

Fall 2012

Orange & white - Fall 2012

University of Texas at Brownsville

ORANGE & WHITE





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our fall 2012 issue of *Orange & White* provides a taste of the current momentum at UTB as we begin our new chapter as a standalone university.

During the formative years of the partnership, the university produced an internationally-recognized chess team and produced impactful research in gravitational wave astronomy and biomedicine. UTB earned prestigious national accreditations in business, counseling, engineering physics, computer science and music. It has graduated 33,000 students and created pathways for graduates to earn professional and medical degrees and launch into careers.

Just as our students are evolving, so is the university. While teaching and molding the students of today, we are boldly planning for the students of 2050. The task before us is to design a vision that takes advantage of the dedication and experience of faculty and staff, opportunities in new technologies for teaching and learning, and the thinking of national leaders in education.

Your support, as we launch UTB 2.0, is gratifying. With your help, UTB will become a stronger university at a time when affordability, accountability and ingenuity are the foundation and the expectation.

Mil gracias,

Juliet V. García

ON THE COVER

Sophomore Miriam De Leon is the first student to be accepted to the new Bachelor of Biomedical Sciences degree program that begins this fall. From Matamoros, De Leon is a 2011 St. Joseph Academy graduate who has known since childhood that she would pursue a career related to medicine. Five of her uncles are medical doctors in Mexico, and her brother is currently in medical school.

Starting as a volunteer in Dr. Luis Colom's laboratory under the tutelage of Dr. Maria Castañeda, De Leon's efforts have paid off; she now continues working in the lab through the Student Employment Initiative.

"I want to thank Dr. Colom for giving me this opportunity," De Leon said. "And I'm so pleased that now we have the biomedical degree. I hope to become a physician assistant, and this program will prepare me, focusing on premedical studies."



COLLEGE OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES



COLLEGE OF NURSING

NEW DEGREES MARK NEW ERA IN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONS

Inspired by the opening of the new Biomedical Research and Health Professions Building, The University of Texas at Brownsville breaks new ground in health science and nursing education this fall.

The new bachelor's degree in biomedical sciences opens pathways to a broad range of medical career opportunities in research, healthcare and medical technology and helps create an updated model for physician education across Texas.

An anticipated 50 students, including Jose Mario Rodriguez (right), will make up the program's first cohort, which will include a foundation year and two-year integrated organ systems curriculum with various learning modules. Students will perform a clinical internship and a research project in an area of interest.

"We are sure this program will be preparing students to become superb and caring physicians, scientists and educators," said Dr. Michael W. Lehker, Associate Dean of the College of Biomedical Sciences. "The faculty has been designing this unique program based on solid published research on learning, teaching and best practices in premedical and medical education."

Physician education will be streamlined under the new program through the Accelerated Professional Relevant Integrated Medical Education, or APRIME initiative. UTB is working with institutions in Edinburg, El Paso, Galveston and Houston to make physician education more accessible to diverse groups. The initiative could launch as early as 2013.

A new era in nursing education is also coming in the fall of 2013, after the Texas Board of Nursing approved the College of Nursing's fully-accredited, four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree that meets the demands of a fast-changing healthcare landscape, offering what has previously been unavailable.

While nationally about half of registered nurses hold a bachelor's degree, in Cameron County that number is 27 percent. National organizations, including the American Nursing Association, support initiatives to increase the number to 80 percent by 2020.



"Hospitals are requiring nurses to have a higher caliber of nursing and higher degrees to meet increasing national standards," said Dr. Edna Garza-Escobedo, Associate Dean of the College of Nursing. "Our new degree program will help fill this critical need."

Representatives of the state nursing board cited the high caliber of the nursing faculty and their experience in pre-licensure professional nursing education and the abundance of clinical opportunities for students as some of the reasons they supported the program's creation.



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

15 YEARS OF MUSIC

The Department of Music marked a milestone as students, alumni, faculty and members of the community celebrated the 15th anniversary of the music degree program with a special concert at The Arts Center on May 3.

“In Celebration: Fifteen Years of Making Musicians” featured performances by current and former students commemorating the May 1997 approval of the Bachelor of Arts in Music degree by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Leo Zamora, Choir Director at Brownsville’s Oliveira Middle School, was part of the crusade of students and faculty who went to Austin and convinced the state board the degree was needed.

“The degree was something students really wanted, and it was nice to have the support of our professors and the administration,” said Zamora, who also became the first to receive the degree.

Since then, the Department of Music has awarded more than 150 bachelor’s degrees and more than 20 master’s degrees. Graduates also have a 100 percent pass rate on the music portion of the state teacher certification exam.

“We have extremely talented students, a consistent curriculum and a dedicated faculty,” said Dr. Sue Zanne Urbis, Chair of the Department of Music. “We filled The Arts Center to celebrate the past 15 years of remarkable success.”



Patron of the Arts celebrates 28 years of bringing professional guest artists as well as faculty and student performers and visual artists to the community. To obtain your 2012-2013 season brochure, call 956-882-7025 or go to utb.edu/patron.

REACHING OUT

Eleven teachers in the Mission Consolidated ISD are halfway through their master’s degrees in English, thanks to the convenience of distance education.

From the Mission High School library two evenings a week, the Mission cohort joins their fellow classmates on campus who are gathered in the distance education classroom on the second floor of the University Boulevard Library.

“The Graduate School has found a good partner in Mission CISD,” said Dr. Charles Lackey, Dean of Graduate Studies. “Every success is a testament to the power of technology when combined with committed students and dedicated faculty.”

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Several groups in the College of Liberal Arts experienced another type of distance education this summer by traveling to Brazil, Czech Republic, Poland, Costa Rica and France. Studying psychology, photojournalism, environmental rhetoric, French language, art and culture, the students returned with broadened horizons and lifetime memories.



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS AND TECHNOLOGY

STELLAR PURSUITS

The first class of Arecibo Remote Command Center Scholars in the Department of Physics and Astronomy graduated with their bachelor's degrees in physics at May's Spring Commencement.

Students Frank Ceballos, Louis P. Dartez, Alejandro Garcia, Rossina B. Miller and Jesus Rivera, all from Brownsville, worked with data collected from the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico and the Green Bank Radio Telescope in West Virginia. The students also did their own research projects and mentored younger ARCC scholarship students.

All are bound for graduate studies this fall: Dartez and Garcia at UTB, Ceballos at the University of Kansas, Miller at West Virginia University and Rivera at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

MAKING MATH AND SCIENCE ROCK

UTeach Brownsville, an innovative teacher preparation program in the College of Science, Mathematics and Technology, allows students to receive teacher certification while earning a degree in mathematics or science. This nationally acclaimed program was developed at UT Austin and has been replicated at 30 universities throughout the country.

Students accepted into the program receive intensive field experience and individual support and mentoring by faculty and master teachers. There are also opportunities for scholarships and paid internships.

LEARNING GAMES

Best Colleges Online named UT Brownsville as one of the "10 Best Colleges for Game-Based Learning" in early July. Dr. Soumya Mohanty, an Associate Professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, had already been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education for his efforts to use video games to teach elementary physics.

See Dr. Mohanty talk about his innovative work in "Expert of the Month" at utb.edu/expert.



FLOATING CLASSROOM

Dr. Richard Kline, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, and some of his university students captured the attention of area youth while explaining the ecological complexities of the Laguna Madre and local marine life on the RV Karma (top). Docked in Port Mansfield and South Padre Island in February, the RV Karma is used for the Texas Sea Grant Program and Texas AgriLife Extension's Floating Classroom Program.



FIRST EARLY HIGH SCHOOL GRADS

Sitting among the graduates at Spring Commencement were 38 high school seniors from the Brownsville Early College High School, a partnership between UTB and Brownsville ISD. They are the first to graduate from BECHS with their Associate of Arts degree and a high school diploma.

“Since I came to BECHS, it really motivated me to stay in school,” said Paloma Abigail Rodriguez (above), who has been the top student since BECHS started in 2008.

Rodriguez is a 2012 recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship and plans to attend UTB in the fall and pursue a bachelor’s degree in biology.

DOCTORATE CELEBRATES 5 YEARS

Inaugurated in the summer of 2007, the Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Bilingual Studies continues to be a sought-after degree.

“I was particularly motivated to pursue this degree both as a student and as an employee of this institution, and felt I could not let down those who believed in me,” said Joel Garza, who earned his Ed.D. at Spring Commencement in May.

Garza is one of 13 students who have earned the degree and 40 others are currently in the pipeline.

NATIONAL RANKING

The university’s online Master of Education in Educational Technology received a high ranking by U.S. News & World Report earlier this year. The program was named number 14 out of 151 U.S. institutions of higher education for 2012.

PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

Administrators from the College of Education and South Texas College gathered in the courtyard of the Education and Business Complex in late April to sign an articulation agreement which will provide a seamless transfer for STC students pursuing degrees in teacher education at UTB.

The College of Liberal Arts and the College of Science, Mathematics and Technology have also signed articulation agreements with STC. UTB has 80 articulation agreements with colleges throughout Texas including Texas State Technical College in Harlingen and UTPA in Edinburg.

CONNECTIONS

UTB will partner with IDEA Public Schools and Sylvan Learning Center to implement the Connect2College Program. IDEA was awarded an \$11.5 Million GEAR UP Partnership Grant to fund the comprehensive college prep experience.



INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

Dr. Mark Kroll, Dean of the School of Business, announced in May that the School of Business was awarded accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International, known worldwide as the oldest and most recognized form of accreditation for schools of business.

“This is a major accomplishment that ensures students and prospective students, as well as employers looking at our graduates, of the quality of the university’s programs,” Kroll said.

EARLY-MORNING WISDOM FROM R.L. HUNT

Two hundred fifty business leaders from throughout the region attended the first Business Appreciation Breakfast on Friday, March 23, where they gained valuable business advice from keynote speaker and Dallas businessman Ray L. Hunt.

“The stars have aligned for the Rio Grande Valley,” Hunt said. “There is great activity occurring in the region with development in educational opportunities that will create a base for growth, with collaboration as an important component of this.”

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS

A \$90,000 grant from The Meadows Foundation will finance a pilot project designed to connect 50 business students with the local business community to ensure student retention and opportunities that lead to employment. The program will likewise provide employers with a flow of experienced, appropriately credentialed graduates prepared for entry-level professional positions.

DUAL FOCUS

U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Jose Campos (below) received his military commission and his M.B.A. all within 24 hours this spring. Campos had previously received his B.B.A. at UTB after earning his A.A. while on active duty as a Marine Corps recruit.

“It’s been a long journey,” Campos said. “Fourteen years ago, I left Brownsville the first time to join the military, and I’m happy to have this second opportunity, now going back in as an officer.”

Campos said he will be exhilarated when he finally reaches his first permanent duty station, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, later this year.





UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

PARTNERS PROMOTING SUCCESS

Dr. Juliet V. García, UTB President, was the keynote speaker in March at the 2012 Learning Institute for Partners for Postsecondary Success in Durham, N.C. Representatives of the Learning Institute, the Lumina Foundation's Latino Student Success, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Communities Learning in Partnership and the Partners for Postsecondary Success organizations attended the conference.

In July 2011, the United Way of Southern Cameron County and its area partners, including the university, were awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant is part of the foundation's Partners for Postsecondary Success initiative. The initiative has identified six critical points – preparation, connection, entry, progress, completion and employment – to help double the number of young adults ages 16 to 26 earning a degree, certificate or other postsecondary credential with labor market value by 2025.

COMMON READER UNITES FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

This fall all first-year students will read "The Culture Code: An Ingenious Way to Understand Why People Around the World Live and Buy as They Do" by Clotaire Rapaille. According to Amazon.com, Rapaille presents the theory that culture drives consumer and personal choices.

First-year students received copies of the book at summer orientations to read before fall semester begins Monday, Aug. 27. All first-year students taking the First-Year Seminar will use the book in classroom discussions and some assignments.

CALLING ALL FRESHMEN

The third annual Freshman Convocation will be held at 3 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 30 at The Arts Center.

Freshman Convocation serves as a formal welcome to first-year students by the university's administrators and faculty members. University leaders don their academic regalia and interact with the student body.

The event features the ringing of the University Bell and the significance behind each college's academic banners. Keynote speakers inspire students to focus on the purpose of a university education and encourage them to pursue a timely graduation path.

ALUMNI CORNER



We want you!

The UTB Alumni Association is open to all graduates and former students of UTB.

Association events bring old and new friends together and are great networking opportunities. Members receive the Inside UTB monthly newsletter, the biannual Orange & White magazine and invitations to mixers and special events.

A few of this past semester's get-togethers included mixers at Pirate's Landing in Port Isabel, Wink's near Olmito, Medusa Lounge in Harlingen and Brownsville, and the annual GutterBALL Tournament.

As a member of the association, you can also be eligible for library privileges and membership at the impressive REK Center.

The Alumni Association is dedicated to supporting the students of today and tomorrow. This year, we awarded nine scholarships, and we can do even more with your help.

Don't miss out - join us! It's free and easy; just visit utb.edu/alumni and follow the prompts.

*See you soon,
Marisa Campirano
University Relations Officer*

P.S. Check out utb.edu/alumni for upcoming events and news, or call me at 956-882-4337.



Top: Alumnae reconnect at mixers.

Bottom: GutterBALL Tournament benefits alumni scholarships.

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YOUR GENEROSITY IN 2011 MADE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR STUDENTS' LIVES.

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THEIR STORY: RICK AND GLORIA RIDOLFI

After 25 years in the Air Force, Rick and Gloria Ridolfi returned to Gloria's roots in the Rio Grande Valley where she recalls her father steering ships loaded with bananas into the Port of Brownsville. The Ridolfis appreciate every new day, and it is this grateful attitude that infuses their active life that includes being staunch supporters of The University of Texas at Brownsville, where Gloria has been a member of the Development Board for the past three years.

Rick and Gloria promote UTB in numerous ways, including their participation in the annual Distinguished Lecturer Series, The Arts Center and the Annual Fund: UTB Fund for Excellence. They also were the driving force behind the establishment of the SPI Faculty Lecture Series, a popular program on South Padre Island since 2005.

Several years ago, the Ridolfis learned from Laurie Howell, Executive Director for University Relations, about children who grow up as wards of the state of Texas and often find themselves in limbo when they are "emancipated" at the age of 18, out on their own with no financial or emotional support.

Rick and Gloria established an endowed scholarship earmarked especially for students leaving state care who might be vulnerable without family support.

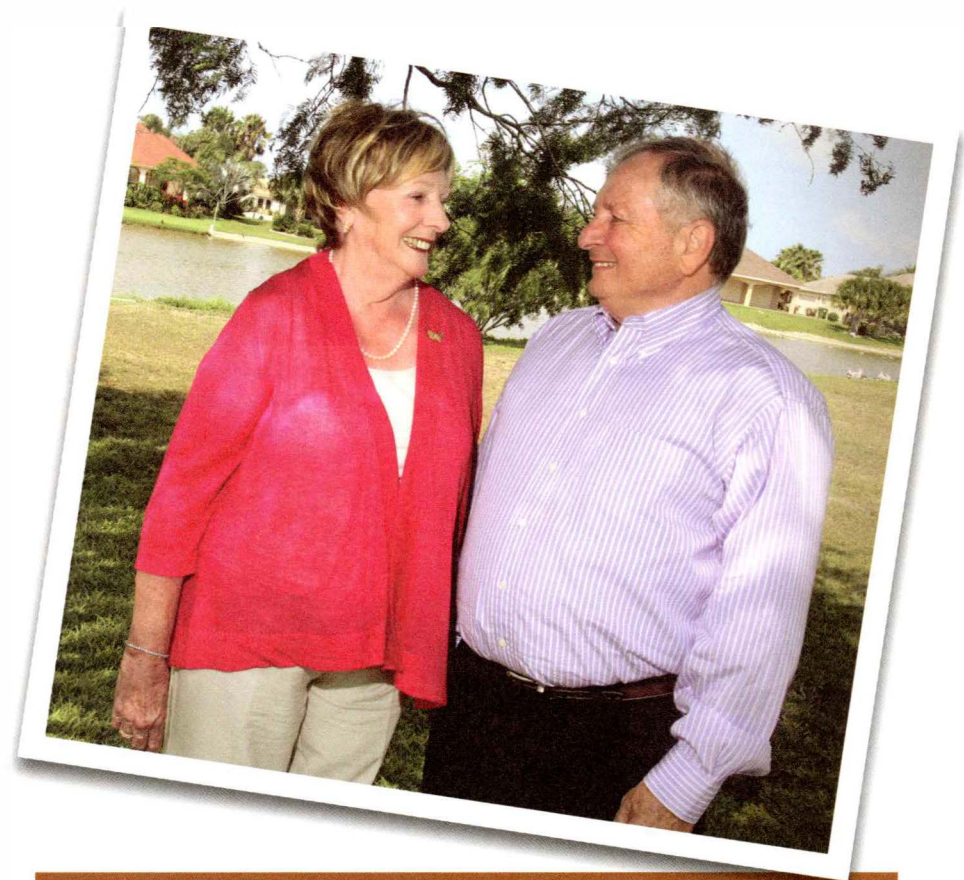
"We felt these kids would benefit from just a little help toward their educations," Rick said.

A few years later, when rewriting their wills in Texas, Rick and Gloria decided to add to the endowment upon their deaths with a planned gift. After making the change with their lawyer, they worked with Serena Putegnat in University Relations to facilitate the simple paperwork saying a set amount would be added to their scholarship endowment upon their deaths.

"We think it's very important to take care of plans early because you never know what and when something will happen," Gloria said. "And this way it's done, and we know it is taken care of, and that's very comforting."

And they hope their actions will serve as a role model for the recipients.

"It shouldn't stop with that person," Rick said. "I hope this becomes contagious for the kids that receive the modest benefit that we can offer. That they say to their children, 'I did it, I want you to do it.'"



GIFT PLANNING

When you leave a gift to UTB in your estate plans, you create your own extraordinary legacy. Your bequest will make a lasting impact by generating funds that help launch our students into meaningful careers. A planned giving specialist is available to discuss ways to plan for your family's future while retaining the resources to support your charitable giving.

For questions or to make an appointment, visit utb.edu/giving, email giving@utb.edu or call 956-882-4326.

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ANNUAL FUND: UTB FUND FOR EXCELLENCE

Make a commitment in 2012 to enrich the life of a deserving student with a gift to the Annual Fund.

Every gift – large or small – goes to enhance a student's academic career by providing the means to participate in a life-changing experience.

A gift might allow a student to attend a conference where they will travel to a new city, hear new ideas, meet other students with similar interests and begin establishing invaluable relationships.

A gift might help a student to participate in an internship, in the Valley or beyond, where they will experience the real-life workings of their future career, perhaps writing stories for a newspaper, learning the intricacies of the banking business or working alongside a city planner or power company engineer.

A gift might allow a student to accept an invitation to participate in a coveted research project – perhaps in chemistry, physics or biology – where they will get a taste of the true dedication of a laboratory scientist.

Each student strengthened by enhancement activities becomes a stronger student. The investment is compounded many times over, resulting in a more vibrant and healthy community.

State and federal funds do not cover such important "extras." This is why we need the Annual Fund.

Rest assured that every dollar goes toward creating a richer university education for our UTB students. Some of your dollars actually grow as they are leveraged by the highly effective nonprofit South Texas Academic Rising Scholars, known as STARS. In 2011, UTB leveraged donations to total \$400,000.

"Your gift to the Annual Fund will enhance a student's degree," said Marisa Campirano, University Relations Officer for Alumni. "It will introduce him or her to new places, new ideas and new challenges while also opening up important networking doors."

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