TENAS STUDENT MEDIA APPLICATION FORM
MANAGING EDITOR OF THE DAILY TEXAN

select which terms of office
☑ June 1, 2019 - August 15, 2019
☐ August 16, 2019 - December 31, 2019

you are willing to serve:

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

Ross Burkhardt
Name

rh6835
UT EID

RossH.Burkhardt@gmail.com
Email Address

Journalism
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.

Signature of Applicant

Date

4/22/19
Supporting signatures from at least five staff members of The Daily Texan:

Keshav Prathivadi - Associate Sports Editor Spring '19

Lauren McEvoy - Associate Managing Editor

Claire Albright - News Editor

Liza Anderson - EIC 2018-19

Kristen Handler - Copy Desk Chief

Catherine Mejia - Associate Managing Editor

John Lindsey - A.D. Editor

Forrest Milburn - Managing Editor

Katie Bauer - Photo Editor

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

Sports Editor - Fall 2018 - Spring 2019

Associate Sports Editor - Summer 2018

Sports issue staff - Spring 2018

News general reporter - Fall 2017

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)
Ross Burkhart

Contact Me
RossHBurkhart@gmail.com
(817) 983-9444
LinkedIn.com/in/RossBurkhart

Education
The University of Texas at Austin
Moody College of Communication, Bachelor of Journalism
May 2020

Tarrant County College
Fall 2016 – Spring 2017

Work Experience
The Daily Texan
Sports Editor
August 2018 – Present
- Read, edit and assign each story that runs through the sports department
- Manage and oversee a staff of 21 writers and reporters
- Create and schedule social media posts to generate reader engagement

Texas Longhorns Football Beat Writer
August 2018 – Present
- Write four to five stories each week, including player features, game recaps and news briefs

Associate Sports Editor
May 2018 – August 2018
- Duties included reporting on men’s basketball, baseball and swimming & diving in addition to frequently editing others’ stories
- Created digital content, including podcasts and videos, to distribute sports-related stories

General News Reporter
September 2017 – May 2018
- Functioned as an entry-level writer in both the sports and news departments

Achievements
Hearst Journalism Awards Program
Sports Writing - 8th place

Skills
Adobe Premiere Pro
Adobe InCopy
Adobe Lightroom
TweetDeck
French (basic knowledge)

Interests
Playing guitar
Visiting national parks
Hiking
Photography

Involvement
Associated Press Sports Editors
Chapter Member
October 2018 – Present
- Meet with other sports journalists to discuss writing techniques, professional content and trends in sports media

Charleston Gazette-Mail
Freelancer
January 2019
- Covered the West Virginia Mountaineers men’s basketball team and wrote for print and online publication

Campus Environmental Center
Organization Member
September 2017 – December 2017
- Participated in team projects as part of the Athletics Sustainability Squad, helping clear trash after events
To the Texas Student Media Board of Operating Trustees,

My name is Ross Burkhart, and I am applying for the managing editor position at The Daily Texan this summer. I am currently finishing up my junior year in the UT Journalism school, and I am expecting to graduate during in May 2020. I have completed four long semesters at the Texan, in addition to last summer’s publishing period. This fall, I will be traveling to New York City for an internship with Sports Illustrated.

My first moments at The Daily Texan began just days after walking onto campus. As a general reporter, I felt that I could bring the greatest impact to a community in the news department. I quickly discovered that for me, that wasn’t true, and it wasn’t what I was supposed to be doing. The following semester, I moved over to the sports department with a rejuvenated spirit and a newfound passion for pursuing journalism at the Texan — a newspaper which very few other college papers can mimic.

Last summer, I made the jump from a sports issue staffer to the associate sports editor, where I quickly became involved with the sports department’s print content, social media usage and weekly podcast episodes. Months later, I joined one of my best friends, Alex Briseño, as a co-sports editor, in addition to covering the Texas Longhorns football beat and serving as an editor of Double Coverage, the Texan’s weekly insert during football season.

The challenges throughout the fall were rigorous. And yet, I never once felt like I was spending a day at the office.

This spring semester, I retained my position as sports editor. In addition to managing our department’s staff of 21 writers and reporters, I read and edit each story that goes onto our print page and the website. I interact with my staff members on a daily basis and frequently do hands-on editing sessions with each of them, which was a change I set out to make at the beginning of the semester.

My time at the Texan has been more than I could ever ask for in a college experience. I’ve made lifelong friends and numerous connections. Most importantly, though, my journalism career began much quicker than I ever could have imagined at a college newspaper. As I hope to take on this new role, I hope to instill that message to other members of the Texan. Having a spot at UT Austin gives you the opportunity to succeed, but finding a seat in the basement is the first step toward a lifelong career in journalism.

**Implement Texan-wide Diversity Training**
Our current managing editor, Forrest Milburn, has done an excellent job in making our newsroom increasingly aware of the importance in having a diverse staff that accurately represents our community at UT Austin.

In fact, many of Forrest’s ideas don’t need altering at all, only measures to help push these ideas forward. I view focusing on diversity as one of the most important ones. In addition to being aware of who we’re hiring, we’ve also had an added emphasis on interviewing diverse sources in our everyday news coverage.

One area in which I’d like to build upon our recent success is to implement diversity training for the entire newsroom. This semester, we held a small training session with the diversity board in January, but only the department heads were in attendance. To start this summer session, and through future semesters, our diversity training should take place before the hiring process. This session should be mandatory, and be held professionally, similarly to the standard that we hold our orientation sessions.

I know that if we bring a clear and concise training session to the newsroom as a whole, it can only do great things for our coverage as we continue to improve those practices already set in place.

**Revamping The Daily Texan’s Webpage**

Since I’ve arrived at The Daily Texan, I have had multiple managing editors talk about enhancing our presentation, and that starts with making changes to our website. The problem is, this goal hasn’t panned out in previous semesters.

Simply put, The Daily Texan is a college newsroom operating at the forefront of innovation, from creating thorough digital engagement strategies to appointing our own diversity board, but we’re presenting our content on a website that looks like it hasn’t been updated in a decade. I even had one of my professors this semester ask me when we were going to see a digital makeover. Readers notice these things, and it’s time to finally make it a priority.

The measures of carrying out this objective are still unclear to me, but I’d like to see if we can find help from web developers within TSM or the University to help move forward with some changes. If we don’t have the means necessary within our own organization, hopefully we could put forward some funds from our semesterly budget to update the website.
Every semester, we have taken leaps forward in terms of attracting readers and finding the best ways to stand out among the country’s best college news organizations. Shouldn’t we have the digital appearance to match?

**Uphold Measures of Increasing Audience Engagement**

Despite all of Forrest’s most impressive skills, perhaps the one that stands out above others is how well he engages with an audience, and that particularly stands out in our newsroom.

The Texan has implemented so many successful ideas in terms of engagement over the previous two semesters. Forrest, along with Ellie Breed, have both done an amazing job by starting our Facebook groups, like Hooked and Lege: In Session, so that our readers have every opportunity to discuss important issues on campus and in Austin.

On top of that, our launch of Curious Campus last semester has had major successes, and now you’re seeing professional newsrooms across the country use the same tactics we have been. If The Daily Texan is to continue trending upward like it has been for the past few years, we should continue to evolve, and the best place to start is with our engagement team.

This summer, I’d like to sit down with our engagement team more closely and see what ideas they have to stay one step ahead of other newsrooms. Our best ideas aren’t going to come solely from me, but from members all around the Texan and I’m excited to have open conversations about how to better improve as an organization.

As a managing editor this summer with a shortened semester, I acknowledge I won’t have as much time to implement as many ideas as I would like to, but I am confident we can implement each of the ideas presented.

I have had so much success during my time in the basement, but to culminate my experience here as a managing editor would be an excellent way to close out my time at The Daily Texan.

Thank you all for allowing me to lay out my plans for this summer, and discuss my aspirations for this position. If there are any questions about my application, I’d be more than happy to assist.

Ross Burkhart  
Sports Editor, The Daily Texan  
Journalism - Moody College of Communication  
The University of Texas at Austin - Spring 2020
April 24, 2019

To the TSM Board of Operating Trustees:

Thank you for the opportunity to give my unequivocal recommendation of Ross Burkhart for the position of managing editor of The Daily Texan for the summer semester.

Ross, in my view, is the ideal candidate for a role that requires ambition, imagination, patience and skill in navigating interpersonal relationships. In my seven years on the faculty here, I’ve met few students who excel in all of those categories. Ross does. He’s an individual of exceptional discipline, energy, levity, maturity, poise and promise. He strikes me as a natural leader. His peers respect him. (I have seen this, in the Texan newsroom and in the School of Journalism classroom.) He’s careful, compassionate, ethical and organized, all of which are qualities I’ve admired in the best managing editors for whom I’ve worked at the daily newspapers in Austin, Memphis and St. Louis. There are two kinds of leaders in our industry: those who lead by fear and those who lead by inspiration and example. I place Ross firmly in the latter category. He’s simply the kind of person who brings out the best in others because they want to do well by and for him.

I’ve seen that in my own classroom. Ross is enrolled (and doing quite well, expectedly) in a course I teach called Narrative Journalism. He’s always enthusiastic, prepared and willing to offer perspectives and insights. Moreover, his work sets a high standard among his peers. I know I can count on him to submit smart, informed assignments that I can use to teach other students who might need extra encouragement or help with their skills. I pay close attention to how his peers respond to his contributions, and it’s clear to me that they listen and learn from him.

The managing editor helps to set the tone of a newsroom. I’ve been impressed with that tone in the Texan for many years. I think Ross would continue to elevate the newspaper.

I’ve met and worked with a lot of students as a full-time instructor at Texas, as well in my former experience as an adjunct at Austin Community College and St. Edward’s University and two years as a teaching assistant at the Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University. Ross is one of the best students I’ve had the pleasure to teach. I like to think I’ve developed a sense for what kind of student is destined to do great things in journalism. Ross is that kind of student.

I hope you’ll give him your highest consideration for this important position. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kevin Robbins, associate professor of practice
To the Texas Student Media Board,

I am writing this letter to strongly support Ross Burkhart as managing editor for the summer of 2019. I’ve worked closely with Ross for the past year, and I can say that he is one of the most hardworking and dedicated members on the Texan staff. Ross is fully capable of leading the paper as managing editor this summer, and I have no doubt that he will do well in the management office if he were selected.

I first met Ross in the fall of 2017 when he was hired as a general reporter in the news department. As associate news editor that semester, I oversaw his weekly pitch meetings and approved his story ideas. He was a strong reporter then, but as I began to work more closely with Ross last fall, his editing abilities and leadership skills really began to shine.

Last fall he took on two positions in his department — sports co-editor and football beat reporter. As an associate managing editor that semester, I saw firsthand Ross’ dedication to not only meeting the expectations of both positions, but exceeding them. As a football beat reporter, Ross dedicated countless hours to covering games and other stories on the beat. He understood that the job was challenging for all staffers involved in producing football stories, and he was always professional and respectful when communicating with copy editors, management, photographers, and other staff members he interacted with when getting his stories ready to publish.

As sports editor, Ross oversaw the sports department’s other writers and planned the content and layout of the sports page each day. On top of those intense responsibilities, he also handled Double Coverage publication each week, one of the most demanding and challenging parts of fall production. It was an immensely challenging semester which Ross consistently met with confidence and level-headedness. I’m sure he will meet the challenges of a management position with the same level of dedication and professionalism.

Ross has continued to excel as sports editor this semester. He is highly respected by not only the reporters he oversees, but everyone in the Texan office. His commitment both to the Texan and his duties as sports editor are clear to everyone on staff. Even on his days off, Ross stops by the office to give reporting advice to sports writers, oversee the production of his page and ensure his department continues to produce high-quality content.

Above all, Ross is a reliable editor — he communicates his department’s schedule with editors early and often, he is always prepared for weekly meetings, and he cares for his staff on a personal and professional level. I’m confident these are skills he will carry with him and will serve him well in a position in the management office this summer. I am lucky to have worked with Ross for the past year, and I strongly support his application for managing editor.

Sincerely,

Catherine Marfin
Associate Managing Editor, Fall 2018 - Spring 2019
Tradition of number 60 lives on at Texas
Countless Texas football players have stepped onto the field since the program was established over a century ago. But only a select few have been given the opportunity to wear a burnt orange jersey with the number 60 sewn in.

From Bobby Goodwin in the late 1950s, Tommy Nobis and Johnny Treadwell during the ‘60s and Britt Hager in the late ‘80s, the number is one that has carried on a legacy of its own at Texas.

“I put my blood, sweat and tears into it, and they were proud the number gets to live on,” Britt said. “It’s cool to have something retired, but it’s another thing to have something that’s living. Every time it got passed down — the same thing happened with Johnny — he said, ‘Look, to keep this thing going, you’ve got to live up to the number.’”

Britt’s time with the Longhorns was largely defined by a number of stellar performances and record-setting seasons, but Texas’ team success never quite matched his level of play.

When Breckyn Hager brought the jersey number out of retirement for this year’s game against Oklahoma, he was faced with the opportunity to do something his father’s Longhorn squad never accomplished — win a game against OU.

“One of our mottos is ‘Going all in,’ and I told Coach Herman how I felt about wearing this number and how I needed to sanctify my father’s legacy and the legacy of number 60,” Breckyn said after the win.

During the third quarter, with Texas leading by one score, Oklahoma quarterback Kyler Murray struggled to find space in the pocket after receiving a snap out of the shotgun. As Murray fell to the ground, Breckyn capitalized on a fumble and emerged from a scrum of players, holding the football high above his head with two hands.

Among the 92,300 fans in attendance at the Cotton Bowl that day was Lynn Nobis, the wife of the late Texas great, Tommy Nobis.

“It was so nice to see number 60 on the field playing for Texas again,” Lynn said. “That was certainly exciting for us and I’ll tell you, this Oklahoma game that we just had, I think I shed more tears through that whole game … I was so excited. Especially when Breckyn recovered that fumble, I was so proud of him.”

Tommy Nobis, who’s often regarded as one of the best Longhorn athletes of all time, contributed to the program’s first national championship in 1963. He gained All-American status twice in his career at Texas and was a three-time All-Southwest Conference member as well.

As a result of his immense stature at the University, longtime Texas coach Mack Brown retired Tommy’s number in 2008.
It wasn’t until Lynn gave Breckyn her blessing to wear her husband’s number during last year’s Texas Bowl and again in the win over Oklahoma that a Texas player wore the number again.

“That was for Lynn Nobis and Tommy Nobis and basically all the football angels out there who blessed me,” Breckyn said. “It was also for my father who never won at the Cotton Bowl in number 60.”

Across decades, many athletes who have worn the number for Texas have cemented a tradition unlike many others at the University of Texas — one that many fans won’t soon forget.

“I think today in the world we live in with news cycles going every 24 hours, people move on,” Britt said. “It’s good to take a breath, to see something like 60. And I think real fans really like it because they can say ‘We do have a tradition at Texas. We do have a tradition of excellence.’ The number 60 is that.”
Texas takes Sugar Bowl on Ehlinger’s shoulders
NEW ORLEANS — If there’s one trap Texas players and coaches have avoided falling into, it’s using the B-word.

But as orange and white confetti fell from the rafters and quarterback Sam Ehlinger stood on stage accepting his 2019 Sugar Bowl Most Outstanding Player trophy, he couldn’t help but utter the famous phrase to Longhorn fans around the country.

“Longhorn nation, we’re baaaaack!”

Nobody exactly knows what the phrase means. But the widespread eruption of cheers from his teammates, many of whom were making confetti angels on the turf 20 feet away, signaled Texas had finally found a foothold on its climb toward once again being one of college football’s elite programs.

“When he said that, I was like, ‘Keep saying it,’” defensive end Charles Omenihu said. “That's the confidence this man exudes to the offense and to the whole team, and I've commended him so many times. And I'll commend him again for just being the guy he is and the way he is because it's really been transcending and inspiring to everybody on this whole team and the whole University.”

Ehlinger, who tied a Sugar Bowl record for rushing touchdowns by a quarterback (3), was the unquestioned leader Tuesday night in New Orleans as the Longhorns took down No. 5 Georgia, 28-21. For the full 60 minutes of action, the game appeared to be Texas’ to lose as it controlled the tempo completely and asserted dominance in nearly every aspect despite the Bulldogs entering as two-score favorites.

The culmination of Texas’ first 10-win season in nearly a decade began in the opening minutes as Ehlinger led his unit down the field in a tone-setting, 75-yard drive that quickly displayed the Longhorns’ readiness.

Georgia responded in contrasting fashion by tallying just eight total yards and one first down through the first quarter. It wasn’t until the Bulldogs fell behind 17 points at the beginning of the second that they scored their first points on a touchdown toss from Georgia quarterback Jake Fromm to Brian Herrien, giving fans a chance to exhale for the first time since kickoff.

Todd Orlando’s defense never faltered, though, holding Georgia scoreless for almost the next 30 minutes of play.

Then, it was Ehlinger who had the ball in his hands — four times, to be exact — during the defining moment of the game.
Ehlinger’s number was called three times on the one-yard line in hopes of pushing through the line of scrimmage for a touchdown. He was held up short of the goal line on all three runs.

Head coach Tom Herman’s trust in Ehlinger didn’t diminish, even after being stuffed on the same play three times in a row. Ehlinger took another snap on fourth down, this time successfully squeezing through the wall of blockers for the score, giving Texas a 28-7 fourth-quarter lead which proved to be too much for Georgia to overcome late in the contest.

“I think that mindset and the physicality and the ‘whatever it takes’ and the 4th and inches is the mindset that our offense needs to have, our team needs to have every single play,” Ehlinger said.

After the game, Herman was asked by a reporter if his heart dropped when Ehlinger claimed Texas was back. Before the question was finished, Herman interjected with a quick, “Yes!” Still, Herman couldn’t hold back a smile at the thought of his quarterback’s confidence in the program moving forward.

Ehlinger wasn’t the only one under the impression this year’s Longhorn team was primed for a successful run. Many seniors like Omenihu, who previously lacked much of anything to show for their run at Texas, decided changing the trajectory of the program was a mission that couldn’t wait another season.

“I knew in the offseason … that this team was going to be an amazing squad,” Omenihu said. “And that was a personal dream of mine to play on a stage like this and to win a game. This was a huge part of why I decided to come back to school. That's the best decision I've ever made in my 21 years of living, for real.”

Looking ahead, Texas once again faces the loss of a number of key players to April’s NFL Draft. But with a future Heisman candidate at quarterback and a ninth-ranked recruiting class on the way, the Longhorns have shown there’s reason to believe they haven’t hit their ceiling yet. Herman will be the first to argue just that.

“(This win) just means we're headed in the right direction,” Herman said. “We lost in Dallas a month ago, and it left a really bad taste in our mouth. So the good thing is there's still a lot for this program to achieve, mainly winning our conference title.”

Herman continued, “But to beat such a quality opponent like that the way that we did it and to do it on this kind of stage in the Sugar Bowl certainly leads me to believe that we're headed in the right direction.”
Congratulations on a 10 win season and beating #5 Georgia in the Sugar Bowl.

Top priority for Herman for 2019 needs to be getting the team to show up in the 4th quarter. They finished horribly in almost every game in 2018. Easily fixed. Inexcusable.
With Cambodia calling, Jordan Windle doesn't shy away
At Texas, freshman diver Jordan Windle is seen as one of the best collegiate athletes in the country. But nearly halfway across the world, Windle is seen as a beacon of hope for many Cambodian orphans.

That’s because he used to be one himself.

Windle was less than six months old when he was found outside an orphanage in Cambodia after the death of his birth parents.

Windle’s adoptive father, Jerry, discovered a magazine for an adoption placement service while waiting in a doctor’s office one day in Florida. A month and a half later, Jerry received the news that would change his and Jordan’s lives forever.

“They said that they wanted him to be my son, and they thought that he would be the perfect match with me based on my home study and my personality,” Jerry said. “I saw his picture, and I immediately fell in love with him.”

It wasn’t until age 7 that Jordan began taking to the diving board. Jerry enrolled him at an aquatics camp for the summer, and the coaches quickly noticed Jordan’s potential.

“One day, randomly, the head coach of the club team told my dad to get me to join the team,” Jordan said. “So I tried it, and two weeks later, ended up getting on the team. My diving career started from there.”

One of Jordan’s coaches, Evan Linette, foresaw how bright Jordan’s future could be after his ability on the diving board rapidly improved.

“I just remember looking at his dad and saying, ‘Jerry, I can’t wait until he’s 15,’ and at the time he was just maybe 10,” Linette said. “I said, ‘Just watch because it’s just going to blow up.’”

Since then, things have definitely blown up for the Longhorn standout diver. Throughout his career, Jordan has received numerous awards, most recently at the Big 12 Championships last week in Austin where he set an NCAA platform diving record in just his first year on campus.

Having already achieved so much in his collegiate career in such a short amount of time, Jordan said coming to Texas has made him a better person and enhanced his athletic career.
“Being able to branch out, grow up to be a man and being around all these amazing athletes has definitely made me probably a better athlete as well,” Jordan said. “They’re pushing me. I’m hopefully pushing them as well.”

Jordan is an athlete forged between two nations. As a competitor for the Longhorns, he represents the United States while simultaneously carrying his Cambodian heritage — something he’s never stopped embracing.

At age 16, Jordan took his first trip back to Cambodia since being adopted. In association with the Cambodian government, he was able to put on a diving exhibition for orphans in Phnom Penh. Prior to his performance, Jordan walked over toward the crowd and delivered a speech to the attending members.

“(Jordan) said something on the cuff that ‘I am one of you. I am a child of Cambodia. The only difference between you and me is that I was given opportunity,’” his father said. “He turned and looked at the government officials and said, ‘I hope that you will give the children of Cambodia all the opportunity that I was given.’”

Often times, a staple of being a Texas swimming and diving athlete is getting the Longhorn logo tattooed on their body. Jordan, however, had some different ink in mind, opting to get the Cambodian flag on his left bicep.

“If I’m ever on TV, when I do a dive and I’m holding my arms out, they’ll see that,” Jordan said, “and everybody in Cambodia will know I’m representing them too.”