first look
For Love of Country

Iconic Texas ranchlands are on the way out, giving way to subdivisions and development. But retired newspaper publisher Chris Harte is countering the trend with Spicewood Ranch. For nearly 30 years, he has been buying parcels of land west of Austin to create an unofficial wildlife preserve. He also has been working with a restoration ecologist to bring native trees and grasses back to land that, like much of the Hill Country, was overgrazed.

The next chapter in Spicewood Ranch’s history involves St. Edward’s University, which this year entered into an agreement with Harte to start an ecolab. The partnership will allow students and faculty like Assistant Professor of Environmental Science Amy Concilio, who spearheaded the effort along with former Assistant Professor of Biology Teresa Bilinski, to study the impacts of conservation practices on the property.

The ranch encompasses a creek bordered by limestone cliffs and prairies that boast incredible biological diversity.
Small Change, Big Difference
Students like Skylar Garza ’19 don’t have to go far from campus to create change in their community.

BY LISA THIEGS
WHEN THE STUDENT criminal-justice association was looking for a way to get involved in the community, Political Science major Skylar Garza ’19 (right) leapt into action. He connected with the Gardner Bettis Juvenile Justice Center, just blocks from campus, and discovered that he and his fellow students could make a difference by doing something simple: hanging out with the kids at the center. The students from St. Edward’s could teach the kids to play guitar, write poetry with them or just have a conversation. Garza helped put many of the pieces in place for the partnership, which launched this fall.

“I didn’t know what steps to take for civil and political activism prior to St. Ed’s,” Garza says. “But taking classes and getting involved showed me how to help the people around me.”

His interest in activism inspired him to intern at the Texas Capitol with state Rep. Oscar Longoria, whose district includes parts of the Rio Grande Valley. Garza shadowed the legislator and met with lobbyists from the healthcare industry. He watched Longoria work with politicians on both sides of the aisle to pass bills that allocated millions of dollars for parks near Garza’s hometown of Harlingen. “The park grants showed he was well liked by both sides, and it was legislation that made a change in people’s everyday lives,” Garza says.

During the internship, Garza was taking a Legislative Process and Lobbying class taught by Assistant Professor of Political Science David Thomason (left), which meant spending even more time walking the halls of the Capitol building. Thomason’s students lobbied for a civics education bill, which would provide a curriculum for Texas students to learn how to advocate in their communities. Students might work with city officials to install stoplights in front of schools or work with school board members to raise awareness about bullying. The students from St. Edward’s were tasked with passing out information and making pitches to legislators and their staff about the merits of the bill.

“There’s one thing that gives students practical, hands-on experience,” Thomason says. “We need real-world problem solving, and in the case of this class, they’re doing it. And they can have actual experience to put on their résumés.”

Students in Thomason’s class worked tirelessly to promote the bill. Garza made an appearance on the local NBC affiliate to talk about the bill. It passed in the House, but the class ran out of time to lobby for it in the Senate.

The idea of bringing civics education to Texas students has been an ongoing priority for Garza. He has also worked as a democracy coach for Generation Citizen, a nonprofit that teaches middle- and high-school students civic participation and engagement strategies. Through Generation Citizen, Garza worked with the Austin Independent School District to develop a plan for a student-led advisory council that would give high-schoolers a voice in the district and effect changes — like getting more books — in their own schools. “Not only did I get to work at the Capitol, but I also got to help students figure out their own path through the political world,” Garza says.

Connecting with younger students was so rewarding that he decided to continue after graduation. Garza is now a seventh-grade instructor at Breakthrough Central Texas, an Austin-based nonprofit that supports students who will be the first in their family to earn a college degree. “Working with kids is my passion,” Garza says. “I feel like I’m really making a difference, and I love seeing people learn and grow. The world can’t move unless we have great humans to move it.”

“I didn’t know what steps to take for civil and political activism prior to St. Ed’s. But taking classes and getting involved showed me how to help the people around me.”
THE SCOOTERS SEEMED to arrive overnight. Beginning in April 2018, multiple companies flooded the streets of Austin with thousands of the dockless electric vehicles. The scooters are unlocked with a smartphone app and transport riders, who pay by the minute, short distances mostly within Austin’s urban core.

Almost immediately, the scooters generated backlash. Riders often left them blocking busy sidewalks. And while it was clear scooters shouldn’t mix with car traffic, no one knew where they belonged. Were people supposed to ride on the sidewalk or in the bike lane? And was this new form of transit a forward-thinking replacement for cars, or a gimmick that put people in danger?

Last spring, the students in Environmental and Ecological Field Methods, taught by Assistant Professor of Environmental Science Amy Concilio, tried to find out. Using field research methods employed by social scientists, they gathered data the City of Austin could use to guide future policy decisions about dockless scooters. The city is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars, and if scooters are replacing car trips, they may help Austin meet its environmental goals.

The students interviewed transportation department staff in Austin and in other Texas cities where scooters are deployed. They held focus groups with scooter users, cyclists and downtown drivers to get a sense of how the public was reacting to the devices. They incorporated what they learned into a survey, administered to people downtown, about how people used scooters and how they thought scooters should be regulated. And they gathered observational data by counting scooter users in high-traffic areas of the city and noting whether the riders were doing something risky.

The project ran into a few speedbumps: Passersby didn’t want to take the survey. Those who did often wanted to have long conversations, taking time that could have been used to survey more people. Risky behavior was hard to quantify.

“It was challenging, but it was good for students to have to figure those things out,” Concilio says. “If they use these tools in their future careers, they can anticipate some of the challenges they’ll need to work around.”

Lifelong Austinite Karrie Newton ’19 says the project helped her thoughtfully consider scooters, which she’d initially dismissed as a nuisance. “Before, I’d always had a car-centric perspective,” she says. “But actually observing and interviewing people who do and do not use scooters reminded me not to automatically judge a new form of transportation.”
The Right Direction
Faculty mentors and Austin connections help students find a career with purpose.

BY ROBYN ROSS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY INTI ST. CLAIR

Amy Truong ’20, Graphic Design
“I started taking computer science classes to expand my skills my sophomore year. I was really unsure of myself at first, because it didn’t come naturally to me. But my graphic design professor, Jimmy Luu, had started a mentorship program with Fjord, a design and interactive studio in downtown Austin. I was matched with a Fjord mentor — a St. Edward’s alumna — who connected me with computer science professionals in her office, and they encouraged me to keep going. They told me having those skills would help me communicate with the programmers I’ll work with, because I’d know both the creative and technical sides of a project. So I stuck with it, and now I’ve decided to pursue a career in interaction design.”

Bianca Esquivel ’19, Psychology and Writing and Rhetoric
“I came to St. Edward’s planning to major in English and become a journalist, but I started taking psychology classes and eventually added it as a second major. My psychology professor also suggested I take a social work class, which confirmed that I like learning about how government policies affect individual people. Now I am planning to pursue a master’s in Social Work, so I can counsel Latinx youth and advocate for better mental health resources for them. My Writing and Rhetoric degree is going to be useful no matter what I eventually do. If you want to change policies, you have to be able to communicate in a way that’s persuasive and relatable.”

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Bianca Esquivel ’19

Joseph Ramirez ’19, Biology
“I started at St. Edward’s in the pre-med track, but I had opportunities that helped me realize the analytical thinking I was developing in biology could be applied in business. Through the School of Natural Sciences, I got a seat at Capital Factory [an Austin-based accelerator for tech startups], where I worked on a startup to help undocumented students. Right now I’m working for an international consulting management firm, focusing on data analytics, and I’ve found that the mindset of biology is directly transferable to my work. My freshman year I did biomedical research with one of my professors, and we would always ask ourselves, Why are we taking this approach? Why are we using this material? When it comes to data analytics, I’m learning to ask, Why are we looking at this data set? Could we drill down or look at it from a higher level? That approach of constantly asking ‘why’ is as useful in business as in science.”

Joseph Ramirez ’19, Biology

Bianca Esquivel ’19, Psychology and Writing and Rhetoric

Amy Truong ’20, Graphic Design

Bianca Esquivel ’19, Psychology and Writing and Rhetoric
THE JULY HEAT is already oppressive by 7 a.m., when Stella Cunningham ’21 arrives at a site on the banks of Waller Creek in downtown Austin. As rush-hour traffic hums in the background, she walks along the water’s edge, using a handheld device to collect data about the air quality. After five minutes, she climbs up to street level, where the city noise is much louder, and repeats the walk. She pauses to make sure the data synced with an app on her phone, then heads several blocks north to her next site.

Cunningham’s morning walks are part of her eight-week summer internship with the Nature Conservancy, funded through the Institute for Interdisciplinary Science (i4) at St. Edward’s, which was established by a grant from the National Science Foundation. Urban ecologists in the Austin office of the Nature Conservancy are studying the effects of multiple efforts to reintegrate nature throughout the Waller Creek watershed, an urban waterway that winds through downtown before joining Lady Bird Lake. Cunningham and her seven teammates collect data about air quality, plants and wildlife along the creek to measure the impacts.

Each morning between 7 and 9 a.m., Cunningham visits four sites to take measurements of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter along the creek and on an adjacent roadway, so her team can compare the two. She then meets up with colleagues for field research, which includes bird counts and surveys of the vegetation and trees along the creek. The students also check wildlife cameras that capture images of animals using the creek — raccoons, possums, birds — and the occasional person.

During one survey, Cunningham’s team encountered someone living in a camp in the creek bed. “Those interactions opened my eyes not only to different ways people are using the creek, but also to different aspects of city life,” she says. “As a student at St. Edward’s, the social justice dimensions of homelessness are always on my mind.”

Cunningham got interested in fieldwork during a weeklong research experience the summer after her freshman year, when she did vegetation surveys at a park in northwest Austin. A Mathematics major, she is considering a career in data science, which develops methods to analyze large data sets like those generated in environmental field research.

Her team this past summer included environmental science majors from The University of Texas at Austin and young people interning with the Austin Parks and Recreation Department. Cunningham says one of her takeaways is learning how to work with colleagues from different backgrounds. “Being able to use their expertise and collaborate on a diverse team was a great opportunity — not just to learn about myself, but to learn how to work with other people,” Cunningham says.
The team’s research measures the impact of restoring urban green spaces on air quality, vegetation, wildlife and even people who use downtown parks.

Cunningham says learning to work with teammates from different backgrounds has been one of the best parts of her internship.

Cunningham volunteers at the Thinkery, a children’s museum. “Kids have crazy ideas and so much energy, and that playfulness was something I wanted to keep in my schedule.”

The personal air monitoring device, or PAM, collects information about the levels of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and particulate matter in the air.

In her free time, Cunningham works out at the gym, takes a yoga class or rides her bike to Barton Springs.

Cunningham is considering a career in data science, which would connect her interests in environmental research and mathematics.
WHO GETS TO BE AN AMERICAN?

Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist Jose Antonio Vargas challenges freshmen to explore citizenship.

BY ROBYN ROSS
ILLUSTRATION BY LUKE WALLER

This interview has been edited and condensed.

When Jose Antonio Vargas was 12 years old, his mother sent him from the Philippines to live with his grandparents in California. After four years, he learned the truth: His passport and green card were fake, and he had entered the United States illegally. At 30, he came out as undocumented in an essay in The New York Times Magazine and started the nonprofit Define American, which helps media tell accurate stories about immigration. Freshmen read his bestselling 2018 book Dear America: Notes from an Undocumented Citizen last summer and are discussing it in classes this fall. Vargas visited campus on Oct. 10.

Q: How do you define “American”?
A: It's about community. We are all a product of the communities that we are a part of. As someone who is here without authorization from the government, I needed people to give me permission to exist beyond papers and laws. I don't know where I would be in my career, or my life, if I didn't have all those mentors and teachers who gave me permission to think outside of what society told me I was, and what my limitations were.

Q: How would you like news coverage of immigration issues to change?
A: Define American has been at the forefront of challenging news organizations not to use the word “illegal” to refer to people. It's not a surprise we have dehumanizing policies when it comes to immigrants when that's what they're called. Facts are important, but they're not enough. People's stories humanize the issue so we can understand different perspectives. Our organization is founded on the power of stories to change the narrative.

Q: You write about how you wanted to “earn” your citizenship, even though there is currently no legal pathway for you to become an American citizen. What does citizenship mean to you?
A: I may not be a citizen by legality or by birth, but to be a citizen means that I have to be accountable to people of this country — and not only the people who agree with me. We are all accountable to each other. How often do you really talk to people who don't agree with you? How often do you actually challenge the way you think about something, and consider what other people think? Being a citizen means we have a responsibility to one another to be engaged, to participate.

Q: What specific changes in policy or culture would help undocumented people?
A: There are 1.6 million undocumented people in the state of Texas. Without papers, you can't drive. So Texas could allow undocumented residents to get a driver's license. We can also think about the places where immigrant families can feel the most safe. How welcoming are our libraries, our community centers, our places of worship? Finally, what risks are U.S. citizens willing to take to advocate for their undocumented neighbors, friends and coworkers?

Q: What conversation do you want students to go home and have with their parents or their grandparents?
A: Right now everybody's being so woke on social media, calling out strangers [who say negative things about immigrants]. But are you calling out your own family members? When you hear something inaccurate, do you say something? Do not leave it to Fox News to have the conversation for you. Don't leave it to CNN. Do not walk away.
Around Campus

RESEARCH MATTERS
Over the past four years, the School of Natural Sciences has received more than $1 million in funding from federal and state grants, foundations and donors, supporting more than 300 undergraduate students doing summer research projects.

One notable research project involves studying how soybean genes respond to high levels of ozone. If ambient ozone levels rise, soybean crop yields decrease, which could result in billions of dollars lost. Studies like this one, funded by the USDA, could help develop ways to introduce genetic traits that enhance ozone resistance in soybeans.

INAUGURAL DOCTORATE
The new online Doctorate of Education in Leadership in Higher Education marks the first doctoral degree offered at St. Edward’s University, and students can complete it in as little as 39 months. Graduates of the program will be prepared to address the critical issues facing higher-education institutions and non-profit organizations.

PRACTICAL TEACHING
Assistant Professor of Marketing Juli James is teaching her students to use marketing tools and platforms prevalent in the industry. She was named Marketo Champion of the Year in the 2019 Revvie Awards, which recognize the most exceptional marketers in the industry who are leveraging the software. She was also previously named one of the company’s “Fearless 50” recipients in recognition of her teaching and because she donated a kidney to a stranger after seeing how a kidney transplant changed her husband’s life.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING
The Texas Oral History Association’s annual conference was held on campus last spring, courtesy of a collaboration between the Journalism and Digital Media program in the School of Arts and Humanities, and the department of History in the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences. Oral historians shared stories of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Houston, the segregation of black children within a Mexican-American–founded school district, and the experiences of Latino firefighters in the Houston Fire Department. Associate Professor of Journalism and Digital Media Jena Heath discussed oral history partnerships and collaborations as well as her own oral history project, “Our China Stories.”

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EFFECTS OF STRESS
Psychology major Ana Vielma ‘19 won a $1,500 Mamie Phipps Clark Diversity Research Grant from Psi Chi, the international honor society in psychology. Under the guidance of Katherine Goldey, assistant professor of Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience, Vielma compared how financial concerns affect levels of the stress hormone cortisol in first-generation and continuing-generation college students. Vielma is now a doctoral student at The University of Texas at Austin.

“As a low-income, first-generation Latina, I wanted to conduct research that would contribute valuable insight into the educational development of underrepresented students such as myself.”

ANA VIELMA ’19
One of my deepest hopes for this year is that students will come to see just how dynamic the Word of God is.

RICHARD BAUTCHE, PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES

An illuminated Bible makes its sojourn to St. Edward’s this year.

MASS CELEBRATION
The Saint John’s Bible divides the books of the Old and New Testaments into seven volumes. The first volume, called the Pentateuch, contains the first five books, beginning with Genesis. Its arrival was celebrated during the Mass of the Holy Spirit on Aug. 25.

ORIGIN STORY
Father Michael Patella, OSB, professor of Theology at Saint John’s University, discussed the origins, development and impact of The Saint John’s Bible on Oct. 2 as part of the Most Reverend John McCarthy Lecture Series.

IMAGE AND SONG
On Nov. 16, the St. Edward’s Masterworks Singers perform at St. William Catholic Church in Round Rock in a fusion of song and projected images from The Saint John’s Bible that will breathe new life into the Word of God.

A DEEPER LOOK
Four courses this fall are incorporating the Bible. A theology class is exploring sacred art and religious texts. A literature course is using the Bible as a springboard for studying biblical narratives in literary works such as Paradise Lost, Frankenstein and Their Eyes Were Watching God. In a graphic design course, students are creating a prototype for a mobile app to read The Saint John’s Bible. And in an Honors course, students are comparing the illuminated manuscript with a regular print version of the Bible.

WORD OF GOD
In the spring, the exploration starts anew with the arrival of the volume containing the Gospels and Acts, which will replace the Pentateuch in the Munday Library. Images from the other five volumes will be woven into the university’s classes and programs.
A Taste of Berlin

MBA students apply their skills abroad in a whirlwind global Capstone course.

BY ROBYN ROSS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEFANIE LOOS/AP IMAGES

CHRISTINE NGUYEN MBA '19 bit into the protein bar made with cricket flour. Not bad. Her project partners, Amy Soe MBA '19, Amy Tourte MBA '19 and David Gonzalez MBA '19, tasted a chia-seed drink and sipped bottled cold-brew coffee. Then the group broke out the Smicies, small flavored tablets designed to be a low-calorie stand-in for pizza. It was hard to imagine the vitamin-sized snack satisfying anyone's craving for a hot, cheesy pizza, but the group's client, a Berlin-based company called FoodBuzz, is augmenting Smicies' own marketing by getting it in front of health-conscious customers.

The food tasting was part of the group's consulting work for FoodBuzz, which connects niche food startups with larger distributors and grocery stores. The company was one of six served by the MBA program's global Capstone course in Spring 2019. "As the last course in the MBA program, the global Capstone ties together what students have learned in multiple classes throughout the program," says Assistant Professor of Management John Mueller. "It also pulls in their experience from outside the program and has them work in a team on a consulting project with a real company."

Students progress from a letter of engagement to deliverables in seven weeks, one of which is spent in the clients' country. Along the way, they communicate across time zones, languages and cultures.

Nguyen's team delivered a marketing plan for FoodBuzz, which had relied heavily on social media but didn't have a clear strategy. The students recommended guidelines for FoodBuzz's Instagram presence (use limited hashtags and post during peak traffic times) and future email campaigns (send messages at regular intervals and lead with upcoming events) and adjusted their plan based on data collected through Instagram Insights and Google Analytics. The group also suggested more distribution channels to help FoodBuzz reach its target market, including vending machines in co-working spaces and transit stations or demos in fitness clubs — where, after a workout, patrons could refuel with cricket-powered protein bars or even pizza-flavored Smicies.
HIVE MINDS

A Biology professor and students track the health of bees in colonies on campus.

BY ROBYN ROSS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHELSEA PURGAHN
Priyanka Ranchod ’21 and David Weier ’19 inspect one another’s protective bee suits, making certain every piece is tightly fastened. They approach a clearing in the woods in a corner of campus where two honeybee hives, like white file cabinets, rest on a table inside a small fence. Bees dart through the air and squeeze through thin openings at the bottom of each hive.

The two Biology majors need to collect live bees for their summer research with Assistant Professor of Biology Matt Steffenson. Ranchod collected bees last week, and today she’s teaching Weier. She takes a vial from a black equipment bag and unscrews the top. “If you tilt it at an angle, they’ll crawl up into it, and then you can just close it.” She holds a vial next to a bee on the edge of the hive, and the bee crawls in. She quickly caps the vial and sets it gently in the bag.

Weier steps up to the hive. “Hey, friend,” he says, offering the vial to a bee near the hive’s entrance. “Anybody want to come with?”

As Ranchod and Weier work, the air around them gradually fills with a low humming as the bees, alerted to an intruder, emerge from the hives to investigate. The students breathe calmly — carbon dioxide attracts the insects — and work until they’ve collected 50 bees from each hive.

When they finish, Ranchod turns to Weier. “Do you want to look inside and see how they’re doing?” The team has refrained from obsessively checking the colony. Opening the hive disturbs its operations, but a peek every now and then is OK. Together the students gently open the hive and peer inside, where the mass of moving bees ripples like a single organism.
Ranchod carefully removes one of the wooden frames from the upper box. Golden comb spreads across the bottom, hexagon by perfect hexagon. “This is all new since last week,” she murmurs as she inspects it. As the colony grows, it will spread from the lower box, where the queen and most of the bees are now, into the upper box.

The sun emerges from behind the clouds, and heat builds beneath the students’ heavy white suits. Carrying the bags full of vials, they head up the hill toward the lab.

The hives are part of Steffenson’s research into what makes bees susceptible to colony collapse disorder (CCD), which emerged as a threat to honeybee populations about a decade ago. CCD, a sudden disappearance of up to 90 percent of the worker bees in a colony, has become an object lesson in the dangers of pesticides or human-driven climate change. But Steffenson says bee death, including CCD, doesn’t have one clear cause.

“There are several leading theories, but there’s no smoking gun,” he says. “Most people, myself included, think it’s actually a combination of things. It’s not just pesticides, parasites or climate change; it’s potentially a combination of these factors.”

When people start keeping bees, or when beekeepers replace a colony lost to CCD, they often start a new hive with bees purchased and transported from an apiary. Steffenson wanted to understand how moving a colony affects the bees’ stress response and ability to fight off infection, and by extension, their susceptibility to CCD. The results may help beekeepers make more informed decisions about how to treat bees after a move. For instance, if his studies show that moving bees suppresses their immunity, beekeepers could treat recently moved colonies with antifungals or other medications to prevent infection.

“We’re used to failure meaning you did something wrong. But it’s the opposite with research. All research is trial and error, so failure is part of the process.”

KIA BAEZA ’20
The team opened the hives this summer to find the queens and check the colonies’ brood pattern, the size and shape of the area where the queen lays eggs. The brood pattern is a rough metric for the quality of the colony; a dense brood pattern that’s centered in the middle of the hive and contains few empty cells suggests a healthy, productive queen. When they inspected the hives, the students and Steffenson also saw eggs, larvae and pupae inside the individual hexagonal cells of comb.
On each visit to the hives, Ranchod and Weier refill the bees’ supplemental food source, a sugar-water nectar with lemongrass essence and spearmint oil that attracts the bees. By measuring how much nectar the bees have consumed between their visits, the students get a rough idea of how much the colony is growing. The longer the students stay at the hives, the more bees swarm around them. Ranchod says the buzzing made her nervous at first, but Steffenson’s patience with her helped her develop confidence.
In May, Steffenson purchased two 15,000-bee colonies from an apiary in Dallas and, with students’ help, set up the hives. Each colony has a single queen who can lay up to 2,000 eggs a day in the summer. Over time, if the colonies are healthy, they will grow to between 30,000 and 50,000 bees each.

Last summer, Steffenson and Biology major Kia Baeza ’20 conducted research with honeybee colonies maintained by professional beekeepers off campus. The two studied how exposure to four commonly used pesticides affected the bees’ immune systems. Their analysis showed that pesticide exposure reduced the concentration of protein in the bees’ hemolymph — which is roughly equivalent to blood — potentially making them susceptible to pathogens.

Baeza spent this past summer applying to medical school and working at a hospital, but she submitted the research to a scientific journal this fall. She says her interest in the project combined her lifelong love of bees and her concern for human health.

“My job as a physician would be harder without honeybees,” she explains. “Statistically, one out of every three bites of food you eat was pollinated by honeybees. Without bees, human health completely crumbles.”

Although Steffenson has been working with honeybees for five years, this summer marked his first foray into managing bee colonies himself. It’s a project he’s undertaking with coaching from area honey farmers — which, he says, makes his academic research unusually reliant on the knowledge of beekeepers in agriculture.

“I know the science side of things, but if you ask me to find a queen in the colony, which beekeepers have been doing for thousands of years, I’d have to rely on YouTube videos,” he says. “The project is this intersection between experts who are not scientists, and me with my science background trying to learn from them.”

Back at the science building, in the aptly named McBeel Lab, Ranchod and Weier hang up their suits and place the vials of bees in an incubator. A few vials go into a refrigerator. This step slows down the bees’ physiological systems, which reduces stress response in the immune system, immobilizes the bees and minimizes any pain they could feel from what comes next. (“We try to be as humane as possible,” Steffenson says. “These bees are essentially sacrificing their lives to improve our understanding of how to combat the problems they’re facing right now.”)

After five minutes, Ranchod pulls a vial from the fridge and places the sedated bee on a small piece of wax paper. Holding its head and thorax with forceps, she removes its abdomen with a scalpel. Then she grabs the head and thorax with the forceps and squeezes until the hemolymph, the bee equivalent of blood, emerges. It’s a tiny drop of yellowish liquid, which Weier uses a micro pipette to collect. The students repeat the process until they’ve extracted hemolymph from all the bees, which they place in a freezer to halt the samples’ biological functions and protein degradation until they can analyze them.

Ranchod and Weier will spend their afternoon running biochemical assays on other samples to measure the levels of proteins in the hemolymph that are specifically associated with the immune system. And they’ll continue collecting sample bees from the hives — 50 bees per hive, twice a week — for a total of seven weeks. The data analysis will eventually show whether the bees’ immunology changes over time and, by extension, how the colony is faring in its new environment.

Like Baeza, Ranchod plans to become a doctor, and conducting research has prepared her for the reality that medicine won’t have an answer for every problem.

“What I like about research is that you never really know what the outcome will be,” she says. “In every step, you encounter more questions. I like that it’s challenging me to keep questioning myself, stay on my toes and discover more new things.”
“All of us in the lab have similar passions. We’re all here because we want to learn new things, and we enjoy the process of research.”

PRIYANKA RANCHOD ‘21
The honeybee colonies were established with funding from a five-year, $1.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation’s Improving Undergraduate STEM Education: Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Program. Next year, Steffenson and his students will collect data about the bees’ ability to fight off pathogens and compare it with data collected this past summer, to see whether a colony’s immunity improves as it grows. Next year he’ll also harvest honey for the first time, with guidance from professional beekeepers.
In a world where it seems harder and harder to get ahead, the St. Edward’s community is more focused than ever on student success.
Educating Hearts and Minds

Each year, a new group of students is welcomed to the hilltop. And while much has changed over the years, the connection to the university’s mission remains strong. Here, five people with deep roots at St. Edward’s discuss the principles that guide us.

Lisa Kirkpatrick, vice president for Student Affairs: Our founders — Edward Sorin and the brothers of Holy Cross — were committed to educating both the heart and the mind. That's something that still drives us today. Our work is about educating the whole person, and being open to all of the gifts, talents and identities that people bring to this community.

Brother Richard Daly, CSG, ’61: Our student body has changed over time. For example, when I was a student here, the university was almost 100 percent Roman Catholic men, and most of the teachers were Holy Cross Brothers. It was much easier to have a significant, unified mission. As we have moved into the 21st century, maintaining that core — an investment in the Catholic, Holy Cross educational tradition — takes constant attention, and the mission continues at St. Edward’s today. One key educational philosophy that we have followed is to meet students where they are, accept them where they are, and then move them forward.

Linus Akanoh Jr. ’06, trustee: This philosophy is something I experienced in my own life. One of my very first accounting professors, David Michael Harris, was critical in helping me understand the art of the possible. He didn’t just teach me theoretical concepts; he taught me what it took to be successful as a student, as a professional and as a person. He encouraged me to consider graduate school. He invited me back to campus to talk to current students about my experiences. Over the years, that nurturing and mentoring evolved into a friendship that continues to this day.

The Panelists

LINUS AKANOH JR. ’06
University connection: Alumnus, trustee and adjunct professor of Management
Favorite moment at St. Ed’s: Teaching the same accounting information systems course I took
You can find me on campus: Drinking hot tea in Meadows Coffeehouse

TRISH BAYNHAM
University connection: Professor of Biology
Favorite moment at St. Ed’s: Meeting with students
You can find me on campus: Walking around the track, especially when the bluebonnets are in bloom

BROTHER RICHARD DALY, CSG, ’61
University connection: Alumnus, Holy Cross Brother, and adjunct professor of Religious and Theological Studies and Political Science
Favorite moment at St. Ed’s: Mass of the Holy Spirit and the Medallion Ceremony
You can find me on campus: Taking early-morning walks

LEONIDAS LACAYO ’14, MSLC ’18
University connection: Alumnus and associate director of Admission
Favorite moment at St. Ed’s: My parents visiting from Honduras during Homecoming
You can find me on campus: Taking lunch and coffee breaks under Sorin Oak

LISA KIRKPATRICK
University connection: Vice president for Student Affairs
Favorite moment at St. Ed’s: When seniors burst through the Red Doors at Legacy Walk
You can find me on campus: On the ground floor of Main Building

Kirkpatrick: Mentorship and connection are a big part of what it means to educate hearts and minds. That part is timeless! But at the same time, sustaining the larger mission of St. Edward’s requires that we interpret it in real time. So we improve our facilities and grounds, manage our enrollment, and increase the number of majors and faculty members to sustain and build on the infrastructure that existed. A science student today would not be well served by the old Fleck Hall; we need state-of-the-art facilities and education for this day and age.

Trish Baynham, professor of Biology: The opportunities that have been opened through these improvements are incredible. In the old science building, I would teach labs until 8:30 at night because the space was so booked up. Now, with the new building, we have many different laboratory spaces — and students use these labs to complete research projects that they could not have imagined before. The new space, along with the Institute for Interdisciplinary Science, is helping students get the experiences they need to succeed. That’s just one example, though. My colleagues and I often take students to regional and national meetings, like the American Society for Microbiology branch meeting. Getting the vans, driving them there and organizing everything is logistically challenging, but I know that those types of experiences really benefit our students, so it’s worth it.

Kirkpatrick: We ask a lot of our faculty and staff because they are the ones investing in our students. They’re serving a purpose that goes far beyond maintaining a favorable
ratio of students to faculty and staff. Whether they’re in front of a classroom, coaching a team, running a residence hall or responding to an emergency on campus, the people working with students are doing their jobs in ways that are not transactional. They’re called to work on the hilltop because they believe in the mission.

Akanoh: I love the fact that we continue to be great champions of the McNair Scholars, a program for first-generation students, and the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), which helps students with migrant and seasonal farmworking backgrounds to reach and succeed in college. From an economic standpoint, this requires a financial commitment from the university. But when we are making decisions, we always refer to our Holy Cross mission and our commitment to help all people realize their full potential.

Leonidas Lacayo ’14, MSLC ’18, associate director of Admission: These programs speak to our identity as a community that values students who are coming from all different types of backgrounds. We find it so valuable to have an inclusive environment in our classroom. Our students have different experiences from all over the world, all over Texas, all over different socioeconomic backgrounds. We continue to really protect that diversity in our student population.

Kirkpatrick: The emphasis on St. Edward’s as a community is important — and has always been important. We start building relationships with students and families before they ever arrive at St. Edward’s, through admission counselors. Then we have student transition programming and orientation that starts in June, long before they go to classes. We want incoming students to get a sense of our rituals and traditions so that they understand what it means to be part of the Holy Cross community. We want them to know what our expectations are to one another and how they will find their place in this community. We want them to find people who are like them, yes, but we also want them to know people who are different from them.

Lacayo: I’ll never forget a seminar class I took as a student called Current Controversies and Political Affairs. In class, students would stand up and share their thoughts. We looked at different news sources — from the BBC to Al Jazeera. But we also had our own perspectives, based on things like where we grew up or our specific backgrounds. I see our students continue to be interested in critical issues impacting our society.

Baynhm: In the same classroom, you’ll have students who are the children of migrant farmworkers and other students whose parents are both physicians. We have a huge range of different kinds of students. I find that they’re incredibly accepting of each other and very frank about their own backgrounds. We push all of them, in different ways, to try new things and to take advantage of their opportunities here. That personalized education is important so that we can make sure that everyone who is here has a real opportunity to succeed.

Baynhm: I’ve been here since 2004, and I agree that our students are attracted to our social justice mission. And I find they become even more committed over time. This is one thing we mean about not educating the head at the expense of the heart. The skills they develop here — through a liberal arts approach that encourages them to embrace all different disciplines, through some of the softer skills, like communication — are things that pay off over time. We work hard to help students understand the long-term value of their education while they’re in school, and we see them coming back, after they’ve graduated, to tell us how valuable their education is.

Daly: It is a real pleasure to be with these young men and women, many of whom come into St. Ed’s as questioning teenagers and leave as mature young men and women who go on to great things.

Akanoh: We are so much more than what people may see on the surface. It’s very easy to say, “This is a small, private liberal arts university in Austin.” When you look closely at our students and alumni, they make profound and lasting impacts in the local Austin community and the world over. It is so impressive that so much greatness can come out of such a seemingly small place.

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Kirkpatrick: One of the people on my staff says that St. Edward’s isn’t a four-year experience. It’s a for-life experience. While they’re here, we want students to develop skills in the classroom and outside of it. And then we also want them to go out into the world and do good. Alumni tell us that it’s a transformative experience. Once you’re a part of this community, we hope you’ll always see yourself as a member of our family, and feel that you always have a role to play on and off the hilltop.
What are the things (and people) that set our graduates up for success? Here are the ways that St. Edward’s helps students thrive in college and beyond.

- 10 success coaches, who connect first-year and transfer students to St. Ed’s
- 70,000 hours of community service completed by students each year
- 1,100+ undergraduate classes offered each semester
- 4,300 students, who come from 48 states and 57 countries
- 55+ undergraduate and graduate degrees
- Resident assistants, who develop programming and mentor residents
- Guest speakers, who bring diverse discussions to campus
- 15:1 student-faculty ratio
- Career counselors, who connect students to internships and job opportunities
- 1 Common Book that all freshmen read and discuss
176 national and international fellowship award winners

34,000-strong alumni network

15 NCAA Division II teams

5 Living Learning Communities, in which first-year students explore a topic through discussion, tours, activities and field trips

5 Learning Communities, where first-year students take a class together and live in the same residence hall

100+ student organizations

Partner universities in 17 countries, where students study abroad

Faculty advisors, who mentor students on careers and graduate school

Peer ministers, who demonstrate a spirit of service to fellow students

17 Service Break Experiences

Experiential learning like research and internships, in which 89% of students participate before graduating
“I Think You Can Do This.”

The university has long touted its personal approach to supporting student success with small classes, excellent mentorship and meaningful connections that last past graduation. A professor and a student talk about what that philosophy looks like in practice.

Tristan Hallman
Chief of Policy and Communication
in the Dallas Mayor’s Office

Jena Heath
Associate Professor of
Journalism and Digital Media

When Tristan Hallman ’11 arrived at St. Edward’s, he was considering a career in politics. Then he met Jena Heath, associate professor of Journalism and Digital Media, who helped him see that he could build on that interest — and take it further than he ever imagined.

Hallman: I was a Political Science major, but I thought it would be fun to take a journalism elective my sophomore year. I remember doing exercises in writing leads, taking notes and turning those notes into a short piece.

Heath: It was clear that Tristan had the makings not only of a great reporter but also of a great editor. So I encouraged him to pursue more work at Hilltop Views, the campus newspaper.

Hallman: I knew that Jena had covered the Bush campaign and the White House, and she had been in Washington, D.C. Her interests aligned very much with mine. But also, having her tell me, “Hey, I think you can do this,” felt big. That moment still stands out to me.

Heath: I also recommended him for internships off campus. One summer, he went to Washington, D.C., with the Institute on Political Journalism. As part of that internship, he worked with Gannett’s Washington bureau. I got a call from the Dallas Morning News D.C. bureau chief asking for a reference for Tristan to go there for an internship the next summer. Of course I gave him a positive recommendation — he’d earned my confidence!

Hallman: I always really trusted her advice. She was a pro in the industry, and this stuff wasn’t theoretical for her. We were speaking the same language. I really believe that she had my best interest at heart.

Heath: Tristan’s new gig is a great use of his journalism experience and skills in the public-sector policy and communications areas. This transition shows how transferrable journalism and digital media are and how the skills we teach open up a wide range of options for really talented and motivated students.

Hallman: I reached out to Jena for her opinion about leaving my job as the local government editor at the Dallas Morning News for a position with Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson. She was such an invaluable resource to me in college and has continued to be someone I trust for advice in my career.

Heath: Tristan’s new gig is a great use of his journalism experience and skills in the public-sector policy and communications areas. This transition shows how transferrable journalism and digital media are and how the skills we teach open up a wide range of options for really talented and motivated students.
Student of the Future

Success coaches and personalized roadmaps will guide students through their academic experience and into their career.

Leslie Rios ’20 is a standout — a top-notch student who has found research opportunities, extracurriculars and mentors who helped her succeed. The St. Edward’s strategic plan, which will culminate in 2022, will provide support in exactly those areas to make it even easier for students to receive our hallmark personalized education, along with outside-the-classroom experiences that prepare them for high-impact careers. Here’s what that will look like.

**Leslie’s Experience**

Leslie arrived at St. Edward’s interested in politics and pursued a range of Political Science classes to find the ones that inspired her, including Comparative Politics, The American Court System and Political Theory.

Leslie didn’t want to miss a thing, so she immediately joined an array of student organizations. Eventually, she found two that were a perfect fit: student government and the Latino Student Leaders Organization. While she loves where she ended up, she admits that having a mentor early on could have prevented her from stretching herself too thin.

Leslie started taking courses with Assistant Professor of Political Science David Thomason her first semester at St. Edward’s. They built a strong working relationship, and she ultimately joined him for a major research project on border policy.

Leslie is driven to excel, and she has pushed herself to take on new pursuits that build on her previous experiences. As part of a recent service break trip to Peru, she ditched her technology and spent time reflecting on her years at St. Edward’s and considering where life might take her next.

**The Future Experience**

Students will have access to concise, two-page guides for each major. These roadmaps will help students understand what options are available from day one — and the step-by-step paths that they can take to get where they want to go.

All first-year students will be assigned a success coach who will assist with their transition to college and help them to get engaged in student organizations, their residence hall and the broader community. Success coaches collaborate with students to develop personalized plans to create a college experience that’s as unique as the student.

Success coaches will receive specific training and collaborate with faculty members to help students get research and internship opportunities that will build from semester to semester. All students will graduate with experiences that prepare them to reach their career goals.

Every semester, success coaches will work closely with their students to reflect on their classroom learning, extracurriculars, research and internships. Coaches will help students make connections between classroom learning and outside projects and help them choose their best next steps.
A Tony Award winner, a teacher, a city shaper, a digital marketer and a scientist share what they’ve learned both on and off the hilltop.

BY JOSHUNDA SANDERS

They came to St. Edward’s with vastly different backgrounds. They knew they wanted to achieve something big but weren’t necessarily sure how to get there. They each left the hilltop with a plan — and a network of professors and mentors to provide support and celebrate their accomplishments. Here, they share what they’ve learned.
TYLER MOUNT ’13
Two-time Tony Award winner and head of digital marketing for NBCUniversal, New York City

I TRANSFERRED TO ST. ED’S with the sole purpose of becoming an actor, but acting post-graduation never felt right. I was waking up at 4:30 a.m. to walk across Times Square in the snow and stand in line to sign up for open auditions. Sign-up for open calls happens early in the morning, and many places don’t let people line up inside, so we’d wait in the freezing cold for two or three hours. It never felt like I was pursuing my truth.

I WAS STAGE-MANAGING A SHOW ABOUT THE LIFE OF GLORIA ESTEFAN called On Your Feet! For fun, I was creating a vlog series — called The Tyler Mount Vlog — on the side. A few months later, Gloria Estefan asked to be a guest on the vlog. We filmed an episode. It was fun and iconic. A year and a half later, I was syndicating the show to 3 million people in 168 countries.

EVERY SINGLE EXPERIENCE in my life has taught me something. Gloria Estefan taught me that with love to give, you will go far. A close group of mentors at St. Ed’s taught me that with dedication and hard work, anything is achievable.

WINNING MY FIRST TONY AWARD (in 2018, for co-producing Once on this Island, which won “Best Revival of a Musical”) was legit the most surreal moment of my life. I still have a hard time believing it.

MY LIFE HAS BEEN TOO COINCIDENTAL and lucky to be only coincidence. I think I was in the right place at the right time because I pursued my career relentlessly.

I GREW UP IN SMALL-TOWN TEXAS wanting to be known in the community. I wanted to be on the front page of The New York Times Arts spread. I wanted people to scream my name at theater conventions. It’s just so strange this happened to a small-town Texas boy who really, really cared and really, really tried.
WHAT I’VE LEARNED

LEON A. VENEGAS ’10
Scientist at AstraZeneca in the
Washington, D.C., area

I APPLIED TO THE
MCNAIR SCHOLARS
PROGRAM, which
prepares underrepre-
sented students
for a research career.
The program provides
funding for internships
and GRE classes.

My first research
experience was at the
University of Notre
Dame, which had a
partnership with
St. Edward’s. My
project’s goal was
to examine how a
mutation in a heart
gene affected heart
development in a fruit
fly. I geeked out all
summer and loved it.

THE SUMMER BEFORE
MY SENIOR YEAR, I did
a research internship
with Associate Pro-
fessor of Biology Lisa
Goering. She piqued
my interest in molecu-
lar biology. She helped
me figure out all the
careers I could pursue
with a PhD.

I WORKED FOR TWO
YEARS AS A TECHNI-
CIAN in an immuno-
logy lab at The Uni-
versity of Texas at El
Paso, then I earned my
PhD at the University
of Illinois at Chicago.

In graduate school, I
became interested in
protein engineering
and a career in drug
development.

IN GRADUATE SCHOOL,
I ENGINEERED A
PROTEIN found in
yeast to allow it to rec-
ognize cancer markers
found in breast and
lung cancers. This par-
ticular yeast protein
had not been used for
this particular pur-
pose yet, so my work
got a lot of attention.
I was able to publish
research articles, and
I was invited to give
two talks.

DR. GOERING AND I
CONTINUE TO HAVE A
GREAT RELATIONSHIP.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE MORGAN
Regina Portillo ’11
Executive director at City Makery, Laredo

AFTER DISCOVERING ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY while at St. Ed’s, I became fascinated with enhancing quality of life for people. I specialized in this field at Columbia University and have applied the scientific methods I learned in each place I have worked.

I MOVED BACK TO TEXAS after living in New York for six years. Spending this time away made me appreciate my hometown’s culture and potential much more.

I LEFT MY JOB AT GOLDMAN SACHS a year ago to form City Makery, a nonprofit organization that works with citizens to change their city. I created this organization in partnership with local architects and urban planners. They understand local government and how to bring the community together.

THERE’S NO DOWNTOWN CORE in Laredo where you can live, work and play. There are limited job opportunities. It’s isolated from other cities, and a third of our community is below the poverty line. At the same time, this is the largest port in the United States, with billions of dollars in trade passing through every year. There’s a disparity between the working class and the poor and the small percentage of wealthy people.

AT ST. ED’S, I LEARNED about using data and research as tools to bring about progress. The McNair Scholars Program laid the foundation for what I do today at City Makery. For instance, early this year I designed a survey to get a sense of people’s perceptions around biking. My team and I got about 1,000 responses, reflecting the views of bicycle commuters who cross the border every day, social and competitive riders, and even non bikers who wish we had safer streets. With this data, we painted a clearer picture of what our community wanted.

A GROUP OF SKATEBOARDERS came to us with all this energy for a concrete skate park. They petitioned, but the petition wasn’t enough. We coached them to create a data-based presentation to prove that a skate park would improve health and quality of life. We facilitated meetings between them and city officials. When they had a cohesive story, they presented to city council and were funded more than $350,000 for a park.

OUR PROJECTS HAVE SHOWN that residents have the power to mold their city into what they want it to be. City government can be complex, but we equip people so that city government becomes a tool to accomplish their objectives.
I was born and raised in Austin. My wife, Avery Benoit ’10, is from San Antonio. We both transferred to St. Ed’s at the same time, and we student-taught together at Dawson Elementary.

My mom and grandmom were teachers, but it wasn’t something I ever considered when I was younger. I started working at an after-school program called Third Base at Williams Elementary, where I helped a small group of students with homework and reading. This is when I realized I wanted to become a teacher. It felt natural, and I enjoyed seeing the students make progress throughout the school year.

St. Ed’s helped me focus and figure out what I wanted to do with my career. From the very beginning of my education courses, we were in the classrooms, even if it was something small like teaching a science lesson.

I chose kindergarten when I did my student teaching and then taught one year of kindergarten followed by eight years of first grade. I love first grade because there’s something about that age. They’re excited about school. They get a little older, and they’re too cool. But at that age, they’re really funny.

There’s a lot of humor and keeping things very structured but very light. The whole goal of my classroom is for students to take ownership, have a sense of pride, honor their feelings — it’s a lot of social-emotional learning. I focus on giving kids a voice. Just because they’re 6 doesn’t mean they don’t have a voice.

It’s a delicate balance to see that humor and affirm it. I want them to know it’s OK to be silly. There’s a time to laugh and a time to work, just like in real life.

I teach my students that even if it’s scary, you still have to try something new. I’m teaching first grade at Casey Elementary this year after teaching at Cunningham Elementary for nine years.

My wife teaches first grade at Barton Hills Elementary. Her dream job is to teach at St. Ed’s someday, and I would love to do that, too! College is such a unique experience that shapes who you are as a person. I couldn’t imagine going to another school and being where I am in my life now without those experiences.
JAKE NISHIMURA MBA ’15
Director of digital marketing for Messina Touring Group, Austin

THE BIGGEST THING St. Ed’s gave me was the opportunity to explore music in and out of the classroom. I didn’t have any professional background in music. I just knew what I wanted to do.

PRETTY QUICKLY AFTER I GRADUATED from the MBA program, I started working with Messina Touring Group. While going to St. Ed’s full time, I was working with a small music company and doing media buying for a digital agency. When I graduated, Louis Messina asked the St. Ed’s program director if he knew anyone who could fill my current role. I was the logical choice.

MY JOB GIVES ME the opportunity to work the creative and analytical parts of my brain to execute digital media campaigns.

THE MOST REWARDING FEELING is standing in a stadium full of 50,000 screaming fans and knowing you played a small role in connecting those people to their favorite artist.

I HAD A WRESTLING COACH who said, “Luck is when preparation meets opportunity.” I was that kind of lucky. I did a lot of preparation, I took on music projects outside the classroom, and I made it known inside the classroom that I wanted to work in the music industry after graduation. I’m very, very thankful to be where I am. But the luck and “right place, right time” is only part of the story.
We’re celebrating our blessings — especially the volunteers who support Hilltoppers. Our alumni serve as mentors, make classroom visits and lend their expertise to our advisory board. Your donations support scholarships, academic programs, research and more. You make our community stronger. Visit stedwards.edu/giving to learn about the impact of your gifts.

Social Hilltop
New Facebook groups moderated by alumni offer a forum to connect with your local St. Edward’s community. We have regional groups for Austin, Dallas/Fort Worth, Denver, El Paso, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Antonio, and the San Francisco Bay Area. Visit facebook.com/seualumni and click on “groups” to join.

540+
Alumni & Friends

volunteered their time and gave their talent to support students during the 2018-2019 year.

2,600+
Alumni, parents, faculty, staff and friends made gifts for scholarships, student services and research during the 2018-2019 year.

Alumni Events
Let’s Catch Up

Connect with St. Edward’s families, alumni and students at three upcoming events on the hilltop.

OCT. 25
Hallow-scream
Bring your family and enjoy treats (not tricks) with today’s Hilltoppers.

DEC. 6
Festival of Lights
Celebrate Advent during this favorite hilltop tradition for students, alumni and families.

FEB. 14-16
Home Again
Make plans to join us for Homecoming & Family Weekend 2020.
THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION COMES TO YOU

Discover the benefits of new Facebook groups by alumni, for alumni.

Share Memories
Reminisce about your St. Edward’s experience, and learn about the St. Edward’s experience of others who came before you.

Lifelong Learning
Facebook groups aren’t just regional. The first-ever Alumni Book Club features professor-led reflections and alumni discussion. It’s all on a Facebook group.

Personal Connections
Interact on a deeper level with alumni-moderated discussions and the chance to welcome new Hilltopper graduates to the area.

Volunteer
Have fun and meet new people by leading your own Facebook group. Let us know you are interested at bit.ly/SEUherd.

JOIN TODAY
Find your online community by visiting facebook.com/seualumni. Click on “groups” and select the one that interests you. Let us know if you’d like to moderate a group for your local Hilltoppers at bit.ly/SEUherd.

Explore Your City
Whether you are new in town or just need a trusted recommendation, the Hilltopper network in your area can point you to everything from career opportunities to the best brunch spots.
OF FAITH

“It was easy to attend daily noon Mass at the chapel, because the chapel is literally between the business building and the tennis courts, where I practiced as a member of the women’s tennis team. The 9 p.m. Mass on Sunday is perfect for students. We’re all so busy during the day, but it can be the last thing you do in the evening and the best way to start the next week.”

Paola Carpio ’19
Economics and Entrepreneurship major
OF FULFILLMENT

“My sophomore year, I joined a Service Break Experience to volunteer at Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, which works with formerly incarcerated people and former gang members. We got a chance to hear their stories — like John, who had his whole life ahead of him but got in with a bad crowd and went to prison when he was 18. When he got out, Father Greg, the founder of Homeboy Industries, gave him a second chance, and now he’s turned his life around. Coming back to Austin, my heart was so full because of the good people we met there.”
Feed the Bees
Wildflowers rich in nectar and pollen bloom on the hilltop and offer food for honeybees living in the two hives that were recently installed on campus. Students and their professor are tracking the health of the bees.