

# Social work club marches at the Capitol

Del Mar group joins others from colleges across the state

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Noe Ruiz, a first-year Social Work Student Association member, was in for a long ride to Austin with high hopes and great intent. During his first visit with the Del Mar club to Student Day at the Legislature in Austin, Ruiz and six other students got to experience their passion for social justice with a community of students who are fighting for the same causes.

On March 26, the group joined universities from all over Texas to hear a panel of social work advocates, join in group activities and rally to the Capitol with signs to speak at a podium about issues we face as a society.

Systematic racism, poverty, gun reform, homeless veterans and immigration were among the topics discussed.

"It's just helping others, and making a difference. I got involved because I'm a veteran," Ruiz said as he marched to the Capitol. "This helps me out with all the problems that I've got; it's an escape. It helps me become more comfortable with myself."

The University of Texas at Austin hosts this event every other year in the Shirley Bird Perry Ballroom, but it was Del Mar's first time showing up. Del Mar was the only two-year college among bachelor-level universities such as Baylor University, Texas State University, UT and many others.

"The Capitol doesn't really 'know' what social workers do," said Will Francis, government relations director for the Texas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and one of the panel speakers of the event. He encouraged students to push change to their legislative officials on a local and state levels.

"In reality, you have the right to talk to anyone," Francis told the crowd.



Social Work Student Association members Maricela Huerta and Yvette Reyes hold up signs during the March 26 rally. This was the first year Del Mar was present in the Student Day at the Legislature in Austin.

The Del Mar team had been preparing for the event all month, including making signs and T-shirts that read, "Be the change you wish to see in the world," by Gandhi on the back.

After listening to the panel speakers and asking questions, students gathered outside to march to the Capitol where they and officials took turns giving three-minute speeches about select issues. The crowd was made up of Austin residents and hundreds of college students from around Texas.

The club not only sustained the Austin heat to attend this event, but had also been fundraising for months prior through multiple bake sales and a Valentine's Day raffle, according to Imani More, who has been with the club since last year.

"We got a feel of what really goes on for social work," Moore said. "We got to talk to the other kids at bachelor programs to know what to expect."



Olivia Lopez (left), adviser for the Social Work Student Association, is joined by her students as they cheer during roll call at the initial meeting at the University of Texas at Austin.

(Registration from Page 1)

From April 2-5, the Student Enrollment Center held Registration Rallies for students to meet with financial aid and the advising staff. Students were able to receive assistance with the registration process. The events included fun activities, snacks and door prizes. Students who provided proof of registration received a free Del Mar T-shirt.

"I'm registering for my classes early so I don't have to wait in line for the second summer session," said culinary arts major Melissa Villegas-Lopez, who was at the rally. "I also want to jump ahead in my classes, so I can knock out whatever I need for my degree."

If students do decide to register at the last minute, it's important to be mindful of all the deadlines.

"Deadlines for early on-campus and online registration for the fall semester is available until 6:30 p.m. July 11," liberal arts adviser Debbie Ann Salazar said.

For any questions about registration or admission, contact the Student Enrollment Center at 361-698-1290.

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damage plus receipts from hotels, roof repairs and food and living expenses.

"Some students wrote two pages of what their needs were ... talking about how they're sleeping on the couch and how their roof was still leaking, still holes on the ceiling, how they can't sleep in their bedrooms," McQueen said.

"You just got a good feel that the students who we helped truly did need it," she added. "I recall one young gentleman came in to pick up his check after we called and told him, and walked right into my office and gave me a big hug with tears in his eyes. It was very heartwarming."

Since we are now past the critical point of the hurricane, the remaining funds will be used specifically to help pay for and keep students in school.

"Helping these students just falls into what the Del Mar College Administration's mission is, removing the financial barrier. Our whole goal is to empower students to reach their academic goals," McQueen said.

If you or anyone you know has been affected by Harvey and is still struggling, visit the foundation's section at delmar.edu to apply for the Hurricane Harvey Assistance Fund. You must be enrolled for summer or fall classes to receive funds.



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