As the community rallied in the wake of Hurricane Harvey’s devastation in Southeast Texas, our staff, faculty, students, alumni and friends came together like never before in the university’s history. Everyone went above and beyond to help each other, developing a pride in being part of something larger than themselves. This attitude created what many in the area called “Texas Strong” as part of a resiliency built upon shared experiences. Like any organization, LU is more than just the sum of its parts and nowhere is that more evident than when our LU community comes together.

We Are LU.
Wisdom is like wealth, you can’t take it with you when you die, so why not leave some of it behind to enrich the next generation.

Hyattye Simmons ’79 instills this idea into the advice he shares with the students and professionals he mentors.

“Regardless of where we are, we all have a certain wisdom of life that we can pass on to the next generation. We can’t force them to take it, but we can make ourselves available to be there and offer it to whomever wants to receive it. I believe that will make the next generation that much better at being successful.”

Hyattye Simmons wasn’t born in Texas, but in good Texas fashion he says, “my mother got me here as fast as she could.” He was the first African-American male valedictorian to graduate Burdekin High School in 1977. Two weeks after graduation his mother signed him up for summer school at Lamar University. He credits LU as “the bridge that helped him prepare for the outside world.” He completed his B.S. in government in two and a half years, taking huge course loads, up to 21 hours a semester. He attributes two major building blocks at Lamar University to helping pave the way for him to become the attorney he is today. The first was his LU speech program which gave Simmons the tools he needed to get rid of a career-limiting stutter. The second was his mentor. Jim Love, in the Criminal Justice Program. Love, who retired as associate professor in 2007 and is a current adjunct professor, steered him in the direction of the University of Texas law school, where he graduated UT law in 1984 and was able to keep the promise of becoming a lawyer, which he made to his late brother.

Simmons was appointed general counsel to the Texas Secretary of State at the age of 26. After serving the State of Texas, Simmons moved to Dallas County and served as assistant city attorney for the City of Dallas for one year, then began a 24-year career at Dallas Area Rapid Transit. He retired from DART in 2012 at 53, but he did not retire from law. He quotes a mentor, ‘when you come to an organization, come with a mission plan, fill that plan and then move on, there are other things for you to do.’ So feeling as though he had accomplished everything he could and more at DART, it was time for him to move on and do some of the things that he wanted to do.

He began mentoring students and other lawyers as well as community outreach as general counsel for non-profit organizations. Simmons currently serves as general counsel for several non-profit organizations, including serving as general counsel for InfraGard National Members Alliance, the organization which oversees a national information sharing program (InfraGard) between the FBI and private sector with the goal of increasing protection of the nation’s critical infrastructure. Simmons previously served as the first general counsel for the North Texas chapter of InfraGard.

In 2017, Simmons received the LU Distinguished Alumni Award, sharing the evening with three other incredible alumni. Simmons’ mentorship of LU students who were at risk and helping to keep them on the path to graduation, earned him the prestigious award. “There are a lot of distractions, especially for minority students,” he said. He teaches his students, “you have no control over how others behave; you have control over how you behave. By conducting yourself to be the best you can be every day, you might be able to change other people’s lives. You can’t force the individuals; those individuals need to make that change on their own. As a mentor, you can be a catalyst for that change.” Simmons accepted students who had a thirst for knowledge and a desire to learn. He describes mentoring “like parenting, you don’t expect anything back. You don’t expect praise or a reward, you do it simply because you really love to do it, and that in and of itself is where you experience the reward.”

“I’ve been fortunate with the students that I have mentored, and they have been very appreciative of the help I’ve given them along the way.” Simmons said. One important lesson he instills in his students is to learn patience. “In life, there will always be painful failures and set-backs, but remember to take the pain with the celebration,” he tells his students. “If you can learn patience, then hopefully with the grace of God you can get to the goals and dreams of your life.”

While describing his relationship with past mentees, Simmons references the movie, Good Will Hunting. He describes the scene when Ben Affleck and Matt Damon discuss Damon’s brilliance and how Affleck hopes that one day he will drive by Damon’s home to find Damon gone. Simmons relates to this scene and knows that if he doesn’t hear from his students, that means they’ve learned what they needed from him and have moved on. “As they become more and more successful in their career, their need to contact me diminishes, and that is fine,” he said. “They have grown and can go out on their own, they have grown their own wings to fly.”
MAKING ACHIEVABLE THE POSSIBLE

by Haley Strahan

As a faculty member at Lamar University, Ashwini Kucknoor, Associate Professor of Biology, is busy and versatile. On any given day, you might find her lecturing a class in the biology building, conducting experiments on a tropical pathogen, composing a paper for an academic journal, or mentoring a promising graduate student as he sets his sights on the highest rungs of scientific education. One might wonder how she manages such a myriad of tasks, and in conversation with her, one word comes up often: “balance.”

Kucknoor is a believer in the importance of finding balance, and she credits Lamar University with providing an environment that allows her to flourish.

Kucknoor joined the Lamar University faculty in 2010. Originally from India, she obtained her Ph.D. at the University of Calgary, before accepting a position with Washington State University. While Washington State provided ample opportunity to focus on her research projects, Kucknoor desired greater and more meaningful interaction with students. “There were so many students at the graduate level that I didn’t really get to know any of them,” she explains. This led her to consider moving to a school affording more interaction, and Lamar University fit the bill.

Right away, Kucknoor observed that the environment provides rich opportunities for increased mentorship. “At LU, we professors get to teach at the undergraduate and graduate levels,” she says. “This allows me to develop relationships with my students that last for years. It is wonderful to be able to touch and influence them at the very beginning of their college years, and then see them blossom through their career.”

Committed to fostering diversity in the sciences, Kucknoor is enthusiastic about working with a population that includes many first-generation college students. “It is so rewarding to get to know those students who may have never even considered a career in science, may not know that such a thing is even possible, and then tell them what is out there for them, what they have the potential to be,” she explains. “This is one of the most fulfilling things about my job here, and something that you don’t get to experience as often in bigger schools.”

Of course, Kucknoor still spends a great deal of time on her research. Currently, she focuses on two pathogens, trichomonas vaginalis, a sexually transmitted pathogen that can make its host susceptible to cervical cancer and HIV, and leishmania amazonenesis, a pathogen that affects individuals in subtropical climates and accounts for many deaths annually. “The mechanisms of the two pathogens are similar,” Kucknoor explains. “Basically, I am doing research into how they affect the human immune response.”

If all of this seems rather complicated and technical, Kucknoor doesn’t let that deter her from inviting students to participate in her work. If an undergraduate takes Kucknoor’s microbiology or genetics class and shows interest and aptitude for the subject, she happily includes them. “I talk about my work in class a lot,” she notes. “I want to inspire students to want to learn more.” Students who begin researching with her at the early stages of their college career can spend years under her tutelage and are eventually encouraged to pursue their own research projects in her laboratory. “They have the liberty to come up with their own project, and I am there to mentor them in their research,” she explains.

Kucknoor is passionate about teaching her students to use their skills to become involved in the community. She periodically takes students to elementary school campuses and other organizations, where they teach the basics of handwashing, good hygiene practices and stress the importance of receiving the flu vaccine. She also directs the Jefferson County Beachwatch Program, in which students monitor Sea Rim and McFaddin Beach every week for bacterial counts.

So yes, Ashwini Kucknoor is busy. But she is busy doing what she loves—researching, teaching and, above all, mentoring. Signs of her success are evident in the curious students who spend time in her laboratory, the many research papers she has published and in the former students who have gone on to medical school or to pursue their doctorate in biology. One former student is currently studying at Yale as a result of her encouragement. “I think of myself as a motivator,” Kucknoor says. “I make time for students. I give a listening ear. I tell them what is possible. And I can do so much of that at LU.”

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—Ashwini Kucknoor

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A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

By Caitlin Duerler

The New Faculty Orientation at the beginning of the year is supplemented by optional participation in the Support and Mentoring to Advance Research and Teaching or SMART program. In addition to creating a community among new faculty, Smith says SMART also helps faculty members succeed in their new positions and navigate campus life at Lamar University.

“When I was starting at LU, we had a traditional one-day orientation, which was helpful in understanding university offices and policies,” she said. “But I remember feeling a bit overwhelmed by all the new information I learned at the beginning. By having a year-long program, we can answer questions as they come up during the year and reinforce important information as it is needed.”

Initiatives like New Faculty Orientations and SMART offer a support channel and source of community for new faculty members familiarizing themselves with their new university and establishing a foundation for their success in the classroom and in their scholarship.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY, RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP

This past August, the Provost’s Kick-Off was named freshman of the year,” Houchin said. “The Cardinals had six players named to the all-conference team, the most LU representatives in the program history. Last two weeks later, the Cardinals steamrolled their way through the Southland tournament to advance to the NCAA Championships—also for the first time in the past 11 years of the program. The Red and White finished the year with an 18-4-1 overall record.

The Cardinals also recorded a five-game undefeated streak heading into the NCAA Championships. The Cardinals also recorded a five-game undefeated streak during the middle of the year.

LU Soccer Wraps Up Historic Season

Playing in front of their biggest home crowd ever, the Lamar University Cardinals came up with their biggest win ever, a 4-1 drubbing of the archival McNeese Cowboys to claim the Southland Conference regular-season championship for the first time in the 11-year history of the program.

The victory handed the Cardinals a near perfect 15-3-1 (.816) overall record and a 10-1-0 Southland (.909) mark. The season marked one of the best single-season turnarounds in the nation as the Cardinals recorded a worst-to-first campaign, landing Big Red the No. 1 overall seed in the conference tournament—it was their first conference tournament appearance since 2012.

The Cardinals had six players named to the all-conference team, the most LU

LU men take 1st, women place 2nd at SLC cross country

October 27, 2017, will go down as one of the greatest days in program history, and in the rivalry with McNeese. Not only did Lamar University record their first Southland title in soccer on that day (defeating McNeese), but the men’s cross country team, led by individual champion, Jamie Crowe, won its fifth-straight league title on the morning of the Oct. 27. Big Red defeated McNeese in one of closest races in league history after a tie-breaker led to head-to-head finishes of the top five runners from each school. LU won four of the five to win the title. “We had perfect execution of our race strategy today,” said LU Coach Tony Houshin, who was named the conference’s men’s cross country coach of the year. For good measure, the women’s cross country team finished second in their race edging out rival McNeese. “Georgia Sudfield had the best race of her career, and Katy Whitesak was named freshman of the year,” Houshin said.

The LU soccer team was recognized by the league after its unprecedented worst-to-first run to the Southland title. After the season, six Cardinals were recognized on the all-conference teams, including four first-team selections. Junior Kelso Peckin was named SLC Newcomer of the Year, and Steve Holman was named league coach of the year.

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A little over a year ago, freshmen Quinton Haynes and Elie Germain did not think they would be attending college. Now, having overcome homelessness and poverty, the two are part of the diverse tapestry that make up the Lamar University student body. While challenges are not completely over as the two adjust to college life and orient their lives toward continuing success, the work ethic of these two students reminds us what it is to be a Cardinal, and why We Are LU.

“I’m really enjoying my time at LU and how friendly people are. I already have my own little friend group,” said Haynes, “My junior year [of high school] I had a 3.1 GPA, so I was steadily rising up, but my family became homeless, and for six months I was not in school. So I was going from hotel to hotel; it was rough having to worry about where you’re gonna lay your head or what you are going to eat—if you could even eat that day.”

Although Haynes had landed in a precarious position, he began to attend a new school and continue his education. It was there that he encountered Chauncy Glover, the founder of the Chauncy Glover Project, at a speaking engagement Glover gave at the school. It was not long before Haynes was accepted to the program.

The Houston-based program aims to help young, underprivileged African-American and Hispanic men prepare for higher education and meet their goals. Founded after Houston ABC 13 News anchor Chauncy Glover witnessed a young man die on the streets of Detroit, the program has helped send more than 100 young men attend universities across the nation. Glover’s project boasts “an extensive, hands-on mentoring program, created to groom inner city teenage boys into upstanding and accomplished gentlemen” by focusing on education, self-empowerment, financial responsibility, etiquette, college readiness and more. It prioritizes students who Glover believes show potential in pursuing their education but are in need of an extra push, be it financial or motivational, to get into a university.

Germain, another graduate of the Chauncy Glover project, is pursuing a degree in civil engineering, with his long-term goals including graduating and getting a job at an engineering firm. Until then, he enjoys working at the campus bookstore and participating in basketball intramurals. Outside of class, he has already joined organizations, including the Society of Black Engineers.

As for Haynes, he spends most of his time also getting involved and hitting the books, not shying away from any of what LU has to offer him. His original plan for his education was to enter nursing, a skill set that would allow him to take care of his younger sister who suffered from spinal difficulties that left her unable to walk. When she passed away earlier this year, he felt that was no longer his purpose. Instead, after being involved with the media through interviews for the CGP, he believes he has stumbled across his passion and is working toward a degree in communication with an emphasis in broadcasting.

“I’m more of a creative person, whether it’s in music or the sports I play or just in writing. So this is something I actually enjoy doing. If I took this for my actual career, I know that I would be great in it. Not just because of my personality, how I carry myself, the way that I speak or my education level, but...
because if you do something you love, then you know that you will succeed no matter what,” Haynes said.

Haynes auditioned for LUTV and is now the weatherman for the program.

“I am not gonna lie, the weatherman position has been fun but demanding. Having to balance school, researching and practicing to get better in front of the camera is a lot to deal with. When it gets done, it’s all worth it,” Haynes said. “Being in front of the camera is easy. It just becomes hard when you have to meet an expectation people have for you. I am not going to say it is not reachable; it is just a hard mountain to climb.”

As for Germain, he continues to excel in his studies as well as getting involved outside of the classroom.

“I have been getting involved in more extracurriculars. It is just a hard mountain to climb.”

Although the two work hard, they agree that they are still able to find time to take a break and relax.

“There is always something going on here at LU. Like with the recent Halloween movie nights and door decorating contest, I am the only non-decorated door in my hall and feel like the odd man out. There is always something new going on or some kind of new activity,” said Haynes.

The two also agree that finding the time to play video games is essential.

“I was independent before I came here so time management isn’t too big an issue. I can’t play video games as much anymore because I have so much homework,” said Germain. “I try to knock everything out in the day so the last few hours of the night I can play video games.”

Throughout the past year, Germain and Haynes can see that much has changed.

“Looking back, I would tell myself that when you really feel like you just can’t take it anymore, just keep pushing,” Haynes said, “because pressure makes diamonds, and you either give up or you just survive through it. Luckily I took the driving route, so I considered myself very lucky and very blessed to actually have the opportunity to be here.”

As for Germain, “If I could say something to myself a year ago, it would be you did it. You’re going to college.”

In the few months they have been at Lamar University, both Quinton Haynes and Elie Germain have already distinguished themselves in class and on campus, setting themselves up for successful college careers. The Chauncy Glover Project helped provide a jumpstart to the rest of their lives, but the work and dedication it took to get to where they are today is all their own.

And what about door decorating?

“It has much improved,” Germain said. “I have been getting involved in more extracurriculars. It is just a hard mountain to climb.”
A new day at the College of Arts and Sciences is the beginning of a new academic year for Lynn Maurer. The new dean of the college is excited to work with her faculty to keep in touch with students earning a bachelor of arts in Spain.

"The transition to democracy—something politics, and Spanish politics since their University Edwardsville. Science Department at Southern Illinois College of Graduate and Professional population is much like that of her academically," Maurer said.

"We are LU" ring loud and clear to Maurer. "The biggest priority for me is student success," Maurer said. "Helping them to succeed is something that we do here by serving them while they’re here and getting them to completion and graduation is very important to me."

As the new dean, Maurer said her focus will be working with the heads of the departments to empower the faculty, who in turn empower the students. "I’m dedicated to the idea of inclusive excellence in the diversity of education, by recognizing varying financial needs and helping students at-risk academically," Maurer said.

The new dean said LU’s underserved population is much like that of her previous colleges, where she spent time as dean and chief research officer of the College of Graduate and Professional Studies at Indiana State University and associate dean of the Graduate School and chair of the Political Science Department at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Her research in political science and her teaching areas focus on European politics, including women in international politics, and Spanish politics since their transition to democracy—something she said she witnessed firsthand while earning a bachelor of arts in Spain.

Maurer said she wants to encourage faculty to keep in touch with students regarding their GPA and help them receive tutoring in an effort to promote heightened student success. "I’d like to start focusing on student success even more, possibly with programs designed to deal with things like lifestyle, how to interview at jobs, write résumés, and how to balance student life and studies," Maurer said.

"This is the type of place that, for me, I can be most effective," she said. "I’d like to be able to create a college that is strong and promotes the university and works well with the community. We see most of the general education students come through our doors as well, so we need to be able to serve that population effectively."

Maurer explained the importance of community involvement in the college, since LU prepares students for their future professions.

"Students work through experiential learning of any type in this community, and we can prepare our students best by having them go from graduation to becoming seamlessly involved," she said of her hopes for students of the college.

Maurer said being involved in the community itself can in turn help the faculty get their students involved—she recently became a member of the Spindletop Rotary Club, saying volunteer work is important to her and her family. She never misses an opportunity to visit a museum, or any place she can represent the college while supporting the community.

"The college has so much potential," Maurer said. "I hope I can help move it forward."

"I’d like to start focusing on student success even more, possibly with programs designed to deal with things like lifestyle, how to interview at jobs, write résumés, and how to balance student life and studies." —Lynn Maurer

Center for History and Culture presents 'Singing the Dream'

LU’s Center for History and Culture presented ‘Singing the Dream: Cajun and Prison Music of Southeast Texas and Louisiana’ with author and scholar Kevin Fontenot and Caroleen Gnaey, an author, musician and scholar, last fall. The lecture explored the life and career of Clemente Breaux Falcón, who, along with her then fiancé Joe Falcón, recorded the first Cajun record in 1929.

Fontenot is an author and scholar of law and research, focusing on the history of country and Cajun music. He holds degrees from Louisiana College and Tulane University, is a member of the Society of Texas Artists, the Louisiana Historical Association, and a frequent speaker at the International Cajun Music Festival. Gnaey is a musician, author, and independent scholar based in Austin.

Chemistry and Biochemistry Department receives grant

The Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry received a three-year, $120,000 research grant from the Welch Foundation Inc. The primary objectives of the grant are to foster enhanced research activities and productivity within the department while at the same time offering enriched educational opportunities for the students," said Xiangyang Liu, a professor of chemical engineering and organic chemistry. The Welch Foundation is one of the United States' largest private funding sources for chemical research.

Students excel at moot court

Two moot court teams from LU competed last October at the University of Texas-Arlington Most Court Tournament and received several individual and team awards. The tournament marked the first time a LU team placed in the Top 10 in most court competition.

The two LU teams (one comprised of Vidor senior Robert Root and Beaumont senior Sierra Dodds, the other of Nederland senior Ryan Sheron and Bridge City junior Emily Lawrence) advanced to the tournament elimination rounds, ranking 8th and 13th out of 24, respectively. Dodds was ranked 12th best overall speaker missing the top ten threshold by half a point.

“I’m proud of how much the Lamar Moot Court team has progressed year after year,” Root said. “I hope it continues to do so. Robert Root and I were a team and placing in the Top 10 definitely sent a surge of pride through me,” said Dodds.

Craig Tahay, instructor of political science, coached the teams.

Most court is a competition in which undergraduate students engage in simulated legal argument before a hypothetical appellate court reviewing a fictitious case. Students draw on a limited number of actual appellate court decisions to support their arguments in a three-round competition structure.

On the heels of the UT competition, the teams took three Top Speaker awards and advanced to the Quarterfinals at the Texas A&M Law School Regional Most Court Tournament. The tournament marked the first time LU has participated in a regional, national-qualifying moot court tournament. “Lamar continued its impressive record against extremely tough most court teams,” Tahay said.

Universities represented at the tournament included Howard Payne University, University of North Texas, University of Texas-Arlington, University of Louisiana-Lafayette, Texas A&M University, Baylor, Texas Christian University, University of the Ozarks, Sam Houston State University, and the United States Air Force Academy. A total of 31 teams and 62 students participated in the regional tournament.

The LU teams and individual members received several notable tournament accolades. Lamar University had the most students make the Top 15 best overall speakers of the university or better. Receiving gavels for their accomplishments were Sierra Dodds, a senior political science major from Beaumont who ranked third overall; Emily Lawrence, a junior political science major from Orange who ranked fifth overall; and Francisco Alvarado, a senior corporate communications major with a minor in political science from Port Arthur who ranked sixth overall.

Both Lamar teams advanced to elimination rounds and, after preliminaries, the team of Alvarez and Root, a senior political science major from Vidor, were the No. 8 seed team. The team of Dodds and Lawrence were the No. 12 seed team. Alvarez and Root defeated a team from Texas A&M University to advance to the quarterfinal round and lost in a very close match (2-1 decision) to the No. 1 seed team from Texas A&M University. Dodds and Lawrence defeated the No. 5 seed team from University of Texas-Arlington to advance to the quarterfinal round then fell to No. 4 seed team from Howard Payne University. The Howard Payne team advanced to win the tournament.

Team Discovery Channel placed third in the regional competition at the Association on Computing Machinery Programming Contest at Louisiana State University last fall, outperforming all but a team from University of Oklahoma, Baylor University and LSU, among others.
T
o some, community is simply a place or an idea, but to LUPD Dispatcher Susan DuBois, it is a commitment.
Community means coming together in times of hardship, supporting each other through struggles and being there when it matters the most, a commitment expressed through the motto We Are LU.

In the early morning of April 14, 2018, just hours before prospective students would arrive for Cardinal View—the university’s most attended prospect visit day—our community came together once again. A storm tore through the campus at around 3 a.m. with winds moving at least 50 mph, leaving major damage in its wake. Most people on campus were asleep in dorms, completely unaware of the destruction happening around them, while Susan DuBoisstood calm in the face of disaster.

“It’s a community,” DuBois said. “Lamar University has its own little city. I saw people coming out of the woodwork just to help. I think that’s what makes the university strong...when people are down, they just come together.”

Normally, according to DuBois, 3 a.m. is a slow period in the night shift. She usually spends the quiet time on paperwork. There were no tornado warnings or any indications that would have made her think this night would be any different.

When the lights went out in the police station, she tried to turn on the generator. Then the bell on the front door rang, and she assumed someone had entered the lobby. Later, she would realize it was just the forceful wind pulling the door open.

“I saw someone out there? Can I help you? Can I help you?” DuBois asked. “About the third time I said that, the doors flew open, and the roof just...Poof.”

Just like that, the roof of the station came off, and the full impact of the storm was raining down inside the station. DuBois, still uncertain about what had happened, hid under a desk to avoid falling debris. “I honestly thought that somebody had opened those doors and threw a bomb. That’s what it sounded like,” she said.

DuBois stood up, saw sky outside and knew it had been a tornado. With the generator not working, the station had no power, which meant the dispatch radio was down. She assumed someone had entered the lobby. Later, she would realize it was just the forceful wind pulling the door open.

“When I rode around, I saw all this damage and it’s like it just took a swath and went straight through this area... That morning we had a large group coming to campus, and it was very important that we looked our best. Everybody pitched in, it was wonderful.”

—Susan DuBois

“I worked here 40 years ago, when [LU] was a very tiny, tiny university. It is so expanded and so much bigger, and it’s amazing to see how much it’s grown. To come back 40 years later, explore the different places and see all the new buildings. It’s just a breath of fresh air. LU is growing, and I’d love to see it continue.”

Thanks to DuBois’s quick thinking, the equipment in the police station was safe from the storm. Nobody was injured in the wind event, and the Cardinal View event went on later that day as planned.

Despite wind events, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods, Lamar University will always stand strong. Our community perseveres, thanks to the love and dedication of passionate people like Susan DuBois.
DEAN DAN FRENCH
by Krista Salter

For one of Lamar University’s brand new deans, Dan French ’73, the meaning of “We Are LU” goes completely full circle.

Before his career in university administration, French graduated with an undergraduate degree in economics from the very college he now oversees—the College of Business.

“I always wanted to come back to my alma mater,” French, a Beaumont native, explained. “But, I never thought it would happen. It means a lot to be back because I feel I’m able to serve LU and Southeast Texas, and I never had that opportunity like this before.”

French said the students he’s met since he’s been on the job have the same eagerness for their education that he recalls when he was a student at LU.

“I’m excited about it,” he said. “The students are excited about their education, they’re wanting to be part of the LU team. I’ve been really fulfilled seeing what the university has accomplished in the past and knowing what it can do in the future.”

Since he began July 1, French said he’s spent a great deal of time learning and meeting, the faculty of the college, supporters and alumni and hopes to be able to call everyone by name before too long.

During his career, French spent time as department chair of the business schools at TCU Fort Worth, New Mexico State University and the University of Missouri, eventually becoming the director of the Real Estate Institute there.

“LU prepared me very well for graduate school and after,” French said, “to compete with other people out there that came from even bigger and more prestigious universities.”

He added, “I always look back on my career and think about how I got this great education here.”

As an alumnus himself, French said looking forward for the college, he wants to continue to work with alumni, donors and supporters to build on the successes of the programs in place and support students and faculty.

He said following the strong leadership of the college during the last decade, growing and moving into other areas where “we have strengths” will prove important.

“One of the natural strengths of the area has always been the petroleum and energy industry,” he said. “If we can leverage those in our business areas, we should continue to commit resources to that.”

French spoke highly of the opportunities for future entrepreneurs at LU—whether it’s with the entrepreneurship program or accessing the many other college resources.

“The Center for Innovation, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship, French said, is one of the ways the college works with the entire university and community, to encourage local entrepreneurship—developing products and learning to take them to market.

“We love bringing alumni back as speakers,” French said, referencing the Michael Wiener Entrepreneurship Lecture Series and the ExxonMobil Executive in Residence Speaker Series. “Bringing in speakers to excite students and motivate them by showing them success stories out of Lamar University lets them know the hard work that’s involved but also the rewards that are there.”

Now that French is “back home” at his alma mater, “We Are LU” rings true for the future of the College of Business as he works to bring alumni and current students alike full circle to encourage success for all.

College of Business team recognized in the Top 5 for ASCC

College of Business faculty, staff and students routinely participate in efforts to encourage local and statewide entrepreneurship. Delvina Seawright, director of accounting and scholarships, demonstrated a spirit of service as he chose to advocate for a cause close to his heart. Seawright spearheaded the College of Business team in the life Julie Richardson Pecter Walk of Stewardship last fall. Organizers recognized Team LU College of Business at a Top 5 Fundraising Team and presented members with an art piece that now hangs in the College of Business.

“The Julie Rogers Gift of Life is close to my heart because of the profound, positive and measurable impact the organization and its founder have had (and continue to have) on countless individuals living in Southeast Texas,” said Seawright, who earned second place in individual fundraising efforts for $9,401.06 in donations.

Colón honored as “Young CPA of the Year”

The Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants honored Ricardo Colón, assistant professor of accounting, with the organization’s Young CPA of the Year Award. The award recognizes a member with 20 or fewer years of service who has made significant contributions to his or her community and is a rising star in his or her profession.

Colón brings an energetic and positive outlook toward the future of Lamar University’s School of Business.

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Mahdi Safa, assistant professor of construction management, served as the project manager. He worked alongside Habitat for Humanity Executive Director Miriam Morgan and president of Rotary Club, Tim Sudduth ’95, for many weeks leading up to last fall’s work dates.

Bringing together education and service is a critical component of the Reese Construction Management Program, explained Safa. “In one project, the students learn so much: service to their community, how to work in a team, and how to network—the types of soft skills that are necessary to be competitive in today’s workforce.”

The students also found many opportunities to learn from the examples of experts, such as Chuck Mason ’72, president of Mason Construction and member of the program’s advisory council, and Patrick Rambly, construction manager for Habitat for Humanity of Southeast Texas.

Construction management students help Harvey-stricken families

In Hurricane Harvey’s wake, new construction found itself at the top of our community’s mind. While the floodwater damage forced those affected to acquire construction knowledge rapidly in order to start rebuilding, students in the Reese Construction Management Program prepared to learn on-site in a new form of classroom: their neighbors’ homes.

In partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Jefferson County, and funded by the Rotary Club of Beaumont, a range of volunteers ages 15 to 80 joined LU freshman-level construction management students during the course of two days in rebuilding a home damaged by the storm and helping to build a new home.

BP Energy CEO shaves experience

BP Energy CEO, Shaves was hosted Orlando Alvarez ’92, a former BP Energy, as part of the Construction Management Program, Class of Business. The event honored Mr. Alvarez with a J. Mark Wilson Scholarship Award included a personal achievement, significant accomplishments within a local chapter, community involvement and dedication to the accounting profession through participation in professional activities.

Wilson funds new retention and success initiative

A college-based Office of Student Retention and Success will soon offer even more help to College of Business students. As freshmen and sophomores, students will meet weekly for business skills training, general professional development and short-term team projects. As juniors and seniors, student teams will work on longer-term projects, including faculty research projects, business plans, strategic plans or new product/service plans. The initiative creates a Cardinal Coach retention manager staff position to counsel at-risk students, primarily at the freshman level, conduct research on retention in the College of Business and coordinate with College of Business faculty and University Advising Center advisors.

Secondarily, the initiative introduces the Translational Scholars Program. Built in conjunction with the College of Business Cardinal Communities, it will provide financial assistance, based primarily on financial need and in lieu of outside employment, and unique career preparation opportunities to program participants. The Translational Scholars Program is spearheaded by Herman Wilson ’63 and Bobbie Wilson. Herman Wilson serves on the College of Business Board of Advisors.

Krista Salter is a student at Lamar University. Her work is supervised by her professor, Dr. Leonard Burleson, professor of communication at Lamar University. Krista Salter is a student at Lamar University. Her work is supervised by her professor, Dr. Leonard Burleson, professor of communication at Lamar University.
21

DEAN ARNE ALMQQUIST by Krista Salter

It’s not easy to find someone as excited about libraries as Arne Almquist, the new dean of Northern Kentucky University’s library system—off of research and reputation, utilizing very high-tech resources and incorporating all the aspects of a university library into a synergistic system.

What made his work revolutionary in Kentucky, Almquist said, was facilitating the transition from the idea that the library is the “big box of books on campus” to using the library to impart information to others by accessing all of its resources—books, computers, the Internet and, specifically, its people.

“I’m an information scientist,” Almquist said. “I’m interested in how people access information, and then how we can make people better users of that information.”

He continued, “As information specialists, we learn how to ask a system for information and how to look at that information and distinguish if it’s trustworthy, quality information, and we organize data so that we can make sense of it, turning the data into relevant information.”

Almquist said if the library can transform the way people look at information, then UL students can become more competitive graduates who are also lifelong learners.

The new dean said one of the ways to improve the library is to transform it from the “geographical and academic heart of UL’s campus” to a synergistic space where information and ideas flow freely, making it the “intellectual heart” of UL.

“She was a librarian first,” Almquist said of his wife, who he met in his early days studying at the University at Buffalo. “The pair enjoy reading together, traveling and collecting antique phones—most of which ring—and fountain pens, as well as going for drives in their Miata. “She was a librarian first,” Almquist said of his wife, who he met in his early days studying at the University at Buffalo. The pair enjoy reading together, traveling and collecting antique phones—most of which ring—and fountain pens, as well as going for drives in their Miata.

The self-described bibliophile said when he’s at home, he can be found building his own personal library with his wife, who he met in his early days studying at the University at Buffalo. The pair enjoy reading together, traveling and collecting antique phones—most of which ring—and fountain pens, as well as going for drives in their Miata.

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Aziz Shaaban is a biology major with a concentration in pre-med... also a minor in chemistry... and another minor in business. Currently in his junior year, Shaaban’s extensive interests are only matched by his focus on helping those around him, whether on campus or in the community. His efforts remind us that charity and altruism are cornerstones of the Cardinal character, and why we are LU.

“I applied to four schools: Lamar University, University of Texas, Baylor University and Washington University-St. Louis,” Shaaban said, “but my top choice has always been LU. It is close to home and has a very competitive medical school acceptance rate. The reason I considered Baylor and Washington University is because they offer programs that allow you to go straight into their medical school after you finish. But after thinking on it, I found Lamar University to be the best choice for me.”

From a young age, Shaaban has known that medicine is his calling, growing up around his father’s medical practice and observing the life of a doctor. “Since the age of six, I have had an affinity for medicine. I grew up in a circle of medical professionals and always enjoyed it,” said Shaaban. “It was because of this early experience that I began shadowing in high school and it only solidified my passion.”

When Shaaban began studying at LU, he found another passion, which is research, in medicine and related science. “As a freshman, I knew I wanted to do research during my college career to get a feel for how the process is played out,” said Shaaban. “I asked my professors if I could visit their labs and help. Through this, I became involved in the cancer and parasitology labs. Through my work in the parasite lab, I came across this idea that we can use parasites in the water to measure water quality. “This line of research interested me because water is a necessity, and if there is any way to better understand the quality of water then we should be pursuing it,” he said.

Along with research, Shaaban also spends much of his time volunteering for his community, on and off campus. “The summer before I came to LU, I worked at the Medical Center of Southeast Texas. During my freshman year, I learned about the Arc of Greater Beaumont so I have been working with them for the past few years,” said Shaaban. “I am also involved in the Lamar University Green Squad, where I started a new initiative collecting litter on the grounds of campus bi-weekly. I also volunteer with the Honors Student Association. Every semester we do many different projects including a beach clean-up day.”

Shaaban considers this his most important volunteer work where he helped his community during and after Hurricane Harvey in the summer of 2017. “That was a major volunteering experience. During and after the hurricane, I tried to help out my community as much as possible,” said Shaaban. “Whether in Port Arthur, Beaumont, Orange or anywhere that needed help. We would go out in boats to deliver food and to help people out of their flooded homes or apartments.”

Shaaban did not let the start of classes get in the way of his volunteer work. He played a role in Harvey Heroes, a partnership between Lamar University and local non-profit organizations, where students earned course credit for public service. “We went from house to house, taking out all the damaged furniture, tearing down walls and digging up carpet. It was incredibly sad to see such a great community have to suffer such a terrible tragedy, but I learned a lot from it,” said Shaaban. “If we do not stand together, we would not get anything done. It takes much more than one person to make a change, and I think what Lamar University did with the Harvey Heroes initiative is very important.”

“It is when these tragedies happen that you see us really are not that divided at all. People from every state, cultural background and ethnicity came together to help each other. As a community, we worked this problem out together,” said Shaaban.

When speaking about his love of charity and volunteer work, Shaaban said, “It has always been a part of me. I have always had the desire to help people out. It obviously grew a lot in high school and much more over the course of my college career. I am grateful for having that desire to give back and help out where I can.”

Shaaban sees a bright future for himself, influenced by his time at LU. He’ll take the MCAT and plans to graduate in 2020 from LU. “I am thinking about getting my JD with my MD degree, but that is not set in stone yet. I then hope to work in the medical profession as long as I can. That is the dream,” said Shaaban. “I have been thinking about going into otolaryngology (ears, nose and throat). It is a great field that affects everyone, so I would be able to provide the most service to as many communities as possible.”

Although Shaaban came to LU knowing more or less what he was looking for out of his education, there are still aspects of his time here that surprise him. I am shocked at the quality of friendships I have developed here. I was really scared I would not fit in with other students on campus, but throughout my college career I have made so many memories and friendships that I would have never thought possible,” said Shaaban. “At LU, there is a closely knit community and many friendships to be made.”

“IT is when these tragedies happen that you see we really are not that divided at all.” —Aziz Shaaban
A point in his youth, Miguel Solis ’08 never wanted much to do with professional education. He had watched his late father, Stephen Solis, a public school teacher, struggle with the day-to-day issues of low pay and administrative woes, and Solis thought those struggles defined the profession. He wanted to pursue a career in law. While studying as an undergraduate at LU and directly after graduation, Solis worked on the Obama presidential campaign and was invited to join the prestigious corps of Teach for America. Though he completed his B.A. in history with a political science minor and went on to earn his M.Ed. at Harvard, his time as an Obama staffer and TFA corps member, lessons from his father, and the advice and example of key faculty at Lamar University had altered the course of his life and profession.

Solis currently serves as District 8 trustee for Dallas Independent School District, the second-largest city school system in Texas and the fifth-largest city system in the nation. As an undergraduate intern, Solis had opportunities to observe policymakers’ work on issues, like education and transportation, and today, that experience has translated to his own work with the White House on policy changes—for example, a policy that has become part of state law which eliminates the practice of out-of-school suspension for pre-kindergarten through second grade. Part of Solis’ mission as trustee involves helping his district find resources to combat behavior problems, and in this way, has become a prime example for school districts across the nation, signaling other educational administrators that it is possible to engage thoughtfully and effectively with the federal government.

In 2015, Solis co-founded the Latino Center for Leadership Development with Jorge Balderos and Rebecca Acuna. Solis says the work of the Latino center is “at the nexus of policy, politics, and education.” He currently serves as president of this national organization that trains millennials, a majority of whom are Latino, who want to pursue positions of public power, including elected and official public positions, but who may lack the knowledge and/or the resources to do so. The center meets an insistent and long-neglected demand for a successful model in preparing Latinos to lead by identifying and ensuring their elected and official public positions, but who may lack the knowledge and/or the resources to do so. The center meets an insistent and long-neglected demand for a successful model in preparing Latinos to lead by identifying and ensuring their elected and official positions, but who may lack the knowledge and/or the resources to do so. The center meets an insistent and long-neglected demand for a successful model in preparing Latinos to lead by identifying and ensuring their elected and official positions, but who may lack the knowledge and/or the resources to do so.

Solis’ daughter inspires him to create resources for children like Olivia so that they do not miss out on educational tools and opportunities during their formative years. He and his wife are fundraisers for the Heart Center at Children’s Medical Center of Dallas; their work helps families who are living through the entire transplant experience to cope financially and emotionally. Together, the Solises wrote a children’s book called Olivia’s New Heart (Olivia’sBook.com), and all proceeds from book sales benefit the Heart Center at CMC Dallas. To date, sales have raised more than $20,000.

Solis never stops. In his roles as educational administrator, policymaker and father, he continually pursues opportunities to support and mentor others personally, professionally and politically. He credits his compassionate heart to his father, who taught him that “a job and a title will not matter in the end, but a person’s value lies in the legacy he leaves of improving the lives of other people.” He also credits his time at Lamar University, remembering especially (history professors emeriti) Ralph A. Wooster and Adrian Anderson, for teaching him his own worth and the power of educators to impact lives. Solis says, “Education is the great equalizer, carrying people past the barriers—both real and perceived—of socioeconomic and cultural difference.” He says, “There are certain tipping point moments in our lives—my decision to apply to Lamar University was one of those—that lead to opportunities and experiences we cannot imagine. I am forever grateful and indebted to the Cardinal community.”

We Are LU: A DALLAS EDITION

by Casey Ford

Working at the nexus of policy, politics, and education, Solis cherishes his diverse Southeast Texas, Cardinal heritage.
H urricane Harvey left a trail of destruction throughout the Southeast Texas region, affecting many Lamar University students. For some of these students, the beginning of the fall 2017 semester was their last priority as they worked to put their lives back together in the wake of a historic natural disaster. They lost laptops, transportation and, in some cases, their homes. The LU administration knew they needed a way to help students left without a means to continue their education, so they created the Cardinal Emergency Fund.

“We were determining how to help students, and we had many donors who called us wondering what they could do to help, so we started the fund,” said Brenda Nichols, vice provost of the university and one of the key figures in organizing LU’s response to the storm. “This is an effort of resilience,” said Nichols. “After the storm, we also started the Harvey Heroes program. Many students volunteered because they just felt it was the right thing to do. Talking to students afterward, they all felt they had made a positive impact.”

“We had helped people clean up their homes through Harvey Heroes, but wanted a way to help them financially. Alumni were contacting us, asking what they could do and they helped build the fund. We went from having nothing to give our students to $300,000,” said Nichols, “It was all about us giving back and supporting each other.”

In its early stages, the Cardinal Emergency Fund was first used to identify and help students in extreme need. Students who would not have been able to continue attending LU without some kind of aid were the first to receive assistance. “We had some students I remember in particular, from mid-county, who lost everything. They were living in a ground floor apartment which flooded; their car flooded as well. We used the fund to move them into the dorms as well as give them a reduced price on their meals so they could eat,” Nichols said.

“Others just didn’t have a place to go. We rented a shuttle bus for a group of students from Houston to get them here and moved them into the dorms as well. But many times it meant helping in small ways, helping students get books, laptops—comparatively smaller things that would help them return to their studies as smoothly as possible.”

It has been more than a year since Harvey, yet many Southeast Texas residents are still rebuilding their homes, and many people are still not completely recovered financially and emotionally. For these reasons, the Cardinal Emergency Fund still exists today.

“There are many problems people have that are an indirect result of the storm,” Nichols said. “We have spent most of the money we initially brought in. I am currently writing a grant request to see if I can’t help to get some of that money into a foundation so we can continue to help students who are still struggling.”

The ways in which the storm impacted the region is seen today in where money from the fund goes.

“We have the book scholarship and dorm scholarships for those who have nowhere else to stay,” Nichols said. “The use of our on-campus mental health services is up 60 percent. People dealing with depression, anxiety and PTSD-like symptoms. Many people are still working through the trauma of what happened and need support.”

One of the ways in which Lamar University is looking to address this need is through a program named LU Strong, which will incorporate the currently active LU Care Team, to provide a holistic way to approach student challenges.

“One of the things that we are trying to do is show that LU is not just concerned with its students’ academic success, but about their growth as individuals,” Nichols said. “If we get the funding from the Department of Education, the LU Care Team will have a full-time social worker to help connect students with the aid they need.”

“Harvey was a very different kind of storm. The trauma from it is much worse than others we have hit this area. In the past, once people were allowed to return to their homes after storms, everything seemed to just pop back into place. With Harvey, the recovery has been much different and much slower.”

The one thing that is for certain is that the mark Harvey left on the region continues to reverberate. But thanks to faculty members like Nichols, LU continues to reach out and respond to the needs of students. Students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of LU can also aid in the process by donating directly to the Cardinal Emergency Fund at lamar.edu/give. Times of great tragedy bring people together in a spirit of mutual recovery and aid. But the work of volunteers, Nichols and the LU Care Team reminds us that such work is most effective when it is sustained, long after the tragedy has passed. It is this commitment to the well-being of our community and the support of our fellow students that shows us what it is to be a cardinal. It is only through supporting each other that we thrive as a whole, because together We Are LU.

--Brenda Nichols

RESOLVE AND RESILIENCE: sustaining recovery

by Daniel Pemberton

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Anywhere she goes, Bhavani Simon creates her own environment.

It is no different at Lamar University, where she can always be found in one of her “spots”—like “Bhavani’s table” outside the dean’s office at the College of Engineering, or, predictably, the middle seat in the front row of any class she takes—where her classmates and family alike gravitate towards her. She adds her own unique story to all those that make up the motto We Are LU.

“Every day, I’m fascinated at what I get to do.”

But Bhavani’s fascination for her everyday life does not end with the mechanical engineering job she’s involved with thanks to Lamar University’s cooperative education program this semester.

Highly involved in campus life, Bhavani sits as project manager for LU’s Student Engineering Council, responsible for handling the mechanics of events like homecoming, career fairs and building the council’s float for the homecoming parade.

She’s also the vice president of LU’s chapter of the American Society of Heating and Refrigeration Engineers and treasurer of the Tau Beta Pi engineering society.

“I do believe LU,” Ryne said, “is suited to a family-oriented environment. The faculty and staff are delighted when they find out about our relationship, and the students have been accepting as well.”

But an engineering degree wasn’t always in the cards for Bhavani, who spent most of the last 20-some-odd years “wrenching on bikes” as a mechanic at family-owned Kickstand Bike Shop in Beaumont.

Perhaps, she said, that’s where her interest for fixing things herself flourished.

A few years ago when things were quiet at the bike shop, Bhavani’s husband dared her to apply to Lamar University. She said she didn’t anticipate being accepted at her age, but she was.

“I didn’t think I was smart enough,” Bhavani said as she reminisced about her decision to apply to the mechanical engineering program. “I looked at it and thought, ‘Well, I’ve always like working on stuff, and I’ve always been very capable.’”

Associate professor Paul Dawkins remembered having Bhavani and Ryne in both Calculus I and II at the same time.

“I recall them being very good students and hard workers,” Dawkins said. “They did sit next to each other, and I would imagine that both being in the same class at the same time probably helped with studying and learning. Both came by the office for help on the homework and had made serious attempts at problems.”

Although Bhavani told Ryne that they could take separate classes when they started at Lamar University, she’s proud they can successfully manage to pursue their degree by accenting each other’s strengths.

“I do believe LU,” Ryne said, “is suited to a family-oriented environment. The faculty and staff are delighted when they find out about our relationship, and the students have been accepting as well.”
And so, the mother of four, after some extra math classes, found herself thriving in LU’s mechanical engineering program, with Byrne giving acceptance shortly after. “I have come to understand and appreciate her work ethic and her desire to provide herself and her family with a good life,” Byrne said of his mother, who he calls by name on campus. “I admire her attempts to avoid middle-aged stagnation. In pursuing a degree, she is improving her socioeconomic status and developing her character in a way that is not possible for many people her age.”

Bhavani said attending LU in her 40s hasn’t been as difficult as some might imagine: “I’ve been really impressed with not only the courses here but also with the students,” Bhavani said. “I don’t see them as young, and they don’t see me as old. Every class I have, I build a team of people.”

Bhavani described group text messages, emails and apps that she utilizes to keep in touch with students in her study groups. When stuck on a problem, she is known to snap a photo and send it out asking for help, and the same is said to be true of the members of her groups. “It’s a very serious field,” Bhavani said. “So, the classes are very serious. As long as you take it as way and doing your best to get it done, that’s what employers will see: someone who’s working hard and who wants to be a part of their team.”

“No way that as an individual I can do all of this on my own,” she added about the groups she studies with. “I’m actively involved in every class, and I get involved in organizations and student life. Maybe it’s because I have children the same age as these students, and I don’t see them as children anymore; they’re grown, and so are these students.”

She described treating her time at LU as her “job,” arriving around 7 a.m. getting to “Bhavani’s table” by the dean’s office to complete coursework and attending classes until she leaves around 4:30 p.m. to head home. When Bhavani gets home for the day, she’s in “mom mode,” making sure her family comes together around the table each and every night for dinner. It’s something, she said, that’s very important to her despite everyone’s crazy lives.

“We get to that point in the day where we all eat and talk,” she described. “We go over our schedules and what’s coming up for the next day, and get a chance to all be together.”

And, as on any given weekday, you can find Bhavani being “typically non-traditional.”

She may be found contemplating a leaking pipe on LU’s campus, running through all the possibilities of “why,” when most people would just walk by. She could be solving equipment problems at Exxon-Mobil as a real-life mechanical engineer through her co-op. She could be found in one of her many study spots with “her group” of students or possibly Byrne, or found wrenching on bikes at her family business.

No matter where you find her, Bhavani is sure to be spending time actively present in the environment she has created for herself—living her best life.”

“My job is fixing problems. Every day, I’m fascinated at what I get to do.”

—Bhavani Simon

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—Bhavani Simon
Lamar University students kicked off their summer in 2017 exploring world-renowned art and architecture in Saint Petersburg, Russia, where earning course credit for ARTS 101, a core curriculum requirement.

“With art and architecture, there’s just no substitute for seeing a real painting or walking through an actual building,” said Richard Gachet, associate professor of art and design, who accompanied the instructor for the study abroad course.

The program introduced students to the artistic and cultural history of Saint Petersburg, the capital of the Russian Empire, known for its rich art, architecture and literature. The “Venice of the North” was built by Peter the Great, who modernized Russia to the western world, modernizing art, architecture and literature. The “Venice of the North” was build by Peter the Great, who modernized Russia to the western world, modernizing art, architecture and literature. The “Venice of the North” was build by Peter the Great, who modernized Russia to the western world, modernizing art, architecture and literature.

Students were exposed to the history and legacy of 20th Century Women Aviators” was the result of a decade of collaborative research, speeches, presentations and articles to shed light on the theatrical legacy of early female aviators who promoted their craft and the involvement of females in the field of flight.

Lamar University selected a student for the second International Workshop on Offshore Geology. The workshop, hosted by Lamar University and Texas University Geoscience, included sessions on finding offshore storage, monitoring, environmental and overburden monitoring, offshore assessment and more. In addition to sharing scientific papers and posters, more than 60 scientists from around the world presented the latest information on CO2 geologic storage.

In addition to more than 20 U.S. organizations, attendees included organizations from the United Kingdom, Japan, Switzerland, Netherlands, Australia, Norway, China, South Africa and Taiwan.

LU commissioned Texas-native artist James Surls to create the newest outdoor art addition to bring inspiration and beauty to Lamar University’s campus, titled “Blooming.”

“Everyone can be inspired by art,” said Kim Steenagen, Public Art Committee co-chair. “It is one of those things that enriches our lives the more we are exposed to it. We hope that this piece will beautify the campus. We love the landscaping on campus, and art is just another part of that.

Surls is a nature-inspired modernist artist, known for his carved sculptures and bronze and steel works. His work has been featured in many galleries around the world, including the Guggenheim Museum in New York; the Dallas Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, as well as locations in Canada, France, Mexico, and other countries.

Surls made a personal trip to Beaumont to create his design. He built the 11-foot piece in stainless steel and bronze. LU purchased the piece with one percent of the state-funded building construction budget designated for art.

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“With art and architecture, there’s just no substitute for seeing a real painting or walking through an actual building,” said Richard Gachet, associate professor of art and design, who accompanied the instructor for the study abroad course.

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Students were exposed to the history and legacy of 20th Century Women Aviators” was the result of a decade of collaborative research, speeches, presentations and articles to shed light on the theatrical legacy of early female aviators who promoted their craft and the involvement of females in the field of flight.

Lamar University selected a student for the second International Workshop on Offshore Geology. The workshop, hosted by Lamar University and Texas University Geoscience, included sessions on finding offshore storage, monitoring, environmental and overburden monitoring, offshore assessment and more. In addition to sharing scientific papers and posters, more than 60 scientists from around the world presented the latest information on CO2 geologic storage.

In addition to more than 20 U.S. organizations, attendees included organizations from the United Kingdom, Japan, Switzerland, Netherlands, Australia, Norway, China, South Africa and Taiwan.

LU commissioned Texas-native artist James Surls to create the newest outdoor art addition to bring inspiration and beauty to Lamar University’s campus, titled “Blooming.”

“Everyone can be inspired by art,” said Kim Steenagen, Public Art Committee co-chair. “It is one of those things that enriches our lives the more we are exposed to it. We hope that this piece will beautify the campus. We love the landscaping on campus, and art is just another part of that.

Surls is a nature-inspired modernist artist, known for his carved sculptures and bronze and steel works. His work has been featured in many galleries around the world, including the Guggenheim Museum in New York; the Dallas Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, as well as locations in Canada, France, Mexico, and other countries.

Surls made a personal trip to Beaumont to create his design. He built the 11-foot piece in stainless steel and bronze. LU purchased the piece with one percent of the state-funded building construction budget designated for art.

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60s
Best lawyers in America recognized Distinguished Alumnus David J. Beck '61. B.S. government, '91, honorary doctorate, in its 2018 ranking on the nation's top legal talent, naming him a 2018 Best Lawyer in America, along with 13 attorneys in the firm he founded and of which he is a partner, Beck Redden.

Randolph J. '65 B.S. physics, earned his doctorate in physics in 1971 and is principal consultant for Randorff and Associates Inc. He and his wife, Pamela (Downey) '90, B.S. biology, live in Normoska, Ohio.

Klein Davis '70, B.S. engineering, is a project manager for EarthMatters Inc. and lives in Edinburgh with his wife, Mina.

Bill Doss '77, B.S. secondary education, is principal judge of Bridge City. He and his wife, Mary (Stokely) Doss '81, B.S. special education, live in Bridge City.

Ken Arthur Moos '78, B.S. music-vocals, and his wife, Charlette, traveled to Kenya on a mission trip, which inspired them to adopt a baby from Kenya. The couple lives in Port Arthur, where Albert manages a non-profit organization for at-risk youth.

Barbara Robbins' Novel '80, B.A. English, earned her chair of liberal arts at Lamar State College-Port Arthur. She lives in Port Arthur.

Late Walter Bals '82, B.S. electrical engineering, is a new senior instrument and electrical engineer for Hangover Engineers and Constructors. She lives in Mobile, Ala., with her husband, James.

Matt Burnett '83, B.S. health and physical education, was a defensive line cook at Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School and lives in Orange with his wife Linda (Williams) '77, B.A. dental hygiene.

Don Clayton '84, B.S. health and physical education, was induced into the Texas High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame at the Ballinger Hall of Honor Banquet. He was also induced into the Greater Houston Football Coaches Association Hall of Honor, the University of Wyoming Hall of Fame and the Katy School District Hall of Honor. He lives in Katy.

Cydil (Adcock) Crews '85, B.S. speech, '85, M.A. theater, is managing director of Orange's LATCH Theatre. She and her husband, Jerry '87, B.S. kinesiology, who is an assistant professor of biology at Lamar State College-Orange, live in Orange.

David Crews '86, B.S. computer science, retired after working for ExxonMobile for more than 25 years. He lives in Lumberton with his wife, Cydil (Adcock) '85, B.S. mathematics.

Harold Murfin '87, B.S. industrial engineering, has started working as a senior staff industrial engineer at Bell Helicopter. He lives in Manvel with his wife, Melody Murfin '87, B.S. general business.

Michael McEachen '87, B.B.A. pre-professional administration, earned a master’s in healthcare administration, a board member and president of High Performance Solutions Group, and his wife, Linda, live in Willis.

Charles Sharon '88, B.S. environmental sciences, is a project manager for EarthMatters Inc. and lives in Port Arthur with his wife, Billy.

90s
Sharon Smith '88, B.S. elementary education, teaches in the Beaumont school district, where she lives with her husband, James.

Adina (Ward) Josey '92, B.S. economics, was senior planner and floodplain administrator for the City of Beaumont. She and her husband, Blaine, live in Beaumont.

Kurt Goss '95, B.S. sociology, earned his doctorate in sociology and in management of the statistics and demographics section of the Texas Legislative Council. His wife, Jennifer (Massie) '98, B.S. civil engineering, is a supervising engineer for the city of Austin, where they live.

Jennifer (Legnan) McCausley '95, B.S. English, earned a master's degree in library and information science, and is the librarian at John B. Connally High School. She lives in Austin.

Susanne (Vickanair) Thames '95, B.A. English, teaches seventh grade language arts teacher at Groves Middle School. She and her husband, Ben '99, B.S. industrial technology, live in Groves.

Billy Brennan '96, B.S. computer science, is a data software specialist for Richard Design Services. He lives in Nederland.

Cynthia (Dixon) Kelly '97, B.B.A. office administration, now owns and operates her own business, C&K Air Services, LLC. She lives in Vidor with her husband, Calvin.

Patricia Lafortune '97, B.B.A. applied arts and sciences, has retired from her career. She lives in Galveston.

Word Willis '97, B.S. health education, is a registered nurse and the operations officer for the Air Force. He lives in Springfield, Va., with his wife, Dawn.


00s
Cullen Ober '00, B.T.A. studio art, lives in Port Neches with his wife, Ashley. She teaches art at Port Neches-Groves High School and received the 2017-2017 Spotlight on Excellence award for PNG school district.

Anna (Sanchez) Castro '01, B.B.A., kinesiology, in head volleyball coach for Harlandale High School. She lives in San Antonio with her husband, Brian.

Betty (Moons) McCausley '01, B.S. earth science, has retired. She lives in Baytown with her husband, Stephen.

Mohammed Musial '01, M.S. computer science, has a M.A. environmental engineering, is a senior application analyst for the City of Minneapolis. He lives in St. Paul, Minn.

Steel Miguez '02, B.B.A. accounting, B.B.A. finance, moved to Romania in 2012 to further her career and earned her CPA in 2015. She is an accounting manager for G&A Partners.

Mercedes (Edmonds) Brawner '03, B.A. art education, teaches fourth grade at Bonne Elementary School. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Charles.

Cyndi (Adcock) '85, B.S. mathematics, is a band director in Little Cypress-Mauriceville school district and lives in Orange with her husband, Shawn. In Beaumont and is the owner of Richard Design Services. She lives in Houston in 2012 to further her career and earned her CPA in 2015. She is an accounting manager for G&A Partners.

Mercedes (Edmonds) Brawner '03, B.A. art education, teaches fourth grade at Bonne Elementary School. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Charles.

Christopher McSweeney '04, M.F.A, '17, M.A. English, lives in oranges and Port Neches. In Beaumont and is the owner of Richard Design Services. She lives in Houston in 2012 to further her career and earned her CPA in 2015. She is an accounting manager for G&A Partners.

Christina (Wright) Villarreal '05, B.A. accounting and operates her own business, High Performance Solutions Group, and his wife, Linda, live in Willis.

堵塞在2012年到2012年进一步她的事业并成功地实现了自己的事业。她在休斯顿工作，与她的丈夫，Chris一起生活。
Competition. Her art is displayed in Spain and the Swiss Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Bobby Smith '03, B.B.A. accounting, is an accounting/finance manager for his own branch of burgeoning Lending. He lives in Dallas with his wife, Carolyn.

S disob S 50, B.B.A. general business—administrating, is a manager for Frontier of Texas Bank. He and his wife, Dixie, live in Beaumont.

Maria (McCoy) Gilley '94, B.B.A. interdisciplinary studies, teaches at the Elder Elementary School in Lumberton school district. She lives in Beaumont with her spouse, Charles.

Dana (Spaulding) Lee '06, B.S. management, is a regional manager of “35 Under 35 Award” recipients. He is a senior risk management officer and investment analyst with First Financial Bank. He and his wife, Laura, live in Katy, Texas.

Pat Lemoine '04, B.S. criminal justice, is chief of police for the City of Port Neches, where he lives.

Shelonda Mikle '06, B.B.A. finance, is a financial advisor and investment manager at Cardtronics as a compensation and benefits specialist. She lives in Magnolia.

Kristy Smith '09, B.B.S. general studies, owns a new small-business acquisition specialist for The Company Services. She lives in Orange.

Bran Tran '09, B.B.A. sociology, is a character coach. He lives in Austin with his wife, Oanh.

Tiffany Weat '09, B.B.A. finance, is editor of the Southern Texas & Tejas in St. Mary's University in San Antonio. She and her partner Kandu '94, B.G.S. general studies, live in Westlake.

Mallia (Proctor) Blevins '94, B.B.A. finance, is executive director of the Foundation for Southern Texas & Tejas on alumni for Kelly Alumni Association Board. She and her husband, Mark, live in Hurst.

Marcus Henderson '96, B.B.A. human resource management, has begun working on a project co-sponsored by ING Bank. He lives in Beaumont with his wife, Kathryn '99, B.B.A. marketing.

Brittany (Brassard) Robinson '95, B.B.A. general studies, teaches in the Humble ISD school district. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Jordan.

Margarith Abad '11, B.A.S. nursing, B.S.N. nursing, is a registered nurse at Methodist The Woodlands Hospital. She lives in Conroe.

Amber (McBride) Clark '11, B.G.S. general studies, is a member of the Lamar University Alumni Advisory Board. She is operations manager of parks and recreation for the City of Beaumont’s Best Years Center. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Gregory.

Deandre Dixon '11, B.G.S. general studies, married Brands Walker '08, B.S. exercise science and fitness management. The couple lives in Houston, where Deandre is a physical therapist administration, live in Beaumont.

The American Institute of Chauffeurs received Chantaya Gottmukkala '06, M.S. chemical engineering, for his contributions to process safety as an outstanding young professional in his inaugural year of the 35 Young Under 35 award recipient. He is a senior engineer at RISKbytes Inc. in Houston, where he lives.

Trang Tran '06, B.B.A. marketing, has accepted a position as a senior financial advisor and investment representative with BHPB Compass Bank. She lives in Port Arthur.

Brian Rosson '99, B.S. computer science, is a project engineer for Mitsubishi Cement Corp. in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he lives.

Logan '12, B.B.A. finance, who is a financial counselor at Merrill Lynch, live in Beaumont.

Rachel Santos '12, B.S. criminal justice, received a master’s degree in victimology and regional planning in 2016. He is a Capital City Fellow for the Department of General Services in Washington, D.C.

Cindy (Magadali) King '11, finance and consumer services-fashion design and merchandising, serves on the Kelly Alumni Association Board. She and her husband, Joel, live in Houston.

Ronald Herbert III '11, M.S. kinesiology, has taken on a position as an athletic training and instructor at East Chambers school district. He and his wife, Amanda, live in Nederland.

Cynthia (Spaights) Ince '13, M.S. school counseling, is a licensed professional counseling psychologist in Beaumont. She and her husband, Tom, live in Lumberton.

Charles Baker '12, B.B.A. business administration, is a business development analyst for Merit Lynch and Co. and serves on the Kelly Alumni Association Board. He and his wife, Katie '11, B.B.A. family and consumer sciences, who is director of child nutrition for Lumberton school district, live in Beaumont.

After playing for the Phoenix Suns in 2017 and the New Orleans Pelicans early in Michael James '12, B.B.A. general studies, now works as a sales representative for an LBA Italian professional basketball team. He and his wife, Laura, live in Greece.

Henry Rauschenberger '12, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is on the faculty of the Lamar University Department of education across multiple school districts for Sabine County Shared Services. He and his wife, Laura, live in Orange.

Shelene (Gamble) Richardson '13, B.S.W. social work, is now working as a CPS case specialist for the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. She lives in Beaumont with her husband, Michael.

Mary Shelby '13, M.Ed. educational technology leadership, is the director of technology, networking and troubleshooting at Lumberton school district. She lives in Sugar Land with her husband, Bruce.

Natalie Rhorer '14, B.S. dance, is an administrative assistant in Lamar University’s recruitment division. She lives in Port Neches.

Jennifer (Reddington) Stout '14, B.S. industrial technology, works for Richland Designs as a controls systems engineer. She lives in Victor with her husband. Charles.

Shannon (Abanawati) Bush '13, B.B.A. teacher leadership, has taken on roles at multiple school districts for Sabine County Shared Services. She and her husband, John, live in Port Arthur.

Daniel '13, B.S. chemical engineering, is an instrumentation and controls engineer for General Automation Services. He lives in Beaumont.

Lori Almond-Caldor '98, B.B.A. applied arts and sciences, is the coordinator of educational technology leadership, is program director for computer networking and troubleshooting technology at Lamar Institute of Technology. She and her partner Kandu '94, B.G.S. general studies, live in Westlake.

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Andrew McMillin ’15, B.B.A. general business, now works in Houston, Texas, for the Houston Astros Foundation. He lives in Friendswood with his wife, Jasmine (Castillo) ’12, B.S. family and consumer sciences.

Sean Murphy ’15, B.S. chemical engineering, is an operating engineer with Ineos. He is married to Gladys Garcia ’13, B.S. communication disorders, ’15, M.S. speech-language pathology. The couple lives in Victorville.

Stuart Music ’15, Ed.D. educational leadership, is superintendent of Navasota school district, where he and his wife, Lauren, live.

Kaylee Compaor ’16, B.B.A. accounting, and Dalton Holly ’16, B.B.A. management, were married on the island of Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos Islands. Both Kaylee and Dalton are LU Board Honors College alumni.

Tina (Ortiz) Crochet ’16, B.B.A. accounting, is a financial analyst for The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. She lives in Groves.

Erica Edgrerly ’16, B.S. family and consumer sciences-faithful reading and merchandising, ’17, M.S. mathematics, recently joined the staff of Web in Orange, where she lives.

Jason Hatton ’16, B.S. computer science, B.S. mathematics, ’17, M.S. mathematics, recently joined the staff of Web in Orange, where she lives.

Taryn Petty ’16, B.B.A. management, ’16, B.B.A. entrepreneurship, is office administrator at Social Solutions and assistant manager of Cinemark in Beaumont, where she lives.

Francella Hill ’16, B.S. communication, is head track coach and teaches English language arts at Stafford High School. Her fiancé, Trevor Davis ’15, B.S. criminal justice, a probation officer for Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, proposes to Francella by training with his fellow Aggie Alpha Phi Beta and sorority brother to canoe Guy’s 1990 rhythm and blues hit “Let’s Chill,” and the video went viral. They live in Houston.


Shubikor Orrun ’16, Ed.D. educational leadership, is principal of Albany High School. He lives in Albany, N.M., with his wife, Leva.

Taylor Stockton ’16, B.B.A. accounting, ’17, M.S. accounting, is an accountant and audit associate with Deloitte Services in Houston. She lives in Fort Worth.


Naelyn (Mills) Carruth ’16, ’17, B.S. criminal justice, is a police officer for Corpus Christi school district. She lives in Houston.

Jason Hatton ’16, B.S. computer science, B.S. mathematics, ’17, M.S. mathematics, recently joined the staff of Web in Orange, where she lives.


After School Special by Catlin Duerler

Working alongside the Office of Alumni Affairs, the Dishman Art Museum held their second annual alumni show this past summer. For the inaugural show, director Dennis Kiel organized an exhibit featuring illustrations alumni in the museum’s permanent collection including artists Paul Manes and John Alexander. The 10 artists for this year’s alumni exhibition titled After School Special, however, were chosen from around 40 applicants by juror and former Dishman director Lynne Loskengard. The art on display featured small bodies of work from art department alumni who graduated in the past five decades. While determining the lineup for the show, Loskengard focused on the work in front of her rather than reading artist statements and vitae. She looked for work that displayed “exquisite craftsmanship” in addition to how the artist has been shaped by her colleagues in the art department.

“During the 59 years I was an art historian at LU, I was impressed with the quality of my colleagues’ teaching,” she said. “I learned so much from them and all they have done for their students so I wanted to see the proof in this show.”

When reviewing applicants, I was looking for what did the art department teach them, what did they do when they went out into the world and how have they continued to improve as artists.” Many of the artists in the show are former students of Loskengard, and she continues to follow their work and stay in contact with them because of the sense of the community hewed while artmaking in Southeast Texas. “Those of us who are interested in the arts in the area tend to cluster together and give each other moral support, and I think that is what makes us a special community.”

Works ranged from two-dimensional paintings, drawing and photography to three-dimensional sculpted and mixed-media works using materials as diverse as teeth and home-crafted paper to bronze.

The American Baseball Coaches Association inducted former baseball head coach Jim Gilligan ’69 into its Hall of Fame this past January. Induction into the ABCA Hall of Fame is the highest honor bestowed by the organization, which was founded in 1945. The Hall of Fame began in 1966. Fellow inductees included Ed Blankmeyer, St. John’s; Hill Denson, Belhaven; Don Freeman, Prairie High School (Wash.); Tim Hill, Sr., State College of Florida; Bobby Howard, Columbus High School (Ga.); Andy Lopez, Arizona; Stan Luketch, Desert Vista High School (Ariz.); Pat Munahon, New York Yankees; Frank Permy, Gaither High School (Florida); John Schaly, Ashland.

For the better part of 39 years, Gilligan—a former pitching ace for LU from 1967-68—was the face of LU baseball. He began his coaching career as a graduate assistant under Bill Vincent in 1970 after a brief stint in Detroit’s Class-A affiliate in New York.

In 1972, he took his first head coaching job and led Western New Mexico to a 10-10 record. After one year, his alma mater came calling, he answered and took over as head coach in 1973. Other than a brief stint as a professional club coach from 1987-1991, he was the skipper until his 2016 retirement.

With his first win of the 2015 season, he accomplished something that only 18 coaches in the history of the NCAA did before him, attain 1,300 career wins. That win came in a 7-6 victory over New Mexico State, and by the end of the season Gilligan claimed 1,320 wins. His career record stands at 1,355-894-1, which stands at 13th all-time in wins in NCAA history. His career record stands at 1,355-894-1, which stands at 13th all-time in wins in NCAA history, and all but two of LU’s 12 conference championships were won under Gilligan’s tutelage.

Gilligan becomes ABCA Hall of Famer
When Marco Born took over as director of athletics in April, becoming a part of We Are LU culture, his arrival in Beaumont came by way of a circuitous route. A native of Germany, Born studied in California during high school as an aspiring tennis student-athlete. His success on the court earned him a scholarship to play tennis at Middle Tennessee State.

"Coming to the U.S. gave me the opportunity to get an education while playing the sport I loved, which I couldn't do back home," said Born. "I went to high school in California and knew that I liked it here in the U.S. I'm not sure at that time that I knew I would stay permanently, but I knew I wanted to get my degree and eventually a master's degree."

There is a prominent NCAA ad which states that "there are more than 400,000 student-athletes and almost all of them go pro in something other than sports." The living embodiment of that ad, Born was a standout on the tennis court at Middle Tennessee. He received All-America honors on his way to the 2007 doubles national title.

"I think somewhere along the way at Middle [Tennessee], I realized I was near the end of my playing career," said Born. "It became very important for me to get my 'ducks in a row' for the rest of my life."

"That is important to me when I speak with our athletes. I remind them there is nothing wrong with aspiring to go pro, but make sure you have your academics in order to pursue a career in something other than sports," added Born. Born arrived in Beaumont following a four-year stint at Louisiana Tech, where he served the final year as executive associate athletics director. He oversaw while overall fundraising revenue to the department increased by 252 percent under his watch.

Born also oversaw ticket sales for the second- and fourth-largest crowds in Joe Aillet Stadium against Southern University (27,905) and Louisiana-Lafayette (26,910). Overall revenue to the ticketing department increased by 58 percent in his final two years in Ruston.

Born came to Ruston from his alma mater, where he served as associate athletics director. During his time on the senior administrative staff, Born handled all the internal and external duties with oversight of marketing, ticketing, Aspire and Learfield partners. He served on Middle Tennessee's senior staff for five years and was heavily involved in the school's transition to Conference USA. He also oversaw the $11 million renovation to the Murphy Center and a $1.4 million turf replacement at Floyd Stadium.

A 2017 Middle Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame inductee, Born earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Middle Tennessee in 2007 and his master's in sports management in 2009. He is married to the former Emily Vest, a former Division I tennis player at Middle Tennessee and a standout tennis player at Middle Tennessee State. The couple has a five-year-old daughter named Scarlett Elizabeth.

In Memoriam

Nancy Evans, First Lady of Lamar University, touched everyone in the LU community and beyond with her generous spirit and her passion for art, sustainability and the environment. The mark she left on LU will live on in the many activities and programs she created during her past five years at the university.

Many of Evans’s projects focused on beautification needs across campus. She is responsible for numerous bicycle rack additions as well as updated gardens, where she utilized her skill as a master gardener. It was not unusual to see her out weeding a garden in the Quad or near the Mary and John Gray Library when she was out on a walk and saw it needed to be done. Evans also would pick up any trash on these same walks and deposit in a nearby trashcan bearing a sign she conceived about keeping the university beautiful.

Through her formation of LU’s Public Art Committee, she worked to transform buildings and open spaces on campus with various paintings and sculptures among many others. Additionally, Evans fostered constructive dialogue on differing issues through the founding of a program called Cardinal Conversations in her home. Her legacy will also be remembered through the Women and Philanthropy program she created. This unique offering at LU was a way to bring women together and learn more about how to give, manage their money and become more involved in their communities.

President Evans will continue to work towards their shared vision for Lamar University as the community keeps her memory alive through the many interests she invested herself in throughout campus.

Chad Powell ’07 and son Hudson with Marco Born, right

by James Dixon

"It became very important for me to get my 'ducks in a row' for the rest of my life."
After Hurricane Harvey, marketing major Davey Langham’s dedication to LU changed drastically and defined his idea of We Are LU. The support he received from staff during his time of need encouraged him to become more involved on campus. He has since become an LU Ambassador and joined the American Marketing Association student organization.

“After the hurricane, my house was three or four feet under water. And LU did a thing where they had staff call around to ask students if they were okay,” Langham said. “I don’t know exactly who it was, but she asked me if I was okay. I said, ‘Yeah, I’m doing fine, everything’s okay.’ But she could tell that I wasn’t okay. So she pressed on and was like, ‘Hey, we’re all in this together. We’re all Cardinals. We’re here to help. Talk to me; tell me what’s going on.’ So we spent about thirty minutes on the phone. It was really nice to have somebody to talk to in that moment. And that is when I realized I wanted to be more involved. That’s what really turned it around for me here at LU.”

Before the hurricane, Langham had plans to graduate as early as possible, staying unnoticed and not participating. After the hurricane, he applied and was accepted as an LU Ambassador, joined AMA and has plans to participate in more organizations on campus. “Now that I’m more involved with things, I don’t want to graduate because I don’t want to leave!” he laughed.

Langham, a Lumberton native, mentioned that although their home was flooded and located near a creek, his parents wanted to rebuild on the same land. “I thought it was a horrible idea because I know it’s going to happen again. So I put together a powerpoint and presented it to them about why we should move versus rebuild. I actually convinced them to move. We live in Silsbee now—not by a creek.”

One of the unique aspects of LU that Langham is proud of is how the professors and instructors care about the individual student. “They actually care,” he said. “They’re not here just to collect the check, teach a class, move on to the next group of students. They really care, and I don’t think that’s something that you would get anywhere else.”

“Prof. Escamilla [a business instructor] and I are super close, and he sends me emails to this day. He knew when I got a new job at Chick-fil-a and sent me an email saying, ‘congrats on getting the new job, bow’s it going?’ Prof. Seawright [an accounting professor] sent me an email once the ambassador list came out saying, ‘Hey, I saw that you’re an ambassador, that’s really cool! I knew you could do it, great job!’”

As an ambassador for LU, Langham attests that a person cannot get through their years attending LU without someone encouraging them and inviting them to be involved in something or attend an event.

“The phrase ‘We are LU’ actually means a lot because it plays back to when the hurricane hit and having someone reach out and say, ‘We are here.’ We are all here together. Everybody is here to help, and I’ve seen that countless times, whether it be a new student walking around lost, and you’ll see five or six people flock to them saying, ‘Hey! Where do you need to go? What can we help you with?’ You see it when it’s the first couple of weeks of class when everyone was handing out breakfast or coffee just to let students know ‘hey, it’s early. We all get it. It’s tough. It’s the beginning of the year, but we can do it.’ The mentality is ‘let’s get through it together.’ It really touches me honestly.”

Langham is a business management intern at Chick-fil-a. After graduation, he hopes to attend the company’s leadership development program, which would either put him on track to get his own store or prepare him to join the corporate office in a marketing position.

To learn more about making a difference in the lives of LU students, please contact Lamar University Advancement. (409) 880-8422 • development@lamar.edu • legacy.lamar.edu