

Throughout her life, journalist Angela Kocherga, is pulled back to reporting at the United States and Mexico border. She addressed a Baylor journalism class on Thursday about the importance of border coverage. “In the era of fake news, it has never been more important to be on the ground, to show people what is happening, and to give people voices,” Kocherga said.

Kocherga has personal ties to the border. She was born in Mexico City to United States parents who were living abroad. Later, she moved to the border and southern United States. After college, Kocherga went into public radio, television news and, taught students how to report at the border. As the 2016 election drew near, she decided that the border needed experienced journalists. She left her teaching job to report on immigrants, Mexico-American trade deals, and to find the truth about life at the border. She currently works with the Albuquerque Journal working at the border near El Paso, Texas.

Kocherga shared her experience as a journalism and what skills are demanded in the industry today. “You are all going to have to shoot some videos, (generate) longer web stories, take photos,” Kocherga said. “The more things you can do and do well, the better.” She has been able to report on stories about the tent cities, environmental impacts that a wall would impose, and the drug problems that effect numerous families. Although the drug violence has stayed in Mexico, all families near the area experienced loss and repercussions, Kocherga said.

Mostly, people at the border do not think that the wall is an effective tool for stopping drugs going through the United States. “There is nowhere in the world that a wall has been 100 percent effective.” The drugs that are seen coming through are no longer marijuana, rather they are smuggling methamphetamine and heroin at ports of entry where people go through legally, Kocherga said.

There have never been this many border patrol officers as well as border journalists, Kocherga said. “The idea of a wall sounds good, but it is more of a symbol. A lot of people are afraid because they do not know. For people who live there, it is not seen as an effective tool.” Texans depend on Mexican business. Even the ambulance service assists people on both sides of the border, Kocherga said.

Finishing her speech, Kocherga remarked that there is not “anywhere I would rather be than on the border.”