**HFNT #11: No Place Like Homecoming**

**Episode Transcript**

[INTRO MUSIC]

Scott: Happy Friday, North Texas. I'm Scott.

Alicia: And I'm Alicia.

Scott: Today is Friday, October 25th, and it is Homecoming week.

Alicia: Yes. There's so much going on this week. And it all wraps up with the game against Tulane tomorrow. In honor of Homecoming, our first segment this week will feature a couple of interviews with legendary UNT alumni Billy Harper and Kevin von Erich. Then, we'll have the final installment of the “Democracy Primer” series before Election Day, talking about the importance of down-ballot races. And we'll wrap it up with an interview about a program that promotes body positivity for female athletes.

Scott: That is a lot to talk about, Alicia. But, before we get to the interviews, what do we have to do first?

Alicia: We have to catch up.

[TRANSITION MSUIC]

Scott: Alicia?

Alicia: Scotty?

Scott: You have been super-duper busy this week making sure all the homecoming festivities get covered across all our social media channels.

Alicia: Yes, after the last four days, the pod is just what I need to re-energize myself to make it through for the game tomorrow.

Scott: Yeah, and speaking of the game tomorrow, I'll be out at the tailgate, giving out free T-shirts at the tent for the *North Texan*. And, who knows, maybe I'll record some impromptu interviews for the pod with our fellow alumni.

Alicia: Speaking of alumni, today we're sharing audio from a couple of videos from our YouTube channel featuring some legendary UNT alumni. First up, we'll hear from Billy Harper, who became the first black member of UNT’s famed One O’Clock Lab Band in 1964 and went on to have an epic career as a jazz musician.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Lisa: Thank you so much for coming this evening. I have the distinct pleasures of interviewing a jazz legend, a revered UNT alumni and the greatest living Texas Tenor, Mr. Billy Harper.

Billy: Before I started to go to college, somebody told me `They have a real good jazz department.’ So, I said, `That's the place for me to go.’ Leon Breeden was the leader of the jazz department. He made sure that only the top guys were in the One O’Clock band. The next top guys were in the Two O’Clock band. It was just a great experience. I mean, it's better than going to one school where there's just one band, one good band. That's OK. But this is like the Four O’Clock band, the Three O’Clock band, the Two O’Clock -- really good band -- and the One O’Clock. Ah, that’s just out of the out of the socket. That's really good. I imagine that there were, like, 10,000 people, students there and maybe 100 blacks. So, there were no blacks in, in the in the One O’Clock at all. It's not just the One O’Clock band. The other bands were helping me also, I mean, helping me develop my confidence to not be thwarted or put down by anything. The influence that North Texas had on me was, I was able to adjust myself to New York. When I got in the One O’Clock band, it was like we're professional. I mean, it's not just, you know, you're a good player as a kid. No, no, no. This is a whole different level. So, for me to get to that and play in that band, made it, like, `I finally made it to New York.’ Although, you know, eventually I was going to get to New York anyway.

Lisa: There was no stopping you.

Billy: Yeah.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Scott: So cool that our very own Lisa Sciortino got to interview Billy at Steve's Wine bar here in Denton. Lisa also wrote a profile of Billy, and we'll have a link to that in the show notes, or alumni can see it in the latest edition of the *North Texan*.

Alicia: We've got one more awesome alumnus interview to share -- this one with wrestling legend and WWE Hall of Famer Kevin von Erich.

Scott: That's right. I was lucky enough to interview Kevin for a profile I wrote for the spring 2023 *North Texan*, and then I connected our video team with him for this interview we're about to hear. I was a big wrestling fan growing up, so I was super-excited to get to talk to Kevin about his time at UNT playing for Mean Green football coaching great Hayden Fry.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Announcer: Denton -- just a half-hour from Dallas and Fort Worth.

Kevin: Denton was always home. You know, if we wanted to go to the big city, we came to Denton. I think I have the record for parking tickets still. Yeah.

Announcer: Action. Whatever you're looking for, you can find it in Dallas, Fort Worth or Denton.

Kevin: I was young and dumb, to tell the truth. I loved football. That's all I was about. So, and I loved Coach Fry. He could motivate you. He would, like, just to listen to Coach Fry for a little while. He would, like, you, you'd be ready to tear the world down with your helmet, you know, you couldn't wait to get out there.

Fry: What we wanna do is make our own introduction out there on that kickoff, go on down there and get that …

Kevin: Covering a kickoff against UTA. Rex, until today, swears that he didn’t get blocked in to me, but that’s the way I saw it. And so, I tell Rex, `Thank you for my knee injury or I’d still be playing ball.’ And I came back too fast and I wound up hurting the other knee, too. And then, I was jeopardizing my wrestling career because I'd been doing some professional wrestling, too, you know. Professional wrestling is work. You know, it's hard work. It's always a long way to get to the shows. It's grueling, you know.

Commentator: Behind me, from Denton County, weighing 240 pounds, Kevin von Erich.

Kevin: If you want to be the world champion, you need to make that other guy look great for about an hour. Because the champion, Ric Flair, was 60-minute man.

Bill: Kevin, you remember back when you started out how you felt?

Kevin: Well, I sure do, Bill. You know, I'm the oldest brother …

Kevin: Bill is a sweet little guy. I just love him so much. And his wife is an angel too, and God bless him. Bill would say, `OK, Kev, Wednesday night, Lawton, Oklahoma, 7 o’clock. And Andre the Giant is going to be there. I’d say, `OK,’ And so, I’d get my interview. I'm, you know, `OK, I got it. Got it.’ You know, because back then, TV scared me. You know, it just made me jumpy. So, I said, `OK, I got it,’ and, `At 7 o’clock, I want to see everybody there in that building,’ and, and, and Bill would say, `And what’d you say about Andre?’ `And Andre is going to be there.’ You know, Bill would lead me on through all of it. You know, he was a consummate professional. And so, if I could say something to the kids out there: Trust God. Do your best, don't quit. And when you get kicked in the butt, you just keep coming because there are such people in the world and those are the ones that succeed, the ones that don't quit, that don't give up. Be a good father and you’ll love your life. Make your wife the queen of your castle and you'll be king of your castle. Each minute is going so fast and to live as much as you can and love. Don't waste time fighting and arguing. But, remember that love is the most powerful force on this earth.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Alicia: What a cool interview. Scotty, did you ask him what it was like to be played by my childhood crush, Zac Efron?

Scott: Yeah, we did talk about “The Iron Claw” a little bit -- the movie about his life that came out last year. You can read what he had to say about it by clicking the link in the show notes.

Alicia: Way to plug the *North Texan*, Scotty. In addition to it being Homecoming week, we are right in the middle of early voting, and with Election Day coming up on November 5th, this is our last chance to sneak in a “Democracy Primer’ segment before the big day.

Scott: Yeah, and for this one, I thought it'd be good to talk about the importance of down- ballot races. Everybody knows about the presidential race and the Senate race here in Texas, but you can't just stop there. There are a lot more positions on the ballot this year. So, I spoke to UNT political science assistant professor Brian Hamel about how to learn more about those candidates before you go to the ballot box.

[TRANISITION MUSIC]

Scott: All right, Brian, thank you so much for joining us today for the podcast. So, today, what I wanted to talk about was down-ballot elections, local elections, the stuff that doesn't necessarily get as much attention and all the media coverage. And so, you know, obviously this year's a big presidential election, and there's a big Senate race. But, you know, down the ballot, there's railroad commissioner, there's the Texas Supreme Court, places, all sorts of judicial races. So, I guess for starters, like, do you have any tips for people to, like, all these names that I've never heard of before. Any tips for people to, like, look up these positions or these people or, you know, because sometimes they can be pretty hard to dig anything up on.

Brian: Yes, so that's a great question. I think you're right, that that we know a lot about the presidential election because it's constantly in our face in the media. We know who the candidates are. You know, for Congress, we have a good idea, Senate race. But they're all of these really important races that affect our day-to-day lives in ways that we don't even, maybe even realize. You know, there are, you know, one recommendation I make to people is that, you know, you want to find out the races that are on your ballot before you get to the ballot box, right? Before you show up to vote. Otherwise, you're going to be kind of flipping coins. One way to do that is there are, you know, nonpartisan organizations, The League of Women Voters, for example. You can go to Vote411.org. And again, it's a nonpartisan organization. What you can do with them is, you can type in your address and they will show you what your ballot will look like on Election Day. So, that will tell you what are the elections that are on your ballot, whether it be, you know, a city council race, a mayoral election. There are some places in Texas – in Austin, in Arlington -- that are going to vote for city council and mayor. And then, it'll tell you who the candidates are, right? And so, you know, the best place to start is knowing who the candidates are, what races are on your ballot. And then, from there, you know, people can do research. The League of Women Voters will provide some information about the candidates and who they are, their backgrounds. And so, that would be my probably my main recommendation is, you know, learn about what's on your ballot, because it's going to depend a lot on where, you know, where you live. Not everyone's going to have the same races, of course.

Scott: Yeah. And then, I don't know, like, now, obviously, like, we said, the presidential election gets a lot of coverage. Everybody's aware and gets a lot of attention this year. But there are elections every year, sometimes multiple times a year. So, something like railroad commissioner, like, can you talk about like the importance of understanding what those what those positions are? And, you know, some somebody might look at and say, `Well, I don't care who the railroad commissioner is. What does that have to do with me?’ What would you say to that?

Brian: Yeah, so it's a great, great question. I mean, I think most people don't have a good understanding of these offices and there are a lot of them, right? It's part of the challenge, too, is that there are a lot of these types of offices. You know, Railroad Commissioner, it's you know, it's one of the oldest regulatory agencies in the state. They are in charge of regulating the oil and gas industry, whichi as we know is a huge industry in the state of Texas. It's why we have a specific agency that's designed to do that. But, you know, they affect things like the utility rates that you pay, right? In Texas, making sure that we have a power grid that is functioning at all times is an important thing. And they have, they have, the things that they do have a have a role in that, right? So, by that score, certainly what they do is really relevant to people, because certainly when it's freezing cold and, you know, that, people understand that. So, the choices that voters making these elections can have big effects on their day-to-day lives. The challenge, as you said, is we don't know these candidates as well as we know the candidates for, you know, president or Senate and that sort of thing. And that, that can make it can make it challenging.

Scott: Yeah. So, the resources like Vote411, because, like,, railroad commissioner, like just looking at the title, you wouldn't think that had anything to do with oil and gas necessarily. Do those resources also, like, have, like, explainers of what these positions do?

Brian: Yeah. So, they'll, you know, not a super-detailed explanation, but they will sort of explain what the positions are, but also what the candidates might want to do, right? So, one of the things that the League of Women Voters, for just as an example of an organization, tries to do, is they try to get candidates to send position statements to them that they can then post on their website so that when people go look for information, they can see some basics about the candidates and that information's provided by the candidates, right? And so, you know, you can kind of, you're right. Like, when you look at a railroad commissioner and you look at what a candidate says they want to do and they're going to be talking about energy and oil and gas and all that, and yeah, people would be surprised that that's what they do. So, yeah, these kinds of resources are out there and, you know, it is it does require some work, right? So, and a lot of voters might not be willing to pay those, you know, time costs in order to do that. But these local elections matter. And so, it's important, you know, to do that.

Scott: Yeah. There's several races on the ballot that are uncontested. There's just one bubble you can fill in. Does it make a difference if you fill it in or not?

Brian: That’s a good question. I don't know for sure. So, yeah, I suspect that it does. Basically, if you don't fill in any particular bubble, even if it's a contested race, they just, obviously, you didn't cast a ballot, so they would count for all the other things you voted for. But I think it would count as sort of a, as an undervote, is what we would call it.

Scott: OK.

Brian: Right? Yeah. And you'll see, you will see a lot of drop off, right? So, like, people, if you tally up the total votes for, like, president and then you compare that to the tally of votes for railroad commissioner, there will be a big difference. A lot of people will go in and vote for president and Senate and then walk out,

Scott: They’ll just skip it.

Brian: And they will just skip the rest of it, right? And, you know, again, encourage people not to do that and to look at these races and, you know, you want your voice to be heard in all possible ways, and that includes these down-ballot elections.

Scott: Yeah. Well, thank you so much for taking the time again. I really appreciate it.

Brian: Thank you for having me.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Alicia: So, Scott, have you made your plan to vote yet?

Scott: You know, I already voted. Early voting is the way to go. Just walked across the parking lot here over to The Gateway, enjoyed the beautiful fall weather we've been having. No lines, no hassle. I got my sticker and I was out of there. What about you?

Alicia: I have not voted yet, but I have been doing my research on the candidates. And, let me tell you, this is the first time I've really been invested in researching all the way down the ballot. I'm only 24, so I probably should have been doing this earlier in my life. But, alas, I digress. But, I'm very excited about this year.

Scott: Yeah. And listeners, we want you all to make sure you have a plan to vote, too. So, we'll have a link to Texas voting information in the show notes to help you put your plan together.

Alicia: All right. For our final segment today, our very own Bess Whitby brings us an interview with counseling Professor Trent Petrie about his work with the Bodies in Motion program, which helps female athletes struggling with body-image issues.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Bess: Some of these questions may overlap with questions about the Center for Sports Psychology. But, like I said, I'll just focus on the Bodies in Motion program for now. And, I guess I'm curious, I've read a bit about it. I looked at the website, but I'm curious how that program came to be and whether there's sort of, like, an origin story there, or whether maybe a research path kind of took you there, or just how that got started.

Trent: So, I think there were kind of a few things coming together. So, one, I had been long involved in research on eating disorders and body image and athletes, and that had been going on since the 1990s until the 2000. And, in that time, too, there was some research being done among non-athlete populations, primarily focused on girls and young women, development of some programing to help alleviate body dissatisfaction and improve their overall sense of well-being. So, that was going on in non-athlete populations. I was doing general research on athletes and their body image and eating disorders. And so, in the mid-to-late 2000s, a doctoral student and I kind of looked at all the original research that was being done with non-athletes and modified that and adapted it to fit better within an athlete population. So, we did a couple of studies at that point, published them and then it just unfortunately kind of dissipated for a little bit. And then, I picked that back up in the mid 2010s with a colleague of mine, Dr. Dana Voelker, who is the co-creator of Bodies in Motion. And then, she and I were able to obtain a grant from the NCAA, and it was through that grant that we were able to really expand the program, both in terms of the materials that are provided for facilitators and then begin to test it out, and out of that came some publications. And it's just kind of continued to grow since then, as more people become aware of it. It's used in more and more athletic departments. And, yeah, so I think that's part of the origin. So, just the longstanding research in the area, just overlapping with research being done generally with women and girls, and then seeing the need for that amongst athlete populations or within athlete populations.

Bess: OK. What was the first year that the Bodies in Motion program was sort of implemented as, you know, what it is in its current incarnation?

Trent: I guess it would have been in the mid 2010s. So, probably around 2015, 2016 is when we were doing that original pilot testing and testing through the grant that we had from the NCAA. Over the last eight years, it's evolved quite a bit. We just came off of -- and I think that's discussed in the in the website -- a two-year grant project with the PAC 12 conference, which just ended this summer. And, just over the last four years or so, it's really expanded in it's just general use in universities and athletic departments across the U.S. So, kind of each year, we get feedback from the facilitators as we do training, as we've had the grants from the PAC 12. And so, while the basis of the program has remained the same in terms of its underlying theoretical foundation and the primary ways that we intervene, we have, the program has evolved to also better fit the changing realities of the age and focus of these young athletes. I mean, when we started in 2015, as just a quick example, college students still used Facebook. I don’t even think there was Instagram, right? Or TikTok at the time, right? So, we have a social media component that’s part of the program, and it was based on Facebook. But, over the years, as college students ran away from Facebook and into other media, we had to evolve as well. So, we've been able to do that. I mean, in 2010 there was not nearly the emphasis and breadth of exposure in terms of different gender identities and things like that. So, as that has evolved and it's become more common within college students generally, in college student-athletes, we've had to modify the program to be able to meet their needs, address their identities in a supportive and caring way.

Bess: OK, excellent. I'm curious, too, did the idea for this program grow purely out of research interest or was there personal interest or personal experience that kind of sparked this idea for the program?

Trent: Yeah, I think a lot of it just came out of, I mean, both generally. As we were working with student athletes, certainly they would come in clinically. As we'd work with them on their mental health, just would talk a lot about their concerns that they have about their bodies. We were seeing that consistently in our general research that we were doing and just how strongly how athletes felt about their bodies were predictive of their disordered eating, their psychological distress. And it really became a central point of intervening. So, if we could help individuals feel better about themselves through how they saw their bodies, how they thought about their appearance and shifting the way they thought about themselves from a more appearance-focused to a more functional-focused way of being in the world that we would then see improvements in their overall well-being. So, there was that. And then, also just seeing a lot of the research and then also, too, some of those programs that I had talked to you about that were being done in the non-athlete population were based within a certain framework. But what we were seeing in the research that was being done on those programs was that they were effective. But, there was also seemingly a big void of how well they could intervene, how well they could be helpful. So, it was also in the mid 2010s that mindful self-compassion was really becoming more prominent within the athlete world. And we were seeing a lot of very positive effects in teaching athletes mindful self-compassion and how they could improve the sport performances, how they could be more centered and grounded in their lives. So, we incorporated that into the program. And so, that was kind of the zeitgeist of the time and it's only grown since then, certainly through the COVID pandemic and everybody's understanding of the importance of mindfulness, meditation and all of that.

Bess: Sure. OK, excellent. So, you spoke a little bit about how the program has been deployed and I know that UNT received a grant from -- and I think you just spoke a little bit to this -- the American Athletic Conference this spring, and that's going to bring the program to all athletic departments in the conference for this upcoming academic year. Is that correct?

Trent: Yes. So, similar to what we had with the PAC 12, we did receive a small grant from the American, and then we are going to use that to make the program available to conference schools, conference athletic departments. How many? We're kind of in that process of just communicating to the schools and seeing which ones are interested in. Yeah, so that's where we are right now. So, whether it will be three or four or it will be ten, that's still to be determined.

Bess: OK, gotcha. Great. So, I guess I would love to know just sort of a, you know, overview of what an athlete's experience in this program might look like. Just sort of, like, what's the format? Is there like a specific process that the program takes on?

Trent: Yeah. So, the program is five sessions. Each session is about 75 to 90 minutes. Typically, the number of student athletes who are in one of the Bodies in Motion groups are 4 to 8. Kind of 6 to 8 is ideal. So, these might be athletes from different teams across department. Obviously, a lot that drives this is schedules and availability and things like that. The groups are led by two professional staff members within an athletic department. Usually, it's a sport nutritionist, a mental health provider, it might be an athletic trainer. These two individuals have been trained, so we do training for the individuals, so they're familiar with the Bodies in Motion program. There is a facilitators’ guide, so it's a, it's a manualized treatment. So, it's very standardized. It's written out. So, you, if you were to deliver the program at UNT and counterpart at Appalachian State, the athletes at both schools would be getting the same thing. So, the two facilitators would take the athletes through the activities within each session. Sometimes it's introducing them to new concepts. What is self-kindness, for instance. Sometimes it's having them do some activities -- learning about beauty as a psychosocial construct or how beauty isn't really real, and beauty changes over time based on what kind of society says. It has lots of discussion where they're able to talk about these ideas with each other. They will do activities such as doing mindfulness meditation in there and what that experience is like for them. At the end of every session, they're given some quote-unquote “homework” or exercises to do, which just kind of furthers the learning and furthers the exposure. So, for example, after one of the early sessions, they're asked to go home and privately spend 10 minutes just looking at themselves in the mirror trying to dress as close to what they might wear in their sport, and then just spend some time looking at themselves and becoming aware of the thoughts and feelings that come up during that experience. Then, they come to the next session, and they talk about that with each other and share those experiences. So, it's through those activities, it's through the sharing and getting to connect with each other, and they begin to realize that they're not alone in their thoughts and feelings about themselves, and their bodies. They begin to get a lot of support from each other. And that all promotes that growth and change. So, the sessions occur once a week. So, over a five- week period, the athletes go through the program.

Bess: OK, excellent. I'm curious how maybe this was something more done at the beginning, because I know you said there's been research and there's been some testing done with the program before it was approved for just broader use. But I'm curious how the program measures positive outcomes and successes that come from the exercises and the whole kind of process?

Trent: Yeah. So, it's done in a variety of ways. So, we do we do examine it through a kind of traditional, treatment-as-usual comparison to control athletes. So, we give athletes a series of questionnaire surveys that they respond to, where they're sharing about, say, their body satisfaction or the pressures they feel to achieve a certain appearance ideal or their levels of disordered eating, for example. So, those are done before they start the group. They're done after they start the group. And then, four months, 12 months later. We also have control athletes, those who've never gone through the group, doing very similar things, so we can make comparisons both between the groups but then also over time to see, do we see positive changes in their self-reported levels of body appreciation or body satisfaction, their levels of disordered eating. Are those going down as they're becoming more appreciative of how they look and satisfied with their bodies? We’ve also done quite a number of qualitative interviews or qualitative studies where we're doing in-depth interviews with the athletes who have completed the program. We've done it in the short term. One of the big projects that the PAC 12 grant was to, within about four months of them having completed the program, was to do about a 75-to-90-minute interview with them about their experiences in the program, how they thought they changed, what they thought helped facilitate the change. So, we're really now looking at their reports and experiences of the program and their targeting, like, `This is really what helped me,’ or, `This is specifically how I changed,’ so in addition to the numbers, which might show some positive change, we're getting their stories as well. We have a published study. It's on the website, too. But, in that one, we targeted athletes who had gone through the program while they were active athletes in college. But, by the time we interviewed them, they had already retired and graduated. So, they were 2- to 6 years out from having been in the Bodies In Motion program because we wanted to see if it had, like, longer term staying power. Like, did it help them at all in terms of their transition out of sport, which can be very challenging for women athletes in particular. And we found some very positive things there as well.

Bess: OK, great. I think I saw on the website that almost everyone, if not everyone, who went through it, said that they had thought it helped or that they would recommend it to someone else, which is kind of an incredible, like, self-reporting success rate. That's really cool.

Trent: Yeah. Well, that's the other piece that I didn't say, that we, at the end of every session, we do have athletes fill kind of out a clinical evaluation, which is not really the same as the kind of the hard-core research, and the more rigorous research that we're doing. So, some of what's on the website is more from those clinical evaluations where they, you know, indicate on a 1-to-5 scale how much they got something helped and we have components of the program, and then we asked them to provide some written responses, which we’ve shared on the website as well. They're similar to what we get when we interview them, but we do that a lot for the facilitators at each school so they can learn a little bit more about what they did, how the athletes who took the program with them, evaluate them and their work so they can continue to improve.

Bess: OK. Awesome. I think this probably seems like a very obvious question, but for the sake of the story, what is your hope for, you know, any athlete who goes through the Bodies in Motion program?

Trent: Well, what we what we've learned through the research that we've done is that the athletes report getting from the program kind of what we aim for them to get. So, simply put, they gain a great deal of awareness of the societal and sport environment pressures that exist regarding body size, shape, weight, etc. They become, in that awareness, they're able, you know, it's kind of like their eyes have been opened, right? And they can no longer close them. So, now they're seeing all of this messaging that is based on a kind of made-up ideal of what beauty is. They become more aware of the fact that they're not alone, that every woman, every female athlete is going through this as well, and that even though I might be a gymnast and look a certain way and you might be a swimmer and look a certain way and you might be a field hockey player and look a certain way, we actually all share very similar ideas and beliefs about ourselves and our bodies that have been influenced by all these external pressures. So, there's this just increased level of awareness that we also see that they start to really shift their perspectives. They start to think differently about themselves, they start to think differently about their bodies, evaluaing them less from the standpoint of appearance and more seeing the beauty and the functionality of their bodies, what they can do for them. They start to have a different perspective on all of these ideals, recognizing the falseness of them. They have a different perspective on what is beauty now. And so, just bringing that. And then, they talk a lot about how they are then able to bring to bear a lot, a lot of new tools. Being able to bring mindful self-compassion and learning to be kinder to themselves, learning to kind of attack and challenge some of these beliefs and pressures that are coming at them. So, they have this whole kind of set of tools that they now bring out. And then, the other big and exciting thing we see is that most of the athletes, by the time they get to the end of the program, really feel supercharged into advocacy. And part of what we build in in the last session is for them to think about what are some things that you want to continue to do, to continue to kind of grow this awareness, support this change in perspective, continue to take care of yourself in a different way. But then, also, what do you want to do to start changing the athletic department that you're in and maybe changing things within your family and broader society? Because, again, I was just doing some training at the University of Georgia last week and, you know, we talked about how Bodies In Motion, a lot of ways the program is like getting inoculated, you know, getting vaccinated. So, you know, you now have all this. You can walk into new situations and, you know, if you get infected, you're not going to be, you know, you're not going to get as sick as you might with other things. However, the reality is we still need to change and improve the environment in which you reside. And that's part of that advocacy, right? Like everybody is not going to be OK until we eradicate some of the germs and everything that are out there.

Bess: Gotcha. Well, OK, that's fantastic. I love that there is also, I mean, it sounds like this wasn't even necessarily something that the program pushed for in its conception, this sort of advocacy piece. It sounds like this is something that a lot of participants are just taking upon themselves to do after participating. Is that right?

Trent: Well, I mean, there is absolutely built into the program something we call body activism. So, part of it is, you know, in kind of gaining awareness of how these pressures affect you, what they start to realize is that not only do they affect how I think and maybe how I feel about my body, but they affect what I actually do in life and the choices that I make. And so, part of what we purposely have built into the program is, as a group, all of them coming up with behaviors that they can engage in that basically push back against some of the limitations that these expectations hold. I mean, the classic example is, especially around, for women, there's a lot of gendered expectations about how you're going to eat and what you're going to eat and when you're going to eat, in front of whom are you going to eat it? So, when we're talking about athletes who oftentimes need to consume more food simply to better fuel themselves, right? But they may go into a cafeteria on campus. There might be a lot of other athletes around, male athletes, whatever, their teammates. And they're hungry and they know they need, but they don't allow themselves to eat because of all these ideas about, you know, food and what it will look like and somebody making a snarky comment about them or something like that. And so, a body activism might be, like, `I'm going to eat what I want to eat when I want to eat it, regardless of who's there. And, if I want to have some dessert, I'm going to have dessert, and I'm not, and if somebody says something to me, I'm going to make a comment back to them.’ So, that something that's built into it and what they start to do is realize that wow, just how limited I have been as a result of all these societal and sports-related expectations and how nice it is to be able to kind of push back against that. So, did advocacy then evolve? Yes. And, as we saw it evolving, what we started to do then was to actually build it in into the last session on the program. So, that was one of the changes that occurred during our time working with the PAC 12. We were hearing a lot from the facilitators how, at end of the sessions, athletes were coming up to them and saying things, like, `I want to go in front of my team and tell my team about this program. I want every female athlete at my school to go through this program. I'm going to talk to my coach about this.’ So, we're like, `OK, if this is happening, let's just bake it into the program, so, you know, it's not a happenstance as to whether or not it occurs, but that every athlete, every group that does it will have a conversation about what they want to do next.’

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Scott: That program sounds incredible. I love the work they're doing to help female athletes feel more comfortable in their bodies.

Alicia: I know. And the fact that participants are paying it forward. Dude, I love to see women helping women. You know, the only thing I like more than that?

Scott: What’s that?

Alicia: Our Q&A segment. What's our question today, Scottie?

Scott: All right. So, in honor of Halloween coming up next week, we have a kind of Halloween-themed question today: Do you believe in ghosts, aliens, both or neither?

Alicia: I would say I believe in ghosts to an extent, but I lean more to the spirit realm due to my Hispanic heritage. With Dia de los Muertos approaching, I believe there is an interaction between the living and the dead during the specific time, to honor deceased loved ones and celebrate the life that they lived. So, yeah, all in all, I would say I believe in ghosts. How about you?

Scott: Yeah, I don't, I don't know. I could be convinced, but personally, I've never seen anything that, like, makes me believe in ghosts. And I kind of don't want to believe in ghosts, because, like, the idea of, like, being stuck in, like, a ghost form sounds, like, kind of terrible. So, I don't want to think that's an option. But, yeah, I guess you could say I'm a little bit agnostic about ghosts. And kind of the same with aliens. Like, it's such a big universe out there. Like, it's totally possible and plausible and believable. I just don't think we have any evidence or have seen anything that was like you can say for sure, `Yeah, they're out there.’ You know, if you want to believe, believe. It’s all good.

Alicia: That's what the movies are for, y'all. Go watch an alien-ghost movie, and there you go, call it a day. Let's do it. All right. Well, now that you've heard about our thoughts on the paranormal and extraterrestrial, we want to hear all about yours. So, email us at podcast@unt.edu or call us at 940-565-4341.

Scott: And don't forget to tell a friend about the show, share it on social media or leave us a rating and review wherever you listen so, our bosses let us keep doing this.

Alicia: And, go find Scotty at the homecoming tailgate tomorrow and get some free T-shirts.

Scott: Yeah, come see us at the tailgate tomorrow. And, until next time, we hope you have a Happy Friday. North Texas.

Alicia: And, Go Mean Green.

[OUTRO MUSIC]

Scott: Happy Friday, North Texas is a production of the University of North Texas. Today’s show was produced and edited by Scott Brown, with original reporting by Scott Brown and Bess Whitby. For more information, visit UNT.edu/podcast.

Alicia: Also, I added something and it might be cute. Anyways. Oh, no. OK. Well, it turned out well, though. That's why it sounded like stupidity. I'm sorry.

Scott: You’re good.

Alicia: Alicia, don't do that. Don't add that in the bloops.

Scott: And don't forget to tell a friend about the show, share it on social media.

All right.