.

Lastly, we hired historic preservation architects to develop a new comprehensive Plant Hall master plan. This plan will provide a thorough review of Plant Hall and a prioritization of the numerous restoration aspects needing attention in this almost 130-year-old building. This plan is critical to the preservation of this signature building for both the institution and the community.

I'm also pleased to report that this year we continued our transformation of Information Technology and Security (ITS), which began more than five years ago when we reorganized the ITS department and began rebuilding much of our campus technology infrastructure. UT added international certification for excellence (ISO/IEC 22301) in maintaining an effective and resilient business continuity program. UT is the only U.S. university to hold this distinction. We're excited to add this to our international certification for cybersecurity (a unique certification we've held since 2015).

This past year also saw the modernization of Wi-Fi coverage in several campus buildings and areas, as well as upgrades of audiovisual equipment in classrooms, voice-over IP phone systems and installation of additional remote printing stations in multiple areas of campus.

CAMPUS LIFE AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Student Affairs division quickly pivoted in March to a full-service remote division based on the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff continued to serve students individually through videoconferencing technology, turned face-to-face programs into virtual offerings and fully utilized social media to educate, engage and entertain students.

Medical services within the Dickey Health and Wellness Center led the health response to the COVID-19 crisis and continues to be at the center of our ongoing health initiatives. Our partnership with Tampa General Hospital, the area's only trauma hospital, is extremely valuable. The Office of Residence Life quickly created processes for quarantining and isolating students during the pandemic. This tough and unprecedented situation was handled professionally and smoothly.

Even before the COVID-19 crisis, UT was already moving into virtual spaces through its online orientation. Due to UT's enrollment growth and space constraints, we transitioned to a hybrid orientation model that encompassed an online orientation along with an 11-day Week of Welcome that featured numerous programs and events.

This year, we added several new student organizations and club sports. Student organizations, clubs and teams now total about 300. One of those organizations — *The Minaret*, UT's student newspaper — was one of five student newspapers in the country to be given a green seal of approval by NewsGuard, a company that evaluates websites for their credibility and transparency. We also expanded the Fraternity and Sorority Life community to 27 by adding the national sorority Delta Phi Epsilon.

Finally, we completed the second year of our partnership with the Jed Foundation, a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting emotional health and preventing suicide among young adults. This year, the partnership focused on researching and assessing UT's mental health programs. Through this collaboration we reviewed best practices as we prepared for the launch of a new strategic plan to address student mental health needs, which have increased nationally.



During the pandemic, students used videoconferencing technology with staff.



UT's Fraternity and Sorority Life community continues to thrive.



UT won three Sunshine State Conference championships in the past year: one in women's basketball, one in women's cross country and one in men's swimming.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

UT continued to excel financially with a 25th year in the black. We worked on plans for our next capital campaign and continued to secure some leadership gifts, although our campaign launch has been slowed by the pandemic.

Thanks to the leadership of trustees and alumni, we ended the academic year with a record "Give Day" fundraising effort to provide additional support for students needing emergency financial aid. Despite being a virtual event, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, volunteer boards and friends contributed \$263,373 — a 41% increase over last year.

UT's online communications were transformed with a complete web redesign. The new website was launched in August, along with a new intranet — SpartanNet — for UT faculty, staff and students. The website also offers a news subscription service so the extended UT community can receive the latest news and developments from campus.

ATHLETICS

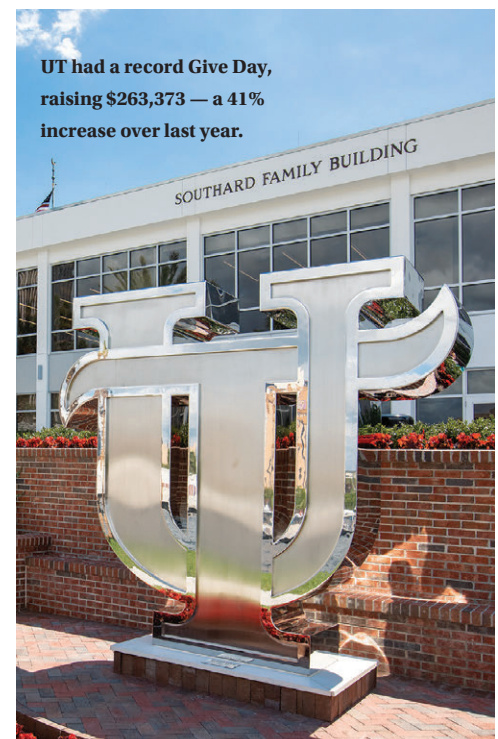
Even with a shortened and disrupted athletics season, UT did well. This can be seen through a variety of athletics recognitions.

UT won three Sunshine State Conference championships: one in women's basketball, one in women's cross country and one in men's swimming. The UT men's swimming team went undefeated this regular season for the first time in school history. Six teams were either in NCAA postseason competition or were selected for the postseason and unable to compete due to COVID-19.

UT had three Division II National Players of the Year: Kiira Riihijarvi (women's golf), Ross Dickerson (men's lacrosse) and Claire Swanson (women's lacrosse). We also had 34 athletic All-Americans, and numerous SSC conference awards were given to both athletes and coaches.

Expectations are high for additional awards for UT student-athletes, as 155 athletes made the Dean's List in a broad range of academic programs. The overall average cumulative GPA across all athletes was a 3.22 on a 4.0 grade scale. Two teams, women's swimming and women's rowing, had spring semester average team GPAs of 3.7. Thirteen swimmers on both the men's and women's teams were selected for the Scholar All-American team.

Lastly, UT completed a comprehensive review of athletics protocols and procedures for athlete concussion management.



UT had a record Give Day, raising \$263,373 — a 41% increase over last year.

OPERATIONS

UT Operations began the academic year with emergency management, focusing on hurricane preparations and threats. It ended the year working on the COVID-19 crisis. This emergency management required leadership from many groups and subgroups, including the Emergency Operations Team, the Emergency Communications Group, Night Operations, the COVID-19 Core Group, the COVID-19 Calendar Group, the Health Safety Task Force and the Tampa Bay Emergency Manager meetings. These various groups worked to enhance safety, ensure Clery Act compliance and facilitate training and operational preparations. Staff also underwent an active shooter mitigation program.

Campus Safety personnel dealt with the flood of rental scooters on UT property, North Boulevard traffic congestion and parking limitations. A new Campus Safety Security Assistant (CSSA) program was launched to incorporate student monitors at residence hall desks as extensions of safety department services.

Mail Services completed its first full year operating UT's new postal services with the innovative intelligent locker system. The onset of COVID-19 did not deter mail delivery, as the intelligent parcel lockers offered a safe way to transfer packages and letters.

Programs and services for veterans were further developed and improved as UT continued to be recognized as a military-friendly university by Victory Media and Military Advanced Education. A new veterans' honor society called Salute was also founded. The compliance audit from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs resulted in a rank of "Commendable." The auditor's letter said that "it is notable that the student veterans who provided feedback during student interview sessions expressed great satisfaction with their learning experiences at UT and with your certifying officials' handling of their VA education benefits."



Mail Services handled more than 6,000 parcels in one recent week in August.



President Ronald Vaughn and his wife, Renée Vaughn

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED COMMITMENT

The activities highlighted are only a few examples of what we've accomplished this year. All in all, UT had an exciting year of achievement, and progress was not dimmed by the historic pandemic.

We thank all of our trustees, Chiselers, Fellows, Counselors, alumni, faculty/staff, students, parents and friends for your help and support. It is through our collective commitment to UT that we are able to transform lives of students for generations to come.

Sweet Solitude

Long before social distancing was trendy, this student hit the books by herself decades ago in Smiley Hall. The two-story Smiley Hall, built in 1958 around a sunny courtyard, is one of the oldest residence halls at UT (along with McKay Hall). It's also the smallest "traditional" residence hall, housing roughly 130 students. Originally a women's-only dorm, it was named after David E. Smiley, who served on UT's Board of Trustees 1936-1960.





**The world is adjusting to a new normal.
But some had a head start. SPARTANS.**

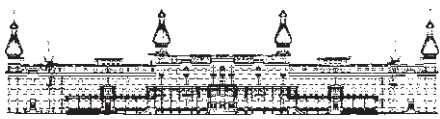
YOU have helped students, past and present, be SPARTAN READY.

YOU have helped them prepare to be successful leaders in our society and live fulfilling lives of purpose. SPARTANS are strong, agile and resilient. They are ready to care for their families, help a neighbor, lead a company and manage a patient's treatment.

What Matters Most at UT? YOU.



People. Opportunity. Impact.



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THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Pre-pandemic, three students rehearsed Richard Wilbur's English-verse translation of Molière's *Les Femmes Savantes* (*The Learned Ladies*). Though the students' in-theater performance had to be canceled due to COVID-19, UT offered a free reading of the play that was performed remotely by the students and streamed through Zoom.

PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT GONZALEZ