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UTPA to partner in Department of Homeland Security project

The University of Texas-Pan American has been named a partner university in the establishment of the Center of Excellence for Border Security and Immigration by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

"The establishment of this center is another significant marker in UTPA's transformation to a nationally recognized learner-centered research institution. This along with other recently announced initiatives, such as the Center for Rapid Response Manufacturing, are part of our plan to bring additional intellectual and fiscal resources to the Valley," said Dr. Paul Sale, UTPA provost and vice president for Academic Affairs.

The center, spearheaded by The University of Arizona at Tucson, will be a consortium of 12 universities, including UTPA that will focus on the research of population dynamics, immigration administration and enforcement, operational analysis, control and communications, immigration policy, civic integration and citizenship, border risk management and international governance.

Partner universities under the research component will share \$15 million over the next six years to develop better models for understanding immigration and new technologies, such as surveillance, screening, data fusion and situational awareness using sensors, unmanned aerial vehicles and other technologies. While The University of Arizona at Tucson will head the research area, The University of Texas at El Paso will lead the educational component of the center. The Center of Excellence for Border Security and Immigration is one of five new centers conducting multi-disciplinary research and creating innovative learning environments for critical homeland security missions.

Dr. Van Reidhead, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences dean, will lead the cross-campus collaborative effort of UTPA interdisciplinary scientists, who will study a wide range of immigration-related factors affecting border security and quality of life in the U.S.-Mexico border region including undocumented immigration, civic integration of new immigrants, human and drug trafficking, utilization of public services, criminal behavior, detention and court processes, law enforcement practices and policies, and trade and international relationships of border communities.

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"The beauty of this center is that DHS has funded UTPA researchers to study immigration on the border for what it really is, not what Washington thinks it is. The UTPA approach will be used to understand immigration throughout the country."

- Dr. Van Reidhead
Dean, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

really is, not what Washington thinks it is. The UTPA approach will be used to understand immigration throughout the country," Reidhead said.

UTPA's research is anchored to the Borderlife Research Project of Dr. Chad Richardson, professor in the Department of Sociology, who, for more than 30 years, has developed a model utilizing student researchers to conduct research related to the distinct South Texas social and cultural environment. Since then, his students have conducted more than 10,000 interviews among 25 distinct social or cultural groups on both sides of the border resulting in more than 6,000 ethnographic accounts of the lives of individual people as told by them. The economic value of the borderlife archive has been appraised in recent years at \$2 million.

Reidhead said the center will not only support UTPA's vision of becoming the premier learner-centered research institution in the state, but it will give UTPA students choices and the preparation needed to succeed in whatever career path they choose. The Center of Excellence for Border Security and Immigration, Reidhead said, is also a good addition to UTPA's Intelligence Community Center of Academic Excellence, a federally designated center on campus that was funded through a \$2.5 million government grant in 2006 and is piloted by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Ozuna named business administration dean

After a national search, Dr. Teofilo Ozuna was recently named dean of the College of Business Administration at The University of Texas-Pan American.

Ozuna has served in numerous capacities during his time at the University including vice provost for the Office of Graduate Studies, associate dean for COBA and most recently interim dean of the college for the last year.

UTPA Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Paul Sale said although Ozuna's most recent experience is at UTPA, he has a long successful record at Texas A&M University and has already used that experience to strengthen this campus.

"Dr. Ozuna has the vision, experience, and background to lead the college at a time when UTPA is transforming itself into a learner-centered research institution," Sale said.

Ozuna said first on his list of things to do is continue to focus on hiring excellent faculty who fit the learner-centered research mind-set the University and college are moving toward.

"This will greatly benefit our students and enhance the learning they are engaged in," he said.

There are three areas Ozuna said he would like to excel in, including continuing to enhance the professional development of UTPA students.

"Doing this will complement the knowledge they gain in the classroom and will make them better business leaders," he said. "I want to also create an environment in the college where our faculty excel and become national leaders in their field."



– Dr. Teofilo Ozuna

Ozuna said he would also like to redesign the MBA program so that it better fits the new organizational structure that regional, national and global companies are now engaged in.

Ozuna, who has been with UTPA since 2000, began his duties as head of the college March 1. As dean, he will lead four departments that offer eight bachelor's degrees, three master's degrees and one doctoral degree.

Ozuna said he is most proud of organizing the student leaders of the 14 business student organizations into the Business Student Advisory Council, which provides the Office of the Dean with feedback on student issues and helps other students engage in professional development and leadership.

"We are already experiencing the leadership accomplishments these student organizations are having regionally, statewide, and internationally," he said.

Ozuna received a Bachelor of Science in agricultural economics in 1981, and a doctorate in agricultural economics in 1989 from Texas A&M University.

The College of Business Administration includes the departments of accounting and business law, economics and finance, computer information systems and quantitative methods, and management, marketing and international business.

The college currently enrolls more than 2,600 undergraduate and 288 graduate students, as well as 63 doctoral students, with a roster of more than 80 full- and part-time faculty.

SACS renews University's accreditation

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges reaffirmed the accreditation of The University of Texas-Pan American Dec. 11.

Dr. Blandina Cárdenas, UTPA president, said this news means UTPA has fully met the demanding criteria established by SACS, which administers the accreditation process every 10 years for colleges and universities in 11 states – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

"It is important for our faculty, staff, students and all of South Texas, the state and nation to know that UTPA has been recognized by The Southern Association of Colleges and Universities as providing a true quality education to all who pass through our doors. Our employees and students can be proud to work here and to attend this wonderful institution," she said.

The reaffirmation work at UTPA was a three-year long process, and included a self-study, a quality enhancement plan (QEP), and a review by an external visitation team. The University's QEP, a major component of the SACS accreditation process, focuses on improving student success in college algebra.

Dr. William L. Turk, UTPA assistant professor of political science and the SACS accreditation coordinator and liaison, said the entire process was very detailed and comprehensive.

"Everything from the groundskeeping to the graduate school was reviewed. We filed five all-inclusive paper and electronic reports, and we reported on everything from the President's Office to the painters who make our buildings so attractive," Turk

said. "Two different groups of academics from universities all over the SACS 11-state region dissected everything we do at UTPA."

Turk said the announcement of the reaffirmation of accreditation signaled the end of a lengthy process, which involved the countless time and effort of about 150 members of the UTPA community – students, faculty and staff. The announcement was made during the annual SACS meeting held in New Orleans, which Turk attended with Dr. Paul Sale, provost/vice president for Academic Affairs.

"The final result of reaffirmation can be summed up quite simply. Every day thousands of employees work at UTPA and at the end of the day each one has made a terrific contribution to the education of thousands of students. The SACS assessment of the accumulation of those days of work is simply a confirmation of what this University is about – giving the best quality of everything associated with higher education to our students and community," Turk said.

Accreditation is a voluntary, independent review of an institution's educational programs and their adherence to accepted academic standards. It determines a school's eligibility for participation in Title IV (federal) and state financial aid programs as well as the acceptance and transfer of college credits of its students.

Graduation from an accredited institution also qualifies its students for admission to higher education (graduate school), more specialized institutions or for professional practice. UTPA was first accredited in 1956.

Online courses offer students flexibility and convenience

Even though Marybeth Kochis resides in Austin, pursuing a Master of Science in kinesiology at The University of Texas-Pan American is possible thanks to the online degree programs and courses the University offers.

Kochis, who works as a senior consultant for Kepner-Tregoe – a consulting and training services company – said she travels frequently for work, so pursuing her master's degree online is a perfect fit for her.

"I am a road warrior and I live in the boonies, far away from civilization, so that's why I chose an on online degree," Kochis said. "I often do assignments at 2 a.m. I love the flexibility in time for meeting deadlines since I have access 24 hours a day to content and assignments."

According to the Sloan Consortium, more than 3.2 million students are learning online in the United States.

Kochis isn't the only student taking advantage of the flexibility that online courses provide. According to the Sloan Consortium, more than 3.2 million students are learning online in the United States.

UTPA offers a master's in kinesiology and a master's in business administration that are fully online, and more than 700 classes are taught by University professors that utilize some aspect of the Web.

There are three types of online classes that can be taken to fulfill online degrees, as well as traditional degree requirements at UTPA. Fully online courses require that students log in to a computer to complete their assignments and projects, while Web-augmented courses are face-to-face courses that are augmented by technology that students can access through the Web. Reduced seat-time courses meet in the classroom one day a week and online the other day, which increases the utilization of classroom space.

This semester approximately 14,900 students are taking one of the three types of online courses at the University, according to Dr. Jane LeMaster, executive director for the Center for Learning, Teaching and Technology. She said they are trying to grow the online program and are continuously working to give students all of the options they need.

"Our students are becoming so much more technology savvy and they are demanding the flexibility more," LeMaster said. "It is so much easier when they can decide when they want to attend class, complete assignments and interact with their peers."

LeMaster said there are many advantages to taking online courses, ranging from not having to find a parking spot, to being able to work from home or another location.

"Convenience is one reason that some students prefer online courses," LeMaster said. "Some may have schedule conflicts with

other classes, work, having to pick up children or other home demands that make flexibility essential."

This semester UTPA offers 63 fully online, five reduced-seat time and 704 Web-augmented courses. Within the last two years, the University has doubled the number of fully online courses being offered from 31 to 63.

Sklyar Stoleson, a junior majoring in computer science, said he enjoys the online component of his class because it helps him stay more organized and offers flexibility.

"My professor assigns a lot of teamwork projects, and the technology makes those projects more convenient, since I can log in from the comfort of my home," he said.

He said he finds the instant messaging applications, as well as the Blackboard component of the class particularly useful. Blackboard is the Web-based application that serves as the online classroom. With this technology students have access to discussion boards, chat rooms, and different places for their course content. There is even technology available now where students and professors can interact via Web cameras and microphones.

Not only are online courses advantageous to students, but also to the University and faculty members.

"Online courses allow for flexible scheduling which provides an opportunity for better classroom utilization and decrease the strain on classroom space," LeMaster said. "One advantage to faculty is also increasing the faculty member's flexibility on how they use their time."

Online courses require a great amount of discipline in keeping up with the reading, assignments and interaction requirements in order to be successful, LeMaster said. But often times, she said, students come to class ready to work and engage.

"I feel like the students that come into my class are more relaxed. They come when they have everything else taken care of and they can talk," LeMaster said. "Since so many of our students have jobs and families, we've allowed them to take courses and finish their degrees sooner than they would have been able to otherwise."

To learn more about online courses, contact LeMaster at 956/381-2979 or visit <http://cdl.utpa.edu>.



Cárdenas to lead UT Borderplex Health Council

As the new chair, effective February 2008, of the UT Borderplex Health Council, Dr. Blandina Cárdenas, president of The University of Texas-Pan American, will lead the council's mission to promote education and research to address the health challenges of the South Texas border region.



Established in 2006, the UT Borderplex Health Council is a collaborative initiative bringing together the scientific and health research expertise of two of The University of Texas System health science centers with the knowledge and skills of the many UT System academic institutions along the Texas-Mexico border.

Its founding members include The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and its Regional Academic Health Center campuses in Harlingen and Edinburg, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and its School of Public Health, The University of Texas-Pan American

and The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College. The Council also works collaboratively with the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio Laredo Campus Extension, The University of Texas at El Paso and the UT School of Public Health's El Paso regional campus. The current Council also includes community representatives from the border region.

"The Borderplex institution presidents are united in our commitment to collaboration that will strengthen this work on the border," Cárdenas said.

The council offers financial support in the form of grants ranging from \$20,000 to \$50,000 to promote inter-institutional, interdisciplinary research, scientific inquiry, and programs initially targeting three significant health-related issues facing border residents - diabetes, obesity and the nursing workforce shortage.

Since its inception, it has funded \$550,000 in 11 proposals examining topics ranging from the susceptibility of tuberculosis in diabetic patients to a feasibility evaluation of expanding existing accelerated LVN to BSN/RN nursing programs to additional campuses.

For more information on the UT Borderplex Council or proposal submission procedures, contact Carol Rausch, assistant to the UTPA president, at 956/381-2127 or via e-mail at bradencr@utpa.edu

Fall 2008 to offer more degree options for students

The University of Texas-Pan American will soon offer two new minors to complement the 55 bachelor's degrees currently offered at the institution, as well as a master's degree in physician assistant studies.

The Master of Physician Assistant Studies, which will be offered starting fall 2008, will require 100 semester credit hours of professional curricula including medical science courses in pathophysiology, pharmacology, clinical science, and medical psychiatry, among others. The program is open on a competitive basis to anyone having met the prerequisites, but applicants with a science background are encouraged to apply.

For students who have already completed a bachelor's in physician assistant studies, an online bridge program will be available. Students can continue working while completing 16 hours of designated online courses and then receive their master's degrees.

"The new master's program will emphasize evidence-based medicine in which the 'best practice' approach is tied to clinical research," said Frank Ambriz, assistant professor and chair of the Physician Assistant Studies Program. "The second unique aspect of our program is that during the last four months of clinical rotations, the students will choose a specialty track in one of four areas of medicine to gain more confidence. The areas include geriatrics, emergency medicine, rural medicine, and border health."

Effective fall 2008, the University will also open minors in global security studies and Hispanic media studies, which will each require 18 hours of coursework. Nick Weimer, manager of the Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence (ICCAE) said the global securities studies minor is interdisciplinary in nature and has been developed to complement all majors on campus.

"The emphasis of this minor will be advanced interdisciplinary study, research, and team communication in situations where students work to produce solutions to problems that involve working with specialists in many different fields," Weimer said.

The courses that make up the global security studies minor will consist of an introduction course that will present the structure of the minor as well as familiarize students with the ICCAE

and available career opportunities within the intelligence community. The ICCAE, which is housed out of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, is UTPA's first federally-designated center which was made possible through a \$2.5 million government grant.

The purpose of the center is to educate and prepare South Texas students as national security, global economy and intelligence leaders.

Students will also choose between a course in science/engineering research or a course in social and health sciences. Nine hours of cluster courses outside of a student's major to broaden their foundation skills will also be required, as well as a practicum course where students will work on a research project.

"Students should consider the global security studies minor to gain the knowledge and skill sets needed for leadership in all sectors of the global economy - for careers in government, corporations, education, and nonprofit organizations," Weimer said.

The minor in Hispanic media studies, which will require 18 hours of coursework, will also be offered in the fall. This multidisciplinary minor includes courses such as media and Hispanics, global communication, Spanish language media studies, advanced Spanish language and six hours of language, cultural studies or a communication internship.

"The minor will complement anyone, but would be best for journalism, communication and modern language students," Dr. Salma Ghanem, department of communication chair, said. "Students should consider a minor in Hispanic media studies because of the growth of Spanish media and the Hispanic population."

Also in the works to be submitted for approval is a master's in global security studies and leadership and doctoral programs in applied and computational mathematics, and engineering science.

For more information about the master's in physician assistant studies, contact Ambriz at 956/316-7042. To learn more about the minors in Hispanic media studies and global securities studies, call Ghanem at 956/381-3583 and Weimer at 956/381-3551, respectively.

PLANETARIUM

Last year former Microsoft guru Charles Simonyi spent \$25 million for a tourist's ride into earth's orbit. Not many can afford that type of rendezvous with the universe.

Soon, however, Rio Grande Valley students and the community will also have an opportunity to more closely experience the wonders of space via newly enhanced planetarium facilities at The University of Texas-Pan American.

With close to \$70,000 in funding recently approved by the University, UTPA's H-E-B Planetarium will be upgraded with a digital projection system and the latest in surround sound capabilities, be made handicapped accessible, and sport an upgraded reception area, where educational, hands-on exhibits will be on display. In addition, the University will purchase a portable, inflatable planetarium dome, five to seven meters in diameter, which can be utilized for community outreach in schools and other locations.

"We want people to get excited about education," said Dr. Steven C. Tidrow, associate professor and chair of the UTPA Department of Physics and Geology. "The present analog projection system can't provide the types of functions that the new portable digital projector will for instruction to students enrolled in astronomy courses and for educational outreach to youth and adults from our community."

Dr. Nicolas Pereyra, a lecturer in the Department of Physics and Geology and head astronomer at UTPA, said the planetarium's evolution into a digital, multimedia environment will transform the viewer's picture of the universe.

"The audience, for example, will literally move through the Milky Way galaxy. And we will be able to project images and zoom in and out as needed on planets and other objects in astronomy classes and in public presentations," he said.

A visit to the planetarium can make concepts in physics and astronomy easier to understand said Dr. Edwin LeMaster, dean of the College of Science and Engineering, who promotes the educational value of a planetarium and the spark it might ignite in students to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) studies and careers.

"It is something that excites kids' imaginations," he said.

Three full-dome videos that can be run in both the fixed and portable planetarium are also being purchased. The videos, which range in price from \$1,500 to \$5,000 each, are intended to serve three audiences - "Sky Quest" for elementary/middle school students, "Oasis in Space" for high school students, and "Hubble Vision 2" for adults/Winter Texans. The department hopes to add to their video offerings and develop their own presentations as additional funds become available.

"We welcome donations - we'd like to be able to have two digital projectors so if one is at a school, the fixed planetarium could still offer presentations. With other new technology available, we could also create a Cave Automatic Virtual Environment - a totally three-dimensional world - within the planetarium lending to other research and entertainment opportunities for students and the community," Tidrow said.

Looking back at the planetarium's 45-year history, it has drawn valued community support toward its role in creating science literacy in Valley students and residents.

Built in 1963 in the initial stages of the Space Age, the 1,373-square foot planetarium seats 40 under its 20-foot diameter dome. A place where students and visitors can view a reproduction of the nighttime sky through projected images on its domed ceiling, the planetarium supported the then Pan-American College's Department of Astro-Science.

Initiated in 1955, the astro-science department offered the only degree program of its type in the United States, combining astronomy, astronautics and astrophysics. The department also operated an observatory adjacent to the planetarium that housed one of the largest telescopes on any Texas university campus in 1965 and was once in charge of one of three earth satellite tracking stations in the country.

The observatory - a building designed and equipped with high-powered telescopes to observe astronomical phenomena - was built with support from Mrs. Moulton "Ty" Cobb, widow of the former baseball great then living in Weslaco, who donated \$7,000 for the construction of the observatory dome.

The projection system for the planetarium, according to Tidrow, came as a donation after use in World War II from the Army Signal Corps associated with the former Moore Air Force Base located northwest of Edinburg, where thousands of Air Force pilots over the years received their primary flight training.

"The projector was used in the training of aviators to utilize the stars for guidance during night flights in World War II," Tidrow said.

In the 1960s, both planetarium and observatory were popular attractions. Astro-science students offered moon-watch events and planetarium shows that at the program's peak attracted in one year alone 11,000 visitors. As the number of astro-science majors decreased toward the end of the U.S. Apollo program, the university discontinued that degree program in 1973.

The observatory was torn down in 1995 to make way for the construction of the \$26 million science building complex, which incorporated the planetarium in its courtyard. In 1997, thanks to financial support from the H-E-B Grocery Company's foundation, the planetarium underwent another facelift, particularly the

UNIVERSITY TO LAUNCH NEW SPACE ADVENTURE

addition of its bright blue and green mosaic exterior. It was also named at that time the H-E-B Planetarium in honor of company's support to the University. Visits to the planetarium have continued since, with 500 student visitors in the fall 2007 semester.

Tidrow said recently the interest in astronomy by UTPA students has skyrocketed.

"In the past five years, the number of semester credit hours taken by students has gone approximately from 464 per semester year in 2002-2003 to more than 2,000 in 2007-2008 - a growth rate on average of about 35 percent a year," he said. "There are a lot of reasons - we have brought in some professors who are enthusiastic about what they are teaching. The planetarium also offers experiences that students would not have other places."

The physics and geology department, which is in the process of constructing a new planetarium Web site, provides night observation sessions for astronomy lab students every Tuesday between 7 and 10 p.m. These sessions are also open to the public, offering two 10-inch telescopes capable of dark sky, deep space observation of galaxies to nebulas. Visitors to the night observation site, located just north of the Physical Science Building on campus, are assisted by Pereyra and several volunteer astronomy graders and lab instructors.

UTPA students also have the opportunity for astronomy and physics study and research using the state's second largest observatory at Stephen F. Austin University, which UTPA has a historical affiliation with. Their observatory's construction was facilitated in 1978 by the donation of its one meter mirror from UTPA, which was obtained as part of a grant from the National Science Foundation.

While the great majority of us will never get to experience the real space travel that Simonyi did, both Tidrow and

Pereyra agree that gaining a better understanding of the universe is essential for us all, particularly the younger generation.

"There are many things to learn and be discussed within a planetarium. As we understand more about our universe, the better we can understand ourselves and the resources we have access to, thus the brighter the future we can plan for," Pereyra said.

To learn more about the physics and geology department at UTPA, go to <http://www.utpa.edu/dept/physci/>. For more information on the planetarium, call 956/316-7088 or 381-3521 or send an e-mail to HEBplanetarium@utpa.edu or to Tidrow at scidrow@utpa.edu.





Dr. Rozzano C. Locsin fills endowed chair in nursing

Nursing was not the first choice of a profession for Rozzano C. Locsin, R.N., Ph.D., F.A.A.N., the first recipient of the Lillian O. Slemph Endowed Chair in Nursing at The University of Texas-Pan American.

Locsin, a professor of nursing at the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing at Florida Atlantic University, wanted to be a musician or to build airplanes as an aeronautical engineer.

"But my father said 'no, you have to be a nurse.' In my native country, the Philippines, the culture is similar to here – what your father says, you do," he said.

It was a fortunate decision for the nursing profession, where Locsin has excelled as an educator, scholar and researcher.

"Dr. Locsin's selection for the endowed chair was based on his exemplary work in international nursing, development of new nursing programs and the acquisition of external funding to support research and program development. His mentorship to faculty in developing their own research agendas will ensure sustainability after he leaves," said Dr. Bruce Reed, dean of the College of Health Sciences and Human Services.

Locsin, who earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from Silliman University in Dumaguete City, Philippines and his Ph.D. from the University of the Philippines in Manila, has served as a consultant worldwide in nursing curriculum development and international nursing education. In 2000, he served as a Fulbright Scholar in Uganda, where he helped facilitate two master's programs in nursing.

Locsin's research interests include technology and caring in nursing, holistic nursing and arts and aesthetics in therapy and health promotion. As a piano music enthusiast, Locsin carried his interest in music's effects into his academic endeavors.

"My master's thesis was on music and postoperative pain. Nurses should be able to use any therapy that does not require a prescription," he said.

Locsin has published extensively in books and international journals. In 2001 he co-authored the book "Advancing Technology, Caring and Nursing" and in 2005 authored "Technological Compe-

tency as Caring in Nursing: A Model for Practice." As co-editor, he published the reference/textbook titled "Technology and Nursing Practice: Concepts, Process, and Issues" in 2007.

His many honors include the Edith Moore Copeland Excellence in Creativity Award from Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing in 2003 and the FAU Researcher of the Year Award in 2006. He was inducted as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing in 2006.

Locsin said the overall goal of the chair is to assist and facilitate the productivity of the nursing department faculty thus creating opportunities to advance the mission of the department, college and University in general regarding research and scholarly endeavors.

"Faculty productivity is understood in two ways – productivity in scholarly works and creative endeavors such as publications of manuscripts and other works, and receipt of grants and funds that influence student education and increased graduation rates," he said.

To stimulate faculty research and external funding, Locsin has scheduled guest lecturers experienced in these areas to present to UTPA faculty. He also started the Slemph Research Initiative, which provides a seed grant of \$1,850 to current nursing faculty to pursue research projects.

"Receiving a research grant fosters opportunities to receive more research grants," he said.

Among the projects awarded so far is research focused on the descriptions used for body parts when querying a child abuse victim. Another project will examine the experiences of nursing students using simulation technology or a robot called "Sim Man" that mimics human anatomy and physiology for training in healthcare.

Locsin is also facilitating curriculum development for advanced practice nursing – a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program – that may replace UTPA's two current nurse practitioners programs. He said by 2015, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, nurse practitioners should be DNP-prepared.

"An expert DNP program prepares nurses who can plan, implement and

coordinate the care of persons with complex problems and provides students further opportunities for professional growth through continuing formal education," Locsin said. "It will also allow UTPA to lead South Texas in the development of programs and projects that increase access to care among the underserved population of the Valley."

Locsin said UTPA has about 100 master's prepared graduates who would qualify to be in the DNP program.

To address what Locsin said is a "global" shortage of nurses, he hopes to develop faculty incentive programs to enhance faculty recruitment and retention. With UTPA faculty, he is also exploring the feasibility of an accelerated BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing) degree program, where persons with a degree in another field could earn a bachelor's degree in nursing in one year (three semesters). Currently five semesters are required to complete the nursing core curriculum to earn a BSN at UTPA.

"Talk about producing more nurses – this is one way to do it," Locsin said. "The challenge is to find the money for the nurse educators required for such a program. One faculty member is required for every 10 students to comply with the Board of Nurse Examiners rules for the state of Texas."

To enhance the international activities by the nursing department, a study abroad program to Thailand has been organized for May 9-23 in cooperation with FAU. The students and faculty attending will take courses in Healthcare Transitions in Global Communities.

"The world is getting smaller – we should know how to care for people from cultures other than our own," Locsin said.

Locsin's position as chair, which began September 2007, will end June 2008. For more information on nursing programs at UTPA, contact the UTPA Department of Nursing at 956/381-3491.

For more information on establishing an endowed chair at UTPA, contact Lydia P. Aleman, executive director for University Advancement, at 956/381-5301 or via e-mail at aleman@utpa.edu.

UTPA vice president awarded TBEC honor

The Texas Business and Education Coalition (TBEC) presented Dr. John Edwards, vice president for Enrollment and Student Services at The University of Texas-Pan American, with its 2008 Distinguished Achievement Award in



Education at its annual VIP Briefing in Fort Worth Feb. 29.

"TBEC is pleased and proud to present this award to Dr. John Edwards, a leader committed to educa-

tional improvement, community service, and state and local initiatives that make education accessible for underserved students. His involvement and support for the TBEC Texas Scholars and Honor Roll Schools initiatives in South Texas have served as models for the entire state," Dr. Orbry Holden, TBEC director of Business and Education Outreach, said.

TBEC is a nonprofit organization of Texas business leaders formed in 1989 to engage with educators in a long-term effort to improve public education in the state. TBEC initiated its Distinguished Achievement Award to recognize those who make exceptional contributions to Texas public education and the state of Texas.

Edwards' long career in enrollment management and improved access to higher education by underserved students began in 1979 as founding director of the New Student Relations Office at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. He later became the founding director of Enrollment Management, and eventually served as dean of Enrollment at Texas A&M at Commerce for 15 years. In 2000 Edwards began his current position at UTPA, where he has continued to demonstrate his state and national leadership in higher education.

A strong advocate for partnerships with business to improve opportunities for higher education, Edwards helped found the Valley Outreach Center, with the support of McDonald's Corporation and Texas Guarantee, which provides information and assistance to South Texas students interested in post secondary education.

To facilitate student success at UTPA, he initiated the Child Development Center and advocated for the Wellness and Recreation Sports Complex completed in 2007. In addition, Edwards has initiated several Phi Theta Kappa academic honor society alumni chapters at universities and the PAL Program at UTPA and Texas A&M Commerce. PAL assists former foster children with college preparation, financial assistance and mentorship upon university admission.

Department explores offering an accelerated BSN program

Faculty and administrators in the Department of Nursing at The University of Texas-Pan American are exploring the feasibility of offering an accelerated BSN (Bachelor of Nursing) program for UTPA students.

To start the process, the department recently hosted a workshop with Debera J. Thomas, D.N.S., A.R.N.P., assistant dean of Undergraduate Programs and associate professor at the Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing at Florida Atlantic University (FAU) in Boca Raton to discuss the possibility of the program. Thomas heads a successful accelerated BSN program initiated at FAU in 2003. She met the faculty members of a UTPA BSN Curriculum Committee and gave an overview of the key components, curriculum, and challenges of FAU's accelerated program.

"Directed to graduates with degrees in other majors than nursing who want to switch careers, the accelerated BSN program is comprised of an integrated compressed curriculum instead of the traditional two-year program. The program we propose can be completed in one calendar year or three semesters," said Rozzano C. Locsin, Ph.D., R.N., F.A.A.N., who fills the Lillian O. Slep Endowed Chair in Nursing at UTPA and is also a professor of nursing at FAU.

Currently five semesters are required to complete the 52-hour core nursing curriculum for a BSN at UTPA.

"This is one way to provide a quicker pipeline of more nurses to combat the nursing shortage," Locsin said.

The state of Texas has a shortage of 19,000 registered nurses according to estimates of the Texas Nurses Association. In the year 2020, that figure could reach close to 71,000 due to a growing and aging population and many current nurses in the state nearing retirement age.

Thomas said the accelerated program at FAU graduated its first set of students in 2005. By May 2008 there will be close to 150 graduates from the program, which has a retention rate of 97 percent and a 97 percent pass rate on the state board licensing exam.

"Local hospitals we work with would actually rather hire our accelerated program students. They are usually more mature, better at critical thinking and have more life experience," Thomas said.

She said their program is only one of a few that is a calendar year program.

"The FAU program is also almost 100 percent integrated with the traditional baccalaureate program and that's what we would propose at UTPA because it is the most cost effective. It's also a way to help with the socialization of the accelerated students into the culture of nursing," she said.

Sandy Sánchez, Ph.D., R.N., C.N.M., UTPA BSN program coordinator, described an accelerated program as very time and

intellectually demanding.

"Students would be in classes or the clinical setting approximately 40 hours a week. It's like a full-time job," she said. "Students will have to be self-motivated and directed. They will have to be quite committed to this cause."

The primary challenge to establishing the program is to find the money for the two additional year-round nurse educators required for such a program. One faculty member is required for every 10 students to comply with the Board of Nurse Examiners rules for the state of Texas. Also, the salary of nurse educators is generally \$20,000 less than nurses in the service sector making it difficult to lure them to generally nine-month academic positions.

"There are a lot of qualified applicants to our nursing programs but we don't have the faculty," Locsin said.

Carolina Huerta, Ed.D., R.N., UTPA chair of the Department of Nursing, said she thinks that an accelerated program would be a good addition to the nursing programs currently being offered at UTPA but recognizes there are many challenges in establishing one.

"An accelerated program may not be possible, unless the department has the financial resources required to offer such a program," she said.

Nursing education is very expensive said Thomas. At FAU it generally costs \$100,000 to produce 10 nursing graduates per year. To help fund the program, FAU has established agreements with three area hospitals. The hospitals also provide scholarships for students in exchange for a commitment to work in those hospitals for a designated time frame after graduation.

Even if the funding is provided for two full-time positions through budget increases or funding support from area hospitals, an accelerated program is not going to completely solve the nursing shortage Sánchez said.

"One of the hindrances to people entering nursing is that people see nurses only in a limited role - they see them in the hospital or a physician's office. In reality we need to start promoting nursing as a health discipline that goes from extreme wellness to extreme debilitation, and there is a role for any personality in nursing. If you want to be a health promotion or wellness nurse out in the community you can do that. If you want to be a high-tech nurse working in a research lab you can do that. It is such a broad field that there is a role for every personality," Sánchez said.

Although the program is only in the preliminary planning stages, Accelerated BSN committee members said they seek the comments from graduates who would be interested in such a program. For more information, contact the Department of Nursing at 956/381-3491.

Books, Music, Arts and Fun

UTPA's second annual festival set for March 24-29

With more than three million Texans considered illiterate, The University of Texas-Pan American hopes to put a slight dent in that statistic by hosting their second annual Festival of International Books and Arts (FESTIBA), March 24-29.

This year FESTIBA 2008, titled "Reading Other Worlds: Storytelling Through the Arts," will not only highlight the arts and humanities at UTPA, but also emphasize the importance and joy of reading and writing for people of all ages in South Texas. To spread the joy of reading, one of the nation's premier literary festivals in the country, the Texas Book Festival, and Reading is Fundamental (RIF), one of the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit children's literacy organizations will join forces with FESTIBA to distribute more than 34,000 books to local school districts.

"Our goal is to increase interest and appreciation for reading and improve success in secondary and post-secondary education through FESTIBA," Dr. Dahlia Guerra, dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and FESTIBA coordinator, said.

The Texas Book Festival for a second time, in collaboration with UTPA and the Region One Education Service Center, will provide six area elementary schools with the opportunity to visit with some of the nation's premier children's authors through its Reading Rock Stars program, formerly known as the Author! Author! program. The schools were chosen out of 70 applications from the Rio Grande Valley area.

Authors such as René Saldana Jr., Carmen Tafolla, Diane Gonzales Bertrand, René Laínez, Lee Merrill Bird, Xavier Garza, and Amada Irma Perez will be meeting with more than 3,500 South Texas children March 25-26. In addition, the authors will discuss their literary works and present each child attending the event with

an autographed book said Clay Smith, literary director for the Texas Book Festival. Also, all participating schools will receive a set of books from the authors for their school libraries.

"Reading Rocks Stars is wonderful because it goes one step further. The program is for lower-income elementary schools whose students may not read books on their own. We choose authors for the Reading Rock Stars program who are brilliant presenters and can bring the books to life. We are looking forward to FESTIBA," Smith said.

In addition, FESTIBA will partner with RIF in the distribution of more than 30,000 books to local schools to encourage reading among students in grades pre-k-sixth.

"We expect it to be a long-term partnership that is not only about

FESTIBA, but is really more about empowering our families with reading as a fundamental part of their lives," UTPA President Dr. Blandina Cárdenas said about the partnership.

According to Stephen Leach, director of government relations and community outreach for RIF, the organization assists 4.6 million children throughout the country and 100,000 are served in South Texas. Leach said the main goal of RIF is to provide books and other literacy resources to parents, teachers, and other professionals who work in the literacy environment.

"We are involved in this South Texas initiative to help with erasing the student dropout rate because we understand that it is at an alarming rate right now. We are hoping to do a lot of work here in South Texas to help raise the graduation rate and we are excited about the opportunity. Through this partnership we will be successful," Leach said.

Joining FESTIBA 2008 will be Congressman Rubén Hinojosa (TX-15) who will host the first ever Congressional Roundtable on Literacy to be held during FESTIBA on March 28, a day scheduled for South Texas librarians. Hinojosa said numerous congressional leaders including Henry Cuellar and Solomon Ortiz will join him to discuss and find solutions for the nation's high illiteracy rates.

"One of the goals of the Congressional Roundtable is to draw more attention to this alarming rate of illiteracy that we have in America. Literacy statistics in Texas alone are a cause for serious concern. More than three million Texans are considered to be functionally illiterate, while one in four Texans lacks reading and writing skills, and our state of Texas has the unimaginable distinction of ranking 47th lowest among the 50 states in reading and writing literacy. We have got to do something and that is why your congressmen have made it one of the highest priorities in congress," Hinojosa said.

In continuing with the theme of encouraging reading and writing, the University's Distinguished Speaker Series will conclude the year of bringing dynamic speakers to campus during FESTIBA with an appearance by leading Chicana playwright and novelist Denise Chávez. Chávez, who will speak March 25, 7:30 p.m. at the Student Union Theater, has written and produced numerous one-act plays since the 1970s; and is best known for her fiction, including "The Last of the Menu Girls," and "Face of an Angel."

FESTIBA, which originally started as a three-day event, has expanded to a week to offer the public a variety of



Community Day

March 29

Free Concert

Grupo Duelo



events such as concerts, workshops and lectures, exhibits, and a Community Day. The weeklong event is a spin-off of UTPA's Hispanic Engineering, Science and Technology (HESTEC) Week, which is geared toward promoting science literacy and careers in science, engineering, mathematics and technology.

"FESTIBA 2008 will be an exciting event and a unique cultural opportunity for our University and South Texas," Dr. Dahlia Guerra, dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and FESTIBA coordinator, said.

A major highlight of FESTIBA will be Community Day, March 29 on the UTPA grounds that will offer the public numerous entertainment and educational events including a free concert by Grupo Duelo, an international band with a norteño sound who got its start in Roma, Texas, from 5-6:30 p.m. at the UTPA Quad.

One of the top mariachi groups in the country, Mariachi Sol de Mexico de José Hernandez, who are known for mesmerizing audiences with their dynamic energy reflecting México's rich cultural heritage will perform during Community Day. The concert is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. at the Fine Arts Auditorium, and an admission fee will be required. In addition to their performance, Mariachi Sol De Mexico will host a workshop for

"Festiba 2008 will be an exciting event and a unique cultural opportunity for our University and South Texas."

- Dr. Dahlia Guerra,
Dean, College of Arts and Humanities

South Texas middle and high school mariachi groups March 28, which will lead up to a mariachi competition concert featuring the groups during Community Day from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Fine Arts Auditorium.

FESTIBA Community Day is an opportunity for families to come out and enjoy a number of free musical concerts, poetry readings, documentary films, and art and photo exhibits performed and provided by UTPA's own students and faculty as well as other masters in the field of arts.

Several tents will also be available for Community Day attendees including one featuring

cooking demonstrations, a book fair with local authors signing their literary

works, a Scholastics Book tent with television characters "Maya and Miguel," a RIF tent with a children's computer lab, and storytelling tent with Texas Book Festival authors.

Other FESTIBA 2008 partners include Region One Education Service Center and UTPA GEAR UP, Scholastic Books, The Monitor Newspapers in Education, H-E-B, National Endowment of the Arts, Edinburg Economic Development Corporation, IBC Bank, International Women's Board, and Kappa Delta Pi, an international honor society in education.



Meet "Maya and Miguel" at Community Day



For a complete schedule of FESTIBA events visit <http://www.coah.utpa.edu/festiba/> or call 956/381-2175.

HISTORY

FESTIBA 8

Events to Attend

Saturday, March 29 COMMUNITY DAY

Grupo Duelo, free concert, 5 p.m. at UTPA Quad.

Vive el Bajo! South Texas Double Bass Concert, 6:30 p.m.
at the FIAC 103 Recital Hall.

Mariachi Sol de Mexico Concert, 7:30 pm at the Fine
Arts Auditorium (admission fee).

**Book Fair, Scholastic Books Tent with "Maya & Miguel,"
Storytelling Tent with Texas Book Festival Authors, Cooking
Demonstrations**, noon-6 p.m., Quad

MONDAY, MARCH 24

Opening reception for "Lost Cultures: The Aztecs" at the UTPA
Visitors Center

"Legends and Folktales" Exhibit at the Communication of Arts and
Sciences Gallery, open all week.

"Cine Mexicano – Epoca de Oro" movie and discussion with UTPA Professor
Dr. Lino Garcia and Monterrey, Mexico literary critic Rogelio R. Reyes, 11 a.m. at the Student Union Theater.

TUESDAY, MARCH 25

Distinguished Speaker Series with Chicana playwright and novelist Denise Chávez, 7:30 p.m. at the Student Union Theater.
Free admission.

WEDNESDAY. MARCH 26

Meet playwright and author Denise Chávez, 12:45 p.m. at the Communication of Arts and Sciences Gallery.

Texas Commission of the Arts Storyteller Gayle Ross, 2 p.m. at the Clark Gallery.

La Boda de la Mujer Maravilla, a Spanish student drama, 3 p.m., at Student Union Theater.

UTPA Chamber Music Concert featuring the music of Mozart and Brahms, 7:30 p.m. at the Media Theater, located adjacent to
the University Library.

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

UTPA Salsa and Percussion Ensembles to perform, noon at UTPA Quad.

Film screening of "Machuca" followed by a panel discussion, 2 p.m. at the Media Theater, located adjacent to the University Library.

Rondell Davidson Lecture Series featuring Dr. John Charles Chasteen, an author of Latin American history books and professor at
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 5 p.m. at the Media Theater, located adjacent to the University Library.

An Evening with Author Lorenzo Pace – Pace will be performing "Jalani and the Lock," named one of the best children's books
for 2001 by the Los Angeles Times, for people of all ages, using music and exciting visual effects, 6 p.m. at the Clark Gallery.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

UTPA Salsa and Percussion Ensembles to perform, noon at UTPA Quad.

"Artists Who Write" presentation, 6 p.m. at the Clark Gallery.

UTPA Dance Concert, 7:30 p.m., Fine Arts Auditorium.

UTPA Chamber Music Concert featuring the music of Mozart and Brahms,
7:30 p.m. at the Media Theater, located adjacent to the University Library.

Emmy Winner Steven Escobar

For Steven Escobar being one of few Hispanics in Hollywood to own a Primetime Emmy Award is not only an honor, but a major coup for the Edinburg native who set out to win the coveted statuette five years ago. Escobar, a freelance film/television editor and producer, was one of seven editors to win a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Picture Editing for Reality Programming for the popular CBS reality show "The Amazing Race" in September 2007. Escobar, owner of Jesco Film Entertainment, LLC, said he always knew he wanted a career in the entertainment industry, however since he did not consider himself much of an actor, his interests took him behind the scenes where editing and producing became his passion. Escobar said taking a summer television workshop at The University of Texas-Pan American where he received hands-on experience working on a crew to make a feature length movie led to his decision to transfer from Sam Houston State University to UTPA's communication program. Escobar graduated from UTPA in 1993 with a Bachelor of Arts in communication with a concentration in radio/TV/film.

What advice would you offer students looking to pursue a career in film/television and wanting to move to Los Angeles?

My advice is not to move to LA right after UTPA. I suggest that you should learn everything you can by working in as many capacities of the entertainment industry that you can and figure out which one you are most interested in. It is very rare in Hollywood that someone will master many aspects all at once. If you are interested in acting, take a lot of classes and do short films so you can have a demo and a good résumé. The same goes for being an art director, an editor, and a make-up artist. I remained in the Valley and in Texas for seven years before I decided to make the move to Los Angeles. It helped me land a job quicker because of the résumé I had built and the connections I made early on.

What was it like for a South Texas kid to win a Primetime Emmy Award?

It's kind of weird to me to be one of a few Hispanics in Hollywood to win such an honor but I know that I knew that sacrifice and determination were going to play a part of that if I wanted to stand out among the others. I was very lucky to have both my mother and my sister with me when our team of seven editors won the Emmy. I feel

like I put all their doubts in my profession to rest at that moment.

What is unique about your job?

My job as a film/TV editor is unique to me because I believe that is where the storytelling is made. You can take a scene from a movie or reality show and make it sad, happy, or even dramatic if you really want to, but it's important to know what your story is and where it will end. You can make someone appear to be a "bad" guy/girl just by choosing the right facial reactions without having them say anything. It all depends on what the scene calls for.

What is next on your plate of projects – more reality television, movies, shows, etc.?

I am starting the next season of "Big Brother 9" and will return to "The Amazing Race" in May. I also produce low-budget independent films with my partner so we are working on a couple of projects. I am also editing a documentary on the side for Gil Cates Jr., son of Gil Cates, the producer of the Academy Awards. This will be the second project I will be involved with him on.

What do you think is the future of reality television?

Most people won't believe me, but reality TV is not going away anytime soon. With the writer's strike affecting the television schedule, more and more reality shows are being ordered every week so there will be a flux of shows appearing on cable and primetime. I'm hoping by the time this interview comes out that the writer's strike will be over so everyone can go back to work.

Tell us about the scholarship you started in the Rio Grande Valley?

I am still in the process of organizing a scholarship through UTPA and Edinburg High School for students who are interested in pursuing careers in film, television, and radio. I decided to start this scholarship as a way to help current students with costs of materials to



produce their own projects. I know how expensive school can be so I want to help students gain demo reel material so that they can enter the workforce after UTPA ahead of other students.

What do you plan to have accomplished in five, 10, 20, and 50 years – personally and/or professionally?

I usually plan only five years in advance. Five years ago, I drove my mom to the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences when she was visiting and showed her a huge replica of the Emmy. I told her, just jokingly, "In five years, I'm going to win one of those." That was exactly five years ago. My next five years, I have various plans. I want to continue editing and hopefully work on a motion picture, and at least get nominated for an Oscar and win it. It might take me 10 years but I'm willing to work hard. On the other hand, I also want to expand my company to produce network TV shows, specials, and feature films – kind of like Jerry Bruckheimer (a prominent film and television producer) has done for himself.



Faculty Profile:

Dr. Shelia Pozorski

New World, a flat-topped pyramid about 100 feet tall with a surface large enough to hold 15 football fields. This immense building is just part of a larger planned settlement with plazas, smaller administrative structures, and houses; and there are four other contemporary, large planned settlements within the Valley.

Q Are you planning any upcoming archaeological trips?

At the end of May, I'll be leaving for Peru along with four students, Tom, and a colleague from UTPA. I won't be doing any excavating this season because we are in an analysis and writing phase. Everything we find has to stay in Peru. So we are finishing a three-year National Science Foundation grant to help us study, draw, photograph, and write about the ceramics, textiles, plant and animal remains, stone tools, and other artifacts from the sites we have been excavating. The students will spend much of their time helping us with the analysis; however, we also take time out to visit the sites we have excavated as well as other archaeological sites and ongoing excavations by our colleagues. We are also already doing the preliminary reconnaissance in preparation to start digging again in 2009.

I am also planning the annual Anthropological Club field trip to Mexico in May. During the eight-day trip, we will be visiting the Mexico City area including Teotihuacan, the Aztec ruins downtown near the zocalo (square), and probably Tula.

Q What has been your most interesting find?

I have been involved in making lots of interesting finds over the years. One of the most exciting occurred at a Casma Valley site called Pampa de las Llamas-Moxeke when we were digging in the architecture. We found a carved stone, about the size of a mailbox, with a double-bodied serpent on one face and the impression of a hand on another face. The find was special because the carvings are unique and because it is very rare to find stone carvings in their original location.

Q Do you participate in any volunteer activities?

I work with local law enforcement officers and help them to assess and identify human skeletal remains. Using the same skills

that enable me to study the burials I find in Peru, I can provide data on age, sex, stature, and sometimes cause of death for the more modern human remains. In return, I am often able to borrow unclaimed and unidentified remains to use in my archaeology methods class so that students get valuable hands-on experience.

Indirectly, I help provide large amounts of volunteer labor for local museums and archives by supervising the museum studies and archive studies courses at UTPA. Students earn anthropology credit by working as interns in our local museums and nature centers. The program has grown rapidly, to the point that I am able to place over 50 students per semester.


Q What kind of careers are out there for students interested in anthropology?

Career opportunities in anthropology are many and varied. I followed a fairly traditional path for archaeology by getting my Ph.D. and then going on to do research and teaching in my field. Students with master's or bachelor's degrees who are interested in archaeology can work on contract archaeology projects here in the United States. Any development with city, county, state, or federal funds must be preceded by a survey of the area by an archaeologist to be sure that no cultural remains are impacted. This regulation results in a steady stream of opportunities to do archaeology.

More broadly, our anthropology majors are qualified to apply for most jobs that involve working with people. I often remind them that they are unlikely to see an advertisement for an anthropologist. Instead, they must often sell themselves to prospective employers.

Q What advice would you give students interested in the field?

I would give students two pieces of advice. First, try anthropology before you make your final decision. Do some actual field work or work with a professor on a research project. I was able to go to Peru as an undergraduate, and I strongly believe in taking our undergraduates with me to Peru. The second is, follow your dream! Other professions may be very lucrative, but so much about anthropology is constantly interesting that we anthropologists love what we do.



Even though Dr. Shelia Pozorski wasn't born in the Rio Grande Valley, she considers herself to be a native since her parents moved here when she was an infant. After attending Edinburg High School and graduating first in her class, Pozorski left to pursue an education at Harvard University where she was introduced to the two things she loves in life the most – studying archaeology and her husband and fellow UTPA professor Dr. Thomas Pozorski, whom she married later at the UTPA chapel. Both went on to pursue doctorates at The University of Texas at Austin and then worked and taught in Peru, Pittsburgh, and Denver before coming to then-Pan American University in 1988 and teaching. Pozorski was recently nominated for the Minnie Stevens Piper Professor Program Award, which honors 15 professors from across the state of Texas during each academic year for their dedication to the teaching profession and for their outstanding academic, scientific and scholarly achievement.

Q Can you tell us about the research you do?

My research focuses on the development of early civilization along the Peruvian coast, one of a few areas of the world where complex society arose independently, without outside influence. More specifically, I work in the Casma Valley, about five hours north of Lima by bus. The early civilization I study did not really have a name, so we named it the Sechin Alto Polity, taking the name from the largest (excavation) site. The culture is about 4,000 years old and lasted more than 500 years. At the time when the Sechin Alto Polity flourished, the Casma Valley people built the largest structure in the

UTPA gears up to prepare local educators to teach advanced courses

The University of Texas-Pan American is once again teaming up with the College Board to offer local, state and national educators three weeks of intensive Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP training courses this summer.

UTPA's AP Summer Institutes are intensive five-day programs for both new and experienced teachers. Each workshop will be led by College Board-certified AP consultants and will provide participants with the experiences necessary to teach advanced placement courses in their discipline.

The institutes are offered during the weeks of July 7-11, July 21-25 and August 4-8 and are held on the University campus, as well as the UTPA Annex building.

The institutes are designed to help the teachers develop, reinforce and implement a stronger curriculum for their Pre-AP and AP students based on classes they will be teaching.

Workshop activities include creation of an AP program in the participant's area of expertise, review of past AP examinations and scoring rubrics, guidance for teaching critical concepts, development of successful AP assignments, hands-on experience for AP workshops and opportunities to network with other AP teachers.

For more information on the AP Summer Institutes or to register, call 956/292-7577.



Erika Buentello, a teacher at J.B. Alexander High School in Laredo, works on a project during the Studio Art Institute hosted by the UTPA Summer Institutes two years ago.



UTPA student Janette Cavazos assists a resident at the center in constructing a poem.

Power of Words: Students bring joy of poetry to others

Andrew Butler, a resident at the Judge Homer Salinas Rehabilitation Center in Edinburg, said he never realized how similar poetry and rap were until he participated in the Creative Writing Service Learning Project, a program sponsored by several departments at The University of Texas-Pan American.

Butler said prior to taking part in the program, he always thought he would become a rap artist, but since then his goals have changed.

"First I thought poetry was for people who were soft at heart but I found out that I'm really soft at heart, so now I am doing poetry," Butler said. "I really like it because you put your words and feelings together and spread it to other people and some people can really relate to it and get something out of it."

For Butler writing has become an outlet where he can express his inner thoughts through words as well as reflect on his life.

He said he is grateful to the students and faculty of UTPA's departments of English, criminal justice and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences for taking time from their busy lives during the fall 2007 semester to help spread the joys of writing and the power of words to individuals like himself.

"I think that the boot camp residents are appreciative of UTPA for helping us reconstruct our minds onto more positive activities," Butler said.

The project, which began in 2007, was the brainchild of UTPA English Assistant Professor Emmy Perez and because of its success other UTPA educators have jumped on the bandwagon. The collaborative program gives UTPA student and faculty volunteers the opportunity to make a difference by teaching center residents how to write poetry.

"The University should be more than just academic, it should give something back to the community. This does two things - it allows students to get experience in tutoring and mentoring, and it also shows the community that we can be involved in helping the community to grow," said Stanley Gonzales, UTPA criminal justice lecturer.

Gonzales said the program has made an impact on the residents, who are court ordered to stay in the facility for six months.

"We hope that in the end they have improved their writing skills because we all know how important it is in the real world to communicate effectively. If they are able to improve their writing through some of these techniques it would be a big plus for them," Gonzales said.

For Janette Cavazos, a senior English major, the experience will serve her in the future as she plans to go into the teaching field. She said this volunteer effort will not only help the residents, but her as well, become better students and individuals.

"I really hope when they get out of here they are able to follow through with their writing. I hope that they have learned a lot from their past experience through writing about it, and hopefully they won't make the same mistakes they made in the past," Cavazos said.

Gonzales said since the center closed in February, the program plans to branch out to juvenile facilities in the area to continue its mission of bringing poetry into the hearts of others.

FACULTY EXPLORE NEW METHODS TO DIAGNOSE AUTISM

With autism affecting one in 150 children nationally, Dr. Cheryl Fielding knows the seriousness of autism spectrum disorders and is working to accurately diagnose the disorder among children in the Rio Grande Valley through her research at The University of Texas-Pan American.

Autism, a complex neurobiological disorder, impairs a person's ability to communicate and relate to others, with symptoms ranging from very mild to severe. According to Autism Speaks, the nation's largest autism advocacy organization, autism is more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes and AIDS combined and occurs in all racial, ethnic, and social groups. It is four times more likely to occur in boys than girls. The Center for Disease Control reports that almost 1.5 million people in the United States are autistic and the rate of autism is increasing 10-17 percent annually.

As a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and associate professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at UTPA, Fielding has worked with local school districts and parents to assist with autism spectrum disorders diagnoses and intervention.

"Our evaluation allows parents to receive a comprehensive, team-based assessment, conducted by professionals who are credentialed in the administration of evaluation instruments that are known as the 'gold standard' in the assessment of autism," she said. "It also allows parents to receive a report written by practitioners who are licensed to diagnose autism within the public school setting."

Fielding and Dr. John Lowdermilk, assistant professor of educational psychology at UTPA, said educating parents is critical to having children diagnosed in a timely manner and showing them how to begin treatment intervention.

In clinical terms, there are a few absolute indicators that suggest a child should be evaluated to determine if a child is on the right developmental path, Fielding said.

According to First Signs, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating parents and pediatric professionals about the early warning signs of autism and other developmental disorders, some indicators include:

- No big smiles or other warm, joyful expressions by six months or thereafter.
- No back-and-forth sharing of sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions by nine months or thereafter.
- No babbling by 12 months.
- No back-and-forth gestures, such as pointing, showing, reaching, or waving by 12 months.
- No words by 16 months.
- No two-word meaningful phrases (without imitating or repeating) by 24 months.
- Any loss of speech or babbling or social skills at any age.

"If your baby shows any of these signs, please ask your pediatrician or family practitioner for an evaluation," Fielding said. "If your child is over the age of three, public schools are required to perform an evaluation at no cost to parents."

Fielding and Lowdermilk recently conducted a workshop for approximately 90 parents of children with autism and other developmental disabilities at UTPA. As the only BCBA in the Rio Grande Valley, Fielding's parent training is critical to helping children with autism lead productive lives with early intervention.

"Research has shown us that the earlier children are identified and the earlier intervention begins, the better the outcomes," Fielding said. "National data indicates that the average age that Caucasian children are identified for an autism spectrum disorder is between



Dr. Cheryl Fielding (left) works with Celina Wood and her mother, Claudia Wood, during one of her sessions at the University.

ages four and five. For Hispanic children the average is closer to seven. Therefore it is crucial that parents in this area are made aware of the early signs so that their children can be identified and a comprehensive intervention program can be implemented sooner. The sooner the better."

Additionally, Fielding conducts research with Dr. Terry Overton, professor of special education at The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College. Fielding said the most significant finding of their research, which is based on a sample of more than 70 locally referred children with an autism spectrum disorder, is that they are seeing trends that mirror national data regarding things like the percentage of regressive cases, ratio of boys to girls, and false positives, among others.

Both Fielding and Overton also study the validity and reliability of the instruments they use, specifically regarding their accuracy within bilingual populations.

"Sometimes the publishers of assessment instruments purport that their instruments are able to reliably pinpoint children with an autism spectrum disorder within a bilingual population," Fielding said. "Bilingual children develop language in different patterns than monolingual children and this impacts their performance on standardized measures."

Fielding and Lowdermilk recently applied for a more than \$500,000 grant in hopes of establishing a clinic at UTPA that would provide services to children with autism. The University has the capability to house the clinic in an 8,000-square-foot facility in the first floor of the Education Complex.

"Parents are desperate for help. Many have told me that they have taken their children to doctors all over the United States and have had all types of medical testing conducted and the doctors say to them, 'We're sorry to tell you we can't find anything physically wrong with your child. It must be autism. Take them to public school, they'll know what to do,'" Fielding said. "It just hasn't been my experience that all public schools are providing what is needed to meet the unique needs of these children. I receive an average of two to three phone calls a week from parents, teachers, medical doctors, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, or speech therapists asking for training or some type of help in getting special education services for these children."

If funded, the clinic would provide evaluations to determine if a child meets the criteria to receive special education services as a child with autism or other developmental disability; intervention services such as behavioral therapy provided by a board-certified behavior analyst; and counseling therapy for family members.

Private donors who are interested in learning more about the proposed center or would like to contribute to this cause can call UTPA's College of Education at 956/381-3627.

New director forecasts Valley to be new global manufacturing center

If the predictions of Dr. John Lloyd, the new director of the Rapid Response Manufacturing Center at The University of Texas-Pan American, come true the center of state-of-the-art manufacturing in the world will soon lie right here in the Rio Grande Valley.

Lloyd, who also holds the position of University Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Michigan State University, was welcomed at a University reception Feb. 18 by UTPA administrators, faculty and local business and economic development leaders.

"This (center) is a pursuit to regain and sustain U.S. and North American competitiveness in the global marketplace and the vehicle by which we are doing this is the concept of advanced manufacturing and rapid response," Lloyd said. "The Rapid Response Manufacturing Center will bring a lot of recognition and a lot of economic power."

Both the Dean of the College of Science and Engineering Dr. Edwin LeMaster and University President Dr. Blandina Cárdenas said Lloyd, who will also serve as research professor of manufacturing engineering at UTPA, brings a wealth of expertise and world-class credentials to the campus.

"Lloyd is the most internationally-renowned faculty member to join UTPA in its entire history. He is not only the kind of magnet for resources and talent that we seek dedicated to this concept of rapid response manufacturing but he has already dedicated a commitment to our students," Cárdenas said.

Lloyd, who earned his undergraduate, master's and Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the University of Minnesota, spent his early academic career at the University of Notre Dame and once worked as an engineer for Proctor and Gamble. He founded and has served as the director of the Institute for Global Engineering Education at Michigan State University. In 1994 he was appointed as a guest professor in the Department of Engineering Mechanics at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China, which is the highest award Tsinghua grants to international scholars. In 2000 he received the first Honorary Doctor of Technical Science from the Russian Academy of Sciences ever awarded to an American engineer.

Lloyd was already a familiar face to a number of Valley faculty members, students and local business and economic development leaders. His hiring, LeMaster said, grew out of a relationship UTPA had established over the past few years with Michigan State and Monterrey Tech in Mexico in the Partnership for Innovation program funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). Lloyd, LeMaster and Dr. Miguel Gonzalez, UTPA associate dean of the College of Science and Engineering and director of School of Engineering and Computer Science, collaborated on developing the innovative engineering education program based on another NSF-funded initiative Lloyd co-founded at Michigan State University called INTEnD (International Networked Teams for Engineering Design).

Designed to give students experience in working together in multidisciplinary, multi-institution engineering product design teams, the Partnership for Innovation received one of four ASME (American Society for Mechanical Engineers) awards for cur-

riculum innovation in mechanical engineering education and an AT&T Innovation in Technology Utilization award. It now serves as a key education program in the Rapid Response Manufacturing Center.

The center is one component of a regional effort to build an infrastructure and a workforce to support rapid response manufacturing called NAAMREI (North American Advanced Manufacturing Research and Education Initiative).

NAAMREI is a network of alliances led by UTPA, South Texas College, five economic development corporations, Region One Education Service Center and Workforce Solutions.

With \$5 million from a Department of Labor Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant and \$3 million from the Texas Workforce Commission, NAAMREI will also develop a large industrial research and development park and provide workforce recruitment and training.

Rapid response manufacturing employs the concepts of mass customization of products and speed to market said McAllen Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Keith Patridge, who as one of many NAAMREI partners greeted Lloyd at the reception.

"We need to focus on how we can start delivering to our customers as many variations of a product that we can but still standardizing as much as possible in a very short delivery time frame," Patridge said, foreseeing one day a 30-day design cycle will be the norm.

The center will incorporate the involvement of many disciplines – marketing research, for example, from the College of Business Administration, new tooling methods provided by nanotechnology discoveries in the College of Science and Engineering and the critical thinking skills and multicultural awareness highlighted in many new programs in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

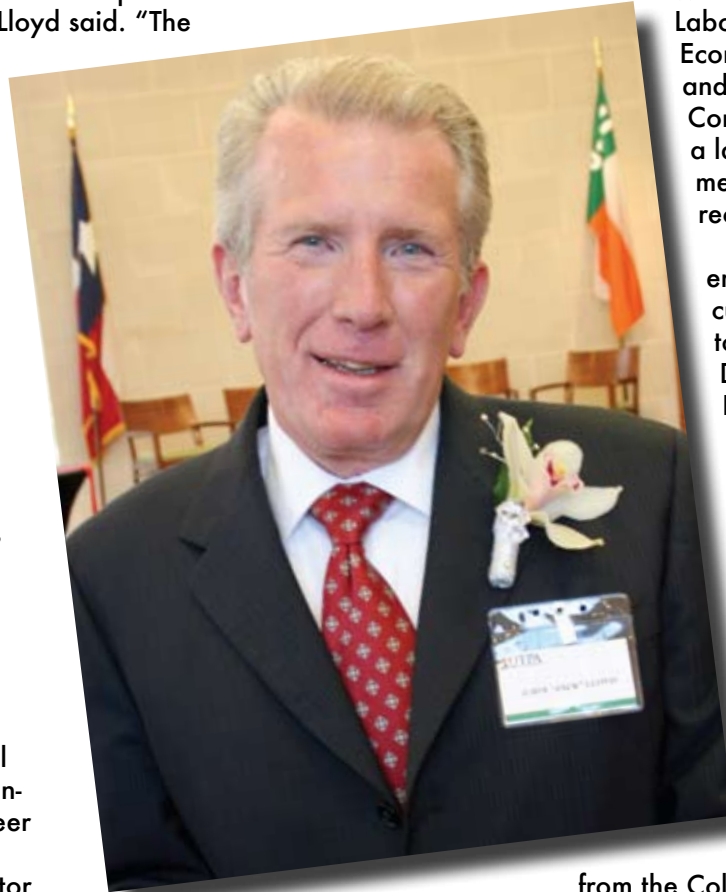
Over the past few years, Lloyd said, he has met many "great" people in the Valley – people with what he called "visionary innovation."

"It is beyond regular innovation. This takes special education, special creativity and a backing that says 'don't fear the risk, let's go for the success,'" he said. "What bigger draw could there be to come here than to be able to work in that environment and be able to help lead not only McAllen, not only Edinburg, not only UTPA, not only the region, not only the state of Texas, not only the United States, not only North America but the world."

The official opening of the Rapid Response Manufacturing Center, located adjacent to the UTPA Police Station on campus, will be held Friday, April 11, featuring an appearance by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez.

The opening will be followed by a Rapid Response Manufacturing Innovation Corporate CEO Summit with Texas Governor Rick Perry, Senior Vice President of the National Association of Manufacturing, Emily DeRocco, and South Texas legislative leaders.

For more information, call Lloyd at 956/381-3522 or e-mail lloydjr@utpa.edu or Gonzalez at 956/381-3510 or e-mail gonzalezma@utpa.edu.



Trinidad earns NASPE award

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) awarded UTPA student-athlete Ytzsel Trinidad the organization's Outstanding Major of the Year award.



This is the highest honor given to a student from the highest recognized body in the field. NASPE honors exemplary students majoring in physical education, sport management, athletic training, and the sub-disciplines of kinesiology from across the country through the NASPE

Outstanding Major of the Year Program. This national recognition is awarded by NASPE's College and University Physical Education Council.

Trinidad, from Mercedes, Texas, is a Lady Bronc volleyball player. The junior kinesiology and business administration major is the daughter of Guillermo and Mary Lou Trinidad.

Students win ADDY Awards

Students at The University of Texas-Pan American brought home numerous ADDY Awards for their creativity and designs during the annual Valley Advertising Federation (VAF) awards ceremony Feb. 23. The VAF is the American Advertising Federation's chapter in the Rio Grande Valley.

The Panorama, a UTPA student magazine, won two gold ADDYS for cover and editorial design along with two special judges awards for cover design and for editorial content design.

The 2006-2007 UTPA National Student Advertising Competition team, a division of the Ad Club at UTPA, also won two awards for their work for Coca-Cola - a gold ADDY for a series of commercials and a silver ADDY for their integrated campaign. In addition, the Ad Club received a gold ADDY for the campaign they created for the UTPA Office of Career Services.

A silver ADDY was also awarded to students who worked on the UTPA presidential holiday card in the professional category. Jimmy Aguilar, a senior communication major, won a silver ADDY for a poster he designed as a class project.

The entries winning gold will be judged at the ADDY regional competition in March where the students will compete against other student gold winners in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana. Dr. Kimberly Selber, assistant professor of communication, serves as adviser for the Ad Club and Panorama.

Student-produced film wins Lone Star Emmy

A film produced by Reel to Red (R2R) Productions, an eight-member student production company and internship program at The University of Texas-Pan American, has recently won its first Lone Star Emmy in the category of Student Production Non-News.

With this statewide Emmy win, the film, titled "Dead Letter," is now eligible for the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation College Television awards according to R2R's director, Chelse Benham, also a radio/TV and film specialist V in UTPA's Office of University Relations.

The "Dead Letter" was a collaborative effort between R2R Productions and the University's TRIO Programs, which provide educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds.



The University of Texas-Pan American Lady Bronc Volleyball team defeated The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College Lady Scorpions 3-2 in the first athletic competition between the two universities in 54 years in November. Prior to the game, both university presidents made a friendly wager that the president of the losing team would wear the other's collegiate apparel. Garcia made good on her wager Jan. 8 by wearing a UTPA T-shirt to a Bronc basketball game.

EDINBURG



The UTPA Alumni Association and Bronc Athletics present the 19th Annual

THE CITY OF EDINBURG



Date: Friday, April 25, 2008

Time: 1 p.m.

Place: Los Lagos Golf Club
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A *Starr* in a small town

The 100-mile drive to and from The University of Texas-Pan American's Starr County Upper-Level Center in Rio Grande City for some would get mundane and frustrating, but for Dr. Alma Perez, director of the facility, it is a daily trip she takes so that her students don't have to.

Perez, a resident of Zapata and a UTPA assistant professor, starts her workday at 1 p.m. every day by checking the temperature of each of the three classrooms and computer lab at the facility to make sure the students have a comfortable learning environment. She also teaches classes and at times, even fields complaints from students when the soda machines have eaten their money. However, the most important thing Perez does during the day is make sure that all UTPA Starr County students receive a world-class education in a small town setting.

"This is a dream job for me. I love it. I think we have the best environment to work in simply because it is not the facility, but the students that are so appreciative that UTPA is here, so that they do not have to travel 100 miles for each class meeting," Perez said.

After eight years in Rio Grande City, the Starr County Upper-Level Center has had a major impact in the area and in the lives of students who have benefited from the facility being located in their own backyard.

"I attended the main Edinburg campus for most of my college career and the drive was killer for me – financially and for my car. This facility is a godsend for us in the area," said Gilberto De Los Reyes, a senior interdisciplinary studies major.

De Los Reyes said since he began taking courses at the extension center, this year alone he has only set foot on the main campus three times to take state exams, and he has not had to ask for any time off from work to take classes.

He said he appreciates UTPA's efforts in helping Starr County students meet their educational needs. De Los Reyes said he plans to become a teacher and hopefully work in the Roma or Rio Grande City school districts. He eventually plans to pursue a master's degree.

Perez said the center has produced 210 graduates from the College of Education EC-4 bilingual generalist program, the majority who have gone on to be teachers in Starr County, La Joya, and Mission areas.



Students at the Center get a little help with assignments from Dr. Alma Perez before the start of her class.



Dr. Alma Perez serves as director of the Starr County Upper-Level Center in Rio Grande City.

"It has been a very positive impact for Starr County when you have over 200 college graduates coming out of this facility. That does make a big difference in a small community like this," Perez said.

Perez said she is most proud of the Center's 99 percent graduation rate.

"We get them, and we graduate them," she said.

The University opened the facility the fall of 2003 to help alleviate some of the commuting problems for the Starr County students, but also provide higher education opportunities to all the citizens in the western region of the Rio Grande Valley – including Starr, Jim Hogg and Zapata counties – an area that has been identified as economically and educationally disadvantaged. The Starr County Upper-Level Center, a 3,000-square-foot mobile building, is located on five acres of leased land in the Country Estates subdivision off FM 755.

The presence of UTPA in the Starr County area has been in existence since 1976 when education courses were offered in Rio Grande City. It was not until the fall of 2000 that the University offered a full program of course offerings toward a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies in elementary education with a specialization in bilingual education. At that time courses were taught at Ringgold Middle School.

"The people of Starr County had been wanting Pan Am to offer the whole program because it had always offered courses here and there, but never a complete program until fall 2000," Perez said.

The Center offers undergraduate programs in EC-4 bilingual generalist for education majors, criminal justice, and graduate master's-level courses in educational leadership and reading. In addition, interdisciplinary courses are offered in history, English, and anthropology.

"The courses offered here are not just for education majors, but also for those students from the community and others who cannot get the classes they need on the main campus," Perez said.

Since the Center opened, Perez said it has seen a steady increase in student enrollment and full-time students taking 12 credit hours.

Perez said the typical student who takes courses at the Center are Hispanic females with a median age of 26, married with two children, and working full time in the public schools.

"From our profile we are catering to the older married students who are serious about their education. That has been my greatest reward to see their interest, their motivation, and willingness to achieve their goals. A lot of our students are also first-generation college graduates."

To ensure the future of the Center, UTPA was awarded \$6 million through House Bill 153 of the 79th state legislature in September 2007 to build a permanent home for the facility.



Something **BIG** is Headed to UTPA
September 2008-January 2009



This exhibit was created by The Field Museum, Chicago and made possible through the generosity of McDonald's Corporation.