



Engaging Students in Their Community

During Houston Citizenship Month, students volunteer at the Houston Food Bank and promote civic leadership.

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For more information about UHD, contact:
Division of Advancement and University Relations
University of Houston-Downtown
One Main Street, Suite 990-South
Houston, Texas 77002
713-221-8045

www.uhd.edu

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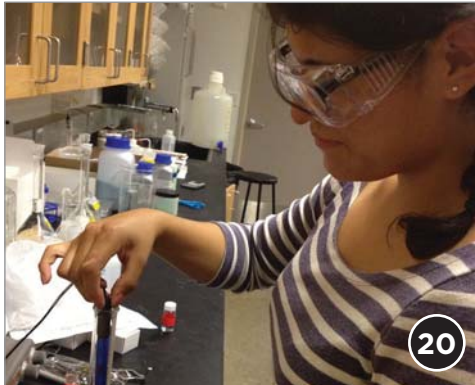


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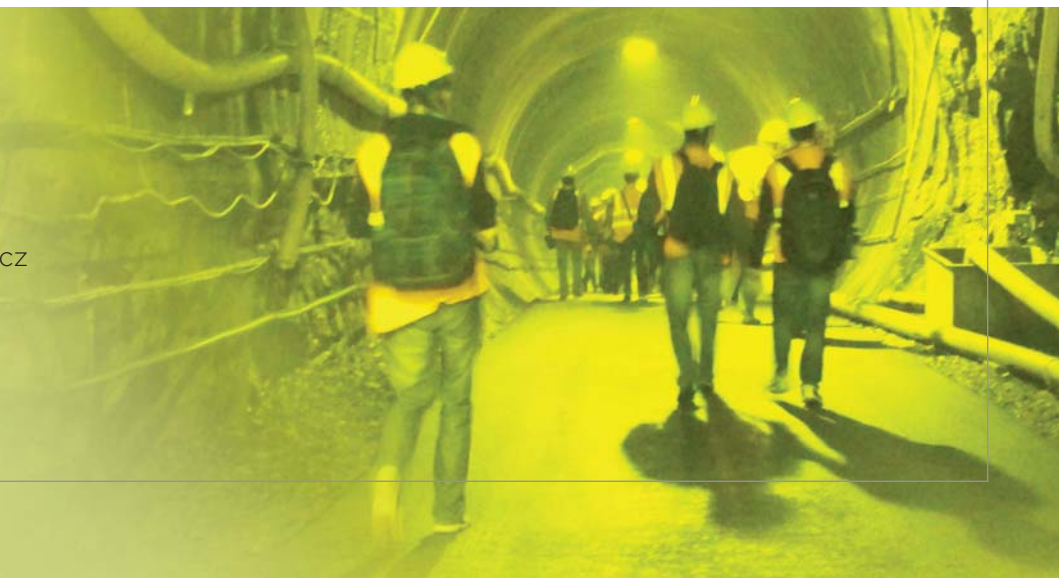
UHD is in the position to address the fastest growing occupation in the country.

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UHD sponsors Houston Citizenship Month, a celebration of our city's strong commitment to civic leadership and community engagement.



Dancers provide entertainment during the annual Rails to Restaurants event on the South Deck.

A Letter from the President



This November, the City of Houston, our University and the surrounding regions celebrated Citizenship Month, for which UHD is a proud sponsor. The citywide initiative has grown from two events with 100 participants five years ago to hundreds of organizations and thousands of participants with activities and events held all over the Greater Houston metropolitan region. In the words of Mayor Annise Parker, Citizenship Month represents “a celebration of our city’s strong commitment to civic leadership, good citizenship and community engagement.”

UHD also has a strong commitment to community service, which is reflected in our curriculum, student organizations and promotion of high-impact educational experiences.

The Citizenship Month theme, “Celebrating the Many Faces of Houston,” recognizes that Houston is one of the most diverse and international cities in the country. Similarly, UHD is one of the most ethnically diverse institutions in the southwest. As a reflection of that diversity, UHD sponsored and participated in engaging Citizenship Month activities, such as art exhibits, voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, tree plantings, bayou clean-up efforts, food and clothing collections, and cultural festivals – just to name a few.

Continued on next page...



Evren Kutlay, world-renowned pianist and musicologist, performed at UHD during Citizenship Month.



UHD student Mike Sullivan, Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector, speaks to students at a fall “Rock the Vote” rally.



Why is this initiative important for Houston and students at UHD? Citizenship Month promotes global understanding, cooperation and inter-faith dialogue. New York, San Antonio and other prominent cities have taken notice of our celebration and now are considering establishing similar events. Cities and universities alike are best served when their populations actively participate in issues that affect their lives and build connections with others. Everyone gains through volunteerism - by helping others, we help ourselves.

As a university, UHD attracts students from across the greater Houston area. They reflect the city's diversity and represent 68 different countries. UHD is proud to be a designated Hispanic Serving and African-American Serving Institution.

Through volunteerism and community service, students from all backgrounds can learn to work together to better their communities, build bridges over social barriers and help those less fortunate.



UHD students (top right), Dr. Noël Bezette-Flores, executive director of the UHD Center for Public Service and Family Strengths, along with Houston Mayor Annise Parker (top left) participate in the Citizenship Month Partnership Walk.



Dr. Flores, students and community leaders attend a fall "Rock the Vote" rally at UHD.

UHD and the Texan-French Alliance for the Arts hosted a cultural jazz exchange with musicians as part of Citizenship Month.



In a global society where differences are celebrated and teamwork is essential to success, UHD students will be prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow thanks to their efforts today.

I'm pleased to serve as an honorary chair, and my wife, Dr. Noël Bezette-Flores, executive director of the UHD Center for Public Service and Family Strength, is co-founder and co-chair of this exciting initiative. We look forward to many years of partnership and engagement with Houston Citizenship Month.

Dr. William V. Flores
President
University of
Houston-Downtown




Citizenship-inspired artwork from area middle school students was displayed at Houston Public Library.

UHD Gives Back to Alumnus

FIGHTING CRIME

By: Claire Caton



UHD exists to equip graduates with skills to succeed and make a difference in the world – and sometimes that support extends well after graduation and well across the globe. Gavino Rivas used his UHD education and connections to impact a war-torn country and its citizens.

An alumnus of UHD's esteemed Criminal Justice Training Center and a captain in the U.S. Army Reserves, Rivas played an instrumental role in training Afghan Police and Border Patrol agents to combat crime in the region. Stationed in the Spin Boldak province of Afghanistan, he worked daily with FBI agents – as well as an Afghan colonel and chief of the country's Criminal Investigations Division – to ensure trainees had the tools they needed to battle significant crime.

Rivas, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, previously served two tours of duty in Afghanistan as a helicopter pilot transporting troops in the region. Following his service, he enrolled at UHD to train as a law enforcement officer and decided to reenlist in the Reserves to provide additional support.

The Army called his "Rule of Law" team to Afghanistan in December 2012 to support the existing government's efforts to curtail crime and protect local citizens.

"These are small town officers dealing with large, intricate crimes," said Rivas. "They regularly face cases of murder, drug busts involving thousands of kilos, large counterfeit rings and theft of \$100,000 and more. I have to say I am amazed at what they do with so very little."

To help trainees and motivate their efforts, Rivas reached out to his former criminal justice professor and director of UHD's Criminal Justice Training Center, Rex White. In an email to White, Rivas noted, "It has truly been an extraordinary experience, particularly getting to help train both the Afghan Uniformed Police and Afghan Border Patrol. Sir, one thing that would really help is to have gear to pass out to our better performers. If it won't be too much trouble for your class, used [supplies] would really go a long way out here."

Upon receiving this request, White marshaled the support of cadets, the UHD Police Department and the Houston Police Department to create a supply drop for used equipment, including universal holsters, slings, batons and handcuffs. All criminal justice cadets must complete community service as part of their training and the Training Center adopted

ACROSS THE GLOBE

Rivas' team as its official outreach through the extent of Rivas' time in Spin Boldak.

"Governments don't fight crime, people do," said White. "I believe the same can be said for helping others. It was an honor to support Captain Rivas' team in improving the quality of life in Afghanistan through professional police training and 'heart.'"

In total, White sent three shipments of police equipment to Rivas, a contribution that he notes is as good for the American troops as it is the Afghan police. "It's great for American soldiers to see how their country supports their efforts and, at the same time, it shows Afghan police the true mission of law enforcement, which is ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens.

"The police equipment our University sent to Captain Rivas' team was handed out to the best and brightest of the police trainees in each class," said White. "These incentives go a long way with troop morale and support of police training, which hopefully saved lives and removed criminals and fear."

For Rivas, the supplies were integral to his mission of training Afghan peace officers.

"I feel we really made a greater impact than most of the [other] teams and that is directly attributed to your help," Rivas wrote to White in an email. He also credits the academy director with providing him other, non-traditional skills.

"I have another thing to thank you for. It turns out that the most useful skill here is teaching! I created classes in arrest, search and seizure, use of force, warrants and anti-corruption – all based on Afghan law. It was so successful and we were the only group allowed to conduct this type of training and create these classes."

Although Rivas is no longer stationed in Spin Boldak with his "Rule of Law" team, he hopes to continue working with the AUP in his new position as Governance Subject Matter Expert at the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command headquarters in Kabul.

Rivas continues to exhibit bravery and dedication to his country through his service and looks forward to returning to the U.S. in November.



L to R: Shahib Jan, Col. Abdulh Quayoum, Maj. Brian Carrico, and Capt. Gavino Rivas. The meeting brought together district leaders to discuss future cooperation.



Afghan Uniformed Police receive donated gear from U.S. Army Reserve Cpt. Gavino Rivas. The equipment was donated from the League City and Houston, Texas Police Departments, the University of Houston-Downtown Criminal Justice Training Center and Kangaroo Industries.

Photo Credit: Staff Sgt. Shane Hamann, 102nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



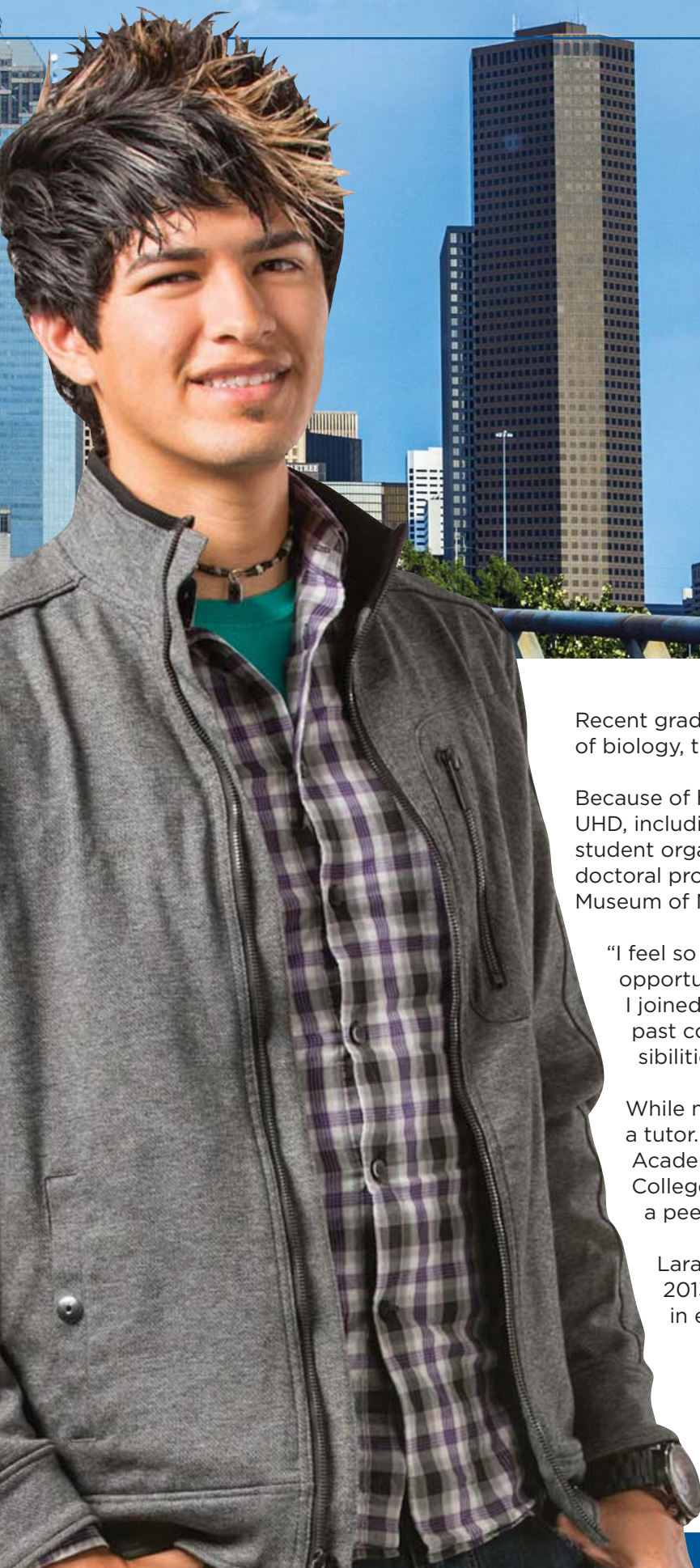
Meet the Newest “Major Opportunity” Ambassadors

By: Mary Ann Cozza, Mariana Elliott, Stanton Cagle

The second phase of UHD’s highly successful “Major Opportunity” branding campaign recently began and a new group of bright, experienced students and alumni were selected to serve as ambassadors for the University in print and media.

These rising stars span the University’s various colleges and include future doctors and business leaders, a comedian, social workers and other stand-outs in the classroom and community.

Get to know five of our former and current students and look for more Gators around the Greater Houston area.



Recent graduate Adolfo Lara has a bright future in the field of biology, thanks in part to his alma mater.

Because of his academic performance and experiences at UHD, including participating in research opportunities and student organizations, Lara was accepted into an innovative doctoral program in comparative biology at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

“I feel so lucky to have attended UHD,” he said. “I had opportunities to do research as an undergraduate; I joined science clubs and built a network that extends past college. UHD showed me the professional possibilities available to me and helped me reach them.”

While not in class, Lara worked part time at UHD as a tutor. He also was actively involved in Scholars Academy, an academically competitive program in the College of Sciences and Technology, for which he was a peer mentor.

Lara began the doctoral program in New York in fall 2013 and looks forward to one day getting involved in education policy or becoming a professor.

Adolfo



Lynn

Lynn Hajdik, a recent UHD graduate, spent more than 10 years working in the medical field when she decided to make a change. She quit her job to go back to college, realizing she needed more education to build on her skill set.

Her studies were soon put on hold in order to care for two ill family members, but something positive came from the break. Having spent time at the hospital and meeting the various staff members, she discovered her true passion was social work.



Bob

Alumnus Bob Morrissey is the epitome of a never-give-up attitude. Following an Army deployment to Iraq, working as a Houston cab driver and several false starts in higher education, Morrissey enrolled at UHD more than 10 years after high school. While it took him several years and a great deal of effort to complete his degree, he understands that “the effort you put in is the primary factor in the results you will get out of your education.”

Morrissey graduated in May 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in history and was the recipient of the 2012 History Award from the Department of Social Sciences. He originally chose UHD because of its affordability and location, but decided to stay because of the small class sizes, personable and qualified professors, and great view of the Houston skyline. When not at UHD, Morrissey is active in the Houston and New Orleans comedy scene - he even appeared at the Houston Comedy Festival in May 2013. He plans to put his wit to good use as a history teacher in the future and notes that “humor is something the classroom lacks these days.”

Now ready to return to school full time, Hajdik began searching for universities in the Houston area with her new focus in mind. UHD was a perfect fit.

Although she was anxious about returning to school as an older student, her class sizes were smaller and there was more personal attention from professors than she expected, which helped her to adjust.



Sharice

Returning to college as an adult isn't easy, but Sharice Foster had plenty of motivation. This determined mother had big dreams for her future and she wanted to be a positive role model for her children. She knew that earning a college degree was the way to achieve both goals.

Foster attended a large state university after high school, but found it difficult to learn and adjust to college in a crowded classroom. She decided to leave school and work full time in order to raise her children. But her dreams were never far from her mind.

After taking time off, Foster completed basic courses at a community college and was ready to give higher education another try. She enrolled at UHD and blossomed in the "intimate learning environment."

"Attending UHD has been great," she said. "I really know my professors and I learn much better in smaller classes. Also, the University's flexibility makes it easier to go to school as a parent because I can take courses that fit my schedule."

With the guidance of her involved professors, this accounting major feels prepared to pursue her dreams of becoming a certified public accountant. "I hope to one day open my own accounting firm," she said. "And my professors have made sure I'm prepared with everything I need to reach my goals."

Hajdik graduated in May 2013 with a degree in social work, making her the first to go to college in her family. She says the experience at UHD was life changing and gave her a strong foundation to grow upon. In August 2013, she began pursuing her master's degree in clinical social work.

Hajdik is enthusiastic about her experience at UHD and wants others to know that, "UHD provides opportunities for everybody at any stage in their lives."



Raymond

Biology major Raymond Cheria followed in his family's footsteps when he enrolled at UHD, but still found plenty to love about the University through his own experiences.


According to Cheria, UHD was the only college he applied to while in high school. With two older siblings attending UHD and his mother working in the University's English Language Institute, Cheria already was familiar with the school.

"I knew that UHD had smaller class sizes than other schools and that there would be opportunities for me to do research as an undergraduate," he said. "And it is conveniently located close to my home, which I liked, but also in downtown, which is really cool."

Thanks to his siblings, Cheria also knew about UHD's Scholars Academy and was eager to join the academically competitive program. An active member, Cheria serves as a peer mentor. He also was able to travel to Panama to conduct research into the social and biological aspects of millipede species.

"One of the major opportunities I've had at UHD was the research trip to Panama," he said. "UHD helped fund the trip the summer after my freshman year. I know that students at other universities don't usually get those same opportunities as undergraduates."

Cheria hopes to channel his research skills and education into a career in medicine.



Award-Winning UHD Alumnus
Brings Filmmaking, Musical Talents
to Houston's Vibrant Arts Scene

Maestro of the

By: Claire Caton

A self-proclaimed “jack-of-all-trades,” the classically trained violinist’s work unites original compositions and technical excellence with undercurrents of gothic mystique. A maestro of the macabre, Ochoa’s performances raise his patrons’ interest and delight – as well as the hair on the back of their necks.

“My goal as an artist is to combine and complement my two passions: filmmaking and music,” said Ochoa. “I’ve always loved horror movies and I enjoy creating that atmosphere of mystery and intrigue when composing music or producing films.”

His fascination with horror began as a child and was demonstrated in the first assignment of his seventh-grade photography class. “We were asked to shoot a photo essay on any topic in any environment and I chose a cemetery!” said Ochoa. “I didn’t see this choice as odd in the least. In fact, I thought it provided the most intriguing visual perspective.”

Ochoa began playing the violin at age 3 and competing at age 6. He hails from a musical family, as both of his parents play musical instruments, his older sister is a cellist and his younger sister is a pianist. And notably, his great aunt was the first woman in the United States to earn a doctorate in music.

He attended the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts in Houston before enrolling at UHD as an undergraduate. He went on to become the University’s political science student of the year in 2006 and earned a spot on the Dean’s List his final semester.

“I am incredibly grateful for my experience at UHD,” he said. “I really blossomed there as an undergraduate and learned so much from my committed professors.”

Prior to enrolling at UHD, Ochoa attended film school at The University of Texas at Austin, where he gained valuable experience in all facets of film production. He premiered his own feature film, entitled, “Hardball: All Balls Don’t

Bounce,” at the International Action On Film Festival in Los Angeles in 2008, for which he received four award nominations, winning one.

As a producer, camera operator and editor, Ochoa has worked for The Discovery Channel, TLC, NBC and Universal Records, and his original work has appeared on the Austin Music Network and at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival.

While studying in Austin, he met the other members of the classical music quartet, Two Star Symphony, with whom he now tours the United States and Europe. “I knew that I wanted to become a professional musician when I joined Two Star Symphony,” he said. “At the time, I remember thinking, ‘I passionately love this. It feels really right.’ Meeting the other members of the group – Jo Bird, Debra Brown and Margaret LeJeune – and joining the quartet opened up a new, exciting world to me.”

Ochoa’s talents and the one-of-a-kind instrumentals of Two Star Symphony earned the quartet an esteemed invitation to speak and present at TEDxHouston in 2010.

At the quartet’s TEDxHouston talk, Ochoa shared, “We’ve done four albums, two feature film scores and a full-length ballet without ever writing down a single note. We never use sheet music and the novelty of this style allows us to

work in environments of near darkness,” which contributes to the band’s aura of eeriness. It also frees the musicians from the need for music stands and helps them establish an intimate connection with other collaborating artists.

In their decade as a quartet, the musicians have partnered with ballet and modern dance companies, universities, theaters and museums, and have played with live performers across the world.

“Music has been the guiding force of my entire adult life,” said Ochoa. “All the best moments of my life have been related to music.”

The Greater Houston Convention and Business Bureau named Two Star Symphony as one of 15 reasons to visit Houston and nationally, the classical quartet has received glowing reviews from the Huffington Post, New York Times and Spin Magazine.

After his many accomplishments, what is next for the enterprising young artist? “In the future, I’d like to become a filmmaker who composes my own film scores and become more active in politics. Eventually, I’d like to run for governor,” he said.

The Houston Press summarized Ochoa’s and Two Star Symphony’s musical imprint as “sinewy, slinky, jarringly percussive and totally perfect.” And the successful UHD alumnus and multi-talented artist wouldn’t have it any other way.

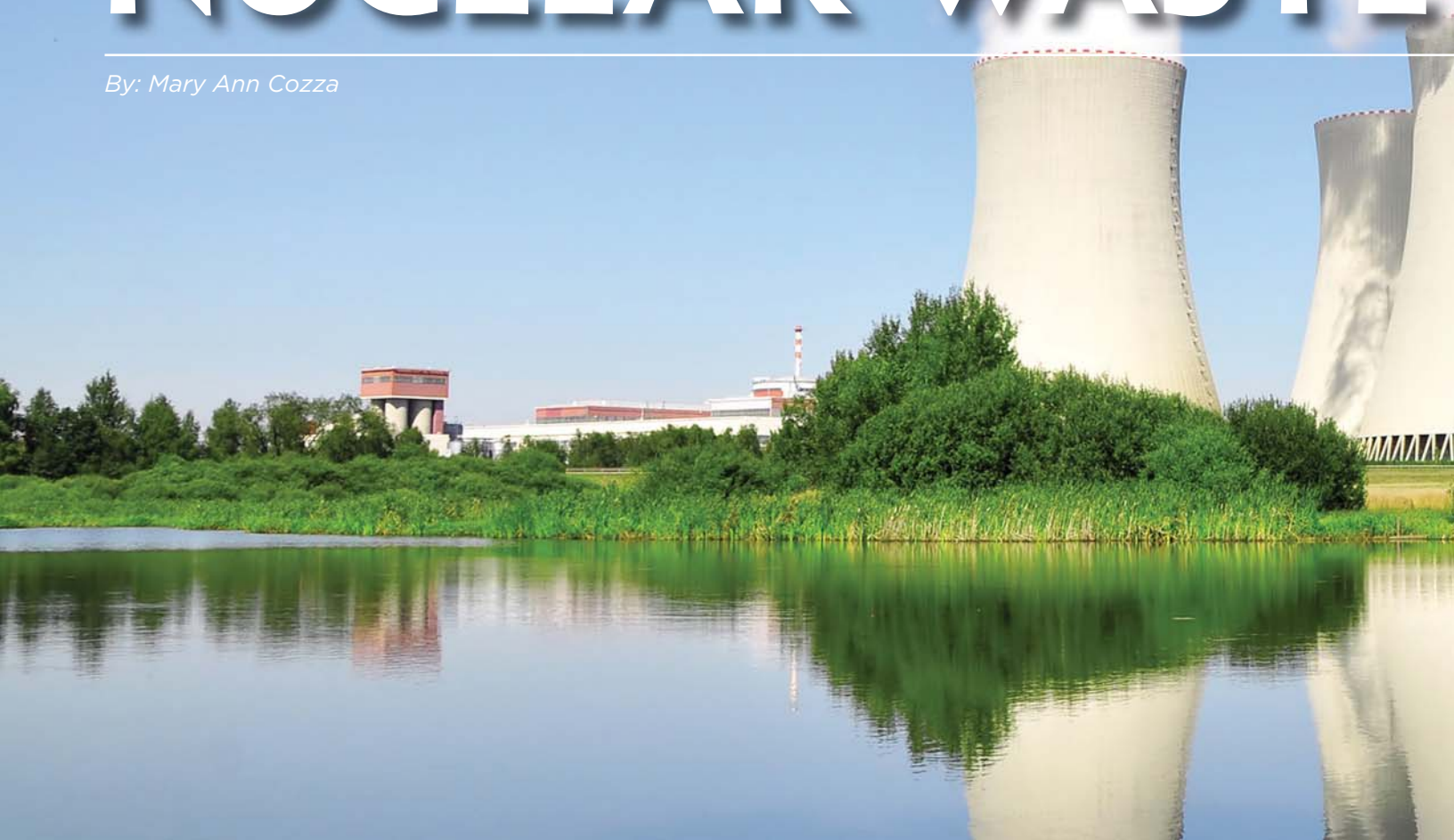
Macabre



*UHD alumnus
Jerry Ochoa brings new
meaning to the phrase,
“eclectic artist.”*

UHD Partners *with* Global Leaders to Solve NUCLEAR WASTE

By: Mary Ann Cozza



There are over 430 locations around the world where the radioactive material is simply awaiting an approved long-term storage facility.

The use of nuclear power is a polarizing topic across the world. Nuclear power stations provide nearly 6 percent of the world's energy and 13 percent of its electricity. And while proponents contend that the power is safe and sustainable, opponents worry about its safety for people and the environment.

Despite the arguments, one of the greatest questions regarding nuclear power is – what happens to the spent nuclear fuel – about 10,000 metric tons a year. The answer is, sometimes nothing. Currently, there are over 430 locations around the world where the radioactive material is simply awaiting an approved long-term storage facility and continuing to accumulate.

Armed with this troubling information, one UHD professor set out to educate students across the world on nuclear spent fuel in an effort to produce more scientists trained in this fascinating field and provide a permanent solution for reposition, or storage.

This summer, Janusz Grebowicz, associate professor of chemistry and physics, co-founded a two-week program that brought together the world's preeminent specialists to teach over 30 students from Russia, Poland, Sweden, the United States and other countries on the reposition of the spent fuel in geological formations.

Held in Oskarshamn, Sweden, and organized by Professor Waclaw Gudowski from the Royal Institute of Technology, the program was hosted by Swedish organizations: Linnaeus University; the Royal Institute of Technology; Nova – the Center for University Studies, Research and Development; and the Swedish Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management Company.

PROBLEM

“Sweden is the largest producer of nuclear energy per capita in the world,” Grebowicz said.

Continued on next page...



“They have some of the best infrastructures and research facilities to host a project like this.”

Four UHD students traveled to Sweden in June with Grebowicz to participate in the program, which included one week of lectures on such topics as plate tectonics, structural geology, hydrogeology, nuclear reactors, geophysics and microbiology. Following the classroom instruction, students enjoyed one week of field study that involved mapping surface areas, observing rock formations and more.

“The students did real work there,” Grebowicz said. “Their assignment was to figure out what professional geologists would do if told to build a repository at their location.”

“I found the whole experience to be incredibly relevant to me and my studies,” said Zach Jaco, UHD geosciences major. “There are so many geological aspects to consider when studying spent nuclear repositioning and the information I learned was exceptionally useful.”

According to Grebowicz, spent nuclear fuel must be stored underground long-term and the international research community has agreed on three types of rocks as the most suitable for permanent repositories: salt, clay and granite. As Sweden’s geological make-up mainly consists of granite, the country is the global research leader in that field.

Much of the research in Sweden on the final storage for the spent fuel is done near Oskarshamn at the Aspo Hard Rock Laboratory. Students were able to visit this unique and renowned research facility which is situated on a small island and some 1,500 feet below sea level and used by scientists and engineers across the globe to perform experiments regarding geological disposal.

This amazing educational and research program was the brainchild of Grebowicz, but its development can be linked to several interesting partnerships that fell into place with perfect timing.

“I teach a great class at UHD called ‘Thermophysical Properties of Materials’, which includes the study of rocks,” Grebowicz said. “We recently collaborated



with a university in Prague that is working to find a suitable site for nuclear spent fuel reposition and they sent us numerous granite samples. I said to myself, 'Why don't we pay attention to this problem of reposition, too.' After that, we received several large research grants from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and we have one of the best university labs in the country to perform thermal analysis."

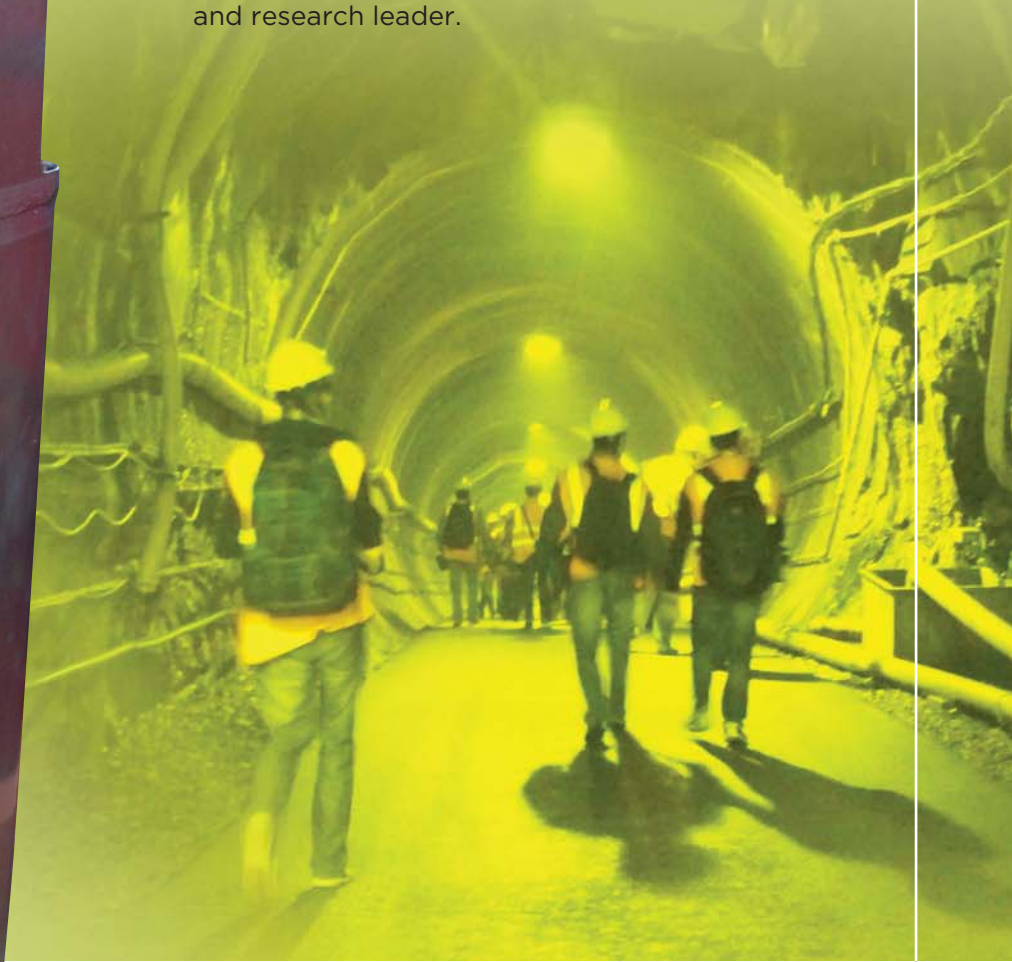
Grebowicz then partnered with Texas A&M University and the Nuclear Power Institute to offer

UHD students the opportunity to earn nuclear engineering certificates online. But what else could be done and how could students gain additional hands-on experience?

"After these elements came together, I recognized the need for this summer program," he said. "I contacted a colleague in Sweden to inquire about hosting a program on the topic of spent nuclear fuel reposition and thus, it was born."

Next year, the program will be cohosted by UHD and Texas A&M University.

In an industry that reaches the far corners of the world, UHD is demonstrating itself as an educational and research leader.



"We received several large research grants from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and we have one of the best university labs in the country to perform thermal analysis."

- Janusz Grebowicz

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

Students Participate in Unique Summer Internships and Research Projects

By: Mary Ann Cozza

A cornerstone of a UHD education is practical, real-world knowledge gained through high-impact educational experiences, internships and other similar initiatives. Students that participate in these opportunities are better prepared to face the challenges of careers following graduation.

Latoyya Smith, Deary Hudson and Joanna Castaneda share details of their hands-on intensive experiences and how it has helped shape their futures.



Computer science is a male-dominated profession, but that's not stopping senior Latoyya Smith from being successful in the field. This summer, Smith headed to New York to intern with technology powerhouse Google. She was selected to participate in the company's inaugural Internal Technology Intern Program, a 12-week internship designed for students who have a passion for providing technical user support.

Smith is a member of Scholars Academy, an academically competitive program at UHD, and is a computer science major. And although she had previous information technology (IT) experience, she was required to undergo a grueling two-week intensive training.

"With Google being such a large company and having extensive security policies, they have their own way of handling IT issues," she said. "So after two weeks of training, I was finally able to really start working."

According to Smith, Google uses a production schedule called "80-20." For 80 percent of an

Hard Work in the Big Apple



employee's day, they're required to work on given tasks. The remaining 20 percent can be used to explore a project of choice.

"For most of my time, I worked in a support role to fellow Googlers," Smith said. "I visited their desks and the TechStop, a place employees come with IT questions or problems, to provide assistance. The rest of my time was spent working on a coding project called Noogley, which keeps track of employees' equipment, desks and physical locations as they enter the company as new employees, interns, vendors or contractors."

Aside from the interesting projects, Smith says Google is a great place to work for the added benefits.

"Google provides a lot of perks for their employees, including food, travel and education," she said.

Smith was sent to the Google headquarters in California, the Googleplex, as well as satellite offices in Michigan and Pennsylvania for team visits, and to the Google Women Engineers Conference for professional development. The company also took her on a tour of the

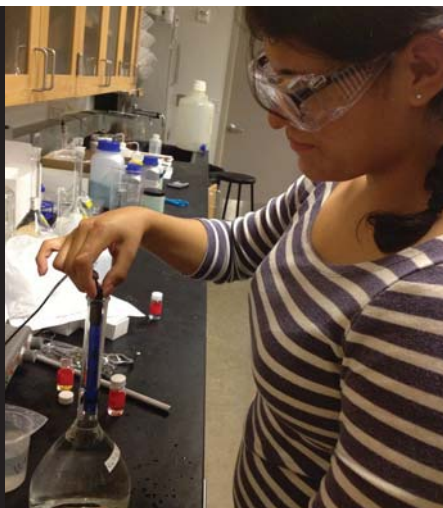
sites and landmarks of New York, including the Statue of Liberty, Freedom Tower and the Empire State Building.

After 12 weeks of intense work and travel, Smith is looking forward to the future with her newly acquired skills. She recently interviewed with her host company for a full-time position following a December 2013 graduation.

Continued on next page...



Forensic Field Trip



The different areas of forensic science can overwhelm an undergraduate chemistry major like Joanna Castaneda. Unsure of what her future could hold, she dedicated her summer to discovering her true passions.

To that end, Castaneda spent time at two premiere research facilities – the forensics laboratory at the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LACSD) and the University of North-Texas (UNT) Department of Chemistry.

“This summer’s experiences have really given me the extra focus I was searching for,” she said. “After spending time in California and at UNT, I now know what I want to do after graduation.”

Castaneda spent time at LACSD on the recommendation of natural sciences lecturer Houston Brown, who personally arranged the in-depth learning experience. While in the lab, Castaneda shadowed criminalists in departments like pharmacology, fire arms, DNA analysis, narcotics and toxicology. She observed fact-finding experiments and tests using real evidence.

“The whole experience was amazing,” she said. “My favorite division was DNA analysis. After spending time in that lab, watching professionals use the same equipment we have at UHD in real life – I know that is exactly what I want to do.”

Castaneda’s decision was solidified after spending two months at UNT for an REU (research experience for undergraduates), working on forensics-based research.

“I was part of the ‘bone project,’ which compared different copper concentrations used in DNA analysis,” she said.

After a spring 2014 graduation, she plans to attend graduate school in California or at UNT, where she would likely continue working on the same research. She credits Scholars Academy with her academic success and the high-impact experiences of the summer.

“I owe it all to Scholars Academy,” she said. “Being a part of the program has really prepared me for the next steps of getting my master’s and hopefully working in a forensics lab one day.”





Computer Savvy in California

Deary Hudson is a self-taught computer programmer, but through his participation in an intensive internship and mentorship program in Silicon Valley, his technical and professional skills have skyrocketed.

Hudson, a junior computer science major, was selected as a summer fellow for CODE2040, a program that, according to its mission, “places high performing black and Latino software engineering students in internships with top start-ups and provides mentorship, leadership training and network development.”

CODE2040 is in its second year and already boasts partnerships with companies like Etsy, Foursquare, Facebook and more. This summer, the program hosted 18 fellows from across the country, including Hudson, one of UH’s best and brightest.

“Last semester, I had the opportunity to listen to the program’s executive director speak on entrepreneurship and the vision of CODE2040,” he said. “They were combating a real problem and were providing tangible resources for rising engineering talent. I thought that what they were doing was noble and I wanted to jumpstart my career in the tech space – so I applied!”

Hudson began interning for the City and County of San Francisco’s (CCSF) Department of Technology, building internal project management tools and doing web development. Although CODE2040 typically works with start-up companies, the chief information officer of San Francisco specifically requested a CODE2040 intern.

“Because my internship is unique to the program, I feel that I had more freedom and a greater chance to grow my skill level,” he said. “This opportunity was so amazing. As someone who is about to start a career, this type of exposure and opportunity is something I can’t take for granted.”

In addition to the internship, CODE2040 provides fellows with technical workshops, industry mentors and exciting opportunities to network and develop professionally.

“The program took us to different companies twice a week to meet with people in different tech positions,” he said. “We were even invited to the home of Ben Horowitz, founding partner of Andreessen Horowitz, for a networking event. I’ve met

the mayor of San Francisco and built relationships with a great cast of people across Silicon Valley.”

At UH, Hudson serves as president of the Association for Computing Machinery student chapter, works on a research project that uses Twitter to identify crimes in near real-time and is a member of Scholars Academy.

“Being at UH helped me better interact with people,” he said. “Also, I know that the research I previously did technically prepared me for the internship.”

Following a May 2014 graduation, Hudson hopes to take the skills and enthusiasm he garnered from CODE2040 and UH to start his own business.

“The whole experience has started a fire in me,” he said.



L to R: San Francisco Mayor Edwin Lee, Deary Hudson, and Marc Tuitioui, Chief Technology Officer of the City and County of San Francisco.

Benjamin Franklin once said, “An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” This sentiment rings true in the lives of two successful graduate program alumni, who turned to advanced degrees for professional advancement and skill development and are now reaping the benefits.

Aaron Tyksinski is chief deputy for the Fort Bend County Precinct 3 Constable’s Office. After earning a bachelor’s degree from UHD in criminal justice, Tyksinski immediately entered the Master of Science in Criminal Justice program.

“I knew that I had to return to college in order to advance in my career,” he said. “I want to be a police chief for a large municipality, as well as a professor. Earning my bachelor’s and master’s degrees was the only way to make those things happen.”

Since completing his graduate degree, Tyksinski already has had the opportunity to share what he learned in the classroom as an adjunct lecturer in UHD’s College of Public Service, as well as at Wharton County Junior College, the Gus George Law Enforcement Academy and the Texas Justice Court Training Center.

“The more time I spend in the classroom, the more I can develop my own skills,” he said. “I enjoy seeing people learn and I have a real passion for the content I teach.”

Tyksinski encourages others to strive for long-term planning and take the necessary steps to reach those goals. He also stresses the intangible benefits of earning a graduate degree.

“In today’s economy, having an advanced degree demonstrates to employers responsibility, personal growth, commitment and professionalism,” he said. “I gained so much from my master’s program in addition to the classroom instruction and all of that has been pivotal to my success.”

Tyksinski continues to work toward his long-term goals and currently is enrolled in a doctoral program in public safety administration. He expects to graduate with a 4.0 grade point average in 2015.



Reaping the Rewards of a

By: Mary Ann Cozza



Aaron Tyksinski



For Trazanna Moreno, earning an advanced degree was a matter of skill development and industry credibility.

Moreno earned two bachelor's degrees, in English and journalism, before working 11 years as a news anchor and reporter. When she decided to change fields and enter the public relations industry, she knew additional education would allow her a smoother transition into a competitive market.

"I wanted a career change and thought that getting my master's degree would be the way to do that, while demonstrating competence and professional substance," she said. "I found that the knowledge I gained was immediately beneficial and applicable to my current position and I was able to solve real-life work problems in the classroom."

Moreno, the chief marketing officer for YMCA of Greater Houston, was working as the organization's communications director while earning a Master of Science in Professional Writing and Technical Communication degree from UHD.

"A few months after I graduated, I received a promotion and a raise," she said. "My boss said that it was important and impressive that I was able to complete my degree

while working full time. The raise more than covered the cost of my degree."

In addition to the classroom knowledge, Moreno cites the credibility, respect and networking opportunities that have come since earning her graduate degree.

"Earning an advance degree requires dedication and hard work, which commands respect from peers," she said. "And although I wasn't expecting it, some of my closest friends and colleagues are people from my master's program."

With those benefits in mind, Moreno calls earning her graduate degree, "one of the smartest things I ever did."

For these two UHD alumni, earning an advanced degree provided much more than an additional frame to hang in an office. Professional skills and industry knowledge helped them advance in their careers and stay competitive in the job market.

For more information on UHD's graduate programs, visit: uhd.edu/academic/gradprograms.html



Graduate Degree



Trazanna Moreno



GEOLOGY ROCKS

at UHD and Throughout Houston

By: Mariana Elliott

What is the fastest growing occupation in the country? The answer: geoscientists, professionals who study the physical aspects of the earth and, in the energy sector, use technology to find natural resources around the world.

Houston's booming oil and gas industry has contributed to an increased demand for geoscientists and UHD is in the position to address that need through education. This semester, UHD is offering for the first time a new bachelor's degree in geoscience, along with three specific concentrations.

"UHD's geoscience degree offers several aspects that make it special, including concentrations in the industry- and research-related fields of petroleum geotechnology, environmental geology and geochemistry, as well as an emphasis on undergraduate research. This will make our students more competitive in graduate school and in the geosciences career market," said Associate Professor Ken Johnson, who was instrumental in developing the degree program.

Lisa Morano, chair of the Department of Natural Sciences, also was active in the program's creation and is looking forward to seeing students pursue their passions for geology. "I am thrilled to now have a bachelor's degree in geoscience at UHD. This is an excellent science degree to offer in the city of Houston - giving our students tremendous career opportunities."

With the addition of this degree, UHD is better able to meet the employment demands of Houston's thriving economy, while preparing students for successful careers following graduation.

Associate Professor
Ken Johnson, left,
examines rock samples
with UHD students.



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for geoscientists is projected to grow by **21 percent** from 2010 - 2020, faster than the average of all occupations.

AABG EXPLORER

Work Force Shifts Create Manpower Needs

*"The number of geoscience-related jobs has increased by almost **30 percent** during the last decade."*

According to Louise S. Durham,
Explorer Correspondent

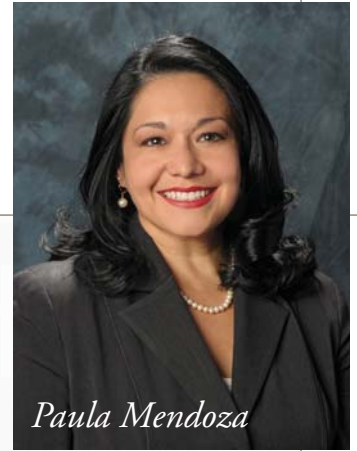
HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

Aug. 23, 2013

"The thriving oil and gas industry in Houston is helping companies in a variety of sectors see new growth."

UHD Alumna Appointed to University of Houston System Board of Regents

By: Mary Ann Cozza



Paula Mendoza

Gov. Rick Perry appointed three members to the University of Houston System Board of Regents in October for terms to expire August 2019, one of which is a University of Houston-Downtown alumna.

Paula Mendoza is president and CEO of Possible Missions, a project management company, and has a story similar to many UHD students. Mendoza enrolled at UHD as an adult student because of the University's flexibility, location and culture of acceptance.

"After earning my associates degree, I knew I still needed to do more," she said. "UHD was close to my home and because I was married with a child, I felt like a non-traditional student. UHD worked with my schedule, met my needs and felt like the right place for me."

Mendoza earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and was the first member of her family to graduate college. She later channeled her significant experience in supply chain and diversity management into starting her own business, Possible Missions.

"My parents were always encouraging me to strive further," she said. "Earning a college education made an incredible difference in my life and I know UHD prepared me for my future and career immensely."

Mendoza's passion for education also led her to begin a non-profit organization that helped guide high school students through the college application process. Knowing how difficult the process was for her, Mendoza wanted to support young people's quest for higher education. Although the organization is no longer active, Mendoza's involvement in various foundations and boards helps her reach more students and populations that need resources and assistance.

Currently, Mendoza is a commissioner of the Texas Ethics Commission and a board member of the East End Chamber of Commerce Foundation. She is past chairman of the Texas Ethics Commission, Texas Association of Mexican American Chambers of Commerce and its Education Foundation, and the MD Anderson Family YMCA. She is also a past board member of several organizations, including the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy, the Association for the Advancement of Mexican Americans and the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The two members appointed alongside Mendoza are Durga D. Agrawal of Houston and Peter Taaffe of Austin. Agrawal is president and CEO of Piping Technology and Products, and director of the Agrawal Association of America. He earned his master's and doctoral degrees in industrial engineering from the University of Houston in 1969 and 1975, respectively. Taaffe is an attorney with the Buzbee Law Firm, a member of the State Bar of Texas, a member of the University of Houston Center for U.S. and Mexican Law Advisory Board, and a former adjunct professor at the University of Houston Law Center. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas in 1993 and graduated with honors from the University of Houston Law Center in 1997.

Mendoza hopes to contribute her professional and personal experiences to her position on the Board of Regents.

"I want to bring my experience as a businessperson and entrepreneur, as well as my passion for education to enhance what the Board is already doing," she said. "I am so honored that Governor Perry appointed me and I look forward to the opportunity to help even more students reach their educational goals."

First Impressions Count... The new Welcome Center and parking garage will provide a central entry point to the UHD campus for current and prospective students. The Welcome Center, with a spectacular view of Houston from the I-45 and I-10 interchange, will include a tour room for presentations to prospective students, seminar rooms and access to newly created space for student services suites. The Welcome Center and garage are scheduled for completion during the 2014-2015 academic year.

