



Hilltopics

University Honors Program

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Dr. Hopkins: Community Builder, Matchmaker, and *Hilltopics* Inspiration

by Craig Zieminski, B.S. '05, B.B.A. '05

In May, Dr. James Hopkins will retire from SMU after forty-one years of shaping the lives and minds of countless Mustangs. His influence cannot be overstated. He had a tremendous impact on shaping the person that I have become and inspired the very publication that you are now reading.

Among the many ways in which he has served SMU, Dr. Hopkins was the Co-Advisor of the President's Scholar program for nearly twenty years. As part of that role, Dr. Hopkins and fellow Co-Advisor Patti LaSalle invited me and the other first-year President's Scholars to their house for dinner one evening in August 2001. The students that entered Dr. Hopkins' book-filled home that evening were (by and large) shy, homesick strangers. But by the time we'd polished off the world's best chicken casserole, Dr. Hopkins and Ms. LaSalle had laid the foundation for a community of life-long friends. They taught us that we had a lot to learn from our professors but had even more to learn from each other. They taught us that we were all very different and very similar. They taught us that we could be a family. The strangers who sat in Dr. Hopkins' living room that evening became each other's teachers, advisors, collaborators, confidants, bridesmaids, and groomsmen.

The dinners at Dr. Hopkins' house continued throughout our four years at SMU. Dr. Hopkins emphasized the "life of the mind" through his insistence on curiosity and discourse. Food was typically accompanied by a group discussion or a guest speaker, often on topics that encouraged us to approach issues from new perspectives. I discovered a great deal about myself and my SMU family at those dinners in East Dallas—including that day in the fall of 2004 when I met my future wife in Dr. Hopkins' kitchen (I complimented her recent Daily Campus article on falconry, and the rest is history).

See the full story on page 2

In this issue:

*Heartbreaking
Basketball Loss*
page 3

*A VLD for Meadows
School of the Arts*
page 4

*Supreme Court over
Spring Break*
page 6

*Residential Commons
in Review*
page 8



Although I never took a class from Dr. Hopkins, he quickly became my mentor at SMU. Once a semester, we would meet for lunch at Peggy Sue BBQ. Dr. Hopkins—never at a loss for words—would typically spend most of these lunches asking questions and listening. Who are you? What do you want to learn? Why? How can you make your mark on this school and this world? He encouraged me to find my passion and to use it to improve other people's lives.

The lessons I learned from Dr. Hopkins motivated me to found Hilltopics with several other students in 2004. Hilltopics was conceived as a blank slate for expression, creativity, and discourse. We wanted to provide a forum for students to learn about themselves and others through the exchange of ideas and differing viewpoints. We wanted to leave our mark on SMU and every student who wrote or read a Hilltopics piece.

I cannot possibly thank Dr. Hopkins enough for those lunches, dinners, and life lessons. The best I can do is to ask each of you what he asked me so many years ago: How can you make your mark on this school and this world? Write an article for Hilltopics, start your own campus organization, volunteer, or conduct research that will improve lives. Learn for the sake of learning, and then teach someone what you've learned. Use your time at SMU and career to make the world a better place. Dr. Hopkins certainly did.

UHP Wrapping Up the Spring, Planning for Fall

by Camille Aucoin, UHP Office Coordinator

As students prepare for finals and the start of the summer, UHP is busy planning for Fall 2015. Recently, we released the Fall 2015 Honors course list; be sure to check it out if you still need to take Honors courses (or just want to; they're all pretty awesome!)

Fall 2015 will kick off with the annual Honors Welcome BBQ on the evening of the first day of classes, complete with mariachi music, as usual.

Additionally, look for opportunities to participate in the 2015 common reading experience. Dr. Doyle and the common reading committee have chosen *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel as the 2015 common reading and they are looking for Honors students to help encourage first-year students to be enthusiastic about participating in common reading discussions.

This fall, UHP will also be introducing a new Honors Mentor program. Mentors will be placed in each of the eleven residential commons and will conduct programming with, provide support to, and be a resource for first-year UHP students. We hope this new program will foster more community among Honors students within the commons.

Finally, this fall, UHP will be implementing Honors Night! To create more coherence and organization in UHP, all events will be held on a specific day of the week (to be announced). Keep an eye on the UHP website and Facebook for upcoming news of book discussions, movie nights, field trips, and more!

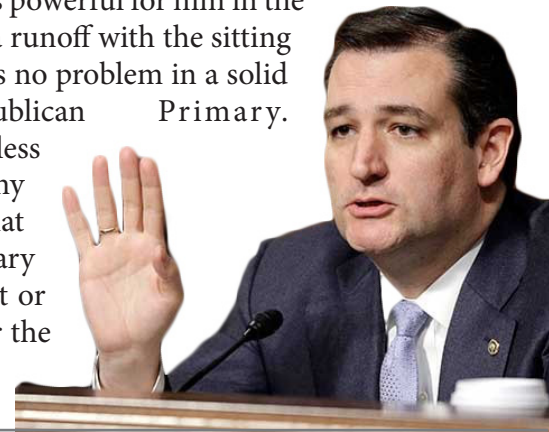
Have a fantastic summer, and get ready to gear up for another year of amazing Honors experiences starting in August!



All Sights Set on 2016

by Cole Chandler

Texas freshman Senator Ted Cruz threw his hat into the ring. In late March the senator announced he will be seeking the Republican nomination for president—the first to do so. The announcement seemed premature to some as he had not yet formed an exploratory committee, the standard process for candidates. Skipping this step will subject Cruz to campaign finance regulations that are separate from those just exploring a possible run. While Cruz's announcement was met with great applause from the audience at Liberty University, he will likely have some trouble with the Republican base. His loyal Tea Party following can potentially get him far in the primary, but it would not be enough to carry him through a general election against the likely democratic nominee, Hillary Clinton. The party's base will most likely back a candidate such as Governor Bush or Governor Walker. Bush and Walker have a better chance of bringing moderates and independents to the polls in 2016, a demographic Republicans desperately need to win. However the Tea Party was powerful for him in the Texas primary to get him on the 2012 ballot. Tea Party support got him into a runoff with the sitting Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst which Cruz ultimately won. This poses no problem in a solid red state like Texas where the real challenge for any state wide office is the Republican Primary. The same cannot be said for a national election where wooing voters with less hardline views on social issues is much more important. That is why many candidates swing to the middle after securing the primary; something that would be difficult for Cruz who tends to take very strong positions. The primary historically has low turnouts, but those that do vote tend to lean father right or left giving Cruz the advantage. However, it is too early to say how his run for the nomination will go as the outcome ultimately depends on who else enters the field.



The Benefits of Goaltending

by Alec Petsche

When I was asked to write an article about the controversial goal tending call against SMU, I was surprised. Partly because I was thinking about llamas and had forgotten that I was in a meeting, but mostly because I'm not really qualified in any way to talk about it. I don't know anything about basketball, I'd forgotten that there was a game going on, and I'm too lazy to do any real research. The only reason that I even knew what happened was because I happened to be sitting next to two girls watching the game on a laptop.



I was going to do my usual bit and type all of the random cynical things that popped into my head, but then I suddenly recognized that there is something in all this that I'm an expert at: complaining! I've complained with the best of them, and I have to say, even though I don't really know anything about basketball, when its almost universally agreed that the call was wrong, we have every right to complain. But fear not dear reader, for there is a silver lining. The right to whine is even better than winning! As a result, we shall come together and create some of the greatest complaints in the history of college basketball!

This unfortunate loss may suck at the moment, but in the long run, we're actually the biggest winners. When your team wins, no one cares but their fans, but when you lose on a technicality the whole world cries injustice and sympathizes with you. Right now, everybody's on our side! This terrible call is great for us!

What's that? I'm wrong? I should stop spouting nonsense if I value my reputation? Well...there you go.

So, what have we learned today kids? 1. Alec shouldn't be a sports journalist. 2. Any way you look at it, that goal tending call sucks for us. Awful deal, but we'll be back next year and come out on top.

A VLD: Very Large Donation

by Sara Jendrusch

On Monday, March 23, students arrived to class at Dallas Hall to find their normal path across the rotunda blocked, the seal covered, and important-looking people in their most impressive business attire milling about. As they were directed around the blocked-off area, students expressed mixed reactions: some grumbled about inconvenience, others (usually freshmen) stared around in wide-eyed amazement, and still others asked the question on everyone's mind—"What is going on here?"

The only answer the students received was that the school was receiving a VLD—Very Large Donation—and the announcement with details would occur at 11:00 a.m., conveniently when most students were in class. But one floor below, in the basement of Dallas Hall, students could see staff handing out We Celebrate Meadows T-Shirts. We're all in college, so two and two should easily fit together, and the rest of the pieces were filled in through the music, confetti, and general fanfare behind the announcement: the Meadows Foundation had donated \$45 million to Meadows School of the Arts. For those students who aren't in Meadows, there was only one comment in response to the excited (and gloating) Arts students: So what?



It's a pretty good question. What does that money mean to the rest of SMU?

First, it's a Historical Moment. Not only was the donation made in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Meadows Museum and SMU's Centennial, \$45 million is also the largest donation that SMU has ever received, as well as the largest that the Meadows Foundation has ever given.

Whoop-de-doo, the Dedman Law students might say. Who cares—from the Lyle School of Engineering. At the very least, the facts are extremely impressive, and it's a great way to brag to your family and friends about how prestigious of a university you attend. But the money itself is more than just a show for the rest of the world.

Of the \$45 million, \$25 million will go straight to the Meadows Museum on our campus, including \$13 million for education programs. The museum is not used solely by Arts students—quite the contrary. Art History majors and minors, including some of our very own Honors students, Spanish majors, and even Public Policy minors have all visited the museum several times during class in order to include hands-on material in their lecture-based classes.





This donation to the Meadows Museum will affect students across the university, regardless of major, minor, or school. The remaining \$20 million will go to the Meadows School of the Arts, though only \$8 million will be attributed to students and scholarships. The rest will be put toward what SMU calls "facility enhancements" (Keep an eye out for even more construction on campus!). However, there can be no doubt that all students will benefit in some way, whether they are Meadows majors receiving the student scholarships or Dedman majors visiting the museum. In the end, it is important to remember that this \$45 million is only a part of our \$1 billion goal for the SMU Centennial, so rest assured: all schools should be included in the Centennial gift-giving eventually.

Comic Relief

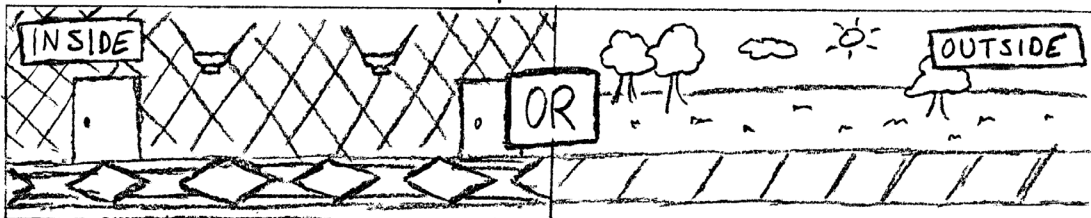
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VISUAL JOUST


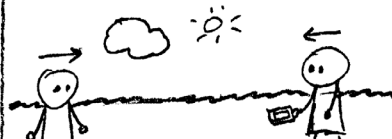
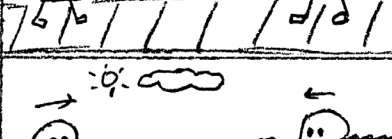
a fun new game for antisocial types of all ages!

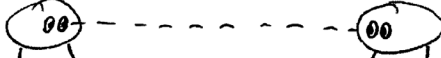
YOU NEED:		in lieu of		&		in lieu of	
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The game begins when two people walk toward each other...



→ WHEN YOU CROSS PATHS... ←

if your opponent:		you get:
looks down		1 POINT
looks down at phone		2 POINTS
takes phone out of pocket and looks at it		3 POINTS

★ if eye contact is made...  ... point values are **DOUBLED!** ★

WHEN YOU GET 500 POINTS...		YOU WIN!		ONWARD! to your next 500 points!
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Comic by Andrew Oh

A Spring Break to Remember

by Kenny Martin

While many of you were no doubt engaging in the usual debauchery of Spring Break (I spent the week in Cozumel, so I'm not completely innocent), a group of UHP students traveled to Washington, D.C., where they researched the Supreme Court in the papers of the justices, housed in the Library of Congress. The trip was part of Professor Joe Kobyłka's Supreme Court Seminar, which is offered every other spring semester. The students kept a blog about their experiences, which can be found on the SMU Student Adventures Blog Page under "Political Science in Washington, 2015." Seriously, go check it out—there's some really neat and funny stuff there, and it's a valuable resource for anyone considering taking the class.

For the class, the students choose their own independent research topic, which will eventually become a 20-30 page research paper. This year, topics ranged from Justice Black's interpretation of the Equal Protection Clause, to capital punishment, to civil liberties during wartime. After an intensive study of major cases and the history of the Supreme Court in the first part of the semester, the students spend 5 days in D.C. actually focusing on their topic, researching for 6-8 hours a day. About this year's trip, Prof. Kobyłka says the students "lived together, three to a room, ate meals together, traveled the Metro together, and lived the research experience together." It's an intense experience, but the students agree that it's worth it. Terisha Kolencherry says "it sounds extremely boring, but the great thing about the class is that everyone in it is excited about their topic" and Kayla Goldberg compares the week to "running a marathon," saying that the hard work and great intellectual rewards of the class are "what college should be about." Without a doubt, the students discovered how demanding academic research can be—almost all the blogs commented on how nice a full night's sleep was after a long day at the Library of Congress.

But the trip wasn't all work. The students ate at the appropriately named "We, the Pizza" and took an impromptu trip to the White House. They also got a private tour of the Supreme Court and spent an hour visiting with Scott Harris, the Clerk of the Court. They even got to cheer on the SMU Basketball team at the airport. Also, as with any trip, there were some surprises along the way that the students will never forget. One student got sick and had to make an emergency CVS run, while another found out that she had been accepted to law school while she was researching.

Overall, the students commented about how much they bonded as a group, and while the trip "may not be as glamorous as Disneyworld or Mexico," as one student put it, I think they would all agree with Kelsey Smith that it will be "the Spring Break [they] remember most." Whether it's the "intellectual high" they got from holding history in their hands, the scent of the aging documents, or the ubiquitously bad handwriting of the justices, each student will take away from the trip new knowledge and fond memories. The class is a great opportunity for committed students, and those of us in the UHP are lucky to have programs like this available to us.



SMU Doesn't Need 100 Candles to Celebrate a Centennial

by Jacquelyn Elias

Turning 100 certainly is cause for celebration, and SMU welcomed the opportunity as the school dedicated 2015, the centennial of SMU's opening, as the Year of the Student. For this celebration, SMU has planned several events throughout the year in honor of the huge strides SMU has taken as well as the successes that students have achieved.



At its opening a 100 years ago, SMU would barely be recognizable as the 237-acre campus with over 101 buildings and 11,000 students that we know today. In 1915, the school opened with just two buildings: Dallas Hall and the Women's Building, and welcomed 456 students.

From this date, SMU has grown tremendously both in size and in academic rigor. With the naming of 2015 as the Year of the Student, SMU recognizes the critical role that the aspirations of students have played in developing SMU for the better. To show the school's admiration of such drive, students can expect a year full of on-campus celebrations in typical SMU extravagance. While many of the events have been longstanding traditions of the school, a collaboration of committees and student groups such as Student Foundation, Program Council, Student Senate and Nineteen11 have dedicated much time to differentiate 2015 traditions from the past.

With SMU's recent athletic achievements in basketball, it only seemed fit that the first Year of the Student event began nowhere else but before a basketball game, honoring the dedication of all student-athletes who have defined SMU athletics over the past hundred years. In February before the Connecticut game, Program Council hosted Moody Madness, which attracted countless alumni and students who celebrated outside of Moody with food and festivities.

Founder's Weekend, starting on April 17, marks the next Year of the Student festivities with Perunapalooza and Sing Song. Relive your inner childhood as Perunapalooza transforms Dallas Hall Lawn into a carnival with rides, activities and food. Later the evening, performers will face the moment of truth as the highly anticipated Sing Song kicks off. After months of practices and preparation, Sing Song will offer a little friendly competition and questionable choreography to entertain all who attend.

Once students return to campus in the fall, Homecoming will sneak upon students before they know it. To coincide Homecoming with the 100th anniversary of the University's opening, Homecoming will take place on September 26. An earlier date, however, is not the only change students can expect during Homecoming. This year's committee has been planning for this celebration since January, promising a day to remember. The weekend will feature a special program commemorating SMU's once-in-a-lifetime centennial birthday.

"Homecoming has always been an event that brings students together on campus to support a common goal. This year, the common goal will be strengthened by an overwhelming pride for our school," said Caroline Gurley, chair of the 2015 Homecoming Committee.

Lastly, SMU will wrap up the Year of the Student with the annual Celebration of Lights, lighting up the holiday season and signaling the closely approaching end of a memorable 2015.

A Year in Review: The Residential Commons

by A.J. Jeffries

Going into this year, there were very few things we knew for sure about the new residential commons model. Sophomores have to live on campus for the first time in SMU history. There are some beautiful new buildings on the southeast quad. The school could finally start building something new. Sure, many of us had heard the spiel about how the mix of students would promote diversity and some of us may have even caught the administration's excitement about the new system. A year later, though, how much better has the residential commons experience been?



First, let's address the commons council concept. Every year, a group was elected to be commons council in the old dorms. Typically, that group had stopped meeting by the beginning of second semester, and even when they were in session they were not a strong presence in their hall. There has not been a one hundred eighty degree turnaround simply because SMU changed the name of our housing system, but there has been a visible change. In ten of the eleven commons, the council presidents lasted the year. Each one of those presidents has spent the year putting on programs and throwing together events, endeavoring to bring residents together and build a sense of community. It has not always gone perfectly, but the very fact that a group of students is working in each commons to make it a better place is evidence of progress.

Second, we can look at the success of the residential commons system's stated purpose: bringing together students with diverse interests. Again, the result has not gone as perfectly as planned. People tend to gravitate towards those with similar interests—it's inevitable. However, in Armstrong commons there is a group of friends who all have totally different majors. With intended majors from biochemistry, APSM, and psychology to journalism, creative computing, and accounting, they certainly have nothing in common academically. They're from different places. But they share a residential commons, and from that common bond has grown a deep friendship.

These are only two aspects of the new system, but they tell a similar story. The new system is not a perfect solution and the residential commons certainly has a long way to go. If you look closely enough, there are signs of hope. Residential life is changing on campus, and I for one cannot wait to see what campus life looks like by the time I graduate.

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