

**TEXAS STUDENT MEDIA APPLICATION FORM
MANAGING EDITOR OF THE DAILY TEXAN**

select which terms of office you are willing to serve: June 1, 2019 - August 15, 2019
 August 16, 2019 - December 31, 2019

This application and supporting materials must be submitted to the TSM Business Office (via hard copy to room HSM 3.200 or via PDF emailed to serpas@austin.utexas.edu) by **Monday, April 29, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.**

This position is due to be appointed at the TSM Board meeting scheduled for **Friday, May 3, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.**

Please plan to attend and discuss your application with the Operating Trustees.

Applicant Information

Lisa Nhan

Name

In6744

UT EID

lnhan@vtexas.edu

Email Address

Business Management w/
Gov minor

Major

Applicant Attestation / Authorization for Release of Information

1. I am currently enrolled as a UT-Austin student.
2. By the start of my term of office, I will (if an undergraduate) have completed 12 hours at UT-Austin with a GPA of at least 2.0 or (if a graduate student) have completed 9 hours at UT-Austin with a GPA of at least 3.0.
3. I agree to complete and pass a media law and libel test administered by the Editorial Adviser prior to taking position.
4. I have obtained and included signatures from at least five staff members of The Daily Texan supporting my application.
5. By the start of my term of office, I will have completed at least two semesters as a permanent-staff member of The Daily Texan in an area other than opinion.
6. By the start of my term of office, I will have served in a Daily Texan management position with supervisory and design responsibilities (as defined by the Daily Texan Handbook) for at least one semester.

Note: if no qualified applicant has filed by the deadline, the Board shall make an appointment using the Handbook qualifications, each of which shall be waivable by an affirmative vote of two-thirds majority of the voting members present.

I certify that to the best of my ability I have given true and accurate information concerning my scholastic and experience qualifications, and hereby grant permission for the Office of the Director, Texas Student Media, to verify said information. Further, I understand that this information will be provided to the TSM Board of Operating Trustees and will become part of the public record of TSM.

Lisa M. Nhan

Signature of Applicant

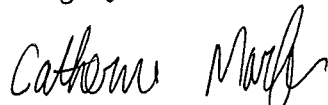
April 26, 2019

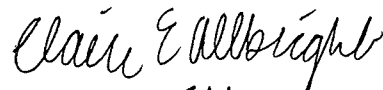
Date

Supporting signatures from at least five staff members of The Daily Texan:


Engagement Editor


Laris Co-editor


Associate Managing Editor


News Editor

Forrest Milburn
Managing Editor


Laris Associate Editor

My experience at The Daily Texan consists of (list positions and dates):

- Projects Reporter (Spring 2019, Fall 2018)

- News Editor (Summer 2018)

- Associate News Editor (Spring 2018)

- News Desk Editor (Fall 2017)

- General News Editor (Spring 2017)

- Diversity & Inclusion Board Member (Spring 2019)

It is recommended that you include supporting materials such as:

A résumé

A letter outlining your qualifications, goals, plans for the position

Letters of recommendation

Samples of published work (on 8 1/2" x 11" paper)

To the members of the Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees,

As a non-journalism major, I often get asked why I work at The Texan. My answer is the same as it was the first day I stepped into the basement: The Daily Texan has the power to transform this campus and our students for the better and I wanted to be a part of the change, to be part of something bigger than myself, to help make this University and paper into what I believe it can be. We are the biggest collection of student voices on this campus. We have the capacity, the resources, and the talent to serve this campus as stewards of truth, fairness, and accountability. My decision to pursue Managing Editor is based on these convictions and it would be an honor to help continue our legacy.

In my time here, I've served as a reporter, an editor and as a Diversity and Inclusion Board Member. I've learned more here than any other class. It was my experience as an editor in News for three semesters that gave me a solid foundation of what the process of a story looks like. I've seen and worked with countless stories from their pitch to the final product. Despite never setting foot in a journalism class, I've been able to spend the last year as an investigative reporter with a focus on hazing on campus. I broke stories that were then picked up the Austin-American Statesman, the Houston Chronicle and KXAN. I learned my reporting skills hands-on, whether working on my own stories or helping others.

I have developed a deep understanding of this process, and my experience in News and Projects have taught me how to adapt to breaking news, profiles, long-form journalism or event pieces. I know the stamina needed to continue reporting on the same story for months because I've had to do it firsthand. I know what support should look and feel like for an emotionally drained reporter because I've been on both sides, working on some of the most horrible accidents on campus like Nicky Cumberland's death or Haruka Weiser's trial last summer. I know the stress and focus that breaking news needs because I've been written breaking stories and helped reporters push theirs out. As an editor, I have always approached my reporters with a focus on, what did I need when I was them? And I've found the answer is almost always the same, someone who will take the time to truly listen and emphasize with me.

As Managing Editor, my priority would be to take the time to actively listen to my staff. I've seen during my time on Diversity and Inclusion Board that some of these issues may not have immediate solutions, the best thing you can do for your staff is listening to them, to take the time to understand their concerns. My other job is at the McCombs Leadership Program, where I lead and create leadership training for business students. My major is in Business Management, where I focus and learn about how to create a better workspace. Those experiences have given me so many transferable skills in problem-solving and relationship dynamics that I have used in the basement as an editor or mentor. My management style has always been people-driven and relationship-based but I'm also a very realistic problem solver. It's one thing to have a big idea, it's another to actually do the work. In my role as editor here and in my McCombs job, I have

learned to be flexible and adaptable. I understand how to accept the things I cannot change and focus on what I can.

This summer, I want to see us end the semester as a better version of the Texan than we started. The summer can often be seen as a throwaway semester, with a smaller staff and smaller paper. But I want to change that. It may only be two months, but it's two months where we aren't dealing with the unpredictable realities of daily-printing. It's an opportunity to take that energy and focus it on further past initiatives and creating new ones.

First, I think the summer would be a great time to focus on more long-form pieces, highlighting the variety of voices on campus. The weekly print schedule and different print format give us the time and design space to really make these stories come to life. Some of my favorite pieces we did last summer were memorable because we took the time to really get to know these campus voices, like the man who had been to over 1,000 UT baseball games. With the first-ever First Gen Orientation and other new initiatives on campus, The Texan can have the time and space to explore these new stories on a deeper, more intimate level.

Second, I'd like to continue furthering our Diversity and Inclusion initiatives. Particularly, I'd like to start working on the long process of creating need-based scholarships for our staffers. That was perhaps the biggest complaint I heard in the office this semester and for valid reasons. Many of our most talented staffers struggle to stay here and many have left for financial reasons. Others, like me, have to work additional jobs on top of being full-time students. I understand this is a complex issue that requires realistic goal setting, which is why I think the slower pace of summer would be a good time to start really thinking about what can we do to help our staff be able to come back to the basement.

Third, after having a long, productive meeting with transgender students on our campus, the Diversity and Inclusion Board came to realize we need better training for reporters who would be approaching minority groups on campus. The trans student group echoed similar sentiments I've heard from many minority groups: They don't trust our coverage and we've unfortunately harmed members of those communities by careless reporting. We have to earn the trust back of our campus members. Because those trans students and many other groups have said they won't speak to us due to mistrust. If they don't speak to us, we fail to do our job of reporting on real issues on this campus. To help create community relationships and provide better training, I want to start creating guides and training on how to report on more complex issues, like gender, sexual orientation, race, and disabilities. To create these, I would work with local campus community members and professors to help prep our reporters to be able to properly report on these issues.

I love this campus and I love this paper. And it's my love and passion that makes me want to hold us accountable, to be better than what we were yesterday. If you pick me as Managing Editor, I promise I will give this paper whatever it takes to make us be a better paper, a better staff by the end of the summer. Change begets change. What we start this summer, no matter how small, can be the next step in creating a better Texan.

Thank you for your consideration,
Lisa Nhan

Dear Daily Texan Management Selection Committee,

I first met Lisa Nhan outside of the Daily Texan — through another campus organization — but she's one of the main reasons I ended up joining.

My sophomore year I was a journalism student unsure of my career in the field and who, to be quite frank, was intimidated by the Daily Texan. But then I met Lisa, a cool business student who spoke so many praises of the Daily Texan staff and its work. Her passion for our campus paper made me realize I, too, could take part in informing our community.

Since then, I have worked alongside Lisa for two years and my admiration for her commitment to the Texan and representing the UT community has only grown. This commitment, along with her years of experience reporting and leading in the basement, will make her a strong and reliable managing editor for the Texan. More importantly, her warmth and drive to improve the paper's representation will help recruit talented and diverse students.

After finally joining the Texan as new reporter in 2017, Lisa edited my stories as a new desk editor and always offered kind constructive criticism and edits that improved my writing. And she was not only supportive of me, but also all the other reporters and editors.

Today, Lisa has become a pillar in the Texan's newsroom with her impactful reporting on hazing at UT and her work on the Texan's new Diversity and Inclusion Board.

Through her compassion, listening to sources' concerns and building strong relationships, Lisa [broke](#) the news of the Texas Rho chapter continuing to operate as a "rogue" fraternity. A few months later, Lisa also [revealed](#) hazing concerns about the Texas Cowboys from the family of Nicky Cumberland. With both of these stories, Lisa was fair and accurate in her reporting and responsibly followed-up with any news and events.

But Lisa has also used her compassion as a Diversity and Inclusion board member, advocating for improved coverage of UT's underrepresented communities and better support for our staffers. She does this by genuinely listening to people's concerns and respectfully raising concerns with the Texan's leadership and management.

Over these last couple of years, the Texan's work has gained attention and praise among the UT community and beyond, and I truly believe Lisa's work has played a role in this. I have no doubt she will continue shedding light on issues within the Texan and UT as managing editor. But I trust she will do so in a graceful, caring approach that will drive the Texan to be the best it can be.

Thank you for taking my input into consideration.

Sincerely,

Maria Mendez

Projects Reporter and Diversity and Inclusion Board member

mariamendez@utexas.edu; 512-400-9589

To the members of the Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees,

I am writing this letter to wholeheartedly recommend Lisa Nhan for the position of managing editor during the summer of 2019. After having the privilege to work as a reporter for Lisa Nhan for two semesters, I can unequivocally say that the board should be confident that she has all of the qualifications needed to be the managing editor of the Daily Texan.

Lisa is the first person I remember meeting when I first walked into the Texan newsroom. When I submitted my one of my first stories for the Texan, my first two editors simply edited my story for small grammatical or spelling mistakes. And Lisa, the associate news editor at the time, could have easily done the same. But instead, she spent nearly 30 minutes providing personalized feedback on every sentence of my story and thoroughly explaining the reasons for all of her thoughtful critiques. Despite the significant time commitment required for editing the story, Lisa seemed happy, if not eager, to help me grow as both a writer and individual.

This is not just a single personal anecdote, but an embodiment of Lisa's personality and the actions she takes on a daily basis. Every day since I first descended down the stairs into the basement, Lisa has made me feel welcome and help me grow as a reporter and eventually as an editor. And anyone who has worked for Lisa in any capacity will tell you the same. She is an incredibly caring, hardworking and selfless leader, but what truly sets her apart from the crowd is that she is always striving to help others improve. Whether someone deserves praise or needs support, Lisa has always been there for the people who need her, and I have no doubt that she would continue to do so as managing editor.

At its core, the Texan not only exists to provide the entire student body with journalism, but also to give people from a variety of different backgrounds and majors an opportunity to grow as student journalists. Lisa also understands this more than anyone else I know. Through the impact she has had, mainly during her tenure as a projects reporter and news editor, Lisa has shown that she has strong news judgement and the ability to find and evaluate stories that matter to the Texan's audience — both of which are qualities that are greatly needed as the Texan's managing editor.

Lisa also recognizes that the Texan is not perfect, but her commitment to making it a better place is unparalleled. As one of the three members of the inaugural Diversity and Inclusion Board, she has made significant strides to make the Texan more inclusive environment for all students at UT. In only a few months, Lisa has used her platform to educate others about the importance

of diversity in a newsroom, mentored younger staffers with their reporting on challenging topics and provided her calm and levelheaded input whenever an issue arose in the newsroom this semester. Whenever she is in the newsroom (or even when she isn't), Lisa shows her passion and constant dedication to helping the Texan improve and grow.

Like many of the former managing editors and other students who have made their mark on the Texan, Lisa is not a journalism major. But to me, that is one of the major strengths — not weaknesses — of her application. She isn't applying because she wants to add another leadership role to her resume, but is instead applying because she truly cares about the success of the Texan and has the professional management and leadership skills needed to continue to maintain the Texan's long legacy.

Personally, I am incredibly grateful to have worked so closely with Lisa Nhan during my time at the Texan. She has truly modeled all aspects of leadership through the attention and care she has given everyone in the newsroom during her tenure at the Texan. With her experience and leadership skills, she is the ideal candidate for managing editor. I strongly urge you to approve her for the position of managing editor.

If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to ask me any questions about Lisa's candidacy. I would be happy to speak at length about her qualifications.

Sincerely,
Megan Menchaca
Engagement Editor, Spring 2019

'Rogue' fraternity, formerly UT SAE, continues operations after suspension

Published October 4, 2018

By Lisa Nhan

Former members of the UT chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon are continuing fraternity activities, despite being suspended for a number of serious hazing offenses.

Their organization, operating under the name Texas Rho, recruited a new pledge class this fall, held fundraisers and hosted events without any University, national chapter or UT Interfraternity Council oversight after being suspended by the University and SAE national chapter. Texas Rho has now taken the stance of “an independent organization,” according to a press release.

However, their organization continues to use the colors and letters of SAE Nationals. The Office of the Dean of Students and IFC have both released statements condemning the unaffiliated fraternity’s continued operations.

‘Fear factor like’ hazing

SAE Nationals suspended the UT chapter last November after receiving an anonymous tip to their hazing hotline, [according to a Daily Texan report](#). Following the suspension, UT’s Office of the Dean of Students conducted its own investigation and suspended the chapter in March for multiple forms of hazing.

Several SAE members said they personally experienced or witnessed hazing during fall 2017, according to the “Finding of Fact” section of Administrative Disposition Form created by the office and obtained by *The Daily Texan* through a Texas Public Information Act request.

The document details hazing acts such as “physical brutality” and members “being confined to uncomfortable spaces” inside something referred to by members as “the hatch” — a small, underground hole on the property of the chapter house. The chapter’s adviser provided the University with photographic evidence of “the hatch,” which was obtained by the Texan through

a public information request. Texas Rho President Robert Perlick confirmed in an interview with The Texan that “the hatch” is present on their house grounds but said he didn’t know its purpose.



“The hatch” used to confine UT SAE chapter pledges as part of a hazing ritual in the SAE chapter house. *Obtained via TPIA*

Student Conduct also found reports of members required to “ingest ‘fear factor like’ substances/concoctions” and drink alcohol. Last year, a fraternity member at both Texas State University and Louisiana State University died after being forced to consume alcohol, according to police reports.

“The boys this year have been through a shit storm ... and it’s just not right for young men to have to endure this crap ‘in the name of brotherhood.’ I’m talking a few hospital visits and mental scars to prove it,” according to an anonymous letter sent to Student Conduct in November 2017, which was used as evidence by the University to suspend the chapter and obtained by The Texan through an information request.

Economics senior Perlick, who was accompanied to the interview by public relations representative Lia Truitt, said he couldn't confirm or deny the hazing detailed in the document.

"If there was a member who said this happened to him, I completely trust a member to say that took place, as unfortunate as that is," Perlick said.

Andel Fils-Aime, director of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, said the Office of Dean of Students doesn't believe the hazing were isolated incidents at the UT SAE chapter.

"There's never going to be a case where there's a one-off," Fils-Aime said. "Had it potentially been a one-off situation, the organization would likely still have some kind of relationship where they could return sooner ... and, if that were the case, it would have been reflected in the information that we gathered."

Severing all ties

Texas Rho has recently attempted to publicly separate itself from the national chapter of SAE, despite being engaged in a legal dispute with SAE Nationals regarding their use of SAE Nationals branding.

In an Oct. 1 press release, Texas Rho declared its independence from SAE.

"While there has been some misunderstanding and misrepresentation about who we are, we want to make it clear that Texas Rho is not affiliated with SAE or the Interfraternity Council," Perlick said in the press release.

The SAE Greek letters still hang on the house entrance. The name Texas Rho has been associated with the UT SAE chapter since its conception as its official charter name, or its identifying name within the SAE Nationals organization. Texas Rho members currently live in the former SAE house.

“The fact that they’re using our name is just not congruent with what they’re trying to portray because they’re still operating with our colors, with our branding, with everything,” said Johnny Sao, SAE Nationals director of communications.

Sao referred to Texas Rho as a “rogue” chapter of SAE but said if the Texas Rho were to rebrand itself and use a different name, SAE Nationals would have “no issue” with that, Sao said.

In a letter to UT SAE alumni, the national chapter said they believe Texas Rho members are misguided thinking that ignoring the suspension will someday lead to a “realignment with national” for the group. The letter went on to detail how the earliest SAE could open a UT chapter again would be in at least four years after Texas Rho disbands.

However, Perlick said Texas Rho is wholly independent, citing Texas Rho’s nonprofit status, new governing body and new insurance.

But — only excluding last year’s graduating seniors and two students — all of the former members of UT’s SAE chapter are in Texas Rho, Perlick said.

In an attempt to stop hazing, Perlick said Texas Rho’s new Behavioral and Financial Responsibility Agreement has many measures and “strict, ethical codes” each member was required to sign.

Under these new rules, Texas Rho banned the serving of hard liquor, hires licensed bartenders to card and serve guests and uses a third-party security for safety.

“The worst of all worlds”

For Peter Driscoll, IFC’s president, Texas Rho represents “the worst of all worlds” when it comes suspended fraternities.

“Everyday (Texas Rho) operates is a day that they’re spitting in the face of the University and IFC and the Nationals,” said Driscoll, science and technology management and government

senior. “As long as they stand, it’s just a shining example of how you can do whatever you want and get away with it.”

In response to learning about Texas Rho’s pledge recruitment this fall, the IFC Executive Board released a statement to condemn unrecognized fraternities and to “strongly recommend” students involved with Greek life not interact with Texas Rho due to their previous hazing offenses, Driscoll said.

In addition to its written statement, IFC is working with Texas University Panhellenic Council to enforce the Panhellenic policy of sororities not being allowed to have formal association with unregistered fraternities, said UPC President Evana Flores.

Fils-Aime, the University student conduct director, called joining an unrecognized fraternity a “significant risk” with immediate “health and safety concerns.”

“If you’re attempting to join an organization that doesn’t have certification or an accredited body, you’re wasting significant time and money with the amount and effort you’re putting into an organization that — in reality — doesn’t even exist,” Fils-Aime said.

Fils-Aime said Texas Rho has no affiliation with the University and compared joining an unrecognized fraternity to a suspended student continuing to attend classes.

“You’re kind of delusional in what you’re going about and wasting your time because you’re not a part of the university,” Fils-Aime said. “The only one you’re fooling is yourself.”

Megan Menchaca contributed to this report.

Family of Texas Cowboys pledge requests investigation following deadly crash

Published November 18, 2018

By Lisa Nhan

The family of Nicholas Cumberland has asked for an investigation into alleged hazing at this year's Texas Cowboys initiation retreat, according to a statement provided to *The Daily Texan*. This follows the death of their son from injuries sustained as a passenger in a car crash returning from the retreat in the early morning hours of Sept. 30.

The crash, which occurred at 5:43 a.m. an hour and a half northwest of Austin, was a result of the driver falling asleep, according to the crash report. The driver, who is a new member of Texas Cowboys, did not respond to requests for comment.

“Why was our son and a group of new Cowboy pledges permitted to depart on a two and a half hour drive from a ranch back to Austin around 4 a.m. in the morning with zero sleep after a full day of initiation activities?” the statement said.

Nicholas “Nicky” Cumberland spent four weeks on life support following the crash and his funeral was held on Nov. 3. Clio Harralson, Nicky’s girlfriend, said Nicky left for the retreat around 4 p.m. the day before the crash and told her he would return the next morning.

The Cumberland family said they heard allegations of hazing following the crash and then shared “information and documents with the proper authorities,” according to the statement.

University spokesman J.B. Bird confirmed the University recently received allegations of hazing connected to the accident but didn’t specify where the University received the information.

“The University takes all accusations of hazing seriously and investigates them as warranted,” Bird wrote in a statement given to the *Texan*. “We are evaluating how to proceed with the information we have at this time.”

Texas Cowboys, a registered student organization best known for firing “Smokey the Cannon” at football games, did not respond to repeated requests for comment. In addition, *The Texan* reached out to four current members of the organization, who did not respond to requests for comment.

However, the Texas Cowboys Alumni Association said it has launched an investigation into the events of this year’s Cowboys initiation retreat.

“The welfare and safety of its students is the first priority of the Texas Cowboys,” the association wrote in a statement to *The Texan*. “The Texas Cowboys have zero tolerance for hazing of any kind. After the investigation is complete, the Texas Cowboys will take any necessary actions to ensure a safe environment for current and future Cowboys.”

Texas Cowboys were previously suspended for five years in 1995 after the University determined hazing occurred at the Cowboy’s initiation retreat earlier that year. During that year’s initiation retreat, then-pledge Gabe Higgins was found dead in the Colorado River near Bastrop with a blood alcohol content twice the legal limit for driving.

The Cumberland family notes in the statement that Texas law and UT policy grant immunity to people who report hazing incidents.

“Our family will have no sympathy for anyone who adopts or encourages a code of silence; however, based on the candid discussions and support we’ve had so far, we are confident that this will be an open, transparent and cathartic process,” the statement said.

Harralson, Nicky’s girlfriend and a former *Texan* staffer, echoed the family’s sentiment.

“We’re not trying to punish anyone,” said Harralson, a Plan II, management information systems and business honors junior. “We just want to find out what happened to the person we love.”

Morgan O’Hanlon and Meghan Nguyen contributed to this reporting.

Introducing the Texan's Raising Voices initiatives: Same paper, new commitment to diversity, inclusion

Published February 3, 2019

By Maria Mendez, Lisa Nhan, Tiana Woodard

Editor's Note: This is an introduction to The Daily Texan's new Diversity and Inclusion Board and our Raising Voices initiatives, which seek to improve representation in our stories and in our newsroom. While this is a newsroom-wide initiative, it is led by three experienced journalists and staffers of color. Learn more about their experiences and goals below.

Maria Mendez, projects reporter

"Since joining The Daily Texan almost two years ago, I've had quite a few friends ask, "How do you stand to work there? It's so white." Hearing those words feels like a jab, but they're not wrong.

When I first became a senior reporter for the news department, I was the only Latina and immigrant on the senior staff. It didn't dawn on me until I became the go-to resource for news on undocumented DACA students. That's when I realized why my friends criticized the Texan so much. How could they connect to our news coverage if most of our staffers had little to no knowledge of the experiences undocumented and minority students face?

Since that realization, I have worked with the rest of the newsroom to make sure people like my friends can also see themselves reflected in our coverage. The result has been collaborative series — sharing the stories of DACA recipients, UT's black community and, most recently, first-generation college students — that give minority writers and sources a platform.

But these strides have taken a lot of time and effort, and they shouldn't disappear when I eventually leave the Texan or until another minority student gets frustrated enough to seek change. Raising the voices of those who are unheard should always be a priority, especially in a

college newsroom, where the next set of journalists and world leaders are being trained and informed."

Lisa Nhan, projects reporter

"Being the daughter of refugees is at the center of everything I am, from what I eat to my core values. And as odd as it may sound, it's what led to me The Daily Texan.

I am always thinking about how my life is the product of countless sacrifices of so many and how to honor their efforts. As Maya Angelou, paraphrasing from James Baldwin, said, "Our crown has already been bought and paid for. All we have to do is wear it." My response has always been storytelling — to use the voice I was given to uplift those who aren't as lucky or privileged. That's why I pursued journalism, that's why I joined the paper, that's why I stay here semester after semester.

We owe this campus, and the voices who encompass it, a paper where they can see themselves inside of our pages. We also owe it to our staff to create a space where our voices aren't silenced or misunderstood, as I and many others have felt. Until we achieve these goals, we are failing to uphold the values journalism is rooted in: accountability, empathy and fairness.

Before we share marginalized voices, we need to listen to them. We owe it to our campus community and very own staff members to start listening — actively, consistently and with the intent to do better."

Tiana Woodard, Life&Arts editor

"The first time I walked into The Daily Texan, I stumbled upon an editors' meeting. Variations in hairstyle, variations in dress, variations in laptop stickers — variations of every kind welcomed my eyes except that of race. This encounter soured my first impression of the

newspaper I had wanted to write for since stepping foot on the Forty Acres. With mainly white males at the top of the newspaper, I feared that there'd be no space for me to grow.

Even as a department head, there are still times in which I feel isolated or misunderstood by the rest of those at our newspaper. As a journalist of color at the Texan, I always hear conversations about how we need to hire a more diverse staff, but there's never much weight behind these words.

Speaking with the many Texan minority alumni for my story confirmed the reason that I've stayed at The Daily Texan for these four, long, testing semesters; I can't expect change without being a part of the change. And by being a part of the newspaper's new Diversity and Inclusion Board, I firmly believe that I'll be fulfilling my mission as a journalist: educating the people with an encompassing, diverse narrative of our world.

Journalism cannot exist without diversity, and we are doing a great injustice to our readers by not doing enough to change this. As a student paper, we need to be just that — a paper that represents each and every person at The University of Texas at Austin."

What we're doing to change the newsroom: As three minority members of The Daily Texan, we're coming together in a new Diversity and Inclusion Board to tackle the lack of representation and microaggressions we have all faced. As an extension of the Texan's management, we are working to make the newsroom more diverse and inclusive for everyone, but especially for students of underrepresented backgrounds of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality and religion. Increasing workforce diversity is a difficult and often abstract task, so we want to actually outline our goals:

Foster a diverse and inclusive newsroom

- Diversifying our newsroom will require reaching out to people who may not even know we exist and giving them the opportunity to work for us. We have to go to students as opposed to expecting them to come to us. To do this, we have been presenting to various non-journalism classes that focus on social issues during our recruitment and try-out process.

- To retain a diverse staff, we must also ensure our newsroom is truly inclusive and supportive of staffers. We also hope to serve as advocates and mediators for staffers, especially when they may be too uncomfortable to speak up about conflicts. But, in hoping to prevent conflicts, we held a leadership training with our department heads this semester to help them also create positive working relationships with their staff. We plan to hold more professional development workshops for all of our staff to have the skills they need to grow.

Create campus relationships

- Just like we can't expect students to just join our newsroom, we can't expect the campus community to just read us. We also have to be intentional in reaching out to our community to improve our newsroom and coverage of campus issues. To accomplish this, we want to be more transparent about our newsroom diversity and how we report and produce our content. Working with the UT chapters National Association of Hispanic Journalists, the National Association of Black Journalists and the Asian American Journalists Association helped us tell forgotten or untold stories in our paper. So, we hope to build or improve our relationships with other student organizations and University departments which we may have overlooked or misrepresented in the past. We want to make sure we're engaging with all parts of the community, including minorities on campus, UT faculty, staff and graduate students.

Develop a long-term strategic vision

- As a student publication, we have a quick turnaround with our staffers graduating or leaving for internships or jobs and our management changing almost every semester. But this still shouldn't hinder our efforts to better represent our campus. Our biggest goal this semester is to develop a long-term vision for our newsroom, which will be well researched with input from a bigger diversity committee of minority Texan staffers and informed by the successful approaches other newsrooms are taking. We will present this vision to the Texas Student Media Board, which oversees all campus media, and to the University community to ensure diversity remains a priority for future Daily Texan leaders.

Create productive conversations

- The point of all these efforts is to better cover the UT community, so we want to hear from you. Tell us what we're doing right and wrong. Tell us what you think about our efforts and our coverage of UT. Email us at diversityinclusion@dailytexanonline.com. If you want to continue discussing issues of diversity — in and outside of our newsroom — join our Raising Voices Facebook group.

Texas Cowboys deny hazing allegations, expel members

Published January 31, 2019

By Lisa Nhan

The Texas Cowboys released a statement Wednesday night in response to hazing allegations surrounding the events leading up to Nicky Cumberland's death, saying no hazing or alcohol was related to the fatal car crash. The Cumberland family issued a response to *The Daily Texan* early Thursday morning.

Cumberland died last fall after sustaining fatal injuries in a car crash on the way back from the Cowboys' annual initiation retreat, in the early morning of Sept. 30. The crash occurred at 5:43 a.m. when police said the driver fell asleep at the wheel.

"Immediately following the accident that claimed Nicky's life, our judiciary board launched a third-party investigation," William Furst, foreman of Texas Cowboys, said in the statement. "No alcohol or any form of hazing contributed in any way to the accident. At the retreat, no member was forced to stay up, nor were they intentionally deprived of sleep."

The Cowboys said in the statement that members were allowed to sleep, however many Cowboys made the choice to stay up late to bond with one another. Before the group left that morning, Cowboys leadership checked the driver to ensure he "had not consumed alcohol and (was) alert," the statement said.

"Unfortunately, the leadership did not check to ensure that all passengers of those vehicles were wearing seatbelts," the Cowboys said. "The fateful decision of these members to not wear seatbelts that morning haunts us as an organization."

Cumberland, along with three of the five other passengers, were not wearing seatbelts at the time of the crash, according to the crash report. During the vehicle's rollover, Cumberland was ejected.

The Cumberland family said the Cowboys' statement contained half-truths, was missing key information and created "an illusion of accountability." The Cumberlands went on to emphasize the role of sleep deprivation in the accident, calling the Cowboys' comments on the matter "subterfuge."

"Nicky's death was caused because the driver fell asleep," their statement said. "The driver fell asleep because he was sleep deprived; he was exhausted and did not have enough sleep to embark upon a long drive. The Cowboys campfire went beyond 3 am, and he was permitted to drive around 4am without sufficient sleep."

The Cumberlands also commented on the Cowboys' "third party investigation."

"Within one day of the fatal accident that took Nicky's life, their lawyers were on the mission to protect the organization," the Cumberland's statement said. "Our family remained in the dark of any legal actions taken by The Cowboys after the accident. We were never contacted by anybody conducting their internal "judiciary" actions to ask what evidence we might possess."

Following their son's death, the Cumberland family requested an investigation into allegations of hazing at the retreat, including sleep deprivation and alcohol, physical and animal abuse. The Cumberland family said they were told by Cowboys who attended the retreat that hazing occurred before the crash. University and University Texas Police Department investigations are still ongoing.

While the Cowboys denied that hazing was connected to the accident, the statement said "there were some activities perpetuated by a few individuals (at the retreat) that did not reflect the organization which we strive to be." According to the statement, the individuals involved have been suspended or expelled from the Cowboys.

Furst, who was recently selected as Foreman, said the Cowboys condemn the actions of these individuals, saying they did not align with Cowboy standards.

“As foreman of the Texas Cowboys, I can confidently say that we are all ashamed of the way that some of our members acted on the night of our fall retreat,” the Cowboys’ statement said.

However, the Cumberland family said suspending or expelling a few members is not a sufficient attempt at reform.

“Throwing a few of the young men under the bus by dismissing them from the Cowboys creates the deceptive optical illusion that the abhorrent actions were atypical and did not occur in prior years, and that the remainder of the organization did not stand by and acquiesce or turn a blind eye,” the Cumberland’s statement said.

The Cowboys’ statement said the accident has “changed (the Cowboys) as individuals and as an organization” and they hope to “salvage some good from this horrific tragedy.”

Some members who were directly involved in the crash are now in leadership roles with the Cowboys. The organization also plans to “enact a campus-wide campaign in order to educate students on the importance of wearing seatbelts and practicing safe driving” and “take an active role as leaders on campus to abolish hazing.”

In the Cowboys’ statement, Furst said the Cowboys “agreed not to adopt a ‘code of silence’” upon learning of their judiciary board’s investigation.

“Our members have been upfront and truthful about the events that occurred that night throughout both the third-party investigation, as well as The University’s investigation,” the Cowboys’ statement said.

However, the Cumberland family said the Cowboys did not properly honor state and UT policy on hazing.

“Not one person came forward to report the prohibited and unlawful activities that occurred to the UT Administration,” the Cumberland’s statement said. “It wasn’t until we requested an

investigation that anyone spoke to authorities. That's a major part of the Code of Silence. Honoring the prohibition on the Code of Silence doesn't simply mean to speak once caught."

"The truth is that without the senseless death of my amazing son none of this would have come to light," the Cumberland's statement said. "The sad truth is that if Nicky had not been killed most likely the same kinds of unacceptable hazing behavior would continue with the new crop of young men each year."

The Cowboys' statement expresses their "goal to act as role models within our community" and how this "aspiration matters now more than ever."

However, the Cumberland family responded by saying the Cowboys' response "does not honor Nicky's legacy."

"The whitewash response by the Cowboys illustrates why The Cowboys currently cannot be trusted to provide the uncomfortable unvarnished truth and do not deserve to represent The University in its current form or to continue to use The University's property," the Cumberland's statement said. "The response highlights the precise reasons behind some of the reforms we have demanded."

The Cowboys said this has been "a devastating year" which has "forever mark(ed) our time at The University."

"While it pales in comparison to the pain his family continues to experience, our organization is still reeling with the loss of our friend and brother, Nicky Cumberland," the Cowboys' statement said. "This has been an experience which no student, parent, or friend should ever have to endure."

UT Austin suspends Texas Cowboys for six years for hazing

Published March 27, 2019

By Lisa Nhan

The University has suspended the Texas Cowboys for six years, following a hazing investigation into their fall initiation retreat.

The investigation found evidence of hazing during the fall of 2018 and as far back as fall 2015. New members of Cowboys were subjected to multiple forms of hazing at the September 2018 retreat, including physical brutality, animal cruelty, forced ingestion of unwanted substances and coerced consumption of alcohol, according to the report.

The sanction will be finalized once the Cowboys decide whether to accept the sanction, appeal it or request a formal hearing. During the suspension, the Cowboys, a spirit organization known for firing “Smokey the Cannon,” will be removed from all game day operations and will no longer act as University ambassadors. The last time the Cowboys were suspended from campus in 1995, the Texas Silver Spurs took care of Smokey, according to Texas Monthly.

The report found that during the 2018 retreat, one new member was coerced into biting the head off a live hamster, a practice which occurred also in 2015 and 2017. Other members were required to ingest unwanted substances such as cat food and whole onions and were forced into the cannon’s trailer.

The Cowboys and their alumni group did not respond to requests for comment.

The investigation was requested by the Cumberland family after their son Nicky suffered fatal injuries in a car crash on the way back from the retreat in September 2018. The crash, which occurred at 5:43 a.m., resulted from the driver falling asleep at the wheel. The hazing

investigation found a lack of evidence to support claims that sleep deprivation was used as a hazing tactic.

The Cumberlands first became aware of hazing at the retreat after speaking to Cowboys who attended. They found severe bruising on Nicky's buttocks four weeks after the crash while he was on life support, and also found a shopping list on his phone that listed abundant amounts of alcohol that new Cowboys were required to bring to the retreat.

Underage drinking is a "major facet of the organization's culture," the report said. Members at the retreat told the University they were forced or coerced to consume alcohol, and at the time of the retreat, 14 of the 25 new members were underage.

In 1995, the Texas Cowboys were banned for five years after the death of then-pledge Gabe Higgins. After being hazed at that year's initiation retreat, Higgins was found dead in the Colorado River near Bastrop with a blood alcohol content twice the legal limit for driving. Following their return to campus in 2000, the Texas Cowboys made a pledge to ban hazing from the organization.

However, the report said that while the Cowboys made attempts at reform, there is still a "disturbing, long-standing pattern of behavior" where "hazing within the Texas Cowboys has not only persisted, but continues to escalate."

"The facts of the 1995 and current case are so similar it is clear that the Texas Cowboys are adept at passing on traditions, but not lessons," the report said.

The recommended sanctions include probation for two years after reinstatement, permanent prohibition of live animals at events and the required use of chartered buses for all off-campus events.

The report said this continued behavior calls for more severe sanctions.

“Two families have lost their sons and The University of Texas at Austin community has lost two of its students because the Texas Cowboys continue to perpetuate unlawful and irresponsible behavior time and time again,” the report said.

Other sanctions required for the Cowboys’ return to campus include showing all members a yearly presentation about the deaths of Nicky and Higgins and requiring all new members to read “The Cowboys’ Secret,” a book written by Higgins’ mother about her son’s death.

Allie Cumberland, Nicky’s sister, said the family was satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, but they are especially pleased the University listened to their recommendation of making “The Cowboys’ Secret” required reading. “She worked so hard on that book for so many years and was so devastated when she heard about Nicky,” Cumberland said. “Reading that book should be required for the Cowboys, but I would recommend it to any student organization or student leader because it is so powerful.”

University President Gregory Fenves said in an official statement that he and the rest of campus continues to mourn over Nicky’s death.

“Let me make clear — there is no place for hazing at The University of Texas. The mission of this university — to educate, learn, discover and serve — can only be accomplished in an environment where we respect each other. Where we look after our neighbors, peers and friends,” Fenves said.