I like numbers. When you’re responsible for the Division of Student Affairs at one of the world’s largest universities, you have to like numbers. They’re everywhere. Here are a few of the most important ones:

- **51,000**: How many students are studying here right now, give or take a few hundred.
- **9 departments**: How many unique operations constitute the Division of Student Affairs, each dedicated to a particular aspect of student life.
- **10 years**: How long we have to realize the scope and ambition of *Change Starts Here: UT’s 10-Year Strategic Plan to Increase Impact*.

We measure everything here. We want to know precisely how many students we’re helping, how much of our budget we’re dedicating to every program and service, and what the research tells us we should tackle next. But numbers aren’t enough.

There are so many parts of the Longhorn life that are immeasurable. One example I think of: How many lifelong friendships are formed because of something we did?

From the moment they arrive on the Forty Acres until they leave — every trip through campus, every visit to University Health Services with a scratchy throat, every meal at a residence hall, every group study session in the Texas Union, every workout at Gregory Gym — we provide chances for our students to meet and connect.

We can’t count the friendships we have helped spark. We can’t put memories into a spreadsheet — some of which will be retold 70, 80 years from now — that we provide the backdrop to. There is no accurate tally of the infinite smiles, epiphanies and inside jokes whose origins are in one of our Division of Student Affairs countless offerings.

And yet, I know they exist. Every day, the Division of Student Affairs influences the Longhorn life. The Longhorn lives — all 51,000+ of them.

And we can do more. This was the perfect year for the university to unveil *Change Starts Here* in tandem with *You Belong Here*, the university’s diversity, equity and inclusion plan. And for our Division to reveal our plan to support those efforts. To fuel these plans, the university kicked off the ambitious *What Starts Here* fundraising campaign.

There is much to come. You can be a key part of it; join us in what’s next. While we may not be able to type into a calculator how many moments of joy, connection and understanding that the Division of Student Affairs provides, we know we do. And we know that we are, indeed, back to better.

*Hook ‘em,*

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Soncia Reagins-Lilly
Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
It’s tempting to think of this year as transitional — a bridge between “the pandemic year” and embarking on the university’s 10-year strategic plan. But we looked at this past year as so much more than a transition.

Every day of every year, more than 51,000 students depend on the Division of Student Affairs. We influence the life — in ways both big and small — of every student who comes to The University of Texas at Austin.

In this impact report, you’ll encounter stories of how the staff of our Division — all 1,000 of them, located across nine departments — took the unique challenges of this year and alchemized them into new ways of serving our beloved institution.

If this year had a tagline, it would be: Back to Better.

You’ll notice that we’ve divided this year’s report into three main sections — People, Place and Pursuits. These are the same pillars of Change Starts Here: UT’s 10-Year Strategic Plan to Increase Impact, unveiled in Spring 2022. The plan sets a bold direction for the future: Become the highest-impact public research university in the world — unleashing knowledge, opportunity and innovation from the heart of Texas.

We hope you’ll be moved by these stories. We hope that, at least a few times, you’ll nod your head in recognition. We hope you’ll see places where you can join us in our shared vision of the future.

Enjoy!
People
Beyond an educational institution, The University of Texas at Austin is a community. Whatever we do — however grand our ambitions — at our core, we are simply people who are trying our best to share knowledge and set ourselves up for a better future.

The UT Strategic Plan, *Change Starts Here*, is rooted in people. The better we help each Longhorn thrive, the richer our community and the brighter our shared future. For our part, the Division of Student Affairs will invest in connecting scholars, leaders and trailblazers.
Marcus Mayes has uncanny timing.

In January 2020, Marcus became assistant director of Student Activities in the Office of the Dean of Students — just weeks before the pandemic shut nearly everything down. “We supported about 99% of students virtually,” he recalls. “For nearly two years, we had to do everything online.”

But few people were better suited to adapt to this new reality. After all, Marcus has been with Student Activities since 2014 and truly loves his job. For him, it’s a mission — one that can profoundly shape the student experience.

“The energy here is great,” he explains. “Every day is a new challenge. It keeps me on my toes. This year, our team had to mix virtual, hybrid and in-person events. We had a lot of events to support, and that’s what keeps it interesting.”

Along with his team, which comprises both full-time professionals and student employees, Marcus spent 2021-2022 combining the lessons of the previous “virtual year” with the ability to — once again, finally, deep breath — gather in person.

“Between student organizations, colleges, and other divisions and departments, this year produced plenty of events to manage,” Marcus pointed out. “Every event is unique, so there are a lot of logistics and details to work through.”

Entering our second year of the pandemic, Student Activities helped 1,000 student organizations navigate new event guidelines.

“For us in Student Activities, the return to face-to-face events wasn’t new,” Marcus reminds us. “But for many students, especially our freshmen and sophomores, this was the first time they could fully immerse themselves into campus. We owed them great experiences, and the support we provided for events was an important part of achieving that.”

Marcus and his team delivered.
Another team that was busy at work bringing back in-person events was University Unions’ Campus Events + Entertainment. Dallas Wilburn, vice president of publicity, sees events as something more than a mere pastime: “We provide places for students to connect, to grow together, to figure out what they want to do.”

Dallas — a senior psychology major from near the city that shares her name — channeled her enthusiastic personality to ensure E+E’s student-led events, like live concerts, the Texas Revue talent show and cultural celebrations, were promoted far and wide. “Knowing that I helped contribute to a vibrant student experience this year is very gratifying,” Dallas explains. “But truly, it was an all-hands-on-deck approach to get all of our events up and running — including virtual options for people who couldn’t join us in person.”

“Back to better” means both launching innovative student services while simultaneously expanding access to the events and experiences that are already quite popular. Having the Forty Acres filled, once again, with the sights and sounds of college life remains the greatest gift of 2021-2022. But perhaps the most enduring legacy of the year will be the new ways we found to serve our students.

**On-campus Moments** A sampling of some of this year’s live events.

**Longhorn Fiesta**
One of the first full-scale, campus-wide cultural events of the year was Longhorn Fiesta. Our events team in University Housing and Dining partnered with organizations across campus to design this Hispanic Heritage Month campus celebration that took place in October 2021.

Bella Vargas, a senior communication and leadership major from Brownsville, Texas, attended the vibrant event. “When I saw the DJ and the big speakers and the dance floor setting ... That’s exactly how it is back at home,” she beamed. “Fun and dancing, grabbing a random partner to dance with — it’s just the best.”

Longhorn Fiesta is a perfect example of the kinds of events on the horizon: dynamic, communal and authentic.

As Bella explained, “This has been my favorite event. It was so nice to have this huge celebration with people who look like me, who talk like me — it was just the whole package that I loved.”

**Longhorn Run**
Recreational Sports welcomed a crowd of more than 4,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members for this beloved campus tradition. The 10K and 5K race through campus was back in person for the first time in three years.

**Family Weekend**
Family Weekend was also back to better for the first time since 2019 and with a major conceptual shift – the campus tradition moved from a fall semester “welcome to campus” event to a springtime event celebrating all that campus offers. Thousands of people made their way to the Forty Acres to see campus from their Longhorns’ eyes while enjoying a variety of academic and non-academic activities and events.
COVID-19 didn’t disappear this academic year. If we were going to bring life back to campus, it first meant keeping our students and staff safe.
Swara Mukkamala saw a flier. Posted at University Health Services, the flier explained that any student organization could win a luxury dinner cruise on Lady Bird Lake by entering a competition through the Office of the Dean of Students. The criteria? The organization had to show its commitment to student safety by getting routine COVID-19 tests through Proactive Community Testing.

As the president of the Longhorn Singers — a co-ed show choir — Swara knew that her fellow singers would make an excellent entrant. For more than a year, ever since COVID-19 first came to Austin, the Longhorn Singers had been conducting regular testing. During the pandemic, they maintained a robust schedule of online concerts then returned to in-person activities.

So she asked her members to test and enter, and, voila, the Longhorn Singers became one of the winners.

“We’d always talked about doing a lake cruise like that, but it was too expensive. So when we won, it was really special. As a choir, and as friends who’d been through so much over the previous year, watching the sunset over Lady Bird Lake as we ate a beautiful dinner ... well, it felt like we’d been rewarded for being safe,” Swara, a senior supply chain management and Plan II Honors major from Sugar Land, Texas, explains.

The choir group wasn’t alone. Even as the academic year began, the pandemic remained a primary concern for all of the Division of Student Affairs. When Fall 2021 kicked off, we were in constant conversation with our university public health leaders and COVID-19 researchers to ensure we knew how best to protect our students.

Testing and vaccination were key planks in our plan. The university provided both at no cost to students, faculty and staff and University Health Services was instrumental in the administration of both. But to capture 51,000+ students’ attention long enough to persuade them to get tested and vaccinated — and to explain how easy and convenient it was — we knew we’d need to get creative.

So, we launched the Vaccine Incentive Program with a robust communications campaign from August-October 2021. Each Friday, names were drawn. The university awarded $100,000 in prizes, with some students receiving $10,000 cash. Other prizes included laptops, coolers, tumblers, wireless headphones, gift cards and one-of-a-kind UT experiences. These experiences included tickets to a football game with President Jay Hartzell and a photo op with Bevo.

We also worked with colleges, schools and units across campus to expand our testing operations with roving clinics. These roving sites located in academic buildings made it more convenient for the campus community to get a COVID-19 test.

But what was especially gratifying was that, prizes or not, students, faculty and staff were eager to do their part to protect themselves and their fellow Longhorns. Each one got us a small step closer to getting back to better.
When were you last on our campus? If it was this year, you probably had a moment when you felt that familiar surge of burnt orange energy — a sensation that said: *This place is unlike any other place*. If it’s been a while since you walked through the Texas Union, or strolled down Speedway Mall, or poked through the stacks at one of the libraries, please come soon. We’d love to show you all of the new things and all of the old things.

The next decade will find us making this place more vibrant. We’ll become more closely entwined with Austin. We’ll forge partnerships with our neighbors in industry and government. We’ll craft environments where the next (exceptional) century of successes will be seeded. Here’s how that work is beginning.
We reopened the Cactus Café this year — one of the oldest, most iconic music venues.

Dylan Smith remembers the date instantly.

“March 13, 2020,” he says when asked when the Cactus Café temporarily shuttered due to the pandemic. As a senior student affairs administrator with University Unions, Dylan supports several student-led committees and groups that organize on-campus events and entertainment. But of the many venues he works with, the Cactus Café is special.

When the music venue opened in February 1979 at the Texas Union, it quickly developed a local, then regional, then international reputation as an incubator of supreme musical talent, especially for folk musicians, country crooners and singer-songwriters.

Early in their careers, eventual superstars such as Lyle Lovett, Ralph Stanley and Townes Van Zandt played on the intimate stage. As the years progressed, the Cactus Café became a destination gig, a rite of passage for Austin-bound musicians including the Chicks, Guy Clark, Gillian Welch, Patty Griffin and hundreds more.
But suddenly, the bar and the stage went silent — the doors locked, the beer taps dry. For more than a year, it remained that way, one of the starkest reminders that things were different. Then in Summer 2021, the Texas Union asked Dylan to lead its re-opening in the fall.

“We started with a soft opening in September,” Dylan says. “A few comedy nights, a few small shows. We did trivia nights, karaoke — we wanted to see how to safely bring crowds back to the Cactus Café and experiment a bit with new ideas.” As with other events across campus this year, the reopening of the Cactus Café proved that students — and faculty, staff and Austinites in general — were eager to get back to the iconic venue.

But it wasn’t until the spring semester that the Cactus Café started to feel more like itself. That’s when Dylan and his team brought back the Songwriters’ Open Mic, a weekly staple and community favorite for many years.

“The open mic encapsulates so much of what makes the Cactus Café great, and so much of that is the community,” Dylan describes. “Students come to watch one week, and then the next week, they play. The musicians compliment each other, offering positive feedback and encouragement. They have conversations about playing together in the future. I feel like we’re building a real community here for talented musicians and songwriters — students and community members alike — to hone their craft in a welcoming, supportive environment. We’re creating something impactful. One of our bartenders, who’s worked here for three decades, says the open mics are better than he’s ever seen.”

James Buckley couldn’t agree more. As the director of facilities and operations for the University Unions, James sees the success of the reopening as an opportunity to more deeply connect students with the venue.

“The Cactus Café is a very important place,” he underscores. “We are going to maintain its character. But we will also point it in some new directions. In recent years, we may have drifted from connecting the Cactus Café with current students. So our team, along with a lot of input from our student employees and volunteers, are going to experiment with new types of programming as well.”

Dylan’s ideas, many of them directly inspired by student input, align neatly with how James sees the role of events and entertainment on campus. “We complement the classroom,” he explains. “We help students build their leadership skills. We help them learn to communicate in real professional settings. We help them discover how teams really operate.”

“I’m from Austin so I know that the Cactus Café is a fundamental part of Austin history. As a musician myself, I always wanted to play music there, so getting artists to play there is just a no brainer. This leadership position with Campus Events+Entertainment has taught me a lot. We offer free events and are giving students experiences they couldn’t have otherwise.”

Ally Protass (Junior, English Major)
Chair, Campus Events+Entertainment’s Headliners Committee

Of course the Cactus Café isn’t the only on-campus location to enjoy a reopening this year. The Division of Student Affairs oversees 40 facilities. Yet, in many ways, the Cactus Café embodies the spirit of this particular year. It’s a treasured place, one with nearly half-a-century of history, one we didn’t want to lose to the pandemic’s effects. And now that it’s reopened, we want to ensure it remains beloved, especially to our Longhorn students.

The Cactus Café is back. And it’s better.
Dining: Bringing Ideas to Life

Most of Erich Geiger’s life is linked to food. His first job? Washing pots at a Wyatt’s Cafeteria. His dad worked in restaurants. One of his most vibrant memories is helping his mom make coffee cakes. When visiting his brother in California, he decided to go to work for Bon Appetit Management Company, where he saw for the first time how skilled chefs operate. It dawned on him then: I can build a career in this world.

Fast forward 40 years — after stops in Amarillo, Oklahoma, Michigan and Arkansas — here’s Erich Geiger, serving as the executive director of residential dining and Longhorn Hospitality. In his role with University Housing and Dining, which is responsible for feeding tens of thousands of people all day every day, Erich sees a simple and profound calling and involves those diners in the product.

“All of our work is based on what’s best for our students. We don’t assume we know. We ask them. We bring them into our programs. We hire them. We ask them what they want to do, learn and be, and then we find ways to bring their ideas to life.”

This feedback is at the heart of a new collaboration between University Housing and Dining and University Unions. With the support of VP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Soncia Reagins-Lilly, the team began reimagining the dining venues in the University Unions facilities following the end of the university’s contract with Aramark. Through Longhorn Hospitality, the team created new, self-operated eateries featuring coffee and pastries, burgers and fries, sandwiches and Philly cheesesteaks. They also brought back campus favorites like Chick-fil-A and expanded catering services.

“Food is just a part of it,” he says. “People like me — hospitality people — we simply love pleasing people. Food is one of the best ways to make someone happy.” After more than three decades working at the university level, Erich has developed a number of deep insights into the work he and his team do — a sort of epicurean philosophy that infuses everything his unit does.

“On-campus dining is a place that students can enjoy themselves with no expectations,” he points out. “We’re here only to serve, to treat each student as a person, not a number.”

Among the buffet of lessons learned during the pandemic is our renewed appreciation for the basics of daily life. We can’t take the availability of food for granted and shouldn’t underestimate the power of feeding our community. Providing students with delicious, nutritious and convenient meals — day in, day out — is one of the most important parts of our mission.

“Food gives us a chance to provide students with education they can’t get inside a classroom,” he begins. “We have all sorts of programs around dining. We host interns in our dietitian program. We buy produce from the gardens maintained by some of our science programs. We’re researching food sustainability. We are sourcing from a hydroponic farm outside Lockhart. We are purchasing coffee from Ruta Maya, a local coffee company, and...
educating students about farmers and supply chains so they can better understand ethical sourcing. We have a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030. This year, we’ve opened new dining options, both big and small, across campus.

**Living: Keeping an Eye on the Future**

The newly unveiled UT Strategic Plan, *Change Starts Here*, envisions a future in which UT Austin unleashes knowledge, opportunity and innovation from the heart of Texas. That “heart” is Austin. We are, of course, proud to sit at the center of one of the country’s most popular metro areas. It’s one of the things that make our university special and vibrant.

But with popularity has come a surge in housing costs. It’s never been pricier to live here. Even the pandemic couldn’t slow things down. And there’s no evidence that the housing market will do an about-face anytime soon. So we acted.

This year, University Housing and Dining played a major part in two important initiatives that will help students live closer to campus and connect with our unique residential programs and services.

First, the university acquired Dobie Twenty21. Known by most as “the Dobie,” it’s one of Austin’s oldest skyline staples — the giant, blue-mirrored dormitory that looms over the edge of the South Mall. A private residence community since it was built in the late 1970s, the 27-story residence hall is now part of our ever-expanding on-campus housing options.

“We know that having students closer to campus helps them build community and thrive academically,” said President Jay Hartzell.

Meanwhile, a couple of miles to the east, we moved ahead on another key acquisition. In Spring 2022, the university broke ground on a new housing development for graduate students. Located a few hundred feet beyond UFCU Disch-Falk Field, the new development will open in about two years. Working closely with the historic Blackland neighborhood association, we developed a plan for a beautiful, affordable community that fits in nicely with the surrounding buildings.

The project includes 784 beds in studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. Residents will enjoy amenities, such as a fitness center, study centers and an amphitheater — all in an effort to attract some of the finest young scholars in the world.

By boosting the availability of student housing close to campus, we can help keep a UT education more attainable for students who yearn to come here. The market will continue to keep up the pressure on our students, and challenges will continue to arise. But we’re keeping a close eye on the future and doing the work today that will ensure tomorrow is bright.

**Merchandise with a Mission**

We’ve forged a new partnership with an iconic destination close to campus and you probably know it well. Since 1896, the University Co-op has been a hub of Longhorn gear and academic supplies, a frequent stop for incoming and current students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and supporters.

Now, you can stop in to buy Living the Longhorn Life® t-shirts and other branded gear to support the NOW Fund. VP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Soncia Reagins-Lilly created the NOW Fund in 2018. This fund supports student success programs, experiential learning opportunities and student well-being.

The Co-op has a long, rich history – more than 125 years – of impacting the student experience, making it the perfect partner for the Division of Student Affairs and our supporters.

Show your Longhorn spirit and share your purchase on social media using hashtag #LivingtheLonghornLife. We know there’s more than one way to be a Longhorn, and we can’t wait to see what it means to you!
Pursuits
What have we learned in the last year if not: *Expect the unexpected.* As a university — and as a division within that university that cultivates and stewards the student experience — we intend to be well prepared for whatever the world throws our way. In the UT Strategic Plan, *Change Starts Here*, the university declared that we will improve the world through transformative experiences, education and research — all under the banner of “pursuits.”

That’s a perfect word to capture our mindset. Pursuits. We are on the hunt — constantly evaluating, constantly seeking efficiencies and improvements. We empower our employees to dig in, experiment, learn, grow and find new ways to make the Longhorn life better.
Counseling on Demand

Chris Brownson is a Longhorn lifer. He earned all of his degrees here, including his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. He did his internship at the Counseling and Mental Health Center. He even wrote his graduate thesis on the early history of the Austin State Hospital.

Few people know more about the mental health of college students, which is why his assessment of the status quo lands so powerfully.

“Depression, anxiety, isolation, stress — they’re all major issues right now,” he explains. “If you look at studies from the 1980s, you discover that back then, college students spent the majority of their time socializing. Now, it’s just the opposite. Our young people are studying far more than they’re socializing.”

In his role as director of the Counseling and Mental Health Center, Chris’ primary mission is to marshal resources and direct them squarely at the mental well-being of every student who needs help. And while he acknowledges that the pandemic created a greater need for counseling, Chris remains excited about the progress the center is making.

“We’ve come back nimble, strong, different,” he emphasizes. “The major disruption we’ve created is expanding access to trained counselors via telehealth. We love seeing students via in-person counseling sessions, but the ability to talk to someone virtually means more students are accessing help when and where they can.”

The list of mental health innovations continues:

• In Fall 2021, we launched a partnership with the My Student Support Program, which helps us meet the growing demand for counseling by connecting students, usually virtually, with an international network of trained experts. Any time of day, any day of the year, Longhorn students can now talk to a mental health practitioner for free. The demand for counseling remains high, but now our supply is bolstered.

• The Longhorn Wellness Center, which focuses on education and prevention, was able to return in full force on campus this year. By delivering specialized and group workshops on a variety of topics — from sexual health to suicide prevention to sleep habits — the Longhorn Wellness Center continues to destigmatize mental illness and equip students with the knowledge they need to thrive.

• Support for mental health continues to arrive from all parts of the university. President Jay Hartzell and VP for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Soncia Reagins-Lilly have both directed funding and vocal support for new, innovative investments in mental health solutions.

• Much of the strain on students comes from academic expectations. Being a college student is harder than it’s ever been. Which is why Chris and his team have launched new efforts to connect with professors — helping “teach the teachers” how best to recognize signs of mental illness or excessive stress in their students. Once our team sees a potential issue, we can help connect a student with a host of mental health supports, both on and off campus.

As we emerge from the worst of the COVID-19 crisis, we do so with a deep, abiding commitment to boosting the mental health of 51,000+ students. By expanding access to counseling, noticing issues before they balloon into crises, and leveraging technology and medical expertise, we’re fostering a culture of well-being on the Forty Acres.
Longhorns Helping Longhorns

Shannen Dumadag switched her major from biology to public health just weeks before COVID-19 arrived in Austin. The senior from Pearland, Texas, found herself drawn to the complexity of public health — how it combines a range of disciplines, from sociology to behaviorism to administration to public policy. But despite her passion for her major — and her plans to attend medical school — the pandemic’s effects hit her deeply and personally.

“My own mental health suffered a bit,” Shannen explains. “I’m the oldest kid in my family, and my parents rely on me a lot. My mom’s an intensive care unit nurse who was on the front lines of the pandemic. I have family in other parts of the world. Worrying about all of this — having to do so much stuff all on my own — took a toll on me. I started to feel isolated.”

Unfortunately, Shannen wasn’t alone in her feelings of stress and anxiety. Thousands of her fellow Longhorns experienced the same feelings of loneliness — a sense that maybe this crisis would have lasting, permanent effects on their futures. Fortunately, however, Shannen was already clued into the many ways she could find help and support on campus.

“My sophomore year, I learned about a volunteer position at the Longhorn Wellness Center,” she explains. “It was called a ‘peer coordinator.’ The idea was that we would identify an aspect of student health that needed attention, and then we’d develop programs to address that issue.”

In her time as a peer coordinator for the Longhorn Wellness Center, Shannen and her colleagues delivered workshops on healthy sexuality, sleep habits, and how to bounce back from failure or rejection. Having organized and taught students about a range of mental health concerns, Shannen was able to notice when her own mental health was suffering.

“The pandemic, in a way, pushed me to prioritize myself,” she recalls. When she was promoted last year to the role of student assistant, a leadership and logistical role at the center, Shannen was even better able to see the big picture. “I help other students become the best peer educators they can become, and we’re having an enormous impact on the day-to-day health of the student body.”

Shannen is taking a gap year between undergraduate and medical school — a chance for her to, as she describes it, “gain more clinical experience while also becoming the best version of myself.” She serves as yet another student inspiration — a symbol of the countless other Longhorns who managed, with help from family and friends and Division of Student Affairs services and programs, to get to the other side of the pandemic intact and determined to create a brighter future.

Responding to Crises with Compassion

Thank goodness people like Brennden Ward and Thomas Schlitt are on our team. There are a select few who possess their patience and insight — professionals whose job, every day, is to assist and support students during the most vulnerable times in their life.

But to hear Brennden tell it, it’s all just an extension of his personality. “Crisis work lets me think on my feet. I like that,” he says. It’s a humble reply, especially considering that “thinking on his feet” is a euphemism for helping students in their greatest hour of need.

Practicing Tough Talks with Technology

When you’re right there in the moment, face-to-face with someone trying their best to express the mental pain they are in — you probably fumble for the best words. You want to help. But you’re not sure what to say, or when to say nothing at all.

But with mental health, as with most things, practice makes perfect. This year, we rolled out a new program named Mental Health Conversations. The software is interactive, where users can simulate the experience of having difficult, emotional conversations. Along the way, the software offers suggestions — for example, when it’s best to suggest a specific mental health resource.

But what makes this technology special is how it allows students, faculty and staff to prepare themselves for a conversation they may have through the course of their daily work. These are skills that will serve Longhorns for a lifetime. And we’re looking forward to learning how these “simulations” lead to real-world conversations that get our students the help they need.
Generally, their job as the Mental Health Assistance and Response Team (MHART) counselors is called crisis work. Specifically, they spend their days partnered with a member of The University of Texas Police Department, responding to calls for help.

“The people I help have been battling a problem for a long time,” he explains. “But today, the problem has come to a head. I’m the neutral party — someone who can hear them, and then guide them to the help they’ve been looking for all along.”

MHART was created to support the UT Austin community, enhance de-escalation practices and provide the best care to those in crisis. Responding to mental health crises in society is a complex issue that intersects with many others. But just as issues intersect, so do solutions. MHART pairs trained mental health specialists with police officers to ensure we deliver the assistance that’s most needed in any given situation.

“MHART is so critical, because when a crisis strikes, you tend to hear someone’s entire story. You get a full understanding of what they’re battling, and so you can make the best referrals,” Brennden explains.

Responsiveness is a skill. Brennden and his colleagues in MHART respond to crisis calls every day. Similarly, the Division of Student Affairs responds to problems swiftly. We keep our ear to the ground and our eyes on our students so we can quickly respond to their needs. When a trend arises, we gather our experts and devise solutions. MHART is simply the latest example — and one that is enhancing campus policing and helping our Longhorns.

Amplifying Student Voices

Meet the Longhorn who “buzzes fast and knows things!” Jaskaran Singh, a senior finance and economics major from Dallas, Texas, is just one of the many students telling their stories on the new Living the Longhorn Life podcast. Jaskaran made it all the way to the Jeopardy! National College Championship and won the competition, crediting his experience with student organization Longhorn Quiz Bowl for preparing him for the win.

His story and others are available for your listening pleasure anytime, anywhere, on Spotify, Apple and Google. Launched in September 2021, our storytelling stands out as the only campus audio story showcasing student voices, featured alongside nearly 20 podcasts on the Texas Podcast Network.

We’ve covered a range of topics from the Vaccine Incentive Program to the Cactus Café’s reopening to cultural celebrations, milestones and achievements to our irreplaceable in-person campus experience.

“Stories have the power to paint a vibrant picture and take someone inside the work we do every day. It’s a privilege to speak with fascinating students and staff so we can educate our audiences about how we are influencing Longhorn lives,” shared Host Jess Cybulski, Division of Student Affairs director of communication operations.
In March 2022, the university launched the *What Starts Here* campaign. Our collective goal is to raise $6 billion in donations over a 10-year period including $1 billion for student support.

It’s an ambitious goal. Our size and scale gives us plenty of great opportunities to lean into our outstanding people, take advantage of our unique place and hone our transformative pursuits — the backbone of our university strategic plan. Unlocking potential is a big, important and complicated endeavor. It means being ready, at any moment, to remove barriers and distractions. It means guiding students to our services, programs and events — each of which is designed to help them better understand themselves, gain new perspectives and become global citizens.

We’re proud of the work our donors do to support our innovative programs and services. You should be proud of yourselves too. Because your support matters. You give students a place to realize who they are and whom they want to become.

Take the UT Outpost food pantry and career closet for example. Nearly 38% of current students experience food insecurity, including making decisions about food based on cost rather than nutrition, eating from a dollar menu or not being able to choose fresh food and produce. But thanks to the food offered by UT Outpost, the Student Emergency Services team in the Office of the Dean of Students is directly combating food insecurity.

“"It’s not only about the immediate crisis and trauma a student is going through. Our team’s influence is about how we support them along the way so they can continue to attain their education. I show up for students who are having a hard time because I know getting this degree is important to them. Your support is critical to our mission," notes Kelly Soucy, director of Student Emergency Services.

As campus regained its vitality this year, we never lost sight of the many Longhorn students who still needed our direct help. In November 2021, a team of volunteers from New Student Services’ Horns Helping Horns and Longhorn TIES programs, along with Kara Hartzell, the university’s first lady, arrived at the UT Outpost to lend a few dozen helping hands.

Another program that returned – Dinner with 16 Longhorns. It’s an event that unites students from across the university with different interests, from different places and studying different things. They each possess a unique perspective on the last few years, and they spend the night connecting and building community. And you can participate. Our Longhorn Family Leadership Council members, alumni and staff help facilitate conversation and get to know students. The dinner is hosted in a donor or alum’s home.

If, at some point in the previous pages, you wondered whether there was some way you could lend a hand — some program, service or endeavor that you could support — we assure you there is. You are as integral to the future success of our campus and student life as much as anyone else. Send our development team an email or give us a call. Let’s talk and discover how you can make a difference to support students through the Division of Student Affairs.
Philanthropy Across the Division

The Vice President for Student Affairs office and the Division of Student Affairs’ nine departments honor students and staff in a variety of ways. Below is a list of our awards, recognitions, scholarships and programs supported by philanthropy.

**Center for Students in Recovery**
- Carol Weikman Farnsworth & James Walter Farnsworth Endowment for Students in Recovery
- Center for Students in Recovery Alumni Endowment
- Center for Students in Recovery Fund
- Center for Students in Recovery Scholarships
- Cullen Trust for Higher Education Endowed Fund for Students in Recovery
- Dawn & Greg Crouch Endowed Excellence Fund for Students in Recovery
- Donna Stockton-Hicks & R. Steven Hicks Endowed Excellence Fund for the Center for Students in Recovery
- Erin Elizabeth Spurgin Endowed Excellence Fund for the Center for Students in Recovery
- Jennifer and Paul E. Heath Endowed Scholarship
- Max, Gene Alice and Lynn Sherman CSR Endowment
- Richard B. Dyke Endowed Presidential Scholarship in Communications

**Counseling and Mental Health Center**
- Brandon Folkes Endowed Excellence Fund
- Brian and Randi Schwartz Community Wellness Initiative
- Brian L. Harlan Memorial Endowment
- Carolyn and Karl Rathjen in Support of Innovations in Data Informatics
- Orange Jackets Endowment for Voices Against Violence
- Paul Martin Compton Endowed Excellence Fund for the Counseling and Mental Health Center
- SHIFT Program

**New Student Services**
- Cristi Biggs Orientation Leadership Fund for Orientation Advisors
- Foyt Family Endowment for Student Affairs
- Gerald E. Hawkhurst & Susan St. Denis Endowed Presidential Scholarship
- Maralyn S. Heimlich Scholarship for Orientation Advisors
- Shawn and Kara Wells Endowment for Horns Helping Horns
- Tom and Bitsy Hail Endowed Presidential Scholarship
- W. Ralph Canada, Jr. Endowment for Horns Helping Horns

**Office of the Dean of Students**
- Barrington McGregor Endowment for Veterans
- C. Thomas Behrman/Tejas Scholarship
- Dean Byron Fullerton/Tejas Scholarship
- Dean’s Dozen
- Delta Gamma Foundation Endowed Lecture Fund in Values and Ethics
- Eyes of Texas Student Government Academic Endeavor Fund
- Fleming Fellowship Scholarship
- Fleming/Tejas Scholarship
- Glenn Maloney Memorial Scholarship
- Gregory E. Lucia/Tejas Scholarship
- Haruka Weiser Endowed Excellence Fund for Campus and Student Safety
- Ingram Lee Endowed Scholarship
- Jean Perkins Foundation Combat Veteran Scholarship
- Jessica Michelle Fertitta Excellence Fund for Student Advocacy & Civic Engagement
- Jim Fenner Fund

**Judge Harley Clark/Tejas Scholarship**
- Judge Royce C. Lamberth/Tejas Scholarship
- Judge Zeke Zbranek/Tejas Scholarship
- Marion B. Buescher Memorial Scholarship
- Pillars of the Forty Acres Recognition Program
- Rebecca H. Carreon Scholarship Fund
- Sean N. Bourgeois Memorial Endowed Scholarship
- Senate of College Councils Endowed Scholarship Fund
- Senate of College Councils’ William Powers Jr. Endowed Scholarship
- Sgt. Tyrell Seth Williams, U.S. Marine Corps Endowed (USMC) Scholarship
- Sorority and Fraternity Life Awards
- Student Emergency Fund
- Student Government Endowed Excellence Fund
- Student Organization Development Fund
- Swing Out Awards
- Texas Cowboys Endowment for UT Students
- The Bryant and Shari T. Truitt Veterans Scholarship
- The David L. Shull Memorial Scholarship
- Theodore Henry Strauss Student Award for Exemplary University Service
- TISTA Tech Veteran Academic Leadership Awards
- Transforming Texas Greeks Endowment

**Division of Student Affairs**

2021-2022 Annual Impact Report
Recreational Sports
Acacia Fraternity Endowed Scholarship
Betty A. Thompson Endowment for Recreational Sports
Bill Frisbie Endowed Scholarship
Bill Patman Endowed Scholarship
Charles and Carolyn Spence, James and Kathryn (Spence) Nance, and William (Spence) and Edith Nance Endowed Scholarship Honoring Michael Monsoor
DeDe and Joe Bill Watkins Endowed Scholarship
Delta Tau Delta Endowed Scholarship Intramural Endowment
John M. Childs Scholarship for Intramural Referees
Kenneth Ford Family Endowed Scholarship
Lubbock Endowed Excellence Fund for Handball in Honor of Pete Tyson
Mark L. Hart, Jr. Endowed Scholarship
Nelson Puett, Jr. Endowment for Recreational Sports
Phi Gamma Delta Endowed Scholarship
Play Golf America University Endowment in Recreational Sports
Recreational Sports Divisional Endowment
Recreational Sports Endowed Scholarship
Robert G. Childress Endowed Scholarship
Robert L. Dewar Golf Scholarship
Susan and Mark Baletka Endowed Scholarship
Sylvie and Gary Crum Endowed Scholarship
Texas Men’s Lacrosse Endowment
Texas Taekwondo Alumni Association Endowed Excellence Fund
Thomas W. Dison Endowed Scholarship

Texas Parents
Parents’ Association Student Services Endowment Fund
Texas Parents Mike Wacker Award
Texas Parents Outstanding Student Awards
Texas Parents Staff Merit Awards

University Health Services
Healthy Student Organization Award Program

University Housing and Dining
Alys Jones Bodoin Centennial Endowed Scholarship
Floyd B. Hoelting Quality of Residence Life Award
George Kinsolving Endowed Memorial Student Services Fund
National Residence Hall Honorary “Of the Month” Awards
National Residence Hall Honorary Induction
University Housing and Dining Residence Life Leadership Awards

University Unions
C.C. “Jitter” Nolen Spirit Award
GRants for Active Student Participants (GRASP) Endowment
J.J. “Jake” Pickle Citizenship Award
Margaret C. Berry Student Activities Fund
Pal—Make A Difference Award
Shirley Bird Perry Leadership Award
Student Activity Center Program Endowment
Student Endowed Centennial Lectureship
Texas Cowboys Centennial Lectureship

Texas Union Building Fund
Texas Union Lectureship in Student Leadership
Texas Union Permanent Art Collection Endowment
Texas Union Student Awards Endowment
Texas Union Student Programs Endowment
Texas Union-University Co-Operative Society Presidential Medallion Endowment
William Andrew Smith, Jr. GRASP Award

Vice President for Student Affairs
1999 Bonfire Unity Endowed Presidential Scholarship
Abigail “Abz” Zeitler Memorial Fund
Arno Nowotny Medal
Harrison Brown Endowed Excellence Fund
James W. Vick Academic Bridge Fund Endowment
Margaret Alexander Steiner Endowed Scholarship Fund
Merryman/Revell Excellence Endowment
NOW Fund – Fund for Immediate Student Support
Sharon H. Justice Leadership Scholarship Endowment
Soncia Reagins-Lilly Award for Administrative Excellence
Tany Norwood Staff Appreciation Award Endowment
Texas Blazers Endowed Excellence Fund
Make a Difference!

Your financial investment matters to our students. Give online at bit.ly/GivetoDivisionofStudentAffairs or you can contact Vice President for Student Affairs Development directly at vpsadevelopment@austin.utexas.edu or by calling (512) 475-6134.

Division of Student Affairs Departments

**Center for Students in Recovery**
recovery.utexas.edu
(512) 475-6778

**Counseling and Mental Health Center**
cmhc.utexas.edu
(512) 471-3515

**New Student Services**
newstudentservices.utexas.edu
(512) 471-3304

**Office of the Dean of Students**
deanofstudents.utexas.edu
(512) 471-5017

**Recreational Sports**
utrecsports.org
(512) 471-3116

**Texas Parents**
texasparents.org
(512) 471-2353

**University Health Services**
healthyhorns.utexas.edu
(512) 471-4955

**University Housing and Dining**
housing.utexas.edu
(512) 471-3136

**University Unions**
universityunions.utexas.edu
(512) 475-6636

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