

St. Edward's

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

WINTER 2016 VOLUME 16 ISSUE 1



A WOMAN TO WATCH

One student is finding her place in the Austin startup scene

EDUCATION MADE

How students are customizing their hilltop experience

IF WALLS COULD TALK

Here's (almost) everything that happens inside one classroom in one day



10 A DAY IN THE LIFE OF FLECK 106

We wanted to know, really know, what goes on inside a classroom at St. Edward's on a typical day, so we sent a recent grad to deliver trends in coffee consumption, wax nostalgic about her own college days and predict the class that requires the most copious note-taking on campus.



16 THE ADVENTURE-SEEKING LOW-BUDGET CONTINENT-CROSSING SUMMER OF CHRIS FLYNN

The associate professor of English channels the 18th- and 19th-century Romantics in his quest to direct a documentary film.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

"St. Edward's helps students figure out who they are, who they can be and who they should be." —George E. Martin, President, St. Edward's University

We help them rise. To who they are. To who they will be. To who they should be. That's really what it's all about, right? That's everything. That's who we are.

And we get to tell their stories in this magazine. Stories of adventure. Perseverance and grit. Achievement and purpose. Of how they rise.

In this issue, we do that many different ways: We go inside Fleck Hall, Room 106, to chronicle the events of a single day. The story typifies the classroom experience at St. Edward's. One that has professors educating minds and connecting hearts. One that has students challenging themselves to think bigger, become more.

In a personal narrative, Associate Professor of English **Chris Flynn** takes us along as he crisscrossed Europe over the summer.

The passion that resonates among his words makes me wish I could have been in his classroom last fall to hear him bring the Romantics to life.

Then we chronicle the big challenges faced by a fledgling entrepreneur (and student). She's persevering and problem-solving and failing and rising every single day.

Finally, we turn to four 2015 graduates who each forged a different path while at the university. In their own way, they are living out Martin's words.

My hope, as you read these stories, is that you share that sense of rising. Because we're never really done, are we? We're all still growing, learning and moving forward.

Frannie Schneider

Frannie Schneider
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For **Regina Vatterott '16**, entrepreneurship is more than an academic exercise. In less than a year, she has taken her product — a “smart” pill container that helps people manage their medications — out of the classroom and into the Austin startup scene.

26 CHOOSE YOUR OWN EDUCATION

The St. Edward's experience is like a choose-your-own-adventure novel — start in the classroom, proceed to anywhere. Here, four recent graduates take us along for the ride.

ABOUT THE COVER

Unidentified Flying Object

Main Building. It's so familiar, yet so distinctive. It can take your breath away, especially when it's shot from the air, complete with a sweeping view of the Austin skyline. To get this photo, the team behind *St. Edward's University Magazine* sent a drone high in the sky over Ragsdale Center to capture the impression of a university on the rise. It took about an hour (and the gift of a perfect blue-sky day) to get the shot.

In addition to getting our cover shot, we've used the drone to capture an unexpected aerial view of the university seal, as well as the excitement of Hillfest in the fall. And be sure to check out Main Building in the midst of construction on page 37.



St. Edward's

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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President's Letter

When considering the most important day in the life of college students, what commonly comes to mind is graduation day and students' first steps in their professional careers. Recently, when thinking about this, I came to quite a different conclusion. For me, the most important milestone in a student's life at St. Edward's is not the graduate procession out the red doors of Main Building, but the day that freshmen enter through those doors as part of their induction into our academic community. On that day, the horizons of opportunity, self-fulfillment and professional accomplishment open

wider than any entering student thought possible. Each day spent at St. Edward's encourages new aspirations and reveals another piece of the map that leads to their realization.

Since 2008, St. Edward's University students have won 78 national and international awards of distinction. Last year, **Victoria Ochoa '16** was the only student from a Texas university to receive a Truman Scholarship, a \$30,000 scholarship to pursue graduate studies as preparation for a career in public service. For the past seven years, St. Edward's has ranked nationally as a "top producer" of Fulbright awards from the highly selective scholarship and grant program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. In 2015, a record 10 students from St. Edward's were named winners of Fulbright awards.

Year after year, the graduate and professional schools accepting students from St. Edward's include the most prestigious national and international institutions, such as Harvard, Yale, Stanford, University of California–Berkeley and Oxford. Frequently, students' acceptances are accompanied by full scholarships and living stipends.

The majority of our students, on their journey through St. Edward's, explore global social, political and cultural issues as they travel a path that leads to our 21 university partners in 16 countries. It is a path with signposts in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Australia.

On campus, students and faculty enjoy world-class facilities. Over the last 16 years, the university has built new or completely renovated more than 20 buildings, including: the John Brooks Williams Natural Sciences Center, the Munday Library, the School of Education (Fleck Hall), The Bill Munday School of Business (Trustee Hall), and the School of Behavioral and Social Sciences (Doyle Hall). Four additional construction projects are slated for completion over the next two years — a new complex of student apartments with a total of 450 beds, renovations of Main Building and Holy Cross Hall, and a new operations building.

Word of St. Edward's is spreading. The university has experienced virtually uninterrupted growth in its traditional undergraduate programs over the last decade and a half. Fall 2015 brought with it the largest freshman class in university history along with the highest SAT scores on record (1137). And once students enroll, they succeed, as demonstrated by graduation rates that exceed Texas and national averages by double digits.

Larger enrollments have increased the need for scholarships to insure our mission-driven commitment to access and diversity. And our donors have responded, creating 162 new scholarships and academic excellence funds since 1999.

Many recognitions have accompanied the university's success. During the last 10 years, St. Edward's has risen faster than any other university in the *U.S. News & World Report* list for the Western Region and now ranks 13. *Forbes*, *Princeton Review* and *Washington Monthly* include St. Edward's on their rolls of the best universities in the country. Closer to home, Niche.com and a ranking in *USA Today* list St. Edward's in the top 10 universities in Texas.

The faith and trust in Providence that brought Holy Cross missionaries to Austin to establish a university have also brought us to where we are today. They will continue to energize and inspire us as we move forward into the future.

—President George E. Martin

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University. Opinions expressed in St. Edward's University Magazine are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the university.



On the Rise

Stroll across the hilltop, and you'll see some pretty impressive changes on campus from just the last five years. New and renovated buildings. More students and faculty. And other milestones. Check out how far we've come since 2010. —Camille Saad

RANKINGS

#21 2010 #13 2015

31

TOTAL FULBRIGHT
SCHOLARS

2010–2015

NEW & RENOVATED BUILDINGS

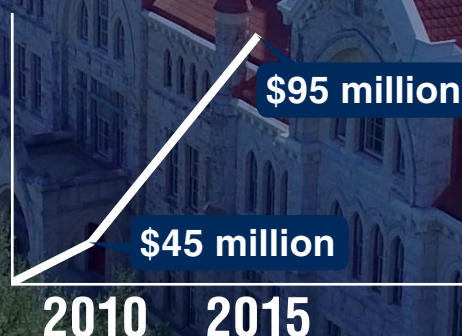
John Brooks Williams Natural
Sciences Center
Munday Library
UFCU Alumni Gym
Our Lady Queen of Peace Chapel
Brother Stephen Walsh, CSC, '62
Campus Ministry Building



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

21 Universities
16 Countries
2015

ENDOWMENT



FRESHMAN ENROLLMENT

711 2010 873 2015



DIVERSE FACULTY

471 Faculty
Members

14 States
38 Countries
2015

How Federal Grants Help Students

Last fall, St. Edward's University was awarded more than \$4 million in federal grant money for programs that directly benefit students. Here's how the latest money is having an impact:

Fostering Research Opportunities

Amount: \$1.6 million through 2020 from the National Science Foundation

What the money does: Gives freshmen in the science Living Learning Community a boost by providing a pre-college, three-day transition program, as well as summer research opportunities

*"The award will support students as they complete their degrees by enriching their portfolios through summer research that reinforces what they learn in class," says **Richard Kopec**, professor of Computer Science and Chemistry.*

Supporting New Teachers

Amount: \$294,000 through August 2017 from the National Science Foundation

What the money does: Supports early-career STEM teachers through monthly strategy sessions and provides research on how orientation programs help new teachers develop

*"The grant helps us meet a critical goal of teaching STEM to students in underserved communities by supporting new teachers and building STEM leaders," says **Steven Fletcher**, associate professor of Secondary Education and director of the Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program, which the grant supports.*



Creating Agricultural Scientists

Amount: \$275,000 through 2019 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture

What the money does: Provides 28 students from St. Edward's University and Austin Community College and 90 public-school students from East Austin College Prep with research opportunities and professional development mentorship through an Agricultural-STEM program

*"Students who go through the Agricultural-STEM pipeline will have a competitive edge as they apply to graduate programs," says **Fidelma O'Leary**, associate professor of Biology.*

Continuing CAMP

Amount: \$2.1 million through June 2020 from the Department of Education

What the money does: Provides scholarships for 35 freshmen whose family's primary source of income is migrant or seasonal farmwork

*"Grants allow us to provide services without worrying how we're going to pay for them and where the money is coming from," says **Esther Yacono**, director of the College Assistance Migrant Program.*

—Erica Quiroz



The 2016 Pritzker Prize, often called the Nobel Prize for architects, went to a Chilean architect whose lone project in the United States to date is the residential village on the St. Edward's University campus. Alejandro Aravena is known for socially responsible architecture that serves the greater good. Hunt, Le Mans and Johnson halls opened in January 2009.



30 Minutes with **Bill Quinn**

When asked what he does in his downtime, **Bill Quinn**, the longtime St. Edward's biology professor and winner of the university's 2015 Distinguished Teaching Career Award, is flummoxed. "Um ... do writing reports and managing papers count?" he asks.

Then he spots a familiar face as he walks through Ragsdale Plaza. "Hey, **Jen Wichman**," he calls out, "What do I like to do when I'm not teaching?" His former student (and now the university's interim associate dean of students) yells back, "Take your class out to dinner!"

"Man, I don't do that nearly often enough," he says. Taking students out is a rarity these days because Quinn divides his time among many activities: teaching, advising, mentoring student researchers and conducting his own research, to name a few. Over the course of his three decades at St. Edward's, he's led field research in destinations ranging from Colorado to Panama. Closer to home, he and his students have studied soil respiration in the alkaline clay of Central Texas, the population structure of Jollyville Plateau salamanders in northwest Austin, the effects of fire on plant associations in the Hill Country and watershed quality in Barton Creek.

“ I remind them that this is real science, so oftentimes, I don't know what's going to happen either. ”

—*Bill Quinn*

The scientific process is not without its challenges, says Quinn, and part of his job is helping students handle setbacks. "Over the years, I've learned that giving students direct, quick feedback and close one-on-one support works best for heading off frustration and keeping

students engaged," he says. "I don't tell them what to do or how. I remind them that this is real science, so oftentimes, I don't know what's going to happen either."

Studying those mysteries has yet to lose its thrill. Quinn loves traveling to new places — the gallery forests of Panama; the

Platte River of Nebraska; the bush of southern Africa; Angers, France; and "anywhere and everywhere in Colorado" — to study diverse and dynamic ecosystems. "I got interested in ecology while growing up in the suburbs of Houston, playing in the woods, digging stuff up, finding an interesting worm or leaf," he says. "I was drawn to biology, and ecology in particular, because they're all about how the whole natural community ticks. Studying and teaching that is a great way to spend a day."

—*Stacia Hernstrom MLA '05*



Where Prisons and Art Meet

Inside the Fine Arts Center at St. Edward's, students are cutting black, orange and tan prison uniforms into strips, then 1-inch squares. They dump the squares into a yellow tarp rigged into a bowl filled with water (middle photo), where the scraps will be mashed together with a machine and dried into paper. The paper will be rolled and shaped into the rings of a target, which is what prisoners say life is like outside and inside a penitentiary.

Jenn Hassin '12, an Austin artist invited to collaborate on the project by Associate Professor of Art **Hollis Hammonds**, initially wanted the paper rolls to mimic the layout of a prison in Huntsville. But after speaking with her cousin, a former prisoner who described being targeted because of his race and by inmates who wanted him to join gangs, she knew a symbol would be more powerful than a design of a prison. Each roll represents one of the 1,750 prisoners at the Huntsville Unit, with the 291 rolls in the center representing those on death row in Texas, she says.



Jenn Hassin '12 created "Targeted" with St. Edward's University students using prison uniforms. Malachi Muncy, a papermaker (top photo, left), shows students how to drain water from mashed prison uniforms, which are combined using a machine and water. Hassin (bottom photo, left) helps a student cut prison uniforms into strips and squares before they're dried into paper.

"I think a prisoner, someone who went to jail or someone who was close to having that path, could connect with that image more than an aerial view," Hassin says. "It's important for me to use facts, too, because that keeps the integrity of the piece and what it represents."

While students cut strips or wait for the paper to dry, Hassin says the project has sparked discussions of race and inequality, many of which are connected to the common reader *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* that all freshmen read last summer.

"I'm surrounded by students who are passionate about social justice. They have given me the fuel I needed to be inspired where I wasn't before," Hassin says. "It's made me more interested in the project because they care about the work so much, and I'm inspired by what they're bringing to it."

—Erica Quiroz

Reflections from **Down Under**

Last summer, **Jana Soares '15** set off for Australia to begin a postgraduate project at the University of Technology in Sydney on a Fulbright Research Grant. We checked in with her to see how her research is going and what she thinks about life Down Under.

—Lauren Liebowitz

>> I'm starting some preliminary experiments using *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, a bacterium that is a serious hospital-acquired infection threat and multi-drug-resistant "superbug." This means that antibiotics are often ineffective against this pathogen, resulting in antibiotic-resistant strains. In my research, I am using the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* to test for effective antibiotic and antimicrobial combinations in combating this pathogen.

Once the most effective option is found using *C. elegans* and further tests are done, this might then be studied in mammalian cells and higher-order model organisms.



>> There's no such thing as a typical day in the lab, but that's partly what makes it exciting. There are some days where lab meetings, seminar talks, training and planned experiments will be jam-packed into a day. Another day may consist of prep work, like sterilizing pipette tips, reading journal articles, planning future experiments or writing up results. Running a research project is like running a marathon — you have to be prepared for all kinds of obstacles, stay at a pace steady enough to keep going and have the endurance to reach the finish line.



>> I find Sydney to be a mix between London and New York City, though half as crowded. Sydney is also very cosmopolitan, and it has been really cool meeting people from many different countries. While I am learning about Australian culture, I am also learning about the cultures in Scotland, Italy, India and more. I've enjoyed attending Mass and joining the choir at St. Benedict's Church, the country's first consecrated Catholic church, which is being restored by the University of Notre Dame Australia. I've visited the "Golden Bucket" (the Sydney Tower Eye), Manly Beach and the Blue Mountains. I like shopping in Paddy's Markets, trying local food — my favorite is the chocolate-covered Tim Tam biscuit for morning or afternoon tea breaks — and getting up close and personal with the Australian white ibis, a well-known sandwich-stealing bird that has interrupted my picnic lunches.

When Garrison Keillor writes to ask you for your latest book of poems, *Instant Winner*, you send it. Keillor has read five of Writer in Residence **Carrie Fountain's** poems from her first collection of poetry, *Burn Lake*, on the *The Writer's Almanac*, the most recent on Oct. 20, 2015. In addition, the Academy of American Poets featured Fountain's poem "First" in its Poem-a-Day digital publication on Oct. 30.



BEST COLLEGES

Both celebrated and controversial among universities, the *U.S. News & World Report* annual college rankings are a key tool for the students who use them. That's good news for St. Edward's, which has risen eight places in rankings since 2010, says **Brian Smith**, professor of Political Science at St. Edward's.

Smith, along with a task force of other faculty and staff members who benchmark St. Edward's against other universities, conducted an analysis of the rankings for the Western region, in which St. Edward's is included. He found that the rankings are remarkably unchanged, pointing out that the top four schools have remained constant since 2004.

Despite the rigidity of the list, St. Edward's has improved more than any school in the Western region during this time. The university has done something most universities have not: improve its rankings almost every year since 2005.

"We grew our faculty and decreased course sizes at a time when most universities were increasing class sizes and decreasing student-faculty interaction," says Smith. "Additionally, more students applied to St. Edward's, and we were able to maintain our tradition of access without reducing excellence, as the average SAT score increased over time."

According to the report by the task force, there are still key metrics used by *U.S. News & World Report* where St. Edward's has room to improve, such as alumni giving. Other areas, such as retention, have shown marked improvement, thanks to a commitment to student success, says **Mary Boyd**, vice president for Academic Affairs. "We are very pleased with our ongoing efforts to increase the number of students continuing at and graduating from St. Edward's. The freshman retention rate for the Fall 2014 cohort was 84.6 percent, the highest retention rate in seven years," says Boyd.

PHOTO BY PETER RINGENBERG



Fish Out of Water

Janaee Wallace '15 grew up snorkeling in the coral reefs surrounding her island homeland, the Bahamas. Captivated by the biodiversity of the oceans, she gravitated toward the sciences and came to St. Edward's to study biology and chemistry. Now, she is the first St. Edward's graduate to participate in ESTEEM, the 11-month Engineering, Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Excellence Master's program at the University of Notre Dame that reserves two spots annually for students from the hilltop. She ultimately hopes to return to the Bahamas and start her own science and technology research and development company — and create hands-on learning opportunities for Bahamian students along the way. Here, Wallace talks with Dean of the School of Natural Sciences **Gary Morris** about ESTEEM, her next steps, and how a Holy Cross education transcends disciplines, universities and geographic borders.

—*Stacia Hemstrom MLA '05*

GM: *How did St. Edward's prepare you for ESTEEM?*

JW: From an academic perspective, I did three years of ecological and behavioral research on syngnathids — pipefish, sea horses, sea dragons — with Assistant Professor of Biology **Raelynn Deaton Haynes**. I was a tutor and teaching assistant for freshman biology. I got two research grants and interned with the U.S. Forest Service. But my time at St. Edward's also taught me about teamwork, finding a work-life balance and not being afraid to talk to my professors. I developed confidence in my writing and presentation skills. I'm comfortable with not just the science aspect, but also the softer (but no less crucial) skills I need to be successful at this level.

GM: *You will complete your master's in May 2016. What's next?*

JW: As part of my master's thesis, I'm already in talks with people in the Bahamas who might partner with me. I plan to go into research or consulting after I graduate so

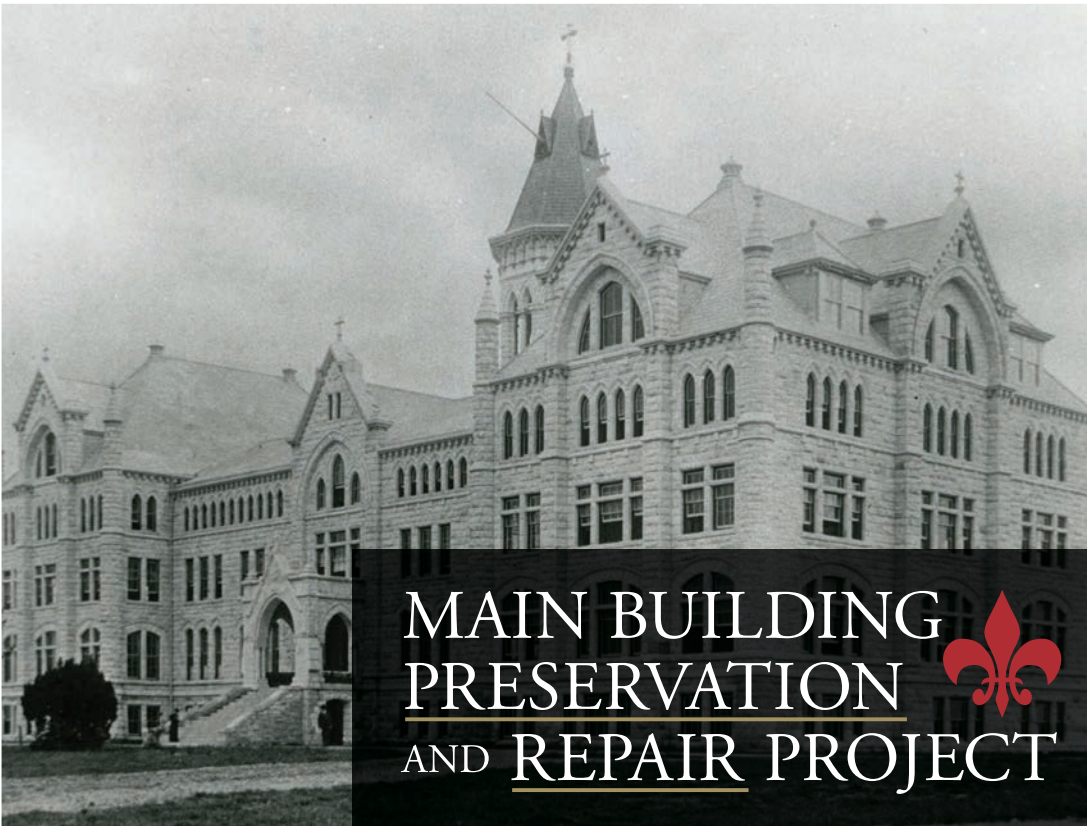
I can keep my skills sharp while I secure seed capital. I deferred entry into a doctoral program in marine sciences to participate in ESTEEM, so I may go ahead with that. But leading a sustainable aquaponics venture in the Bahamas is where my heart is — I'll keep working toward that goal no matter what.

GM: *It sounds like returning to the Bahamas is a crucial part of your future plans.*

JW: I've seen firsthand the differences between STEM education in the United States and in Caribbean nations like the Bahamas. I had to work a little harder at the college level because the Bahamas simply didn't have the same classes, teachers and resources to prepare me for a challenging science curriculum. I want to change that by involving Bahamian kids in my research and my company. I'm envisioning it as an innovation laboratory where they can develop their STEM skills and talents by getting their hands wet, literally! Then, when they come to compete and collaborate with the best, they will be able to hold their own.



Fire damage, 1903



MAIN BUILDING PRESERVATION AND REPAIR PROJECT



Study hall, 1905



MAIN BUILDING IS MORE THAN 130 YEARS OLD. It is a symbol of the strength and perseverance of the Holy Cross tradition. To stand strong for generations to come, it needs repair and preservation due to weather damage and regular use.

YOU HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD ON THE EARLIEST HISTORY of St. Edward's University with the Main Building Preservation and Repair Project. A gift of any amount, if made before April 15, 2016, will help secure \$500,000 from the J.E. and L.E. Mabree Foundation.



106

CLASSROOM

A Day in the Life of Fleck 106

By Hannah Thornby '15
Photography by Morgan Printy

Fleck. In my four years as an undergrad, I'd made the trek to its glass doors frequently, for everything from Film and Fiction II to campus newspaper budget meetings and at least a few roundtable discussions with speakers I'll likely remember for the rest of my life. I know its poster-strewn walls well and call its third-floor lobby, which offers the best view of Austin you'll find anywhere, one of my all-time favorite places. But until Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2015, I had never had a class or meeting inside Fleck 106. This is what I found.



8 a.m.

COMM 1317

**TERI VARNER, ASSOCIATE
PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION**

7:45 I show up earlier than I ever have to a class, more excited about being back in a classroom than embarrassed at sitting alone. I take a seat, far back right, near the window. Directly outside are big trees — the kind that they don't have at most workplaces — and a grassy lawn that leads down to Congress Avenue. I've missed this hill.

7:55 All the brave souls who would dare take an 8 a.m. class are here. Varner pulls up the schedule on the projector, as well as a song on YouTube, the customary “come into my classroom; I don't bite” song that professors often play to ease their students into class. It's “Shepherd's Clock” by some band called Hikes. Mostly instrumental indie rock. A quick Google search confirms my suspicion that it is an Austin-bred band. She lets it play until class starts.

7:58 “Those of you who are here early: Make sure you have your textbook, and sign up for one of the four speech presentation dates on the board,” says Varner. One small stampede later, only one name is scribbled next to the first sign-up date. Everyone else has opted for more preparation time and crammed their names into the remaining three slots.

8:00 The background music is turned off; another day in academia officially begins. Varner's “Good morning” is greeted with mumbles, the customary sound of college students before 9:30 a.m. Two are wearing Hilltopper shirts; otherwise, the classroom is a mix of athletic gear, polos, dresses, a baseball shirt, rolled-up khakis, white sneakers and one pair of socks in flip-flops.

8:05 “If I haven't learned something new after your informative speech, you have failed,” says Varner. An obvious fact, but it still seems harsh. I wonder if that's the coddled millennial in me.



8:16–8:30 Chatter from the students, who have formed four- or five-person groups to discuss and finalize their picks for their speeches. Topics include everything from rain forests and the environment to body piercing and tattoos. Not everyone is talking, but no one is asleep.

8:22 All of the iced coffees have been consumed. The few with hot coffees — in my book, the winners — are still sipping.

8:30 Varner calls attention to the front of the room and starts asking, maybe even interrogating, the students, making sure their topics are well thought out and that their upcoming informative speeches won't, in her words, “fail.” Banned books, radio identification systems, brain mapping and the FDIC all pass. She tells the girl who selected veganism that she is doubtful she will learn anything new from her speech; apparently, someone covers the topic every semester. Varner is clearly most enthusiastic about someone who proposes doing a speech on marriage in Saudi Arabia: “Good for you all! That's what I love about St. Edward's. We are global citizens. Fantastic.”

9:06 Varner: “If you say ‘you guys’ after this class, I will deny that I was ever your teacher.”

9:30 a.m.

SOCW 2318.01

STACEY BORASKY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL WORK

9:22 “We’re going to debate the Social Security Act today. It’s going to be fun,” Borasky tells me as I introduce myself, shortly before class begins. The name sounds familiar so I text my college roommate, a Social Work major, to see if this was one of her professors.

9:26 “Anyone going to ACL [Austin City Limits] this weekend? I’m staying as far away from downtown as I can,” says Borasky.

9:33 Two people come in late. One has a jug of coffee. I’m guessing 20, maybe 22 ounces. Impressive. The other carries a coffee mug with her.

9:35 In a five-minute intro, Borasky has breezed through the Great Depression, Keynesian economics and the role of the federal government. “What else do you think needs to be discussed?” Students throw out forced pensions, the longevity of the program as a whole, retirement age and baby boomers, among other things.

9:41 Students have to pick a state and whether they are a Democrat or a Republican for the debate. To start the debate, which is supposed to be argued as though it were 1935, Borasky pretends to

be President Franklin Delano Roosevelt introducing the Social Security Act to Congress. It’s a lot of dramatic hand waving and a cartoonishly deep voice.

9:45 The debate floor is set. Students don’t wait to jump in.

9:53 The best Congressional imitation comes from a girl with dyed hair, tattoos and high-top Chuck Taylors. She starts each of her rebuttals with, “As my colleague said,” and references laws, economic theory or political ideals every time she speaks.

10:02 Someone who had avoided talking suddenly drops a whole lot of knowledge about the WPA [Works Progress Administration], the private sector and the numbers behind it all.

10:06 There is one girl left to talk. She’s flipping through her textbook.

10:11 She speaks! The last person to join in the debate insists that “hope” has to play a role and offers relatively liberal idealism.

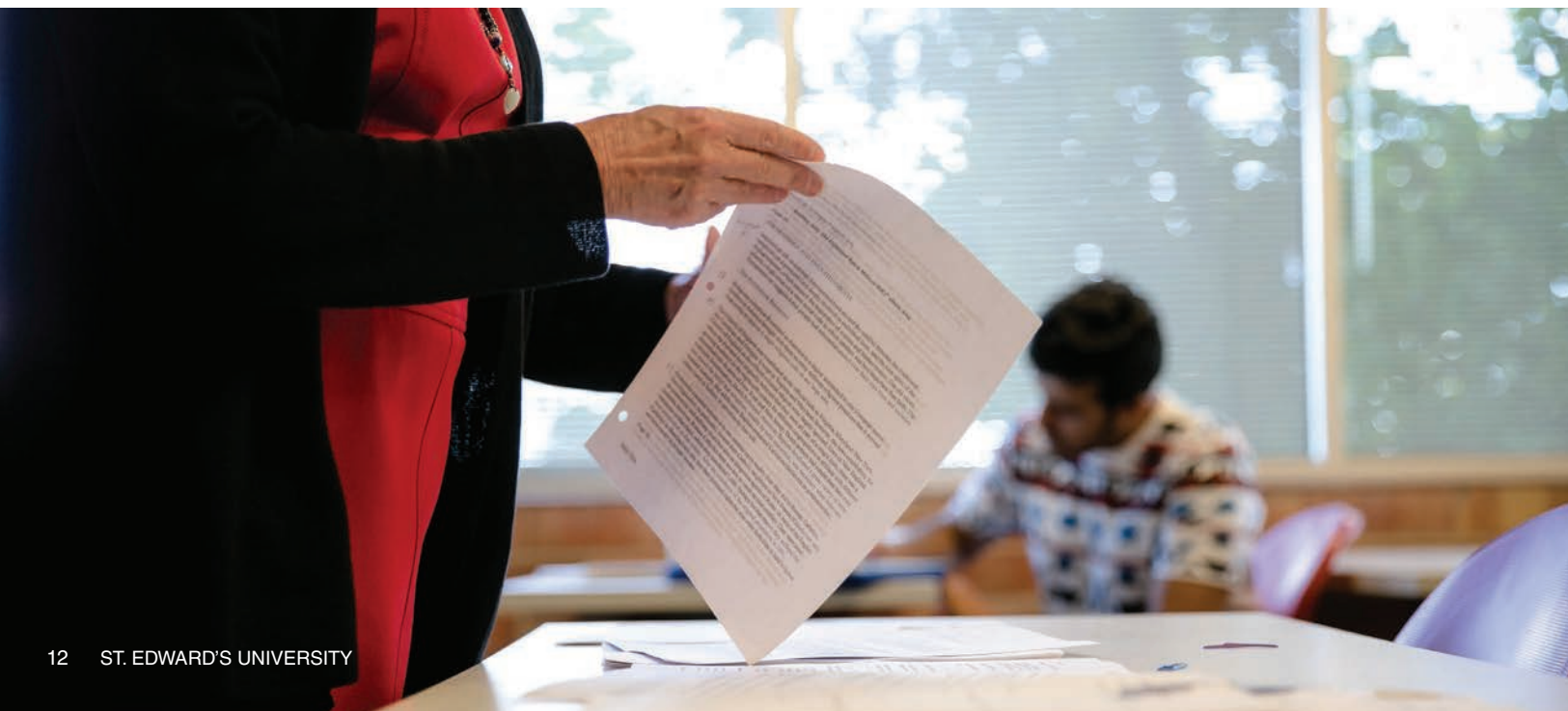
10:20 “Anyone remember the words to the preamble?” asks Borasky. A “Republican” from the back nails it — and also explains that it’s from *Schoolhouse Rock*.

10:22 I’ve almost finished my coffee. A Jo’s Americano. I spent a good portion of my meal plan on these my freshman year. Nostalgia washes over.

10:36 “That’s why I have Scottie dogs — because FDR had them, too,” Borasky says, as she finishes showing the class a YouTube video of a 1936 FDR speech called, “I Welcome Their Hatred.”

10:46 No lingering tensions from the political debate. Republicans and Democrats walk out together.

10:52 I finally get a chance to talk to Borasky after three other students bombard her with comments and questions about the class. My old roommate texted me halfway through class and has asked me to say hello and share the story about how she was able to see Pope Francis last week in Washington, D.C. Borasky is clearly delighted to hear my former roommate’s name, but she already knows the story I’m going to tell her. Another student had shown some of the Facebook pictures to her last week.



11 a.m.

READ 1324.01

JUDY LEAVELL, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF READING

11:11 It takes me a while to figure out that this is a supplementary class for American Experience, a social problems and term paper-based course that all sophomores at St. Edward's have to take. This class is set aside for students whose first language is something other than English.

11:16 They all speak Arabic, minus one student from Angola who speaks Portuguese. Interns are previous students of the class and circle the room to help.

11:36 I've finished my coffee.

11:38 Leavell talks about how important the Writing Center is. It's headed by one of my favorite professors. I make a note to stop by after class on my reunion tour of campus.

11:49 In an exercise about contrasting expectations with reality, the interns share stories about how, before coming to the United States, they thought New York City was violent because of things like popular crime and murder shows. Another says she thought that she would face a lot of racism and discrimination because she wears a hijab. "But the people of Austin are very friendly," she adds.

12:15 End of class. Overall, it was a very quiet hour. I have a feeling several of the students were uncomfortable with my presence and had concerns about their comments being distributed outside of Fleck 106.

12:30 p.m.

EDUC 3340.01

ARCELIA HERNÁNDEZ, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

12:30 The next class is about bilingual pedagogy, one of those classes that is so obviously practical for real life, but which you never think about actually existing. It's by far the smallest class of the day. Only four students. All women. They pull two of the tables together and gather around as if they were sharing a meal. I don't speak Spanish, so much is lost on me during this class.

12:45 I wonder if these students have had this professor before — not unheard of at St. Edward's. They're all very relaxed with each other and remind me of old neighborhood friends, catching up casually in someone's kitchen. From what I can tell, they're debriefing on an event they went to, the Tomás Rivera Award 20th Anniversary Celebration in San Marcos. They all laugh about some mischievous marker-stealing kid I gather they encountered at the event. I'm still not fluent in Spanish.



12:55 Now they're going around the table sharing scrapbooks, which Hernández calls "I Live Here" books. I catch mentions of paddleboarding, Home Slice Pizza, Zilker Park, the HOPE Outdoor Gallery, Idaho, Austin, St. Edward's, Enchanted Rock and HEB.

1:21 As a lover of narrative studies and literacy theory, I love the current debate: What topics are too difficult to teach? What role do stories and fiction play in education? "Have y'all read *Pete and Pickles*?" one student asks the others.

1:25 What sociocultural movements aren't currently included in education? "You hear about *Brown vs. Board of Education*, and the black civil rights movement, but some things you never hear about. I never thought about the Mexican-American civil rights movement until I came to St. Edward's," says a student. Same for me!

1:43 Class is over so Hernández asks one of the students about her club soccer game. She recaps the match in Spanish, so I can't share the details. I think they lost. My Spanish has not improved over the last hour and 15 minutes.



2 p.m. RELS 2303.01

JULIE HIEBERT, VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1:52 Hiebert puts on her “come into my classroom; I don’t bite” song from an iTunes “SEU Class” playlist. The song playing is a classical North Indian tune.

1:59 “Who is coming with me to the Austin Hindu Temple this Saturday?” she asks. The class is just finishing up a section on Hinduism, so Hiebert is inviting students to meet her Saturday. “You have time before ACL starts if you meet me at 9 a.m.”

2:05 Once I finally get everyone to sign the photo release form, I realize just how many students are in this classroom. I think it’s one of the biggest classes I’ve ever seen at St. Edward’s: about 23 students, split almost evenly between male and female.

2:06 *Shiva and Shakti, god and goddess.* Transcendence and Immanence of God. A couple more vocabulary words later, and I start to think the class might be hard to follow.

2:10 It’s been years since I’ve studied world religions, and thinking and talking about Eastern traditions is not like riding a bike. The students are on it, though. They respond to questions, offer examples and ask what seem to be thoughtful questions, though I’m not sure because I am officially lost.

2:15 Now they’re moving onto a more specific piece of Hinduism I can understand: Hindu temples. And by understand, I mean that I can have at least a visual understanding of what we’re talking about via the professor’s PowerPoint.

2:21 I am deeply disappointed to learn that I have been pronouncing “Himalayas” wrong: It’s Hi-MAL-ias, not Hima-LAY-as.

2:35 Hiebert shows us the lotus motif in Hindu paintings, buildings, wall designs and tapestries from various centuries. From what I can tell, there is incredible intricacy in Hinduism, so many seemingly small details that add up to a very robust culture and religion.

2:46 I can’t imagine how many pages and pages and pages of notes students in RELS 2303 take. So much vocabulary.

3:01 *Puja*, meaning Hindu worship, involves being mindful of using all your senses. And, of course, smell and taste are important senses. Making their debut on today’s projector screen: pictures of food.

3:09 “Hindu priests are like techies at a rock concert,” Hiebert says, making the best analogy of the day. She explains that it means they make sure everything goes well technically with a ritual when people come to worship at a temple.

3:13 Class comes to an end. I race off to feed myself.

5 p.m.

POLS 2320.01

ROBERT JONES, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

4:50 I come in a little later than I have been. Two girls are talking about taking some kind of trip — I'm going out on a limb and saying it's political science-related — to Washington, D.C.

5:04 We start late. It's my fault. These Political Science students are the most excited I have seen to be on camera. I feel like they're schmoozing me, trying to say something that will get themselves into what I'm writing. They are called back to attention by Jones, who is lecturing on campaign management in times of crisis.

5:10 Today's topic is introduced: crafting a campaign message.

5:15 There are 17 students, the majority of whom are men. Still a few daredevil coffee-drinkers, even though it's past 5 p.m.

5:26 Someone asks Jones about what happens when candidates go rogue. I am intrigued, and Jones actually has an anecdote about it.

5:31 Enter politicians with social media accounts. Twitter has changed everything.

5:32 A passing anecdote from Jones later, and I finally have a good understanding of the particulars of why Romney lost in 2012.

5:47 Breaking news: Clip art is back and now, on Jones' next slide, includes a figure that looks very much like a political candidate espousing a political message to his voters.

6:09 Jones talks to a few students after class about getting involved in upcoming campaigns.

6:30 p.m.

ACCT 2301.06

JENNIFER WANG, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING

6:30 Last class of the day. Accounting. Only seven people are in the room, and they're sitting as far away from one another as possible. I bet this is customary of night classes.

6:35 I have just learned that there are two types of inventory: perpetual and periodic.

6:43 Wang uses selling an iPhone to explain something about inventory, and a few seconds later, a signature iPhone ring goes off.

6:58 Wang admits this can be overwhelming and promises example problems. I'm under no illusion that I won't still be confused.

7:12 A student nails the answer to what seems to be a really tough question from Wang. But before anyone can start celebrating, Wang says that the methods used for this problem are becoming extinct in 2017 when the rules change. "Changing Tax Rules" sounds like it could be its own class.

8:30 As I leave, I long for the full classroom experience you only get as a student: I have no classmates with whom to dissect and analyze all that was discussed and covered, which I have seen students do today walking out Fleck 106's door after each class. The one thing missing from my day was the camaraderie you get with your classmates, of being in something together. And even though it's well past 5 p.m., I could really use that meal plan for another cup of coffee.

Hannah Thornby '15 is currently a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Malaysia.



The Adventure-Seeking Low-Budget Continent-Crossing Summer of Chris Flynn



The associate professor of English channels the 18th- and 19th-century Romantics in his quest to direct a documentary film.

By Chris Flynn

The barber waved a flaming stick around my ears after cutting my hair. Then the squat, muscled masseur slammed me around on a marble slab to work out my kinks, or maybe his. But when in Turkey without a word of Turkish in your brain, you just go along and hope to survive the local customs long enough to swim across the Hellespont from Europe to Asia.

The seaport of Çanakkale sits between the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean. I was there directing *Swimming with Byron*, my first feature-length documentary film. The movie follows in the footsteps (and wake) of the more energetic Romantic writers — Byron, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth,

Wollstonecraft, the younger Coleridge. By the time we got to northwestern Turkey, the crew was down to me and **Eric Trimble '98, MLA '11**, who'd been working as the cinematographer since before we started raising funds to make the film in the spring. We'd recently said goodbye to our first assistant camera operator, **Adriana Montenegro '12**, in Rome, and were in Turkey to film our last sequence, my swim, an echo of Byron's 1810 crossing, itself a much louder echo of the mythical Leander's nightly back-and-forth across the Hellespont, now called the Dardanelles.

But first I wanted to clean off the months of trekking across Europe, so I went for a haircut. My ears didn't catch fire, the

masseur didn't break any essential bones, and the next morning I found myself in a Speedo on a narrow beach with 500 Turks and 95 fellow foreigners ready to wade into some of the strongest currents in the world for the yearly Hellespont swim. A new friend from orientation events stood next to me.

"I'm a grown man capable of adult decisions," he said. "Why am I here?"

I knew what he meant. That was a lot of water we were looking across. But for him, this was one of many swims. I'd decided to do this particular event 11 years earlier and had finally made it to the starting line. What was a vast, watery, continental dividing line in the face of more than a decade of expectation?



I came to St. Edward's as a professor of British Romantic literature in 2004. Part of my application outlined a plan to write a book of essays where I climbed the mountains Wordsworth had climbed, walked the beaches where Coleridge had invented his ancient mariner, skirted the glaciers Mary Shelley had sought out for Frankenstein's monster and swam Byron's Hellespont. One of the English professors who'd hired me consistently reminded me of that project, and the fact that I hadn't done it yet.

"When are you going to swim the Hellespont?" **Brother George Klawitter, CSC**, would ask me. "Will it be in the geriatric division when you get around to it? Will the rest of us still be alive for it?"

So I had to do the swim, not just for myself, but for St. Edward's, and for Brother George, who often reminded me the only reason they'd hired me was my promise that I'd do it.



The summer before I began teaching on the hilltop, I hiked the Alps around Mont Blanc, the tallest mountain in Europe. It was the embodiment of the sublime for the writers I studied and taught, particularly William Wordsworth, and Mary and Percy Shelley. I went there to hike the Tour du Mont Blanc, a two-week circuit around the mountain that went through France, Italy and Switzerland. The hike is filled with the scenery of Wordsworth's great epic poem "The Prelude," Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Percy Shelley's poem "Mont Blanc," and many other great texts from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. I wanted to breathe it all in, to see what all these writers I'd focused on for several years were talking about. I wrote and published my first essay about the places of Romanticism after I got home from that trip.

More trips and essays followed. Then I started teaching French cinema at the university's campus in Angers, France, and assigned my students the insane, over-our-heads task of making a feature-length documentary about their semester abroad.



I made myself the director to oversee the project. None of us had ever made a film before.

As we worked on it, I became obsessed. By the time we finished I knew I wanted to make more movies. I had no money, no crew and no formal training, but the students and I had put together a fun document of that semester, *New Eyes/d'autres yeux*, which we showed at St. Edward's to an enthusiastic audience the following fall, and I started looking out for my next project.

Soon, I realized I already had it, and that the book of essays that had been slowly emerging was location scouting for a film. I asked Eric, who works in the Faculty Resource Center on campus, if he'd join me. Then I asked **Kate Rosati '06, MBA '12**, if she'd help us raise the money to shoot in Europe. They both said yes, so the film had a director, cinematographer and producer. We managed to raise \$12,500 with a Kickstarter campaign and headed over to England in late May 2015 to begin filming.



We stood on the Jubilee Walkway across the Thames from the Houses of Parliament in London: me, six students from St. Edward's, and eight acting students from London whom I'd recruited with the help of a friend, a theater professor at the University of Surrey. The wind was picking up, and we had maybe 90 minutes of sunshine early on a Monday morning. I realized I'd forgotten the wind cover for the microphone, and this was the only day we had to film the actors reciting Wordsworth's "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" sonnet on the site where it had been conceived more than 200 years earlier.

The one actor who hadn't shown up yet kept phoning me. I hadn't met any of them before, and had given them directions to where we'd be by email. It was impossible to miss, or so I thought. She kept ending up on the wrong side of the river, or the wrong part of the Jubilee Walkway, so I kept pushing her down the list of reciters until she was last.

I was in London with 13 first-year students for a two-week trip following a semester where I had taught them literature

that touched on mental health, and several students had volunteered to serve as crew on the film. As **Victoria Cavazos '18** and **Sara Radebaugh '18** MacGyvered a wind cover for the microphone — Victoria's sweater — **Jason Morris '18** and **Dylan Ramos '18** worked on framing the shot, and **Daniel Sullivan '18** helped coordinate the actors. Meanwhile, I repeatedly talked the wayward actor closer to where she needed to be.

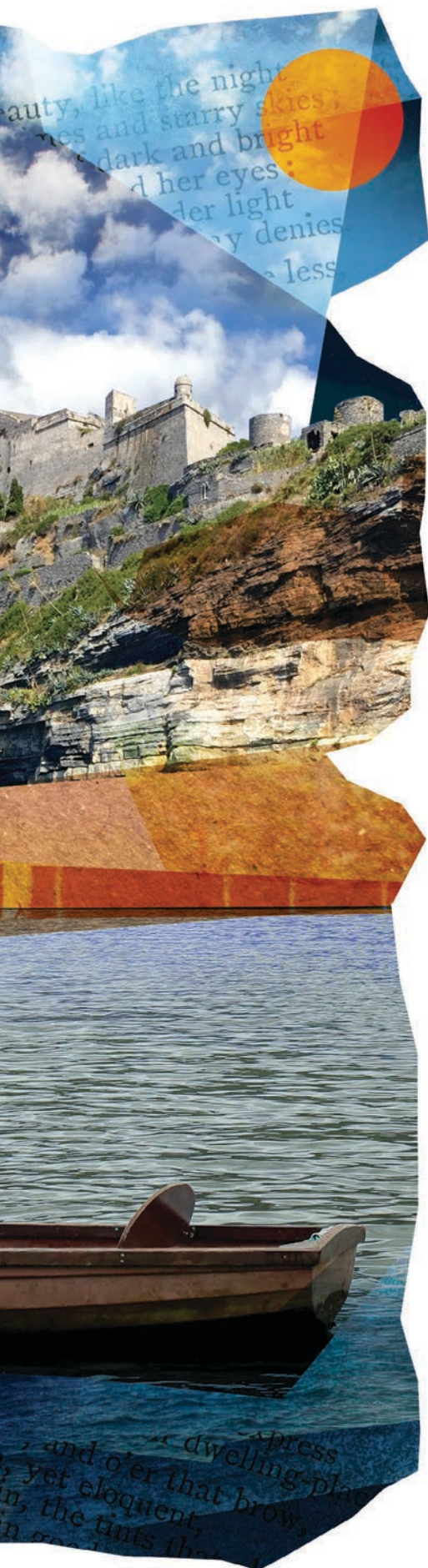
She made it, we got all of our volunteers on film before the light went bad, telling the future audience that "Earth has not anything to show more fair" than the sight of London from that spot, and film production was underway.

For two weeks, I shot all over London with the help of various groups of students. I paid them in fish and chips in various London pubs, and the footage accumulated: John Keats' house in Hampstead, Mary Wollstonecraft's grave in a small churchyard behind King's Cross Station, the Serpentine in Hyde Park where Percy Shelley's first wife drowned herself.

Then the students flew home. Eric arrived, and we drove west to the Somerset Coast, to Tintern Abbey, then north to the Lake District. I interviewed a charming little man named Toby Bryant, one of the people who run the Watchet Market House Museum in a little harbor town where Wordsworth and Coleridge used to walk along the sea, and where Coleridge came up with the idea for "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798).

Toby talked about a statue of the mariner the museum had commissioned a few years earlier. The bronzed mariner was very buff and battered, draped with the albatross he'd killed with his crossbow. Then we had a pint in the inn where the poets had been accustomed to taking liquid refreshment back in the last decade of the 18th century. I talked to two writers from Manchester who'd compiled a book, *Walking the Literary Landscape*, about the treks Wordsworth and other writers would make in the Lake District and other spots around northern England. I rowed Eric around on Ullswater, a lake where a young Wordsworth had stolen a boat as a child, as he filmed me talking about it.





When the sky cleared, I had a perfect view of the Matterhorn. It was the day we were to hike the Simplon Pass, Europe's continental divide. Eric had had to fly back to Austin for a few weeks while I continued filming, and we had plans to meet up again to film a hike up to the pass. Eric was supposed to pick up Adriana, who'd be helping with the camera work, in Milan, and the two would drive a rental car to Visperterminen, a small ski village in the Swiss Alps. I'd hiked there across the Alps and planned to meet them today in a cabin on the side of the mountain.

When I'd arrived in Visperterminen, I'd realized immediately that I wouldn't be able to contact them. The cabin had electricity, but no Wi-Fi, no phone, no connection to the outside world. My cell phone didn't work in Switzerland, even though the person who'd sold me a European SIM card in France had promised me that it would work in all six of the countries I told her we'd be visiting. I could only hope the directions I'd given Eric and Adriana when we all had Internet service would suffice.

Hours went by. I walked down the mountain to the few small buildings in Visperterminen. I waited in a hotel restaurant there as it grew darker, but still they didn't show. I knew I had about a half-hour walk up the mountain to the cabin, and waited as long as I could so I wouldn't be on the tiny road after dark.

I didn't sleep much that night. I could only hope Eric and Adriana were all right. I'd expected them no later than 4 p.m. the afternoon before, and by sunrise there was still no sign of them. I climbed down the mountain again, and there, in front of the hotel where I'd waited for them the evening before, they climbed out of the rental car where they'd ended up spending the night after giving up on finding the cabin in the dark. They'd been lost on the roads around Milan. It had taken until well past dark just to find their way out of Milan and across the border from Italy to Switzerland, and they'd driven for hours with no wireless access or GPS signal.

I let myself breathe, thankful they were safe, then quickly turned back into a low-budget film director filming in six countries in one summer. We had to hike the Simplon Pass, even if Eric had just flown over from

Texas, driven through the Alps, and spent the night in a car.



From Switzerland it was a race: Venice, then the Ligurian coast on the other side of northern Italy, where Byron swam and Shelley drowned, then down to Rome, where Keats died of consumption at the age of 25 and my friend Tatiana fed our little Texan film crew delicious dinners on the roof garden of her apartment every night.

The film was almost in the can, as they used to say, or in the external hard drives, as no one says. We had more than 30 hours of footage and audio from the summer's work. Now, there was just a day in Istanbul and two days in Çanakkale before I could finally swim with Byron.

There would be a lot more to do once we got back to Austin. Search for backers to finish the film. (We were broke.) Shape the narrative. Edit all the footage. Engineer the sound, and so much more. But before that, with my fresh haircut and relaxed muscles, I was going to enjoy swimming to Asia.

I thought I'd be plowing through oil and muck, since the waterway from the Aegean through the Sea of Marmara to the Black Sea is one of the most trafficked in the world. We'd seen a constant flow of freighters in the days before the swim. They only stop them on Aug. 30 every year, Turkish Independence Day, and then only for an hour and a half, so Leander's 4.5-kilometer swim can be re-created.

But the water was remarkably clear. Jellyfish bobbed below me as I got into the deeper water. I struck out, aiming toward a radio tower on the opposite shore, as we'd been coached, then downstream toward Çanakkale once I'd gotten halfway across the heavy current. In less than five minutes it was like I was alone in the water. We all were swimming our own routes. When I looked to my left, I could see a few fishing boats. To my right it was mostly water and the horizon.

I stumbled up on shore in an hour and 10 minutes, Byron's time exactly. I have no idea how I hit that so perfectly. Eric was there to film me coming out of the water, then a close-up of my watch with the perfect display, as if we'd planned it all.

STARTING UP

For Regina Vatterott '16, entrepreneurship is more than an academic exercise. In less than a year, she has taken her product — a “smart” pill container that helps people manage their medications — out of the classroom and into the Austin startup scene.

By Robyn Ross
Photography by Whitney Devin





AUGUST 2015, PITCH NIGHT

The nervous energy in the room is palpable, but it's balanced by the promise of champagne. Pitch Night is the final meeting of the summer-long Venture Forth class, a boot camp for startups at Austin's Tech Ranch, an education and networking hub for technology entrepreneurs. A dozen participants, and twice as many friends and family, perch on brightly colored chairs in the second floor atrium of an office building on the north side of town. Before the students toast their 10 weeks of hard work, they stand and present their concepts: a shared commercial kitchen space, a roommate-matching platform, a socially conscious import business.

At 8 p.m., it is time for the final pitch, delivered by the two youngest Venture Forth participants. **Regina Vatterott '16** and her co-founder, Abe Matamoros, a recent University of Tulsa graduate, make their way to the front of the room.

"We want to start by telling you about Abe's grandfather, our inspiration," Vatterott begins, as a snapshot of the elderly man is projected onto the screen behind her. "He spends too much time organizing his medications. In fact, there was a time recently when he stopped taking them, because organizing them was so time-consuming. He ended up getting very sick. He was lucky that he recovered, but each year in the United States 125,000 people die because they're not taking their medications consistently or correctly." Medication nonadherence costs the U.S. healthcare system between \$100 billion and \$289 billion annually.

She advances to the next slide, a picture of a jewelry-box-like container outfitted with LED lights and a digital clock.

"Our solution, the EllieGrid, is not just a medical device, but an attractive accessory," Matamoros continues. "It's paired with a mobile app that can send a reminder to caregivers, who can check in with family members like my grandfather to make sure they've taken their pills."

As the duo finish their pitch, their classmates applaud, and then the questions begin: *How will the Affordable Care Act affect your market? How will you test your medical device? Have you considered Kickstarter as a funding source?*

Vatterott smiles. "We appreciate the tough love. Please keep the questions coming."

As volunteers in the back of the room set out snacks and pop open the champagne, a member of the class raises his hand. "I understand that you've already received a million-dollar investment offer. Did you accept it?"

MARCH 2015, THE BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

Five months earlier, on March 28, 2015, Vatterott makes a different pitch, alone, to an audience of judges in the St. Edward's University Business Plan Competition.

In October 2015, Regina Vatterott '16 attended Austin Startup Week with sessions at Techstars, a startup accelerator.

She recounts how the idea for the business formed with the frightening incident with Matamoros' grandfather. Looking for a device to help the elder Matamoros keep track of his medications, the two longtime friends found only cheap day-of-the-week plastic pill containers and \$500-plus "smart" pill containers that could be programmed with dosages and times. So they built their own, using supplies from RadioShack and Hobby Lobby.

The device she's pitching in her business plan has compartments for multiple medications, each of which is meant to hold the entire bottle's worth of pills, and a digital clock. The user or caregiver programs it with information about how many pills should be taken and at what time of day. When it's time to take a pill, that compartment lights up in a color associated with the dosage (white for one pill, red for two) and makes a sound. After the patient has taken the medicine, he presses a button to turn off the light, and that information is sent via the associated app to the smartphone or computer of his care provider or a relative who's signed up for alerts.

Because the person who sets up the system pours in the whole bottle of pills, instead of counting them out into day-of-the-week pill organizers, the EllieGrid streamlines medication management. In her research, Vatterott tells the judges, she'd learned caregivers' biggest complaint is the time it takes to organize medications. "That really affects quality of life," she says. "The EllieGrid is user-friendly and will save lives."

But it is still a long way from hitting the market. "How do you plan to manufacture your product?" one of the judges asks. Vatterott answers that she doesn't know yet. Healthcare regulations restrict what materials can be used to make the device and the information that can be used in the smartphone app. She's also still evaluating the name. "The idea is that elephants — the 'Ellie' — have good memories, and we want to help people remember everything," she explains. "And 'Ellie' works with the LED lights. 'Grid' is the grid of the pill container. Although we think the name is a good one, it might not be intuitive to everyone."

"But that's also part of the process when you start a business," she tells the panel. "Maybe you fail, but you fail fast, fix it and move on."

"What does that mean to you?" one of them asks. "I understand you're the vice president of the entrepreneurship club here. How do you tell your fellow students it's OK to fail?"

Vatterott nods. "Failure" might be a chance to identify and correct a problem, she explains, and the sooner an entrepreneur can get over her fear of it, the better. "I tell everyone in the club to talk about their business ideas with whoever will listen. One benefit of talking about your idea out loud is just hearing your own flaws that you can fix. If you don't tell anyone, you're not going to hear what your customers actually want. Talk to as many people as you can. There's no such thing as bad feedback."

"But that's also part of the process when you start a business," she tells the panel. "Maybe you fail, but you fail fast, fix it and move on."



The judges withdraw to deliberate. Executive in Residence **Tony Alvarado**, the interim director of the Entrepreneurship program and Vatterott's academic advisor, has been watching in the back of the room. He notes that she'd performed well: She hadn't used notes or stood behind the lecturn, she'd maintained eye contact and a relaxed demeanor, and she'd been honest when she didn't know the answer to a question.

"When you're talking to investors, you're marketing yourself as much as your venture," he says. "Regina tells you a little bit about herself, how she got involved with the venture, what her passion is about it — and in doing that she's also telling you about who she is and what her values are. She has this intangible quality of coming across as a genuine, authentic person, and not pulling any punches."

In a moment, the judges emerge and announce their decision: Vatterott won first place in the competition, which comes with a \$2,500 purse.

JULY 2015, THE WORK SESSION

Four months have passed, and Vatterott and Matamoros' venture continues to gather steam. They are camping out at a north Austin coffee shop, going over their pitches for this week's important meetings. Tomorrow night Matamoros will present at the Austin Hardware Startup Meetup at Capital Factory, an incubator downtown; it's a chance to put out feelers for a technical co-founder. The next day they'll get feedback from staff at Memorial Hermann—Texas Medical Center in their hometown of Houston.

But tonight they have class, the fourth meeting of their Venture Forth program. Started by Tech Ranch founder and CEO Kevin Koym, the Venture Forth program teaches people how to turn business ideas into reality. **Paula Sabrsula MBA '12**, who has experience in the pharmaceutical industry and mentors young entrepreneurs, sponsors their attendance in the program, an intense course that only a handful of college students have ever taken. Every week starts with a "jam session" dedicated to longer and longer pitches.

Pitching is old hat for Vatterott, who's been presenting business ideas since her freshman year in the business Living Learning Community. But last week something clicked in a way it hadn't before. Asked to come up with an elevator pitch on the spot, Vatterott explained the EllieGrid's lifesaving capabilities and wrapped up with a new ending: "What is this technology worth to you? Or better yet, *who* is worth it to you?"

When she finished, the cohort was silent. "It was because they could see the pathway to how this venture could actually make a difference in the world," Koym recalls. "It immediately gave permission for some of the other people in the room to start speaking about their own ventures that way. It's not until someone's bold like that, that people see there's really a chance to use the tools of business to change the world for the better."

Not only had the Tech Ranch cohort been moved by Vatterott's bold pitch; to her surprise, the group also had gotten attached to



At Capital Factory, Vatterott has access to work areas and mentorship from Austin's startup community.

the name "EllieGrid." So Vatterott and Matamoros worked with a lawyer to do a patent search — checking to see if any very similar products were already on the market — and, finding none, they filed a provisional patent that would protect their idea while they hired an industrial designer. The two were leaning toward a firm in Mexico City that Matamoros had vetted via phone and an in-person visit.

"Something we told them is we don't want it to look like a medical device, because we think that actually makes people feel stigmatized," he explains between sips of ice water at the coffee shop. "If we can build a beautiful accessory that just so happens to save your life, we think people will be more attracted to that — something you could put on your bedside table that doesn't look like a healthcare device."

They spread out photos of their new functioning prototype, the first and last one they'll use a 3D printer to make. They used the slow

and error-prone printer for the prototype but plan to manufacture the actual devices with injection moldings instead. First, Vatterott and Matamoros need to find a third co-founder, someone with experience in electronic components who can work on the circuit board.

Vatterott isn't the kind of lifelong entrepreneur whose parents remember her selling pencils to her first-grade classmates or squeezing hundreds of dollars out of a lemonade stand. She didn't even know what to study in college until she found the Entrepreneurship major at St. Edward's. But it turned out to be the perfect fit.

"I thought it was really exciting because you could learn how to do things from top to bottom," she says. "I didn't only want to study accounting, or finance, or management — I wanted to learn how it all worked. That way I could go into a meeting and feel comfortable talking to everyone there."

And she was motivated by her Catholic upbringing, which nudged her toward a career that would give back. In high school she learned about social enterprise companies like TOMS Shoes, whose "one for one" model builds a donation into every purchase. "I knew I wanted to help people in whatever way I could, and I saw entrepreneurship as a sustainable and scalable way to do that," she says.

That mission fits well with the focus on social enterprise at St. Edward's, says Alvarado.

"One of the things we emphasize in all of our courses, because of the mission statement and Holy Cross heritage, is that students at St. Edward's are not just getting a degree in entrepreneurship," he says. "Their job is also to look at the problems that we have in our society and our community, and find solutions to those problems. If someone is motivated just by money, that's probably going to be a very short ride because of the hours that you spend and the sacrifices that you make as an entrepreneur. But if you're passionate about improving somebody's life as a result of a solution you've found, you're going to be persistent and follow through."

OCTOBER 2015, THE OFFER

The elevator doors open, and Vatterott steps onto the 16th floor of the Omni Hotel building in downtown Austin. The receptionist smiles and waves her into Capital Factory. Through the partnership between Capital Factory and St. Edward's, Vatterott has access to the accelerator's work areas, video production studio, "office hours" with expert mentors and daily opportunities to network with Austin's community of entrepreneurs.

After stuffing her lunch into the sleek communal fridge, Vatterott winds her way to an empty seat. She passes the accouterments of the startup scene: a rack of bicycles on the wall, a beer keg, desks connected to treadmills and stationary bicycles, exercise balls, enormous beanbag chairs. Most of them are occupied by casually dressed people in their 20s, 30s and 40s, who are either staring intently at their laptop screens or talking animatedly with colleagues.

Two months ago, when Matamoros gave his pitch here at the Austin Hardware Startup Meetup, he and Vatterott had been

approached by an engineer named Hieu Nguyen, a new arrival to Austin, who'd become their much-needed technical co-founder. Now all they need is a software developer.

And they need one other thing: money. So far, the co-founders have paid the venture's expenses from Matamoros' savings. They can offer additional partners only equity in the company, not a salary, which isn't unusual for startups. But they'll need money for ongoing legal services and supplies, like circuit boards and hardware.

Sitting at one of the long communal tables, Vatterott lays out their options. They could pursue funding from an angel investor, someone who, in addition to investing his or her own money in the company, could offer EllieGrid business or technical expertise for a number of years. They could work with a venture capitalist or VC firm, which would offer multiple investors' pooled money in exchange for a percentage of the company. They could start a crowdfunding campaign, like Kickstarter.

"If we do a Kickstarter," she explains, "it would be less about raising money than a strategic move to validate our idea. If we do go to an investor or a VC firm, we could say, 'Look, we have this many pre-sales,' and that would hold a lot more weight."

And one investor has already decided the EllieGrid is going places. Matamoros had been in conversation with an angel investor interested in the tech industry when the man offered him \$1 million in exchange for a share of the company.

"A million dollars is so tempting — and it was refreshing to think about having a salary," Vatterott says. The co-founders talked it over with their Tech Ranch cohort and with Koym and ultimately decided to decline the offer. "We knew we could bootstrap the company a little longer," she says, "and put it in a better position to receive investment."

They decided to let the industrial designers finish their work, Vatterott explains, and then approach investors with a top-notch minimum viable product. A more developed EllieGrid would likely lead to a higher valuation for the company. "That first investor might be a great option," she said, "but it's like buying the first car you see."

While they are the youngest members of their Tech Ranch cohort, the EllieGrid team is the only one to receive a funding offer during the course. And that isn't the only way Vatterott stands out, says Jaime Sutton, Tech Ranch's director of marketing and operations. Vatterott isn't afraid to ask questions when she doesn't understand the material, or when other entrepreneurs aren't explaining their ventures clearly.

"That created a dynamic where the entrepreneurs felt safe learning from each other," Sutton says, "and Regina's willingness to learn and help others learn through example is really powerful."

With the conversations around her at Capital Factory blending into a comfortable background noise, Vatterott opens her trusty calendar. She needs to plan her schedule for Austin Startup Week, when she might meet the software developer who'd complete their team. She needs to work on EllieGrid's website. And she has to manage her 13 hours of coursework.

"The startup world isn't always glamorous like social media and movies make it out to be," she says. "It's a lot of long hours."



But a big part of my motivation is saving lives, and that's why I keep going. And the entrepreneurship and startup scene is so exciting: the people, the city, the university. If you're willing to put yourself out there, there's an incredible amount of opportunity."

JANUARY 2016, THE ACCELERATION

Since October 2015, things have been moving fast for the EllieGrid team — which now includes Vatterott, Matamoros, Nguyen and Nic Dhanam, a college friend of Matamoros' who is the startup's chief product officer. They've talked up the startup at other pitch competitions. They were finalists in the CVS Retail and Health Innovation Challenge at Wake Forest University, and they won first place (and a \$1,000 check) at the IBM Cultivate Health Hackathon in Austin. They're applying to various accelerators, a more intense version of the Venture Forth class that comes with mentors, connections and guaranteed investment dollars.

In mid-January, they were announced as finalists at the IOT/M2M Innovation World Cup in Barcelona. They'll have the opportunity to present EllieGrid on stage, if they can find a way to get to Spain by the end of February. That nomination also means expediting the prototype, so they have a working device to show.

These are all big steps for a company that started just over a year ago as a DIY experiment with hobby shop parts. To keep up with Vatterott's progress, visit EllieGrid.com or follow @EllieGrid on Twitter.

Being in Austin has given Vatterott opportunities to network with other entrepreneurs and meet potential partners for EllieGrid.



CHOOSE YOUR OWN EDUCATION

The St. Edward's experience is like a choose-your-own-adventure novel — start in the classroom, proceed to anywhere. Here, four recent graduates take us along for the ride.

By Stacia Hernstrom MLA '05 | Photography by Morgan Printy and Whitney Devin

GO TO COLLEGE. CHOOSE

MAJOR. Take classes. Earn degree.

Seems simple enough. But life (and higher education) is rarely so straightforward. On the hilltop, the “traditional” undergraduate experience is anything but, as students step beyond the walls of their classrooms and into study abroad programs, national and international service learning, real-world research projects, student organizations, and more. The résumés of recent grads read more like *Choose Your Own Adventure* books, with an infinite number of paths to follow.



Tanzania by Tomorrow!

WHEN MEETING THE VILLAGE LOCALS near Moshi, Tanzania, **Courtney Brock '15** got asked three questions. *Are you married? How many kids do you have? What's wrong with you?*

The American twentysomething continually surprised everyone by telling them that she was studying biology and planned to become a doctor before she married and started a family. She had traveled to Tanzania to volunteer with International Service Learning (ISL), a nongovernmental organization that leads service trips and offers aid in developing countries. Brock spent three weeks in the summer before her junior year with ISL's General Med Team, which pairs pre-medical students with a global healthcare team on the ground in local villages. She connected with the program through her involvement in the American Medical Association Student Chapter at St. Edward's. Brock helped establish and run three clinics in rural villages, where the team treated as many as 150 people a day for ailments like backaches and arthritis, vision problems, and the ever-present malaria.

“In their experiences, people in scrubs only came to their village when something terrible was happening, so our presence often made people uncomfortable,” she remembers. “But there were no hospitals nearby, so if something was bothering them, we were really their only option.”

The medical team also enticed people to visit by offering free basic but critical supplies like soap, toothbrushes and shoes. Brock even gave away her eyeglasses to a child who could no longer read the chalkboard at school.

“I still think a lot about the children I met,” she says. “Many of the things we treated them for could be fixed with therapy or education here in the United States, but their parents didn't have those resources as an option. They were doing the best they could, but in so many cases, it wasn't enough.”

When she returned from Tanzania, Brock channeled that empathy into a volunteer position in the ER unit at St. David's Medical Center. She helped relieve the burden on the nurses by restocking supply rooms and providing simple things like pillows and blankets to patients. But she realized pretty quickly that just as much as fresh linens, the patients she visited wanted company.

“When someone gets sick, many people feel uncomfortable and don't know what to say or do. It can be alienating,” says Brock, who is now conducting cancer genetics research at MD Anderson Cancer Center and plans to start medical school in two years. “I talked to them and tried not to let their illness shape my perceptions of who they were. And if the conversation flagged a little, I asked about grandkids, and out came the pictures!”

Both experiences — halfway across the world and right down the road — taught her that “so many things are universal. No matter where they are, people want to take care of their families and be taken care of themselves. They want friends and a sense of community. And being a doctor is about more than treating patients and making them better — it's about providing for those basic human needs, too.”

Surprise! You're a Leader!

A COMMUTER STUDENT, **Nathalie Eguiza '15** spent her freshman year trying to adjust to college classes while living at home. She found it hard to make friends, and between going to her classes and driving to and from them, she had little time for anything else. "It was a rough year," she remembers.

Her sophomore year, she unintentionally walked into the university's Involvement Fair and then spotted the intern from her Freshman Studies class the previous year. He was working at the Student Life table and told her she would be a good fit for Hilltop Leaders, a yearlong program designed to guide underclassmen through an exploration of leadership styles and skills. She applied but with hesitation. "I always wanted to get more involved, but being an introvert made it challenging to put myself out there," she says. "I had to give myself a pep talk and say, 'College is the time to try new things. Just go for it, Nathalie.'"

She did. And she was accepted. She spent her sophomore year with 14 other students attending workshops, listening to guest speakers, identifying her strengths and working on group projects. The students traveled to Washington, D.C., for a week to hear from leaders like the late **Brandon Lepow '05**, a longtime aide to President Barack Obama. At the end of the year, the group combined their talents to coordinate a school-supply drive and cookout for a low-income neighborhood near the St. Edward's campus.

Over the next three years, she would take part in nearly every leadership program St. Edward's offers — LeaderShape, Leading EDGE, EcoLead, OrgCon and more — all of which helped her identify her talents, clarify her own sense of leadership and put those skills into practice.

"During Hilltop Leaders, I learned that being quiet didn't have to be a bad thing," she says. "In some of the assessments we took, I identified being a helper as my biggest leadership strength, and I learned to use that strength to listen and help others find their own way through challenges."

She began volunteering at the Riverside Nursing and Rehab Center and teaching an informal painting class to her assigned buddy, a resident named Tina. She signed up for Campus Ministry Service Break Experiences at an Apache reservation in Arizona and an orphanage in Jamaica. She also served as the executive coordinator of Student Life's Transitional Experiences Council, where she oversaw five student coordinators and helped with the programs they carried out.

"I never thought that would be me, but I've learned that anyone can be a leader," says Eguiza, who now works for the American Heart Association. "Everyone can have their own style — there's not just one way, there are many."





"It was like having a new life for six weeks ... with new people in a new environment."

Seville or Bust!

DANIEL CARDENAS '15 admits he spent his first week studying abroad in Seville, Spain, freaking out. He had been pickpocketed, losing his cell phone and real-time connection to friends and family back home. Then, he walked into his Intermediate Spanish class to find that the native Spanish professor spoke only, well, Spanish. "I was expecting it to be challenging," he says, "but everything, right down to the syllabus, was in Spanish. My skills were definitely put to the test right from the beginning."

Cardenas was one of 70 American students from universities across the country (and one of 11 from St. Edward's) to participate in the Seville summer program, which is coordinated through a partnership with the Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo. There was also a group of students from China. "I remember working on several projects with the Chinese students, and the only way we could communicate was through our broken Spanish," he says. "It was pretty surreal, but we made it work."

During the six weeks he spent in Spain the summer before his senior year, Cardenas traveled to Madrid, Córdoba and Toledo and visited Lagos, Portugal. He walked Seville's Old City and explored even older churches; snapped pictures at the tomb of Christopher Columbus and the mushroom-like Metropol Parasol, the world's largest wooden structure; tried to learn flamenco dancing; and

picnicked in the lush Parque de María Luisa. He and a friend got locked out of the famous Alcázar palace: An unfortunately timed bathroom break meant the tour left without them but with their ticket stubs. "The outside of that mosque was actually gorgeous," he says, "and I got to see it for two hours while we tried to explain what had happened and get back inside."

The delicious sangria and tapas dishes like *jamón* and *pulpo* more than made up for the cultural mishaps. "The *patatas bravas* with garlic mayo was my absolute favorite," says Cardenas, who wrote a paper on the culinary tradition of tapas for a Cultural Foundations class that summer. He also got to experience the frenzy of a World Cup, cheering on the *rojo y amarillo* in Seville's famous Plaza de la Encarnación. Then there was the face paint. "A friend and I went to a tapas bar to watch a game, and our waitress wouldn't let us pay for our food unless we let her paint the Spanish flag on our faces!"

An Accounting graduate who is now preparing to sit for the CPA exam, Cardenas loved being fully immersed in something so foreign. "It was like having a new life for six weeks — a complete vacation from everything I knew, with new people in a new environment," he says. "I knew I wouldn't get the chance to experience a different culture and place firsthand again, so I didn't really think about being so far from home. I just jumped in."



"You can't be afraid to reach out to people, whether it's a professor or a famous activist. You have to be the one who starts the conversation."



From Reel to Real!

WHEN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF COMMUNICATION **Shannan Butler** cued up the documentary *Tough Guise* during his Media Studies class, then-sophomore **Mary Kathryn Flores '15, MBA '18** had no idea it would change the focus of her academic career. And she had even less of an inkling that two years later, she would be interviewing the film's creator about one of its major themes — violence against women.

The film piqued Flores' interest in how various channels of communication perpetuate mindsets that degrade women. "There are so many areas of society where violence against women is downplayed — the law, the media, sexual assault, victim blaming and shaming," she says. "Once I started to see how much there was to explore, I kept that focus for writing assignments in my classes whenever I could."

Her professors encouraged her interest, guiding her through more than one bout of frustration over research and the daunting breadth of topics. When she was thinking of

abandoning a paper on feminism, Assistant Professor of University Studies **Alex Barron** talked her through it. "She told me, 'I know you love this topic because I can see it in your eyes. Stick with it.'"

Associate Professor of Communication **Tere Garza** could see it, too. She invited Flores to attend the annual National Communication Association conference in Chicago her junior year as a representative of the university's communication honor society, of which Flores was co-president. In Chicago, she honed in on the conference's Feminist and Women's Studies track, marveling at the passion she sensed among the presenters and kindling her own. Back in Austin, she got involved with BeVocal, a movement that focuses on bystander intervention as a way to curb violence against women. And she decided to email Jackson Katz, creator and co-writer of the *Tough Guise* series (there are now two films) and an outspoken advocate for BeVocal's bystander-intervention platform.

"I needed to interview someone who

was influential for my Capstone paper, and I thought, 'Why not him?'" she says. "I knew he was going to be at a BeVocal event coming up at the University of Texas, so I found his email address online and sent him a message."

Not only did he write back, he offered to talk in person after his Austin speech. That's how she found herself snaking through an excruciatingly slow line waiting to meet Katz last March on the UT campus. Finally, she got her turn and introduced herself. Despite the hours he had been talking and the many hands he had already shaken, he took the time to answer her questions.

"Experiences like that are one of the biggest takeaways from my time at St. Edward's," says Flores, who is a content management associate at Dimensional Fund Advisors and recently started her MBA at St. Edward's. "You can't be afraid to reach out to people, whether it's a professor or a famous activist. You have to be the one who starts the conversation."

Startups and Standouts!

IN THEIR FINAL CLASS BEFORE GRADUATION, **Layne Cassidy MBA '15** and **Bill Yeager MBA '15** had no idea they'd become experts on the subject of energy poverty. They'd actually never heard of the issue. But during their last semester, they completed a consulting project for Gridmates, an Austin-based crowdfunding initiative that provides energy to low-income families around the world. Over five months, Cassidy and Yeager met weekly with Gridmates' founder to hammer out the company's goals, strengthen its peer-to-peer donation model, identify possible industry partners and engage donors.

"We were able to dig down and learn this issue inside and out," says Yeager. "We both felt confident knowing we had the knowledge and skills to evaluate the market — and then communicate our ideas effectively to someone at the executive level."

Both drew on their previous experiences in the MBA program. Cassidy had interned at a startup that eventually went under, then joined her former boss at a new startup for a second internship that

turned into a job as operations manager. His first summer as an MBA student, Yeager had interned at Turner Broadcasting's headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, his résumé having been pulled from a pile of applications from around the country for its breadth and depth. Cassidy and Yeager also won first place in last year's annual MBA business plan competition for a font-recognition app targeted to graphic designers.

"As I was working on them, I knew I'd see every one of the business situations from my internship and the competition again one day," says Yeager. "So when we started the Gridmates project, I knew I could handle it. It was a challenging semester, but I was comfortable with the marketing skills I needed, and I had practice presenting to clients."

"All of my experiences in the MBA program taught me to take the initiative and solve problems," agrees Cassidy. "I've learned that I can add value minute by minute to any situation."

ALUMNI NOTES

ALUMNI SUCCESS

Twice the Wisdom



Dave '74 (left) and Dan '74 (right) Schmotzer grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. The 63-year-old twins played baseball and basketball throughout high school and during their time at St. Edward's. As longtime coaches of the Coker Cobras (Dave coaches baseball, and Dan coaches basketball) in Hartsville, South Carolina, they've learned a thing or two in their 40-plus years on the sidelines. —Interviewed by Lisa Thiels

You want to teach as much as you can. You want your athletes to learn, but you also want them to remember how you made them feel. I learned that from the Holy Cross Brothers at St. Edward's. —Dan

The values that were reinforced at St. Edward's are forever lasting, though I didn't know it at the time. There's so much else going on with finding out who you are, and I talk to my team about this all the time. When you start college, you really are a stranger to yourself, and you eventually find out who you are and what your niche is. —Dave

If you don't have enthusiasm for what you do, you're not doing the best job you can. You try to be hard-working, you try to be prepared, but your enthusiasm and spirit for what you do is very, very contagious. And I think I carry that over with the students I teach and with the players I coach. —Dan

I just want them to get up and try hard. I tell the players in my ball club all the time that they've got a choice to make each day: When they get out of bed, is it, "Good morning, God!" or "Good God, it's morning!"? You try to have a banner day, even knowing that most days you're not getting any rewards. —Dave

To be able to be called "Coach" is a privilege, and we don't take that lightly. I have this great commitment to every player I've ever coached, and it's a big family now after 40 years. —Dan

One of the most powerful leadership tools out there is your ability to listen. I learned this a long time ago: You really listen with your eyes. —Dave

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CHAPTER & NETWORK EVENTS

Austin

The Austin chapter gathered for fun and networking at Casa Chapala on Sept. 24.



About 40 alumni and friends wrapped gifts for needy families at the Travis County Sheriff's Office Brown Santa Warehouse for the chapter's holiday service project on Dec. 3.



Dallas–Fort Worth

The DFW chapter completed a holiday service project with the Fort Worth Salvation Army's Angel Tree project on Dec. 19.



Alumni Athletes

This fall, six teams (baseball, women's basketball, men's golf, women's golf, women's soccer and softball) invited former Hilltoppers for various reunion events.

San Antonio

Both the Austin and San Antonio chapters gathered for a night of soccer with the San Antonio Scorpions on Sept. 26.



Houston

The Houston chapter convened for a happy hour and the St. Edward's vs. Rice University basketball game on Dec. 5.



Denver

Student leaders from the Hilltop Welcome Team and Transitional Experiences Council met with Denver alumni while attending a national conference in the city on Oct. 25.



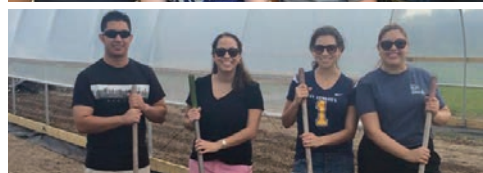
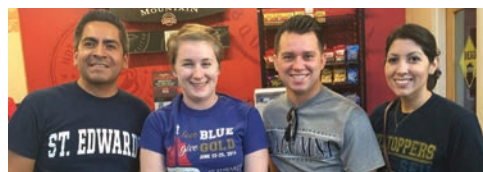
Chicago

The Hilltop Leaders were in Chicago on a leadership study tour and enjoyed dinner with local alumni on Nov. 5.



Founders Day

Five alumni chapters (Austin, Dallas–Fort Worth, Houston, Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio) did service projects in their communities in honor of Founders Day 2015. More than 60 alumni and friends completed more than 200 hours of service.



Get involved with the alumni chapter near you. Visit stedwards.edu/alumni for information on upcoming events.

Class Notes

SEND IN YOUR CLASS NOTES

Send your Class Notes and wedding or birth announcements to the Alumni Office at bit.ly/AlumniUpdateForm (address is case sensitive).

1960s

Milton Werner '69, of Berkeley, California, was named interim principal of St. Joseph Notre Dame High School in Alameda, California.

1970s

Jim Gavin '72, of Austin, is the director of insurance information for the Independent Insurance Agents of Texas.

1980s

Roy "Buddy" Howell '81, of San Antonio, is the founder and CEO of Eagle Outfitters of Texas. The company is opening a new store at the Stratosphere Hotel-Casino & Tower in Las Vegas.

Alex Labry '84, of Austin, had his photography featured in the 2015 Salon de Jeanne d'Arc at Loyola University New Orleans' Medieval Studies program.

1990s

Taj McWilliams-Franklin '93, of San Antonio, is the new head coach for Post University's women's basketball program.

Alejandro G. Meade '99, of Mission, is CEO of Mission Economic Development Corporation and has completed an MBA at the University of Texas at Brownsville.

Diana Ortega-Feerick '99, of Corpus Christi, is the assistant dean of Student Engagement and Retention at Del Mar College.

2000s

Melinda Rodriguez MAHS '00, of Rancho Viejo, has been named president and CEO of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce.

Esam Abd Ali Hammad '03, of Austin, represented Bahrain at the 2015 Red Bull Music Academy. He was one of 61 participants who traveled to La Gaîté Lyrique in Paris.

Leah Foster '06, of Chicago, Illinois, is the recruiting coordinator and assistant coach of the University of Tulsa's women's basketball team.

Lauren Myrick '06, of Cedar Park, is the head coach of the Vista Ridge High School girls' softball team. They claimed the 2015 district title.

Jennifer Delgado Heullant MBA '08, of Paris, France, was named a Leader for Tomorrow by the 2015 Oil & Money Conference sponsored by Energy Intelligence and *The New York Times*.

Brandon Maxwell '08, of New York City, presented his first ready-to-wear collection during New York Fashion Week in September.

Carly Hallman '10, of Beijing, China, had her first novel, *Year of the Goose* about China's tycoon culture, published by The Unnamed Press in December.

2010s

Naomi Broadway '10, of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, wrote a piece for *The Borders I Cross*, a series of reflections from Bautistas por la Paz, the largest network of Baptist peacemakers in the world.

Eric Bomblatus '12, of Round Rock, joined the Youth Impact and Employment Services program of Innovative Services NW as an AmeriCorps VISTA member.

Corina Solis '12, of San Antonio, earned a master's degree in Environmental Management from Yale University and is an energy and sustainability consultant for Alamo Colleges.

Shaniqua Adams '13, of Pflugerville, is a civil engineering technician stationed in South Carolina with the U.S. Air Force.

Andrew Fox '15, of Cambridge, England, joined the ranks of professional soccer after signing a contract with Peterborough United FC, an English League One club.

Chadwic Layne '15, of Austin, has joined the Hays County Food Bank as its new client services coordinator.

Chloe Talbot '15, of Bellevue, Washington, works in software configuration management at Boeing.

IN MEMORIAM

Edward Fischner '47, of San Antonio, on July 16, 2015

Carroll LaBorde hs '50, of Notre Dame, Indiana, on July 7, 2015

James Albright '51, of Rockport, on July 21, 2015

Francis Behal '53, of Matthews, Virginia, on July 18, 2015

Thomas Lacombe '53, of Queensbury, New York, on May 2, 2015

Robert Polk hs '49, '53, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, on May 1, 2015

Guy Cox '57, of Colorado Springs, Colorado, on Dec. 24, 2014

Ralph Sansone '58, of Lady Lake, Florida, on Aug. 2, 2015

Thomas Singel '60, of Fort Myers, Florida, on Aug. 15, 2015

Dennis Karman '62, of Fredericksburg, on Oct. 8, 2015

Sister Mary Beatrice Cruz, IWBS, '64, of Beeville, on July 17, 2015

Brother Charles McBride, CSC, '65, of Notre Dame, Indiana, on July 14, 2015

Joe Kana '66, of Corsicana, on July 3, 2015

James Beck '75, MLA '10, of Manchaca, on Aug. 31, 2015

Ralph Lymas '80, of La Pryor, on Aug. 31, 2015

Robert Anderson '82, of Austin, on April 13, 2015

Creta Gerhart '82, of Buda, on April 29, 2015

Rosa Valencia '84, of McAllen, on Aug. 19, 2015

Ralph Daniels '89, of Austin, on Aug. 27, 2015

Ruth Braun '92, of Montgomery, on July 16, 2015

Thomas Friou '92, of Austin, on Aug. 21, 2015

Kathleen Wolfington '92, of Elgin, on April 30, 2015

Robert Jones '95, of Houston, on Oct. 10, 2014

Matthew Langdon '97, of Houston, on Aug. 8, 2015

Theodore Popp '03, of Kerrville, on May 8, 2015

Brandon David Lepow '05, of Houston, on Oct. 13, 2015

Andrew Roles '08, of Austin, on April 20, 2015

Erin Kimberly Conant '09, of Houston, on March 14, 2015

Alice Johnson '11, of Austin, on July 22, 2015

BIRTHS

To **Stephanie Bazan '02** and **Matt Abbott '03**, son Bastian Emile Abbott on Aug. 17, 2015

To **Maria Guadalupe Hernandez '05** and Daniel Villanueva, daughter Noelani Grace Villanueva on Aug. 13, 2015

To **Vidhya Natarajan '13** and Raj Rajan, son Raghav Rajan on May 27, 2015

MARRIAGES

Michael Condren '08, of San Antonio, to Taylor Kathryn Lafayette Coker on May 23, 2015

Jennifer Delgado MBA '08, of Paris, France, to Nicolas Heullant on Oct. 27, 2014

Holly Smith '10, of Hockley, to Austin Alvis on May 30, 2015

Ginger Grossman '11, of Boston, Massachusetts, to **Joseph Blaise Treuting '10** on May 23, 2015

Kyle Welch MBA '13, of Austin, to Lindsay O'Neal on April 4, 2015

Lifelong Learners



Josie '80 and **Chris '81 Ryan** try to make regular visits to St. Edward's, and when they do, they know it's based on more than just a craving for enchiladas at nearby El Gallo. The campus is where they met, got married and developed a love for learning that has guided them to where they are today, which includes serving on the St. Edward's Alumni Association board and being active in the Dallas–Fort Worth alumni chapter. Josie works for the Plano Independent School District as a student-services coordinator. Chris serves as the director of Rhetoric and Professional and Technical Communication at the University of Texas at Dallas.

—Interviewed by Lisa Thiegs

How did you land at St. Edward's?

Chris: It is very much a family school. My dad went to St. Edward's and graduated in 1952. And I have seven siblings; seven out of eight of us went to St. Edward's. There was never any pressure to attend the school — it's because we were so comfortable there and loved everything about it.

Josie: My sister also went there. I was exposed to all the good things about St. Edward's through her experience, so I decided to follow suit.

Chris: It extends, because our youngest of two sons, **Andy Ryan '12**, went to and graduated from St. Edward's as well. So we've had a few generations there now.

What about your classes inspired you to become educators?

Chris: We both have a strong feeling about the influence that the Holy Cross Brothers had on us. It's not so much what they did in guiding us to our specific career paths, as much as it was the foundation that they laid and how they helped model the way life should be led.

Josie: [The brothers] were integral in our formative years. To me, that was probably the most unique thing about St. Edward's — the devotion that all those professors had to the students. It was just amazing.

What philosophies from St. Edward's do you incorporate into your careers or personal lives?

Chris: The faculty members were all very involved in the community. We would see them every day outside of the classroom, whether it was walking across campus, at a theater event, at a baseball game or at church on Sundays. They were always there, and it felt like more of a community than if they were only present in the classroom. Now, I try my best to get engaged in things beyond the classroom with my students so that I can influence them as those at St. Edward's did for me.

What would you tell new graduates about making learning a lifelong endeavor?

Josie: In the type of work I do, we have to be certified in different areas, so learning is just something we do every year, and I look forward to it. Today's graduates should keep themselves current and open. Ten years down the line, you may be doing something different, so it's a great idea to keep your skills polished and learn as much as you can.

Chris: I would encourage them to understand that they have to be learning all the time, and what they're getting in college is really foundational to that, but it certainly isn't the endpoint. It's also going to be helpful for them in terms of their own personal fulfillment.

ALUMNI SUCCESS

From Sidelines to Spotlight



In high school, **Gabe Luna '05** never would have guessed that his golden ticket to Hollywood would come in the form of a scholarship to a local university.

As a kid who grew up playing football on the south side of Austin, Luna expected to go to college on a football scholarship. But those scholarship offers disappeared when he dislocated his shoulder his senior year — and so did his hopes for a full ride. His family couldn't afford to pay for college, and Luna knew he would need significant financial assistance to earn a degree. He had no idea where it would come from now.

Luna resisted when his high school theater teacher asked him to read a part for the upcoming one-act play. But that day, his grandmother brought him a box of belongings from his father, who had died three months before Luna was born. Among the yearbooks and trophies, he found a VHS tape of his father in a church play.

"This was the first time I'd heard his speaking voice and the first time I'd seen a video of him. Not only that, he was doing what I'd

just been asked to do that day," Luna says. "It wasn't lost on me, the coincidence and the power of that. I felt a surge of confidence and courage."

He landed the lead role in that play, and at the performance, he caught the attention of a cast-mate's parent, who was the artistic director at Mary Moody Northern Theatre at the time. She was the one who helped him get a theater scholarship to St. Edward's, which launched Luna's love of acting and helped cover the full cost of tuition when combined with other scholarships and grants he received.

"What I learned at St. Edward's was the foundation for everything I've done since," Luna says of his two years on the hilltop, before leaving to pursue his acting career. His praise of the Theater Arts program is not just about the basics of acting but also about the way in which actors are trained. "The type of work we were doing was more than saying the words. It was about knowing your body, your instrument, and approaching it from more of a spiritual place."

Luna's first taste of film came during college when he was cast in *Fall to Grace*, a 2005 movie that premiered at the South by Southwest Film Conference and Festival and included several people affiliated with the St. Edward's Theater Arts program in the production and casting. After that, his résumé grew quickly in Austin, where he worked with top-tier actors in a number of theater productions and later helped start Paper Chairs, an Austin theater company that opened its doors to rave reviews in 2010.

Although he says he felt like a little guppy in a big pond when he got to Los Angeles in 2011, it wasn't long before Luna had a substantial list of film and television appearances, including the 2014 series *Matador* on the El Rey network. Not one to be easily starstruck, he nonetheless felt honored to be playing hero to Alfred Molina's villain. "Every moment I got to work with him was another moment that I could possibly do the best work I've ever done," Luna says. "He's one of the world's greatest thespians."

Now 33 years old, Luna marvels at how he has become a peer to actors he once watched in admiration from his own television. "I grew up watching Wilmer Valderrama on *That '70s Show*, and now he is a good friend of mine, and we're competing for the same parts."

Luna's star continues to rise, but he finds it essential to stay grounded. He keeps in mind his working-class parents and grandparents and never thinks of himself as more important than anyone else on the set. Robert Rodriguez, the executive producer of *Matador*, gave him a Cordoba guitar that Luna brought with him to the set of ABC's crime drama *Wicked City*, which aired last fall. "If we're between setups, I'll play for the crew. Now all the sound guys have started bringing their guitars, and we're jamming at lunch. I never leave the set and go back to my trailer," Luna says. "It creates a good energy on stage."

—Lisa Thiels



Old Main

It burnt down in 1903. A tornado ripped a huge hole in its side in 1922.

Yet it stands, serving as a symbol to all who know and are St. Edward's University.

If you know anything about old buildings (this one was originally constructed in 1888, then rebuilt in 1903), they need a lot of TLC to stand strong. The last major renovation project on Main Building wrapped in 1986.

Nearly 30 years later, the renovation would begin again. In 2014, scaffolding covered the iconic tower, as workers replaced damaged limestone, worn by time and weather. Additionally, the original bell was restored and rehung, and its toll can once again be heard across campus to mark significant events.

In 2015, the restoration continued, with the focus on mechanical work. The hole in the roof made way for a new heating and cooling system that will improve energy efficiency.

Over the next year, additional work is scheduled for the roof, the windows and the exterior walls, as well as some interior renovations to make the building more student-focused. As Holy Cross Brother and former university president **Stephen Walsh, CSC, '62**, said, "In a very real sense, we can all say that we have left our mark. However hard and durable that stone is, it is soft enough to give way to us. Over the years, the hard edges of the front steps have become rounded and smooth. So when I climb those steps in the morning headed to my office, I am aware as at no other time that I am following in the footsteps of others."

Read more about the project and its fundraising goals at bit.ly/seuoldmain.



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