A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE?

Beto O’Rourke fights an uphill battle to unseat Greg Abbott

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Abbott, O’Rourke take primary wins


Abbott won with 67.4% of the vote, and O’Rourke with 91.2%. The two candidates will face off in the general election Nov. 8.

Tonight, Republicans sent a message to keep Texas on the path of opportunity and prosperity," Abbott said in a victory speech on Twitter. "Together, we’ll secure the future of Texas and protect the individual liberties we all cherish.”

Abbott defeated seven challengers, and O’Rourke three. Prior to the election, polls showed both of them were favored to win.

If O’Rourke wins the general election, he would become the first Democratic Texas governor since 1995.

State Rep. Victoria Neave Criado (D-Dallas) said at a Latina Leaders Unite voting drive at Eastfield on Tuesday that she thinks a lot of voters are upset about the extremism they’ve seen in the Republican Party.

“We’ve heard everything from the grid failures to making sure that our schools are fully funded,” Neave Criado said. “There’s just lots of issues that are driving people to the polls today. … It can be everything from the critical race theory issue that is sort of permeating school board elections to the discrimination and the equality that we’ve been advocating for.”

O’Rourke, a former U.S. representative from El Paso, ran a tight election for senator against Ted Cruz in 2018, losing by only 3 percentage points. O’Rourke was also a 2020 presidential candidate.

Abbott is running for his third term as governor. His Republican opponents criticized his COVID-19 response, saying his mask mandate early in the pandemic was extreme. Abbott’s later ban on mask and vaccine mandates was criticized by Democrats.

Sylvia Garcia, a Mesquite resident who voted at Eastfield, said Abbott’s COVID-19 response factored into her voting decisions.

“I want someone that’s going to represent us more,” Garcia said. “When we needed someone to stand up for us, it just felt like [Abbott] wasn’t really looking out for us. It seems like he was more looking out for the political.”

Last week, Abbott asked state child welfare officials to investigate any report of transgender youth receiving hormone therapy or gender transition surgery, saying the practices constitute child abuse under current Texas law.

Veronica Lopez, a social worker from Dallas, said this is a key issue for her.

“Something that definitely motivated me was seeing Abbott’s recent post against trans youth and their families,” Lopez said. “So that was definitely something that reminded me I need to come out and vote.”

Lopez said immigration is also an important issue for her. Her parents are immigrants, and she frequently has contact with immigrants through her work.

O’Rourke has said he wants to make it easier for immigrants to come legally to the United States.

“We need America to step up and convene the countries of this hemisphere to solve the interconnected crises of failed states, climate catastrophes and the mass movement of people who — through no fault of their own — are unable to stay in their home countries,” O’Rourke said in a Sept. 24, 2021, opinion column in El Paso Matters.

The results were still too close to call at press time.

The top Democratic candidate, Rochelle Mercedes Garza, earned 44.6% of the vote and will face a runoff against Joe Jaworski at 20.4%.

Incumbent Dan Patrick won the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor with 77.4% of the vote. Mike Collier at 43.3% and Michelle Beckley at 29.5% will face a runoff for the Democratic nomination.

Dallas resident Angela Ragans said there wasn’t a particular issue that motivated her to vote, but she came out because it is an important thing for everyone to do.

“I just believe that every time we do have the opportunity to have our voice heard, then we should definitely get a good candidate that’s going to make sure that they help represent our beliefs,” Ragans said.
Voting numbers shift under new restrictions

By CARLOS GUZMAN
Managing Editor
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Republican voters outnumbered Democratic voters by nearly double in the first early voting session under expanded election restrictions.

Senate Bill 1 prohibited drive-thru and 24-hour voting and added restrictions to mail-in voting applications. Data from the secretary of state showed a resulting increase for in-person voting under these new provisions.

This year, 974,589 of the 1.5 million early votes were Republican, trouncing the 557,615 early votes cast by Democrats.

Jennifer Stoddard, chairwoman for the Dallas County Republican Party, celebrated the Republican turnout for early voting.

Stoddard said numbers for Republican voters who participated in early voting were about 20% more in 2018.

"SB 1 greatly limited the number of mail-in ballots, which has been known for many years to be a problem with regard to being able to track the integrity of those votes," Stoddard said.

According to preliminary data from the secretary of state, about 10% of voters cast ballots early.

Since the passage of SB 1, Melissa Alfaro, co-founder of the Hey Chica movement, worries the bill will decrease Latino voter participation.

"And it's absolutely ridiculous and uncalled for," Alfaro said. "If [voting] wasn't a real way to enact change, we wouldn't see leaders working hard to change access to the ballot box. We've seen races where people lose or win by 50 votes."

Alfaro claims SB 1 will also affect disabled and elderly voters.

Texas Rep. Rhetta Bowers is a staunch opponent of SB 1 and participated in a walkout to prevent the bill from passing during the 2021 legislative session.

"There's a lot at stake when you look at the mail-in ballot system not working because of the new laws," Bowers said.

Under SB 1's limitations, The New York Times found 30% of applications for mail-in ballots in the state of Texas were rejected.

Kendel Skudder, a Democratic watch party attendee, said a lot of those who had their ballot rejected were legally registered voters.

"They can go on in a year or two to get a bachelor's degree, " May said. "And they're going to the polls when they're used to voting by mail."

Republican voters tend to vote in-person regardless of demographic.

Even with an unexpected increase, Stoddard doesn't expect early voting numbers to overtake in-person votes.

"History and trends show Republicans are most likely to vote on Election Day," Stoddard said.

Bowers and Alfaro continue their fight to increase democratic turnout despite restrictions.

"Not having many people turn out is concerning, but we'll see what happens," Alfaro said.

—Manny Willis contributed to this report.

Early voting inside C Building, like most polling locations across Texas, had little activity.

Student debt multiplies, showing no decline

By HARRIET RAMOS
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The government's pause on federal student loan payments as part of COVID-19 relief is set to expire May 1.

According to Education Data Initiative, as of August 2021, 42.3 million people in the United States owe money on federal student loans.

An additional 2.4 million owe money on private student loans, which were not paused due to the pandemic.

Josh Mitchell, a Wall Street Journal journalist and author of "The Debt Trap," spoke at the Feb. 22 Dallas College town hall about the student debt crisis. He said the student loan system is "broken."

"If you ask anyone what their mortgage rate was and how much they paid for a house, they will tell you down to the decimal point," Mitchell said. "If you ask students how much they owe and what their interest rate is, no one knows. And they don't know what the tuition is every year, and they don't know why the balance is rising. ...And all of a sudden, it turns into quicksand."

Mitchell said student debt in the United States just continues to get worse. The federal student loan program, which started in 1958 as a way to make college accessible to a broader range of students, has resulted in colleges charging higher tuition, which in turn leads to students taking out bigger loans.

"This is a broad problem," Mitchell said. "And it has very negative consequences on people's lives, whether it's their ability to buy a house or their ability to save for retirement."

According to the Education Data Initiative, student loan debt is growing six times faster than the U.S. economy and totals about $1.75 trillion — up from about $500 billion 15 years ago.

Chancellor Joe May said at the town hall that many families don't know there are affordable options to get an education, and that is why he helped create the Dallas County Promise four years ago.

The Dallas County Promise is a partnership of colleges and high schools that helps students graduating from participating high schools pay for tuition not covered by federal and state financial aid.

Dallas College also offers early college high school, a program that allows high school students to take college level classes and graduate with an associate degree the same time they receive their high school diploma.

May said there are 3,000 high school students set to graduate with associate degrees this year.

"They can go on in a year or two to get a bachelor's degree," May said. "And they're going to work in our public schools and other employers here in the area ... making great salaries and they have no debt."

Dallas College charges $79 per credit hour, which covers textbooks and class supplies. According to the Education Data Initiative, the average cost per credit hour at a private university is $1,092.

Katrina James, the managing director of Dallas County Promise and one of the town hall panelists, said young people and their parents need to be educated about payment options for college education so they aren't easily led into debt.

"The education around what college costs and what is a grant versus a loan, those kinds of conversations need to happen with students and families in seventh or eighth grade, ninth grade at the latest," James said. "By the time senior year comes around, there's not a parent who is fallen into the trap of wanting their student to go to the dream school so that they take on $20,000 a year in Parent PLUS loans and trap themselves. That education piece is crucial."
Upward Bound gets students off the ground

By CARLOS GUZMAN
Managing Editor
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Andrea Estrada’s name is scribbled on a large whiteboard labeled “the brag board” in Upward Bound’s second floor office. Underneath her name is a list of six universities that have offered her scholarships.

“As of right now, I’ve won the $1,000 scholarship for PCA,” Estrada said while completing another scholarship application on her laptop. “I have an offer for $100,000 from St. Louis University for their Vice President Scholarship, and I’ve also gotten $60,000 offered for LSU.”

Estrada, a business major, is one of 70 current students who credit their academic achievement to Upward Bound.

“I used to just go to school and do my classes,” Estrada said. “After Upward Bound, they helped me be more involved with [Dallas College]. They’d make me stay after school… I had activities during the weekends.”

Upward Bound is a TRIO program designed to help disadvantaged and first-generation students succeed in higher education.

Every student who enrolls in Upward Bound is assigned a coordinator for academic support. The previous director and coordinators were promoted in December after a staff reshuffle. Currently, two coordinators help 70 students with scholarships, college applications and coursework.

Christina Ybarra, who was previously the administrative assistant for Upward Bound, is one of the new coordinators. Ybarra helps 35 students — including Estrada — stay on top of their academics.

“It’s been a bit hard on our students because they loved the old team,” Ybarra said. “They’re getting to know me in a different way.”

Coordinators work with individual students for six years, even following up with them after graduation.

According to an annual performance report, 40 out of 63 students currently enrolled in Upward Bound since 2017 graduated with an associate’s degree. Upward Bound’s new director Nikomo Logan said the program helps students progress to the next stage.

“There is a good percentage of students who went beyond their associate,” Logan said. “They got their bachelor’s, and some are even working on their master’s degree. [Upward Bound] works.”

Despite heavy caseloads, the coordinators seek to form one-on-one connections with their students.

Coordinator John Walsh champions the social aspect of the program as a primary component of success. Despite limitations presented by COVID-19, he and Ybarra spend most of their time interacting with students.

“I want to know who [the students] are because I could better understand what their passions are,” Walsh said. “And from there, I can provide different resources for careers. It’s opening a new world of education for them.”

Walsh doesn’t think Upward Bound is a replacement for counseling, but he said he sees improved performance in students who approach him for academic guidance.

“[Upward Bound] gives [students] a sense of purpose, gives them hope,” Walsh said. “There’s somebody in their corner to assist them.”

Estrada said she doesn’t know yet where she will continue her education, but she knows Upward Bound will help her decide on a university.

“[Ybarra] makes it interesting for me to keep looking for better opportunities,” Estrada said. “She helps with everything in my life.”

Experiential learning provides hands-on career practice

By HARRIET RAMOS
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Dallas College students can get real-life work experience and get paid while going to school.

Chris Schlarb, practicum and clinicals coordinator, said the Experiential Learning Department matches students with available internships and apprenticeships and helps students polish their resumes and interviewing skills.

“We call it earn while you learn,” Schlarb said. “So basically, instead of having a job at like a fast-food restaurant where you’re not really developing those professional skills … we get you a job where you’re paid and you’re developing those skills and you’re gaining that experience in your career pathway.”

According to Schlarb, in most cases Experiential Learning does not require students to have a certain GPA or number of credit hours to participate in the program.

Students can email experientiallearning@dccc.edu for more information.

Daniel Brookshire, a computer science major, is in his second internship.

He was hired by the information technology company GXA to set up workstations for clients around the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

“The most valuable part of all this is getting to see the technology I study in class being used in real world applications,” Brookshire said. “[I’m] gaining job experience and exposure to day-to-day work processes.”

Brookshire said that his internships run for 12 weeks, but Schlarb said some internships last anywhere between six months and a year depending on the area. Apprenticeships are typically a year long.

Schlarb said the number of employers the college partners with is constantly growing.

Currently there are about 80 local businesses, including hospitals and software companies, that have hands-on learning options available for Dallas College students.

The amount of money students get paid for internships and apprenticeships varies, but Schlarb said they strive to get employers to pay a minimum of $15 per hour, which is the living wage for Dallas County.

“We should value our students’ knowledge and their experience,” Schlarb said. “They’re bringing in their skill set and their time.”

Title V, a government-funded grant program focused on improving higher education for Hispanic students, also offers an internship program.

Jonathan Estrada, Eastfield’s grant program coordinator, said students who get internships through Title V must be Hispanic or eligible for financial aid, have at least 30 credit hours and a 3.0 minimum GPA.

Estrada said the program is working under a new grant and the reorganization to Dallas College delayed getting staff in place. Now they are focused on getting the word out to students.

“Now we’re fully staffed and OK,” Estrada said. “We had a resource fair [last] Wednesday … and we had about 75 to 100 students come through.”

Students can find out more information at dallascollege.edu/dhsi.

Schlarb said the goal of Experiential Learning is to improve the lives of students for the long term.

“It really helps them in the end, once they graduate, with finding a job in a position that’s full time,” Schlarb said. “So I really see it as kind of like social justice work in a way.”
Available scholarships go unclaimed

By CARLOS GUZMAN
Managing Editor
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Scholarship applications opened for Dallas College students on March 1.
Students can apply for scholarships for the fall semester until the June 1 deadline. Currently, there are over 400 available scholarships.

As a Title V grant program coordinator, Elena Martinez’s job entails hosting scholarship workshops and assisting students with applications.

“[Students] just need to know that [scholarships] are there,” Martinez said. “For example, there was one scholarship for dramatic arts, and it was for $500. Not one student applied last semester.”

In 2021, 18 out of 225 application-based scholarships had zero applicants. Among these scholarships, four of them were for hospitality majors and three were for theater majors.

Scholarship coordinator Lori Tatsch manages the scholarship database for the Dallas College Foundation, which has increased marketing over the past three years to help students find scholarships.

Tatsch said most scholarships with no applicants range from $100 to $2,500.

“[Students] are probably not familiar with how to search for a scholarship,” Tatsch said. “With our system, it’s actually quite easy.”

The Dallas College Foundation uses the search engine myScholarships. Students can filter scholarships by major, campus and keywords. Students can visit this search engine at foundation.dallascollege.edu/myscholarships.

Additionally, the search engine offers a general application which automatically places students in pools for eligible scholarships.

“You have to keep in mind when you’re doing [the general application], there’s probably a thousand other students in the system,” Tatsch said.

Tatsch and Martinez say students shouldn’t gamble on gaining scholarships through the general application alone.

Certain scholarships in the general application pool have optional essays or questionnaires.

“Make sure you’re making yourself a strong candidate,” Martinez said.

The general application connects students with application-based scholarships, but students must manually search for scholarships that are not under the application pool.

Keywords on myScholarships’ allows students to find scholarships based on ethnicity, hobbies and financial situation.

Itzay Gallegos is received a scholarship for being a first-generation student as well as the first person in his family on track for college graduation.

“[Counselors] reached out to me and told me about scholarships,” Gallegos said.

Gallegos thanks his counselors for directing him towards scholarships, but he said he wishes Dallas College hosted more scholarship workshops and activities. Although scholarship openings are advertised, Tatsch said students should keep an eye out for scholarships with different deadlines.

Certain scholarship applications close as early as the end of April. Currently, students cannot search scholarships by deadline.

Tatsch urges students to actively search for scholarships they’re eligible for as soon as they can.

“It’s free money,” Tatsch said. “There’s scholarships out there for everyone.”

Construction for new student services building underway

By HARRIET RAMOS
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Construction on the Student Services and Academic Building is underway.
Eastfield’s construction manager Brandon Murrell said the city of Mesquite issued a civil permit to the college Feb. 15 and crews started breaking ground the next morning.

The new facility will be located in front of C Building and will house many of the services now in C, such as Financial Aid, Veterans Affairs and the Health Center.

“A lot of it is really just breaking up the concrete, removing a lot of that so we can start doing the grading work,” Murrell said.

Murrell said the project is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2023. The new building is part of the $1.1 billion bond package that Dallas County voters approved in May 2019.

According to the bond website, a total of $62.4 million was budgeted for the Student Services and Academic Building.

Eastfield nurse Nancy Abdo said she is excited about the possibility of having more space for the Health Center.

“Hopefully it’s going to be a little bit bigger … so we can provide more services and better service,” Abdo said.

Facilities manager Adam Qualkenbush said the construction crew was supposed to break ground in January but there was a delay in getting some of the building materials.

“Everything was backed up just because of COVID and the supply chain,” Qualkenbush said. “[Construction is] going to happen any day which is why the fences are starting to go up and they’re preparing for it.”

Temporary fencing is in place around Parking Lots 1, 2 and 3, and the parking lot closures are making access more difficult for some students.

Sara Leos, an early college high school student and business major who drives to campus, said she was late to class one of the first days the fences were up.

“It’s more difficult because I used to park in front of the G Building, but now I have to park by the S Building,” Leos said. “This morning I got here, there was no parking, — it was full.”

Jaziel Alejo, a criminal justice major, said even though the parking lots are more crowded now, it hasn’t caused any problems for him yet.

“[Traffic is] a bit slower coming in from Motley,” Alejo said. “But other than that … it’s fine.”

Murrell said the new building will take up part of Parking Lot 2, but he doesn’t know of any plans to replace the lost parking space. Parking Lots 1 and 3 are only closed temporarily.

“There will still be parking [in Lot 2], but we will be losing some spaces,” Murrell said.

“That’s really the only lot that will be reduced.”
In honor of Women’s History Month, we compiled a collection of accomplished women who helped change the world. Their stories were rarely mentioned in history or taught in school, but their impact is still felt today.

Edmonia Lewis was the first African American and Native American female sculptor. Furthermore, she is the first American sculptor to achieve national and international prominence. She is well known for creating portraits of anti-slavery heroes.

In A.D. 859, Fatima al-Fihri established the al-Qarawiyyin mosque, the first religious institution in Morocco. In 1947, it was renovated to a state university where students learned about religion and science.

In 1947, Maria Tallchief became the first Native American female to be a prima ballerina. She also became the first American to perform in the Paris Opera Ballet and the Bolshoi Theatre, both world-renowned venues. Her role as the Sugar Plum Fairy in “The Nutcracker” made the performance one of the most famous in the world.

Alice Guy-Blaché was one of the first filmmakers to make a narrative fiction film, and the first woman to direct a film. She later became the Gaumont Film Company’s head of production, directing nearly all Gaumont films made until 1905. From 1906 to 1907, she directed about 100 short sound pictures using Gaumont’s Chronophone, which effectively became the first music videos.

Sarojini Naidu fought for civil rights, women’s emancipation, anti-imperialism and India’s independence from British rule. In 1925, she became the first Indian woman to be appointed president of the Indian National Congress. In 1917, she helped establish the Women’s India Association (WIA) and was sent to London to fight for women’s votes in the Joint Select Committee.

On April 26, 1777, Sybil Ludington traveled 40 miles on horseback in the pouring rain at night to announce the British were coming. When she came back home, 400 troops had assembled and were able to force the British to retreat. The battle was later known as the Battle of Ridgefield and her hometown was named Ludingtonville in her honor.

In 1942, Marina Raskova, the first female navigator in the Soviet Air Force, created an all-women Night Bomber Aviation Regiment. They flew in small wooden planes with no radios, parachutes or armor. While fighting off gunfire and frostbite, they successfully managed to perform over 30,000 bombing raids on the German military. Because of how quiet their planes were, they earned the name the Night Witches.

The Trưng sisters led the first Vietnamese independence movement with 80,000 predominantly female soldiers, creating a stalemate against Chinese rule. They later conquered 65 citadels and ruled for two years until their defeat in A.D. 43.

In 1908, Huda Sha’arawi founded Egypt’s first female-run philanthropic society to help impoverished women and children. In 1923, she founded the Egyptian Feminist Union to support women’s suffrage. Later that same year, she publicly took off her veil in protest. Several Egyptian women stopped wearing their veils in solidarity.

The Trưng Trắc and Trưng Nhị (A.D. 12-43)

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The Night Witches

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The Sciences

Rachel Carson (1907-1964)

Rachel Carson’s book “Silent Spring,” published in 1962, exposed the government for polluting streams and harming the environment with man-made chemicals and pesticides. She brought environmental issues to the U.S. public for the first time and launched an environmental movement. She was later awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1980.

Margaret Hamilton (1936-present)

Margaret Hamilton directed the Software Engineering division of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Instrumentation Laboratory that developed the Apollo spacecraft’s guidance and navigation system. Her team tested Apollo’s software for Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin’s moon landing.

Annie Dodge Wauneka (1910-1997)

In 1951, Annie Dodge Wauneka became the first woman elected to the Navajo Tribal Council, and she later served as an adviser to the U.S. Surgeon General and the U.S. Public Health Service. She created an English-Navajo medical dictionary and helped the Navajo people access modern medicine.

Mary Anning (1799-1847)

Mary Anning was a fossil collector, dealer and paleontologist. At 12 years old, she discovered the first ichthyosaurus fossil and later found the first complete fossil of a plesiosaurus and pterodactylus, as well as numerous fossilized feces. Her many Jurassic marine discoveries challenged the way scientists at the time believed the world was developed.

Wangari Maathai (1940-2011)

Wangari Maathai was the first East and Central African woman to earn a doctorate degree as well as the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. She also created the environmental organization the Green Belt Movement in 1977 in response to reports of rural Kenyan women who had difficulty feeding themselves and their families due to droughts, deforestation and other environmental changes.

Politics

Benazir Bhutto (1953-2007)

Benazir Bhutto was the first female prime minister of Pakistan, serving from 1988-90 and 1993-96. She advocated for healthcare and housing programs, building schools and bringing electricity to the countryside. She also created organizations to protest military dictatorship, corruption and violence.

Madonna Thunder Hawk (1940-present)

Madonna Thunder Hawk is a prominent indigenous activist who became one of the first followers of the Red Power Movement. She was involved in the 1969-1971 Occupation of Alcatraz, a 19-month long protest designed to convince the federal government to adopt the Indian Self-Determination Act.

Dolores Huerta (1930-present)

Dolores Huerta advocated for safer working conditions and unemployment and health care benefits for Hispanic migrant farm workers. She also cofounded the Stockton chapter of the Community Service Organization, a grassroots group which fought to end discrimination and improve the economic situation of Hispanics.

Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005)

Shirley Chisholm became the first Black congresswoman in 1968 and the first Black woman to run for president in 1972. She pushed for domestic worker benefits, advocated for improved access to education and fought for immigrant rights. She also served on the Education and Labor Committee as one of the Black Caucus.

Patsy Mink (1927-2002)

Patsy Mink was the first Asian-American woman and the first woman of color to be elected to U.S. Congress. While serving in the House of Representatives she introduced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to fund schools for poor communities. She also co-authored the Title IX Amendment of the Higher Education Act, which prohibits sex-based discrimination in schools. In 1971 she became the first Asian-American woman to run for president.
Harvesters blaze to nationals

Eastfield beats North Lake with no time to spare

By MANNY WILLIS
Contributor
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The Eastfield Harvesters captured the South-Central District Tournament championship Saturday with a dramatic 84-83 win against the North Lake Blazers, claiming a spot in the NJCAA Division III Men's Basketball National Tournament in Rockford, Illinois.

The win came from a late floater from captain Geontay Davis with 0.3 seconds left.

“I’ve never taken the game-winning shot before. Normally I’d defer, but my teammates told me not to,” Davis said. “We kept being aggressive. It’s all surreal.”

The Harvesters last played in the national tournament in 2020 when they lost to Mohawk Valley 93-87 in their second game. They will try to win their second national title, with their first coming in 1997. They finished as runners-up in 2013, 2004 and 1992.

“I’ve been telling them since day one that we have enough to win a national championship, to go to the national tournament. You just have go out there and do it,” coach Anthony Fletcher said. “There’s been some ups and downs, but you gotta have faith in yourself. You have to go out and compete and play hard.”

Eastfield (23-6) entered the post-season ranked ninth in the nation and pushed the Richland Thunderducks to the side in the district semifinals with ease. The Harvesters are now on a five-game winning streak heading into nationals. Their last loss came against No. 3 North Lake, 85-75, on Feb. 12.

“I’m speechless right now,” sophomore guard Anthony Hunter said. “We fought hard, came back and won. We did what we needed to do. Now we go to Chicago to do the same thing.”

In the final, Eastfield did exactly what they planned on doing, keeping the pressure early on in the contest to make it frustrating for the Blazers. Hunter led the scoring in the first half with 10 points, putting the Harvesters ahead by five at halftime, 33-28. Guard Jacore Williams left the game in the first half after picking up a knee injury but eventually returned in the second.

What seemed like an easy first half quickly turned into chaos as the Harvesters lost their grip on the game, falling behind by as many as 13 points with only seven minutes to play. The Eastfield Harvesters never caved in, though, and remained calm. They rallied late to briefly regain the lead only to lose it again.

With 13 seconds on the clock and Eastfield’s season on the line, they had one final possession. Davis was able to dribble past the Blazers defense and shoot a floater that went in to put the Harvesters ahead with just 0.3 seconds left. But a technical was called on the Eastfield bench when they rushed the court to celebrate, giving the Blazers a chance to send the game into overtime.

However, North Lake missed the free throw. The Blazers were able to make a full-court pass and hit their final shot, but it was after the whistle as the Harvesters upset North Lake in dramatic fashion.

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Jamari Robertson carries the plaque before posing for photos on the court. Bottom left, Coach Anthony Fletcher takes in the moment of winning the title before celebrating with his team. Bottom right, Harvesters lift the plaque in their locker room.
Winning on the court and in the classroom

Robertson helps clinch district championship

By EDUARDO CHAVEZ
Contributor
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Jamari Robertson has been an athlete his entire life, and now this son of two coaches is a coach on the floor, helping lead the Harvesters to the national tournament.

“That dude is a warrior,” Eastfield coach Anthony Fletcher said. “He goes up and he battles.”

Robertson’s mother, Shenika, and his father, Silas, are coaches of two different middle schools in Fort Worth. Thanks to his parents, Robertson has seen many situations and learned from everything he has seen.

As he has played the game, his senses have strengthened and he has become more aware of what is happening on the court.

Robertson has averaged 13.2 points, along with three assists and two steals, per game this season. The Dallas Athletic Conference named Robertson the Region V Men’s Basketball Player of the Week for the week of Jan. 24.

Robertson attended Boswell High School, where he achieved first team all-district. This caught the eye of Fletcher, who reached out to Robertson and told him he would be a great fit for Eastfield.

Fletcher said Robertson has a high mental capacity and is a leader on the court and in the classroom.

“Jamari is book smart. He has a high basketball IQ and also a [strong] work ethic,” Fletcher said.

Robertson earned Academic All American recognition in his first year, an honor reserved for student athletes with an outstanding academic record.

Robertson’s mother said she has pushed him to succeed academically and she is proud of him for taking care of business in the classroom.

“His IQ on the court is very parallel to his academic IQ,” Shenika Robertson said.

One obstacle that Robertson has had to face is being away from his home and his family. He stays in Mesquite with his aunt to attend Eastfield, but his parents live in Fort Worth. Robertson said it has been hard adjusting to not seeing his family during the week.

Robertson has one older sibling and two younger. His younger sister is a senior and his younger brother is a freshman. Both play basketball at Boswell High School.

“We’re all growing up and it’s crazy because sooner or later we’ll all be out the house,” Robertson said.

Robertson said he wants to be someone his teammates can look up to and go to when they need something.

The Harvesters head to the national tournament with a 25-6 record after capturing the district title with an 84-83 win against North Lake on Feb. 26. The NJCAA national tournament is scheduled for March 9-12 in Rockford, Illinois.

After this semester, Robertson said he plans to transfer to a four-year school. Fletcher has already started helping him with the process by reaching out to schools and trying to get him where he wants to go.

For motivation, Robertson remembers the late Kobe Bryant as someone who inspired him. He uses the mindset of knowing there is someone else working at the same time as him, to push him to be better.

“The basketball may stop dribbling, but if the grades are still good then I’ll have a lot of places that I can go,” Robertson said.

Eastfield takes five-game win streak to national tournament

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The national tournament is set to be played March 9-12 at Rock Valley College. At-large bids, seeding and schedules had not been announced at press time. Until then, the Harvesters will continue to prepare for the journey ahead.

“We just have to play to our system” Fletcher said. “I’m so proud of these guys.”

The Harvesters have averaged 100 points a game this season, with transfer guard Spencer Simes ranked second nationwide in total points. The high-powered offense isn’t short on weapons when it comes to their attacking play, making Eastfield a serious contender.

“We just have to continue to play hard and play our basketball. Play Eastfield basketball,” Hunter said. “We play fast, hard and play defense. If we continue to do us, we’ll get where we belong.”
OUR VIEW

An open letter to the new chancellor

Dr. Lonon, we would like to congratulate you on your new role as chancellor.

We know you have a long record at Dallas College, including time working under three different chancellors, and we are confident you will move the college forward.

As vice chancellor, you’ve sat down with us and listened to our concerns. You’ve attended our graduation ceremonies and celebrated our achievements. We believe you champion student success.

As you transition into your new role, here are some things we’d like you to keep in mind. We are excited to see the expansion of the Student Care Network and the implementation of Student Success Coaches.

We applaud the plans to increase Dallas College’s baccalaureate programs and realize the consolidation of seven colleges into one means Dallas College is now in a better position to offer these robust programs and services to students.

We also ask you to remember the excellent programs already in place before the consolidation.

Like most clubs and organizations, the Student Government Association’s membership took a hit during the pandemic, and Eastfield’s SGA is down to two members. The college reorganization with reshuffled funds and adviser layoffs further complicated things.

We encourage you to make the Student Government Association and other organizations that advocate for students a priority. Students on all campuses need someone to share their needs and perspectives with administration. Only then can we be sure that Dallas College stays student centric.

It’s also disheartening to see previously well-funded programs struggle due to lack of funding.

Last week our website provider temporarily shut down The Et Cetera website because of an invoice that was 162 days overdue — an invoice we’ve been trying to get paid since last summer. We’ve been told another campus’ student media organization is in a similar situation.

At the end of March our student journalists will participate in the Texas Intercolligate Press Association Convention in Fort Worth. Due to finances, only four will attend. In previous years Eastfield sent groups as large as 10.

We know student media can’t be the only program that’s struggling to get basic things paid for or that’s been given a reduced budget.

Please make funding for all Dallas College programs a priority. Well-funded programs are crucial to our success as students. According to the old adage, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link.

Dr. Lonon, as you do all you can to strengthen these areas, all of Dallas College will be strengthened.

Podcasts should enrich audience, not stoke controversy

Most of the time we follow a YouTube channel or tune in to a podcast because of the host. It’s natural for us to try to connect with the people on our screen, but even then our favorite speakers become less relatable when we can’t view them beyond their persona.

The Joe Rogan Experience is a podcast primed for getting rid of the smoke and mirrors. It’s famous for hosting celebrity speakers in a one-on-one setting — a formula that’s earned it the top spot among Spotify’s most viewed podcasts.

Some of Rogan’s most popular episodes include stubborn progressives like Bernie Sanders and Andrew Yang. Inversely, listeners get to hear from political extremists like Milo Yiannopoulos and Gavin McInnes.

Rogan provides an unchallenged platform and allows anyone to speak in an honest manner. But this can backfire as guests can parrot harmful statements without consequences.

Recently, Rogan got into hot water for allowing his guests to produce vaccine misinformation and conspiracy rhetoric unchallenged.

It’s become such a problem that Spotify performances are protesting by distancing themselves from the platform. So has a fraction of his viewership. I’ve been alienated by Rogan’s constant promotion of fringe politics, resulting in the loss of the individualist charm that made his content attractive.

But the original purpose of Rogan’s podcast doesn’t matter to him now that extremists are causing his viewership to multiply.

Any content can have its political opinion, but a podcast infringes on its target audience when an agenda is set for personal gain.

On the contrary, for podcasts that don’t have to worry about sponsors or pleasing certain audiences, it’s easier for the hosts speak in a manner that feels tailored for the viewer.

For example, This American Life is a thought-provoking examination of North American living and invokes feelings about the vivid nature of our country and its people.

Even during discussions about fringe politics and talking points, TAL never fails to detract from its breakdown of the American experience.

Likewise, Omnibus chronicles peculiar and hilarious life stories. The hosts intend for future generations to hear these small instances of weirdness that occur among average Joes.

I believe the best and most compelling podcasts refrain from discussing larger-than-life people.

Unlike Rogan’s approach with America’s prominent talking heads, I find it easier to relate to average Joes.

With how prone high-ranking podcasts are to controversy, you’re not alone in your frustration when another favorite celebrity falls into the way of cancel culture. In fact, it’s worth questioning the intentions behind controversial statements for how they can inflate audience numbers.

But that shouldn’t be our focus when the takeaway is how easy it is for celebrities to make headlines. As more people begin to voice their opinions, the hosts speak in a manner that feels tailored for the viewer.

For example, This American Life is a thought-provoking examination of North American living and invokes feelings about the vivid nature of our country and its people.

Even during discussions about fringe politics and talking points, TAL never fails to detract from its breakdown of the American experience.

—Carlos Guzman is a managing editor and English major
‘Encanto’ is a gift to Latinx families

Watching Disney’s “Encanto” for the very first time gave me a sense of familiarity. Not only did the characters look like me, but their experiences mirrored mine — from being first-generation to growing up in a society that dictates who I need to be and what I need to accomplish.

The Madrigal’s story begins with their Abuela Alma and Abuelo Pedro who are forced to flee their hometown in Colombia. In an attempt to help Alma and his three children escape, Pedro sacrifices himself. A magical candle appears and creates the family’s new home. As Alma’s children grow up, the candle gives each of them a gift that is then used to help their new community.

“Encanto’s” take on generational trauma is one many can relate to.

I have often found myself wondering why the older generations in my family think the way they do. It wasn’t until I grew up that I had more clarity on this.

Many older generations in Latinx families have been through their own struggles and carry them to this day. In “Encanto,” Abuela does not talk about her trauma very often, but she finally comes to a breaking point when she realizes the pain she has caused her own family. Mirabel, one of the youngest grandchildren, does not receive a gift and feels rejected by her grandmother because of it. In return, Mirabel tries to break the generational trauma by calling Abuela out on her behavior.

In today’s world where therapy and trauma are no longer taboo, many adults are trying to heal their inner child. Mirabel represents this. Mirabel’s sisters, Luisa and Isabela, form part of the grandkids who received a gift. However, as the movie goes on, it is clear that these gifts are too much for them to handle.

Luisa has a hard time opening up and admitting this as she fears her family will see her in a different light. She is perceived as the strong one and continues this facade so she won’t be seen as less.

Luisa’s character represents what so many daughters growing up in Latinx families struggle with as adults.

In her I see so many older sisters who must stay behind or grow up earlier than they should. Often they feel they cannot be vulnerable and express their real emotions, to the detriment of their mental health.

Isabela, on the other hand, is portrayed as the perfect daughter who follows the rules and wishes of her family. She is even willing to get engaged to a man she does not love, but whom her family sees as the perfect match.

Like Isabela, those of us who grew up in Latinx families thought we must fulfill our parents’ every wish to make them proud.

However, I have learned that you cannot always please your parents. There are decisions you must make on your own for the sake of your future and what makes you happy. As Isabela begins to realize this, she finds a way to reinvent herself in her own way and live for herself and not for the approval of others.

This animated film is not the conventional Disney movie. It deals with a lot of important issues that are ignored in our families. I encourage Latinos to watch what feels like a love letter to adults and children in traditional Latinx families.

— Valery Bonilla is a contributor and public relations major

Support will motivate immigrants to keep learning English

Imagine coming to a new country without knowing the language. It feels like you are coming out of a box for the first time and you have no idea of what is going on.

I was born and raised in El Salvador, the smallest country in Central America.

El Salvador has amazing scenery and the greatest beaches for surfing. It is also one of the most dangerous countries in the world and the economy and education are not good.

When my mom and dad asked my brother and me if we wanted to move to the United States, without any doubt, we agreed.

I studied in El Salvador until the seventh grade. If you attend a private school you are lucky because they start to teach English in first grade. But if you attend a government school, they don’t teach you English until the seventh grade. I was 13 years old when I arrived in Mesquite, Texas, on March 7, 2014.

The first thing I heard was “Hi, welcome to America.” I only understood two words, “hi” and “America.”

When I began learning English there were words I could not pronounce or I got confused about. Many people made fun of me. It made me feel sad, insecure and embarrassed. It discouraged me from learning sometimes, but I understood there are always going to be people like that.

The beginning of my school year was hard. I cried every day before and after school. I put pressure on myself because I did not understand the language, and I began to have painful headaches.

I was depressed and ready to give up, but I reminded myself of everything my parents had done for me.

They brought me to this country so I could have a better education and find a career I would love. I started to focus more in school and asked my friends how to say and spell words. I stayed after school for tutoring, and I started to believe more in myself.

There were many factors that help me learn English. I had friends who did not speak Spanish, which motivated me to find ways to talk to them so they could understand me. I also watched television in English with subtitles in Spanish so I could put both of the languages together. Talking with friends in English was a great help too. If I said something wrong they helped me say it right.

Learning the language better brought more responsibilities from my parents. They had me translate their documents and talk to people for them. At that time I was not confident with my English and putting that responsibility of being the spokesperson on me made me feel nervous for a couple of years.

Today, I am proud of learning a new language. It was not easy, but in the end, I am proud of myself for overcoming all the obstacles there are for people like me.

Now, I feel more comfortable talking to people. I still get confused with words, but that is how everyone learns. First you make mistakes, and then you learn from them.

If you know someone who is in the same situation, please do not pressure them. Show them your support and they will feel motivated to keep learning the language.

— Londy Ramirez is a contributor and communications major
College celebrates Black History Month

Gloria Johnson, right, sings “Better Days” at the African American Sing in Feb. 17. Above, English faculty Larissa Pierce reads from “Mustafa’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale,” and President Eddie Tealer speaks to the audience in the Hive.

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