

# Texas Civic Impact Council

*2020 - 2021 Impact Report*





Website: [peacusa.org/tcic](https://peacusa.org/tcic)

Instagram: @peac.tcic

LinkedIn: Texas Civic Impact Council

FB: Texas Civic Impact Council

Written by Vaishnav Kuruvanka

Designed by Ruth Mewhinney

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# ***Message from the Council***

COVID-19 highlights the need for our society to band together and move towards a more equitable and loving future. As students, we believe that youth are an integral part of this equation and we at the Texas Civic Impact Council (TCIC) set out to prove that. Naturally, our vision for TCIC's inaugural year was to focus student energy on serving those severely affected by the pandemic and moving toward the future.

This report showcases who we served, how and why. Our work during 2020-2021 was an encouraging example of how effectively students could identify a problem and act on it. It is now clear to the council what our mission moving forward is: to ambitiously engage student talent in shaping Austin's future through driving progress on consequential civic issues.

TCIC is thankful for the support of our members and partners that made this first step possible. The direction of the council moving forward will change with social conditions, but our strong dedication to serving the Austin community will remain constant.

The 2020 - 2021 TCIC Council

# ***Mission***

Create a blueprint for UT students to actively involve in solving city-wide issues and shaping Austin's future

# ***Vision***

Embrace UT's diversity by connecting colleges on campus to create nuanced solutions at the intersection of the arts, sciences, and humanities



# Who we are

The Texas Civic Impact Council (TCIC) is a cross-college council at the University of Texas at Austin leading campus collaboration on community-impact projects. TCIC is a bridge for students to connect ideas with action in an effort to lead progress on city-wide issues.

TCIC is the Austin chapter of Promoting Education Across the Country (PEAC), a national non - profit supporting student social entrepreneurs in seven cities and 13 colleges/high-schools across the nation.

## Advisory Board Members

*Our board consists of interdisciplinary leaders on campus and in the city of Austin*



**Michael Hole**

Executive Director at the  
Impact Factory  
Faculty at LBJ and Dell Med



**Ashley Jennings**

Managing Director at the  
Texas Innovation Center



**Lesley Robinson**

Director at the Kendra Scott  
Women's Entrepreneurial  
Institute

— 2020 - 2021

# ***The Inaugural Council***



**Vaishnav Kuruvanka**  
Founder, Chair

---

McCombs School of Business  
Finance  
Junior



**Ruth Mewhinney**  
Vice Chair

---

College of Liberal Arts  
International Relations & Global Studies  
Urban Studies  
Junior



**Jonathan Villela**

---

College of Fine Arts  
Doctorate of Musical Arts in Wind Conducting



**Aidan Henderson**

---

Moody College of Communications  
Advertising  
Textiles and Consumer Sciences  
Senior





Mauricio Morales

---

McCombs School of Business  
Master of Science in Business Analytics



Kellen Cody

---

College of Liberal Arts  
Economics  
Senior

## **TCIC recruits 2 student representatives from 9 major colleges at UT Austin**

Cockrell School of Engineering

College of Fine Arts

College of Liberal Arts

College of Natural Sciences

Dell Medical School

LBJ School of Public Affairs

McCombs School of Business

Moody College of Communication

Steve Hicks School of Social Work

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# ***Impact of COVID-19***

As our knowledge of the coronavirus grew, it became clear the pandemic was here to stay. As a result, in person activities shifted online and technology became a necessary foundation for our daily lives. Unfortunately, millions of Americans were unable to participate in this virtual transition, and our nation's digital divide came into focus.

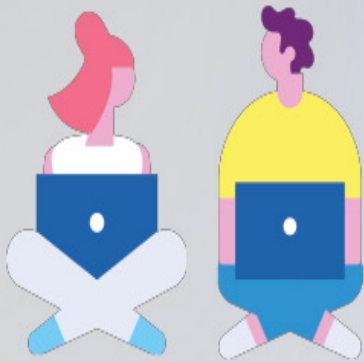
Our parents, family, neighbors and friends were among those affected. These Americans' livelihoods either required real-life interactions or they were unfamiliar with modern technologies like Zoom and the internet. Through conversations with the City of Austin, we became aware of small business owners falling in both of these camps. Their livelihoods were upended without any prior warning, leaving many feeling stranded without a clear path forward.

The council saw this problem unfold in front of our eyes as our favorite stores permanently closed their doors. As consumers shifted online, small businesses were forced to follow. The problem was many business owners did not know how to.

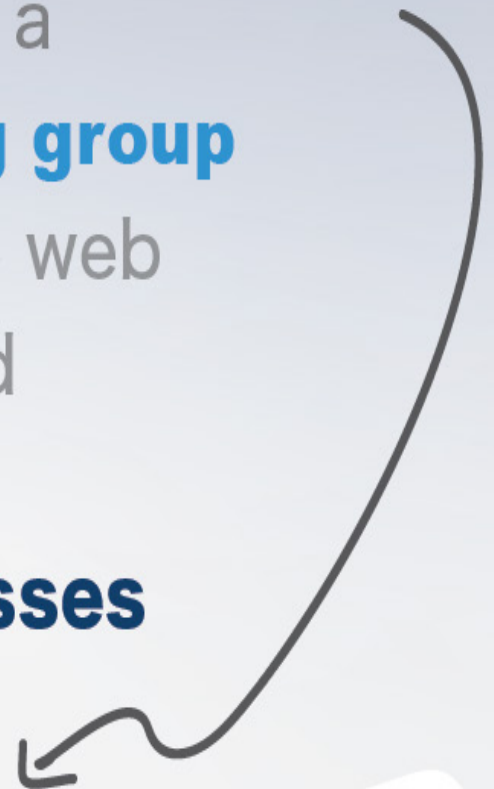
It became clear to the council that students were the solution. We grew up in the age of social media, online ads, and websites. These technologies were second nature to students. What if we used our skills to build an online presence for these business owners?



# Texas Civic Impact Council's Small Business Initiative



TCIC is launching a  
**student-led consulting group**  
that is providing free web  
development and  
tech services to  
**local small businesses**



**APPLY  
NOW**



Texas  
Civic  
Impact  
Council



# ***Small Business Initiative***

*How TCIC responded to small businesses during COVID*

To address small business owners' unfamiliarity with online platforms, the council formally launched our Small Business Initiative (SBI) in January of 2021. The SBI was a student-led consulting program connecting students with businesses to guide their digital transitions. Our solution paired students with local small businesses to build digital products and educate business owners about key technologies for an increasingly digital world. The SBI began pairing student consultants with businesses starting in February of 2021 to offer an array of tech and business development services.

Pairings were designed to last between four to six weeks during which students were developing projects from the ground up and exploring practical business applications for their skills.



On the flip side, business owners were interfacing with new technologies and learning from students simple, yet valuable skills that could turn their businesses around. The SBI intended to provide value for both parties, and it was delivering. As April rolled around, we started getting our first round of websites, social media posts, and online ads. We ran the program from April until August and focused on scaling and improving efficiency for our pairings.



# ***Program Goals***

- 1) Create tangible products that grow business's online presence and position them to benefit from an increasingly digital world.
- 2) Educate small business owners on how to leverage these technologies to create sustainable, long-lasting impact.

# ***Available Services***

- 1) Domain and website creation
- 2) Social media marketing
- 3) Online advertising
- 4) Advanced tech
- 5) Online payments
- 6) Graphic design
- 7) Photography

# ***SBI by the numbers***

**21**

student consultants

**15**

businesses

**4**

universities

**5**

UT colleges

**4**

cities in Texas

**23**

original social  
media posts

**100%**

of student consultants feel more  
confident in their ability to  
address social issues

**85%**

of students feel they created a  
sustainable product that will help  
their business owner be more  
successful

# SBI recruiting material



# Join us.

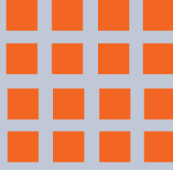
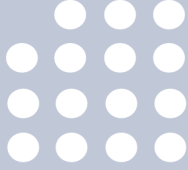
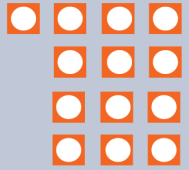
CONSULT SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS


LEAD HIGH-IMPACT TECH & MARKETING PROJECTS

APPLY: [bit.ly/tcicstudent](https://bit.ly/tcicstudent)

## Small Business Initiative Project Update

TCIC's Small Business Initiative is in full swing. Our current team consists of 16 student consultants and 15 business owners. Students are paired with a business owner and work with them to expand their business's online presence.

16 Student Consultants	15 Business Owners	13 Pairings
		

 Texas Civic Impact Council

## SUMMER 2021 INTERNSHIP

Small Business Initiative



 Texas Civic Impact Council

## Become an Austin Small Business Consultant



 Texas Civic Impact Council



# ***Student Consultants***





# ***The SBI Community***

## ***Student Consultants***

Aditi Kalla

Ali Pappa

Ana Molina

Ana Truong

Audrey O'Donnell

Cameron Vaughn

Carley Roberts

Daniel Shodunola

Hunter Pischke

Julia Jergens

Max Bui

Mia Grimes

Nithila Ilangovan

Rachel Williams

Roshini Krishnaswamy

Sonya Bhakthavachalam

Tayo Ezekoye

Vaniya Khan

Yash Goyal

Yukthika Danneeru

Zane Halabi

## ***Businesses***

Above Bird Art, Gina Rayne

A Mighty Good Time, Jennifer Emerick

Austin Youth Fitness, Larry Chauvin

AV's Garage Doors, Irma Martinez

Awesome Art!, Allison Lash

Brow + Ink Studio, Therese McCarver

Chavez Real Estate, Olvido Chavez

Engage - A Creative Retreat, Terri Wade

Honeybees Baton Twirling, Sara Rudin

Jesters Wild Quilting & Retreat, Lorena Wood

Mundo & Lighthouse, Reynaldo Vasquez

Plain Jain, Rahkee Jain

Silk Route, Rashmi Prabhu

Terra Solar, Jennie Yoshimoto

Yoga For Each One, Latha Kuruvanka





***supporting small business owners***





# ***Student - Business Pairing Spotlight***

*The following projects exemplify TCIC's goal to  
create meaningful and sustainable community impact*

# Chavez Real Estate

*Olvido Chavez, founder of Chavez Real Estate, worked with UT student Rachel Williams to create an online presence for her real estate company*

Olvido Chavez grew up in Austin and has lived here ever since. She started her Real Estate business, Chavez Real Estate, in 2007 as a side project to her nursing career. For the past 14 years, Ms. Chavez has been balancing nursing full time with managing properties, and leasing and selling houses on the side. Before that, however, she worked for 20 years alongside her neighbor and real-estate broker, Joe Mitchell. He taught her about the real estate industry and helped her become the agent she is today.

Ms. Chavez started her business with the intention to eventually retire from nursing to pursue real estate full time. Although retirement may still be a long way off, Ms. Chavez joined the TCIC Small Business Initiative so she could start to develop her business's online presence. Through this program, Ms. Chavez has been able to gain help with the technical aspects of setting up a business social media account and a website.







## Rachel Williams

I'm a sophomore at UT Austin pursuing dual degrees in Plan II Liberal Arts & Advertising with a minor in Art History and a certificate in Design Strategies. I signed up for TCIC's small business initiative so I could use my creative and social media skills to help businesses create an online presence. Through this program, I have met some truly inspiring people and gained experience in consulting.

Ms. Chavez and I focused on creating a website, Facebook, and taking high quality photos and videos of her rental properties for online advertising. I worked with Ms. Chavez to create original graphics and branding materials for the business. We met weekly to build up the online presence of Chavez Real Estate. Throughout the process of working with Ms. Chavez, we made sure that TCIC's efforts to help grow her business would be sustainable by showing her how to do every step. We taught Ms. Chavez new skills ranging from how to run ads on Facebook to how to create new website content, instead of simply making products for her. I was also able to create instructional videos on how to change aspects of the website in case Ms. Chavez is in need of any assistance in the future. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with Ms. Chavez and wish her the very best!

Website: [www.olvidochavezrealestate.com](http://www.olvidochavezrealestate.com)  
Facebook: @OlvidoChavezRealEstate

**CHAVEZ  
REAL ESTATE**

CHAVEZ REAL ESTATE

**LET US  
INTRODUCE  
OURSELVES:**

FAMILY OWNED SINCE 2007 & BASED IN  
THE HEART OF EAST AUSTIN



Olvido Chavez  
(512) 567 - 6021  
@olvidochavezrealestate

Founded by Olvido Chavez in 2007, Chavez Real Estate has helped an array of clients find their forever home. Olvido has lived in East Austin for over 50 years and knows the area personally.

Connect with Chavez Real Estate to receive personalized housing advice from an Austin local and find a place to call home.

# Austin Youth Fitness

*Larry Chauvin, owner and founder of Austin Youth Fitness, worked with UT student Ali Pappa, to create a functional webpage and implement business management strategies*



Larry Chauvin and wife Emily Chauvin, and their two children Jack and Tacy

Since 2009, Austin Youth Fitness (AYF) has been encouraging active lifestyles for all participants and promoting fitness fun! Our mission is to teach kiddos to love running and biking as well as the proper technique in order to be life long athletes. During these unprecedented times, AYF is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and positive environment for all of our runners and bikers. We know the importance of socialization to kids' health, both physical and mental. AYF's programs are based on child development and exercise physiology principles.

Larry Chauvin, founder of Austin Youth Fitness, is starting his 15th year of teaching at Casis, and his eighth year as physical education teacher. In 2005, Larry started running to lose weight and get in shape. He lost 30 pounds and gained a great love for running. Larry started entering many 5Ks and 10Ks in Austin. Now Larry has 10 marathons under his belt, and he's training for more! "I want to bring my knowledge of fitness and teaching to young runners while also having fun," Larry says.





## Ali Pappa

I was born and raised in Houston, TX and earned my AA in Music at Houston Community College in 2019. I then transferred to UT Austin to pursue my B.A. in Music composition and percussion studies with a minor in Arts Management. I am most interested in working in production- whether it's for a concert or a theater show. I have experience working in show production as a stagehand and usher for Houston Grand Opera and the City Ballet of Houston pre-Covid. After graduating I plan on securing a job as an arts administrator for a music organization in the Austin area.

My main goals for my partnership with Mr. Chauvin were to revamp AYF's website by updating their user interface to highlight specific services and streamline the customer's process to enroll in upcoming programs.

I worked closely with Mr. Chauvin to understand the key business segments he wanted to attract attention to, and I got to work prototyping designs and eventually building them on his website. I got first-hand experience of the transition from an idea, to design, to execution and am grateful to have been a part of the process. Most importantly, I made teaching Mr. Chauvin how to utilize the new website a main priority so TCIC's impact was sustainable and long-lasting. I am glad to have played a small part in Larry and Austin Youth Fitness's mission to bring fitness knowledge to Austin's youth!



Website: [www.austinyouthfitness.com](http://www.austinyouthfitness.com)  
Instagram: [@austinyouthfitness](https://www.instagram.com/austinyouthfitness)

# **Key Takeaways**

## **Interdisciplinary Approach**

We at TCIC understand that effective social solutions are created at the intersection of the arts, humanities and sciences. The small business initiative would not have been possible without our strong bases in the social and cultural sciences, communications, and technology. For this reason, the council has laid its foundation across nine different disciplines here at the University of Texas at Austin.

## **Adaptability is key**

*"Change is the only constant" - Heraclitus*

2020 was a year driven by change. Naturally, our project had to adapt to deal with constant social changes created by the pandemic. Over time, it became apparent that the initiative's progress was tied to how often we would implement new changes. We began evaluating everything about our process and approach seeking out weak points for us to improve. Our group became more accepting of feedback and comfortable with adapting to change. At the end of it all, we attributed many of our great outcomes to the small changes we made along the way. This experience taught us to embrace change as a positive opportunity as opposed to a necessary act.



# ***Key Takeaways***

## **Deep impact over superficial success**

One of our main priorities going into the SBI was ensuring students and businesses were entering mutually beneficial partnerships. We envisioned our pairings producing tangible products and education for our small businesses while providing students with realistic project management experience.

To achieve this, we had procedures that evaluated both parties pre-pairing. Once our first pairings were live, we learned that sustainably improving businesses called for a high degree of involvement from the council. This meant we were faced with a tradeoff. Have sustainable impact with limited businesses or have superficial success with many. Without hesitation we chose the former.

We wanted our work to be meaningful and sincere rather than inflate eye-catching statistics. In support, we found our work to be more rewarding and our outcomes more fruitful. This lesson will forever remain at the core of TCIC's work.

# ***Thank you***

The Small Business Initiative would have stayed just an idea if it weren't for the dedication of our student consultants and the cooperation of our small business owners. The enthusiasm we felt from both students and local business owners from across the country made it possible for us to launch and expand this program. To everyone that participated in the SBI, we are grateful for your support and contributions.

Moving forward, the focus for our council will remain on growing the connection between students and the city of Austin. We envision the Texas Civic Impact Council becoming a hub for student leaders to work hand in hand with local leaders to implement innovative solutions for city-wide issues. Austin is a city of rich history and a promising future. We as students must focus our energy, bold ideas, and proclivity for action towards uplifting our communities and shaping a future for our city that is inclusive, equitable, and innovative.

Lastly, the Texas Civic Impact Council Class of '21 rose to serve the Austin community during the heights of a world-wide pandemic. The example set by this inaugural class will serve as an honorable reminder that everyone can and should engage in service.

On to the next one!