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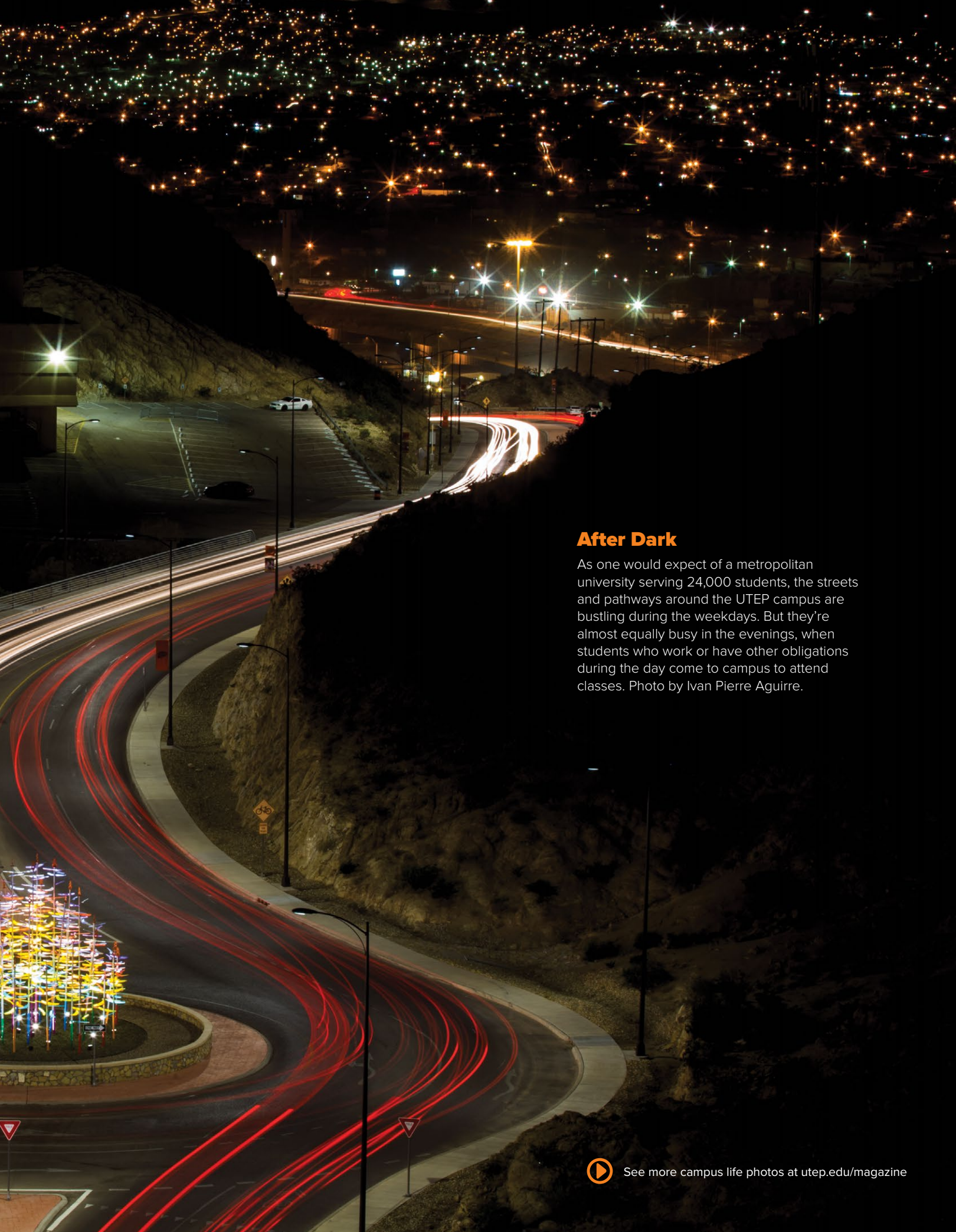
SPREADING

MUSIC

Globally

STUDENTS EMBARK ON A MUSICAL JOURNEY THROUGH
THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCES OF FACULTY AND ALUMNI





After Dark

As one would expect of a metropolitan university serving 24,000 students, the streets and pathways around the UTEP campus are bustling during the weekdays. But they're almost equally busy in the evenings, when students who work or have other obligations during the day come to campus to attend classes. Photo by Ivan Pierre Aguirre.



See more campus life photos at utep.edu/magazine

AMERICA'S GREAT WORKING-CLASS COLLEGES



Erik Pavia '10

Dear UTEP Alumni and Friends:

UTEP's success in achieving our access and excellence mission continues to place us in a national spotlight. The New York Times recently published a piece by columnist David Leonhardt that highlights the work of public universities—and especially UTEP—to ensure that higher education serves as a major accelerator of social mobility for students from low-income backgrounds. We are delighted to share this reprint with you, knowing that you'll be as proud as we are to see UTEP featured in such a highly prominent publication. *Go Miners!*

Diana Natalicio, UTEP President

T

he heyday of the colleges that serve America's working class can often feel very long ago. It harks back to the mid-20th century, when City College of New York cost

only a few hundred dollars a year and was known as the "Harvard of the proletariat." Out West, California built an entire university system that was both accessible and excellent.

More recently, these universities have seemed to struggle, with unprepared students, squeezed budgets and high dropout rates. To some New Yorkers, "City College" is now mostly a byword for nostalgia.

It should not be.

Yes, the universities that educate students from modest backgrounds face big challenges, particularly state budget cuts. But many of them are performing much better than their new stereotype suggests. They remain deeply impressive institutions that continue to push many Americans into the middle class and beyond — many more, in fact, than elite colleges that receive far more attention.

Where does this optimistic conclusion come from? The most comprehensive study of college graduates yet conducted, based on millions of anonymous tax filings and financial-aid records. Published Wednesday, the study tracked students from nearly every college in the country (including those who failed to graduate), measuring their earnings years after they left campus. The paper is the latest in a burst of economic research made possible by the availability of huge data sets and powerful computers.

To take just one encouraging statistic: At City College, in Manhattan, 76 percent of students who enrolled in the late 1990s and came from families in the bottom fifth of the income distribution have ended up in the top three-fifths of the distribution. These students entered college poor. They left on

their way to the middle class and often the upper middle class.

The equivalent number at the University of Texas, El Paso, is 71 percent. At California State University in Bakersfield, it's 82 percent. At Stony Brook University, on Long Island, it's 78 percent, and at Baruch College in Manhattan, it's 79 percent.

"We are the engine of the ability to be socially mobile," Baruch's president, Mitchel B. Wallerstein, said. Most Baruch graduates, he added, are making more money than their parents as soon as they start their first post-college job.

I'll admit that the new data surprised me. Years of reporting on higher education left me focused on the many problems at colleges that enroll large numbers of poor and middle-class students.

Those problems are real: The new study — by a team of economists led by Raj Chetty of Stanford — shows that many colleges indeed fail to serve their students well. Dropout rates are high, saddling students with debt but no degree. For-profit colleges perform the worst, and a significant number of public colleges also struggle. Even at the strong performers, too many students fall by the wayside. Improving higher education should be a national priority.

But the success stories are real, too, and they're fairly common. As I thought about the new findings in light of the other evidence pointing to the value of education, they became less surprising. After all, the earnings gap between four-year college graduates and everyone else has soared in recent decades. The unemployment rate for college graduates today is a mere 2.5 percent.

Those college graduates have to come from somewhere, of course, and most of them are coming from campuses that look a lot less like Harvard or the University of Michigan than like City College or the University of Texas at El Paso. On these more typical campuses, students often work while they're going to college. Some are

"There are a lot of people who would not go to college at all, and would not get an education at all, if they had to go through some selective criteria."

Erik Pavia

military veterans, others learned English as a second language and others are in their mid-20s or 30s.

"There are a lot of people who would not go to college at all, and would not get an education at all, if they had to go through some selective criteria," said Erik Pavia, a 2010 graduate of the University of Texas at El Paso, known as UTEP. "UTEP opens the doors to people from all walks of life."

Pavia grew up in Canutillo, a poor neighborhood in El Paso, the son of a construction worker and house cleaner. He did well enough in high school to attend many colleges but — as frequently happens with low-income students — was not willing to leave home at age 18 for an unfamiliar world. "I just didn't feel like I was ready to go out to college on my own," he said. "So I decided to stay home and save money."

After college, he went to law school, and today is a business manager at a technology start-up called Knotch. Twice a year, he returns to UTEP to teach an intensive two-week class on business and law. Pavia's story is the classic story of the American dream.

Lower-income students who attend elite colleges fare even better on average than low-income students elsewhere — almost as well, in fact, as affluent students who attend elite colleges. But there aren't very many students from modest backgrounds on elite campuses, noted John Friedman of Brown, one of the study's authors. On several dozen of campuses, remarkably, fewer students hail from the entire bottom half of the income distribution than from the top 1 percent.

"There is a real problem with the elite privates and flagship publics in not serving as many low-income students as they should," John B. King Jr., President Obama's education secretary, told me. "These institutions have a moral and educational responsibility."

Because the elite colleges aren't fulfilling that responsibility, working-class colleges have become vastly larger engines of social mobility. The new data shows, for example, that the City University of New York system propelled almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all eight Ivy League campuses, plus Duke, M.I.T., Stanford and Chicago, combined.

The research does come with one dark lining, however — one that should

motivate anyone trying to think about how to affect government policy in the age of Donald Trump. The share of lower-income students at many public colleges has fallen somewhat over the last 15 years.

The reason is clear. State funding for higher education has plummeted. It's down 18 percent per student, adjusted for inflation, since 2008, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The financial crisis pinched state budgets, and facing a pinch, some states decided education wasn't a top priority.

"It's really been a nightmare," said Diana Natalicio, UTEP's president and herself a first-generation college graduate. "The state does not recognize — and it's not just in Texas — the importance that the investment in public education has for the economy and so many other things. Education was for me, and for many of the rest of us, the great opportunity creator."

Obviously, colleges don't deserve all the credit for their graduates' success. But they do deserve a healthy portion of it. Other research that has tried to tease out the actual effects of higher education finds them to be large. And they're not limited to money: Graduates are also happier and healthier. No wonder that virtually all affluent children go to college, and nearly all graduate.

The question is how to enable more working-class students to do so. "It's really the way democracy regenerates itself," said Ted Mitchell, Obama's under secretary of education. The new research shows that plenty of successful models exist, yet many of them are struggling to maintain the status quo, let alone grow. It's true in red states as well as in many blue and purple states, and it's a grave mistake.

There is a reason that City College and California's universities evoke such warm nostalgia: They fulfilled the country's highest ideals — of excellence, progress and opportunity. Many of those same colleges, and many others, still do. They deserve more than nostalgia.

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Although they're on opposite sides of the globe, UTEP and Victoria University in Australia face many of the same challenges.

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Photo by J.R. Hernandez



At the invitation of El Paso art aficionado Adair Margo, left, former first lady Laura Bush visited the UTEP campus on Nov. 9, 2016 as part of a trip to El Paso. She is pictured in the Lhaxhang speaking with Estrella Escobar, right, UTEP assistant to the President. Bush also visited the Nancy Lea exhibit at the Centennial Museum and toured the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens.

On the Cover

UTEP music students benefit from the global experiences of professors such as Brad Geneviro, DMA, standing, who spent a week in December 2016 as a guest clinician, adjudicator and conductor of the largest band festival in Hong Kong. Photo by J.R. Hernandez.

Campus

Raising the Bar

UTEP Alumnus Returns to
Take UTEP Funding Into
the 21st Century

From a young age, Ben Gonzalez was in a New York state of mind, with dreams of living in the Big Apple. The newly appointed vice president for asset management and development for The University of Texas at El Paso was born and raised in El Paso. He is a UTEP alumnus who has never shied away from lofty goals or the tenacity needed to achieve them.

As a UTEP student, Gonzalez was an active member of the Student Government Association and excelled academically, but was uncertain what he wanted to do after graduation. He met with a UTEP adviser and took an aptitude test that led him to pursue a career in finance. When he graduated from the University in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in business administration, he had not one, but four job offers from local financial institutions.

"UTEP is what got me interested in my career," Gonzalez said. "It is where it all got started."

After graduating, he joined InterFirst Bank as a credit analyst. After three years with the bank, he took a chance and went to work for a client, helping to launch a business that stonewashed apparel — one of the first of its kind in the U.S. At East-West Apparel, as it was called, Gonzalez served as a chief financial officer. The business, whose biggest client was Levi Strauss, grew rapidly to 1,500 employees in six months.

Later, East-West Apparel was sold to a firm with operations in New York. Gonzalez moved to New York City along with the business.

After years of corporate experience, in pursuit of a competitive edge in a highly competitive industry, Gonzalez decided to go back to school. He earned his MBA from Harvard Business School in 1999. He went



**"UTEP is what got me
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Ben Gonzalez

on to work on financial restructurings, representing companies in transactions involving Brazilian media conglomerate TV Globo, CBS, Viacom, U.S. Airways, Fruit of the Loom, Barneys New York, and Bank of America.

In the new position for the University, Gonzalez will oversee innovative strategies for generating value and revenue from the University's many assets, from educational programs to intellectual property and real estate holdings. It is a role he is eager to take on.

"I am anxious to get a couple of projects launched and develop a team that can deliver a return executing the strategy, and help us stand out as a university," Gonzalez shared.

"There are tremendous opportunities and a lot of things we can do here with both intellectual property and real estate. UTEP is a first-class university, and the possibilities for us are almost limitless." - **Christina Rodriguez**



See a video interview with Ben Gonzalez at utep.edu/magazine



Ice Breaker

UTEP Hockey Club Earns Conference Title

The University of Texas at El Paso's Hockey Club enjoyed a dominating 2016-17 season that included the first Texas Collegiate Hockey Conference championship and a #7 ranking by the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA).

The Miners club, a registered student organization, won the conference title Feb. 11, 2017, with a 6-0 victory against the Dallas Baptist University Patriots at the El Paso County Special Events Center. The win allowed them to move on to the ACHA regional tournament Feb. 24 in Greeley, Colorado, about 50 miles northeast of Denver.

"We took care of business," said Alek Lazarski, sophomore biochemistry major and the club's goalie. The Seattle, Washington, native has tasted victory in the past with other teams and he shared that feeling with his teammates. "Now our goal is to prove that we're not just the best in Texas."

This was the team's second year of existence. Its 25-man roster is filled with undergraduate students from El Paso and cities in Canada, Mexico and the Czech Republic. The team knew their home ice would host the conference championship so they prepared hard for the season, said second year head coach Tom Herman.

"The team bought into the system from the beginning," Herman said a few days after the championship game that took their record to 30-3. He lauded the student-athletes for their sacrifices and investment in teamwork. "Our depth was among the keys to our success."

The coach and team members said this year's accomplishments are the result of hard work by the team, but also because of the overall support from the University and the community.

If successful in Colorado, the team will qualify for the national championship tournament in mid-March in Columbus, Ohio. - **Daniel Perez**

Photo by Ivan Pierre Aguirre



Photo courtesy of Grammy Awards

Double Grammy

Zuill Bailey Wins 2 Grammys for Hemingway Album

Zuill Bailey has stood on countless stages throughout his career. On Feb. 12, 2017, he walked onto possibly the biggest stage yet: the pre-telecast Grammys ceremony at the Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, and accepted his first two Grammy awards.

Bailey, a senior lecturer of cello at UTEP and artistic director for El Paso Pro-Musica, accepted the awards for Best Classical Instrumental Solo and Best Contemporary Classical Composition. Both wins were for his work on "Daugherty: Tales Of Hemingway; American Gothic; Once Upon A Castle." The album also won a Grammy in the Best Classical Compendium category.

"Tales of Hemingway" was written specifically for Bailey by acclaimed composer Michael Daugherty and was recorded live at its debut performance with the Nashville Symphony in 2015.

"The Nashville Symphony wanted to commission a new piece of work and they had had a wonderful collaboration with Daugherty in the past," Bailey said. "They gave him carte blanche ... and he said he always wanted to write a cello concerto."

Steve Wilson, DMA, chair of UTEP's Music Department, said the department is excited about Bailey's latest accomplishment.

"The Grammys represent the pinnacle of success for recording artists," Wilson said. "Having a second Grammy winner on faculty (Lowell E. Graham, DMA, was the music director for a Grammy Award-winning CD) affords our students the opportunity to interact with musicians of the highest caliber with real-world experience." - **Leonard Martinez**



Photo by Ivan Pierre Aguirre

Registration Escalation

Enrollment Jumps for 18th Straight Year

Fall enrollment at The University of Texas at El Paso rose again for the 18th straight year and by the largest single-year percentage increase in five years.

UTEP registered 23,904 students in fall 2016 compared to 23,397 in fall 2015. That 2.2 percent increase is just below the 2.4 percent bump experienced in 2011. Two of the largest growth areas were first-time undergraduate students (5 percent) and new graduate students (13 percent). This year's figures also benefited from high student retention.

University President Diana Natalicio said the enrollment trend is a sign that the region's students understand the value of a high-quality education and its role in their social mobility. She noted that the University achieved its record enrollment despite graduating more than 4,500 students during the 2015-16 academic year – UTEP's biggest graduating class to date. President Natalicio added that UTEP's retention rates are a testament to the hard work of the talented faculty and staff who are instrumental for student success in higher education.

Gary Edens, Ed.D., vice president for student affairs, said the 2016-17 enrollment numbers are the result of many years of cultivating a college-going culture throughout the region's school districts and beyond.

He said students and their families trust UTEP to provide an affordable and excellent education.

Charles Ambler, Ph.D., dean of UTEP's Graduate School, noted that the number of master's students increased by 7 percent and doctoral students went up by 9 percent.

"Increased graduate enrollments reflect the critical role UTEP plays in providing advanced educational opportunities in the border region and UTEP's emergence as a nationally recognized research university," Ambler said. - **Daniel Perez**

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See a video from the Hispanic Heritage Awards at utep.edu/magazine

Hispanic Heritage Foundation Award

Natalicio Recognized Nationally for STEM Efforts

The Hispanic Heritage Foundation recognized University of Texas at El Paso President Diana Natalicio with the STEM Award at the 29th Annual Hispanic Heritage Awards in September 2016 in Washington, D.C. The awards recognized the accomplishments of leaders in various fields while celebrating Latino cultural pride and Latinos' great promise for America's future.

"[President Natalicio's] impact on Latino students and our community has been tremendous," said Jose Antonio Tijerino, president and CEO of the Hispanic Heritage Foundation. "With two-thirds of new jobs over the next decade projected to be filled by Latinos, Dr. Natalicio is preparing our students in the STEM fields to help move America forward."

ExxonMobil sponsored the HHF STEM award and echoed the importance of the work happening on the UTEP campus.

"At ExxonMobil we depend on bright minds of all backgrounds to keep us at the forefront of solving America's toughest energy challenges," said ExxonMobil Project Executive William H. Eisner. "We salute Dr. Diana Natalicio for her role in making The University of Texas at El Paso one of the premier institutions growing generations of Hispanic engineers and helping ExxonMobil achieve our goals."

- **Lauren Macias-Cervantes**

Comic Book Legend

Pulitzer Prize Winner Visits UTEP

Pulitzer Prize winner Art Spiegelman spoke to an overflow crowd at the UTEP Union Cinema on Oct. 19, 2016.

Spiegelman is the author, illustrator and comic book legend behind "Maus," a Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel that depicts Spiegelman's father's experiences during the Holocaust.

As part of the underground comics subculture of the 1960s and 1970s, Spiegelman created Wacky Packages and Garbage Pail Kids. In 1980 he founded Raw, the acclaimed avant-garde comics magazine.

The Inter-American Jewish Studies Program at UTEP, led by Associate Professor of English Ezra Cappell, organized Spiegelman's visit.

During his talk, Spiegelman discussed the comic book medium, how "Maus" came about and early influences on his artistic style.

- **Jenn Crawford**



Corporate Collaborations

Unique Partnerships Benefit COBA Students

Professional success is dictated in part by preparation.

The University of Texas at El Paso's College of Business Administration (COBA) has launched several programs in recent years to better equip students for their careers.

Robert Nachtmann, DBA, dean of the college, has made it one of his goals to build deep, strategic relationships with industry to stay aware of the necessary skill sets required in new employees and to create the best possible career

pathways for COBA graduates.

To that end, the college has partnered with several Fortune 500 companies to create mutually beneficial programs with academic and professional components for COBA's graduate and undergraduate students. The experiences build confidence that give UTEP students an advantage as they enter the job market.

One example is the planned family of specialized academies that blend academics with industry and provide networking, advanced training, curriculum development and certification opportunities for undergraduates.

The experiences build confidence that give UTEP students an advantage as they enter the job market.

Another example is the Corporate Engagement Project (CEP) started in 2009, where full-time Master of Business Administration students tackle specific tasks requested by a company.

"Some of the training can put our graduates six to 12 months ahead of their peers," said Krista Snow, director of COBA's Corporate Partnership Programs.

The first academy was the ADP Human Capital Management (HCM) Academy that launched during the fall 2016 semester. The academy extends students' knowledge of practice and theory through the use of industry-standard information technology systems, advanced analytics and in-class presentations by representatives from ADP, one of the world's largest payroll and comprehensive human resources outsourcing service providers.

The academies, planned by a team of faculty, COBA administrators and senior executives from the firms, have multiple benefits such as creating talent pipelines for well-prepared UTEP graduates.

Richard Posthuma, Ph.D., professor of management and academic director of the ADP academy, said the program's coursework was designed to give students a hands-on experience as they use state-of-the-art human resource information systems.

"I am very enthusiastic about the future of this program," Posthuma said.

Ericka Jacquez, a senior business management major, said she was excited to learn about the ADP academy because her concentration is in HR/Human Capital Management. She was among the initial seven students accepted into the academy, which includes two lab courses that incorporate video tutorials, lab assignments that are shared with ADP representatives, and a tour of the ADP offices to experience the work that is done on a daily basis.

"I knew I wanted to join the second I read the flier," said Jacquez, an El Paso native and first-generation college student. She said the academy has exposed her to concepts that are not found in textbooks, and to the latest technology used in the field. "I thought it would be a great opportunity to gain knowledge about real-world scenarios and network with professionals. I absolutely love the hands-on learning."

Two more academies are scheduled to launch in 2017: the Lockheed Martin Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Academy and the Prudential Risk Management Academy. Future academies that focus on health care management and business analytics are in the early planning stages.

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Ericka Jacquez



Photo by J.R. Hernandez

**While the
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COBA created
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Project (CEP) for
MBA students.**

While the academies are for undergraduates, COBA created the Corporate Engagement Project (CEP) for MBA students. It started as an extracurricular activity to provide the DeWalt tool company with market research. With the continued support of DeWalt, the program was formally launched as the CEP during the spring 2010 semester and turned into an elective for full-time MBA students in spring 2013.

Since its inception, the CEP has organized 21 projects at the request of 15 corporate partners such as Coca-Cola and involved 66 students. One of those students was Daniel Martinez, vice president of card product management for Morgan Stanley, a global financial services firm in New York City.

Martinez, who earned bachelor's degrees in political science and economics in 2010 and his MBA in finance two years later, said the CEP was the key to his professional success.

He said his first project was to research the Hispanic builders' market for the relaunch of an electric circular saw for Stanley Black & Decker. His second was to help a now closed electronic startup with a market penetration strategy for the electronic repairs field. "It was an opportunity to experience real-world problem solving with a corporate partner," Martinez said. "My advice to MBA students is to get in (to a CEP)."

Martinez, an El Paso native, said the CEP helped him land a summer 2011 internship with the Federal Reserve Board

in Washington, D.C., which led to his being hired by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York after he earned his MBA. William Conwell, CEP director and clinical professor of corporate enterprise, said both sides benefit from

these collaborations. Students learn how to apply their knowledge and enhance their business skills in a corporate environment. Corporate partners benefit from short-term focused projects that also serve as on-the-job talent evaluations.

Conwell said COBA plans to expand the CEP program to more and varied industries that would benefit from this experiential learning opportunity, and tap into a treasure trove of multicultural talent that often is bilingual and used to balancing the priorities of work, life and school. - **Daniel Perez**



UTEP'S PLANNED
INTERDISCIPLINARY
RESEARCH
BUILDING
INTENDED FOR
WORLD'S GRAND
CHALLENGES

Collaboration Complex



A new complex designed to enhance interdisciplinary research at The University of Texas at El Paso will sprout from the southeast corner of University Avenue and Sun Bowl Drive in the near future and herald a new era of discovery at UTEP.

The planned \$85 million, 158,800-square-foot Interdisciplinary Research Building (IDRB) will provide faculty and students from different disciplines with the support and resources to tackle complex issues that face the world in the 21st century.

Peter Golding, Ph.D., professor of engineering education and

Timeline

Groundbreaking **April 2017**. Construction scheduled for completion in **Spring 2019**.



See more renderings and floor plans at utep.edu/magazine

leadership, said the state-of-the-art building speaks directly to the relevancy of interdisciplinary research, a concept that UTEP President Diana Natalicio and Roberto Osegueda, Ph.D., vice president for research, have championed for many years.

"To me, this investment will put our money where our mouth is," said Golding, who added that today's research in materials science cannot be done without an understanding of chemistry, biology, mathematics and nanotechnology. "They are all interconnected in a way that they weren't once upon a time."

University officials envision the IDRB as a tool to advance UTEP's core values of access and excellence and its ability to pursue unique approaches to large-scale research that will attract world-class faculty and talented students at the

undergraduate and graduate levels.

"The building will provide a unique opportunity to foster interdisciplinary research in our growing areas of strength, while benefiting the quality of UTEP's undergraduate and graduate students, as well as research and academic programs," Osegueda said.

The building will consist of three wings within sight of Interstate 10. The north wing will be four floors and the middle and south wings will be five stories tall. The exterior will follow a Bhutanese architectural design and be landscaped with native or drought-resistant vegetation.

The first floor, which will be partially underground, will have core facilities and heavy equipment. The second floor, nicknamed "Main Street," will handle the heaviest pedestrian traffic with a

café, building visitor center, galleries to showcase research, meeting rooms and an 80-seat auditorium. The top three floors will have wet and dry labs and interdisciplinary research suites designed for maximum flexibility in size and use.

Among the highlights will be a "canyon-like" patio between the IDRB and the Undergraduate Learning Center. A planned bridge will span the canyon, which will have a water feature.

"We believe that this building will not only be a beautiful addition to our campus, but will raise our interdisciplinary research enterprise to a whole new level," said Bill Hargrove, Ph.D., chair of the IDRB campus committee and director of UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management. "This building represents the way of the future." - **Daniel Perez**

..... It could take **up to six months** to move in research equipment, furniture and people. | For more information, please visit idrb.utep.edu.



Sustainable Site

UTEP's Campus Transformation Earns Prestigious Certification

The University of Texas at El Paso's Campus Transformation project has earned several international awards since it was officially unveiled in April 2015 to include the world's first SITES Certification Award in the Silver category for achievement in landscape sustainability.

The project transformed much of the campus into a pedestrian-friendly environment with shade structures and about 700 native and drought-resistant trees, bushes and plants.

The project's crown jewel is Centennial Plaza, an 11-acre multiuse, ecologically friendly oasis that students, faculty, staff and visitors use to relax, study and collaborate.

The design involves wide, multi-textured walking paths, decorative lighting, water features, concrete benches and a 130-seat amphitheater. It also incorporates underground infrastructure

upgrades and rock-strewn arroyos and acequias to enhance stormwater drainage.

Mahesh Ramanujam, president of Green Business Certification Inc., the group behind the SITES award, said the project showed tremendous leadership in landscape design.

"We know that a sustainable built environment extends beyond the four walls of a building, and through the use of SITES, projects like this are creating ecologically resilient communities, reducing water demand, improving air quality and human health by connecting people to nature," Ramanujam said. "UTEP and the entire project team who worked on this certification are true leaders in campus transformation and sustainable landscape design."

The plaza has been used for numerous official University activities, from welcoming events to campus health fairs and Movies on the Lawn. While individuals use it as a place to eat, stroll

or capture Pokémon, larger groups use it for weekly after-hours yoga classes. Staff have used it for team-building exercises and faculty have used it as an outdoor classroom to test equipment and prepare for off-campus research trips.

Among the projects' other honors were the People's Choice Award in Outstanding Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development from the Environmental Protection Agency, Excellence in Landscape Architecture from the international Society for College and University Planning, and the 2015 Gold Leaf Award from the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture.

Greg McNicol, associate vice president for business affairs – facilities management, said the University was honored to have been recognized for this successful once-in-a-lifetime project.

"As is, it has had a positive impact on the University and the community," McNicol said. - **Daniel Perez**

Creating an Aerospace Hub

UTEP Partners with El Paso County on Technology Research

In October 2016, The University of Texas at El Paso and the County of El Paso announced their collaboration on a new NASA MIRO cSETR Technology Research and Innovation Acceleration Park (tRIAc) in Fabens, Texas, adjacent to the Fabens Airport.

The new aerospace and energy testing facility will create opportunities to increase regional economic prosperity. Students from UTEP will connect with industry leaders on research projects at the facility, helping to create new jobs in the area.

"This partnership marks a giant leap forward not only for research

"...our goal is to **keep graduates here at home.**"

opportunities available to the University's students, but also for economic development that benefits our whole region," said UTEP President Diana Natalicio.

Ahsan Choudhuri, Ph.D., chair of UTEP's mechanical engineering department and director of the University's Center for Space Exploration and Technology Research (cSETR), said the partnership is "a tremendous opportunity for our region to be seen as a major player within the aerospace industry."

El Paso County is contributing acreage and infrastructure support while promoting the area as an economic hub. The University's cSETR will attract more industry leaders to the region for students to gain real-world work experience as part of its commitment to meet the demand for aerospace engineers conducting research in the fields of combustion and propulsion.

"The last 100 years of UTEP's history were about giving tools to students to be successful," Choudhuri said. "But then, graduates – especially in engineering – leave town because that's where the employers are. For UTEP's next hundred years, our goal is to keep graduates here at home. Efforts like tRIAc are essential to achieve that goal." - **Lisa Y. Garibay**

See a video about the new collaboration in Fabens at utep.edu/magazine



Understanding the Man in the Mirror

Study Uncovers Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence

After interviewing more than 50 women of Mexican origin about their experiences with intimate partner violence, Bibiana Mancera, a December 2016 graduate from UTEP's Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. program, was interested to find out the risk factors for intimate partner violence among men of Mexican origin.

"When you hear or read about men and intimate partner violence, it is usually in the context of perpetration," Mancera said. "I wanted to find what influences this behavior in men."

For her dissertation, Mancera asked 56 men of Mexican origin between 18 and 55 years old who were living in a public housing complex in El Paso to describe their experiences with risk factors that could contribute to intimate partner violence.

Participants were asked to reflect on themselves, their environment, past experiences, family origins and stereotypes.

Several themes emerged from the data, which Mancera used to describe the ways in which men of Mexican origin see themselves. They include the "Me Others See," which includes stereotypes, such as machismo, that encourage men to display negative behavior; the "Masked Me," which includes the beliefs that men learned during childhood, including witnessing violence; the "Real Me," which is how men see themselves daily and how their beliefs contribute to intimate partner violence; and the "Heartfelt Me," which occurs when men gain self-awareness to overcome all the negative aspects of their past to become better people.

Mancera hopes her research will eventually lead to interventions specifically for Mexican-Americans, the largest Hispanic-origin population in the United States.

"We need to better understand sub-populations of Hispanics, such as Mexican-Americans, in order to develop interventions that are culturally and even linguistically appropriate for them," Mancera said. - **Laura L. Acosta**

Guitar Hero

Basketball Coach Shares Her Musical Side

Keitha Adams is in the midst of her 16th season as head coach of the UTEP women's basketball team and has had to get to know eight new faces on the team – six freshmen and two junior college transfers.

"It's kind of hard to believe it's my 16th season," Adams said. "It's gone by really fast. We've had some great moments in the Haskins Center and a lot of things we have taken a lot of pride in. What's fun about this is every year it's a new team and a new challenge and you have new pieces to the puzzle. It's about working your way through that."

When she's not working with the team, Adams likes to take time with her other passion – music. She has been a lifelong music fan.

"I love music," she said. "It just brightens your spirits. It takes you back to memory association. I'm always just blown away by people and their talent."

In recent years, she has gone from listener to performer.

"I started playing and tinkering around with [the guitar] when my dad passed three years ago," Adams said of her father, Lowell Adams. "He was a really great guitar player and I had no interest at all. I just listened to him because he was so good at it. But it was after losing him that I picked up one of his guitars and just started doing it."

Adams first learned by teaching herself and then took some lessons from a guitar instructor on campus.

"I'm not very good," Adams said. "My dad would definitely say, 'Stick with your day job.' But I do enjoy it."

She mostly plays acoustic guitar – she has three of them – but will play her father's red Fender electric guitar with her friend's rock band, Ageless, when she goes back to Kansas.

"I try to play once or twice a week," Adams said. "When the season is going on, it's a lot harder to play. Usually the night before games I'll play a little bit. It's a great way for me to relax." - **Leonard Martinez**



"I love music.

It just brightens your spirits.
It takes you back to memory
association. I'm always just blown
away by people and their talent."

Academic All-Stars

UTEP Soccer Earns Prestigious NSCAA Team Academic Award

The UTEP soccer team is scoring big inside the classroom. For the sixth straight year, the team has earned the Team Academic Award from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA).

To gain the recognition, the team had to achieve a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. During the 2015-16 academic year, the Miners boasted the top cumulative GPA among all Conference USA programs with a 3.567.

Just this summer the team received the Conference USA Sports Academic Award. That honor is given to the squad in each conference-sponsored sport with the highest GPA for the academic year.

"We recruit character to UTEP soccer, which means the girls are winners in all areas of their life," UTEP head coach Kevin Cross said. "I am appreciative of the team's commitment to academics, which can be very challenging with their busy soccer schedule."

In its more than two-decade history, the UTEP soccer team has produced five All-Americans, 19 Academic All-District honorees and 17 Academic All-League members. - **Lauren Macias-Cervantes**

Defending Champs

Men's Cross Country Team Wins Conference Title

The UTEP men's cross country team captured the 2016 Conference USA Championship team title for the second consecutive year in October. The Miners tallied 24 points to defend their championship title at Frank Liske Park in Charlotte, North Carolina. It was the team's second-straight conference title, and the sixth title in 12 years with C-USA.

The Orange and Blue had four runners finish in the top seven spots in the competitive 8K to earn All Conference First Team honors, including Jonah Koech, Outstanding Senior of the Meet Cosmas Boit, Antony Kosgei and freshman Michael Saruni.

It was a tough 8K course with changes in elevation, gravel roads, and slick, dewy grass hills. Conference USA opponent Middle Tennessee set a close competition. The Blue Raiders trailed alongside UTEP throughout the entire race. However, the Miners had a little more juice and pushed through to take the crown. Middle Tennessee followed in for second-place with 36 points. Charlotte took third with 92 points.

Head coach Paul Ereng was named Conference USA Coach of the Year.

- **Stephanie Shields**

"Cameasha is a young woman who took advantage of everything that our great University has to offer ..."



Hoop Star Still Shines

Former UTEP Basketball Star Named NCAA 2016 Woman of the Year Finalist

Former UTEP women's basketball star

and May 2016 graduate Cameasha Turner was selected from more than 500 nominees as one of nine finalists for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Woman of the Year Award.

"Cameasha's accomplishments on and off the court while at UTEP were unparalleled as she excelled athletically, as well as in the classroom with a perfect GPA," said Julie Levesque, senior associate athletic director at UTEP. "Cameasha is a young woman who took advantage of everything that our great University has to offer, which is a great example for current and future student-athletes and what they can achieve."

Turner was named to the list of finalists from 30 Woman of the Year honorees. In order to be considered, the athletes must excel both on and off the court and have an excellent record of

academics, athletics, community service and leadership.

Turner graduated with a 4.0 GPA in criminal justice with minors in psychology and legal reasoning. She was named UTEP's 2016 Female Athlete of the Year and is currently enrolled at Notre Dame Law School.

The All-Conference USA first team and defensive team honoree was a team leader for the Miners during her career. She averaged 13.1 points, 4.8 rebounds, 2.0 steals and 1.5 assists while leading the team in field goal percentage (49.5), free throw percentage (77.3) and minutes per game as a senior (30.5).

"Cameasha is definitely a college athlete who pursued a pathway to opportunity and achieving excellence in the classroom, in competition and in life," Levesque said. - **Esmeralda Treviño**

Courtney
Clayton



Rachael
Schoenrock



COURTNEY CLAYTON

HOMETOWN: CORNELIUS, OREGON

CLASS: JUNIOR

MAJOR: HEALTH PROMOTION

SPORT: SOFTBALL

UTEP softball's Courtney Clayton is the epitome of a student-athlete. Clayton was named the 2016 Conference USA Softball Player of the Year after producing big numbers in 2016 as a sophomore. But not only does she excel on the field, Clayton has maintained a GPA over 3.9 in the classroom.

The Cornelius, Oregon native set the UTEP softball single-season record by connecting on 79 hits and 21 doubles in 2016. Clayton was announced as the C-USA Player of the Year and was named All-C-USA first team prior to the C-USA Softball Tournament. Clayton hit .416 – the third best average in program history – with seven long balls and 35 RBI. Her phenomenal effort helped surge the Miners to their first-ever winning conference record and into the C-USA tournament for the first time since 2010. Not only did UTEP earn a spot in the tourney, it also rallied to beat Florida International University, 5-4, in the first round, giving the program its first postseason victory since 2009.

Clayton's outstanding work in the classroom hasn't gone unnoticed, as the health promotion major was named to the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll and was recognized as a C-USA Academic Medalist in 2015 and 2016. She was recently named to the 2016 CoSIDA Academic All-District team, and acknowledged as an NFCA Scholar-Athlete for the past two academic years.

The junior infielder arrived in the Sun City in fall 2014 and made her presence known during her freshman campaign in 2015. She was named to the C-USA All-Freshman team after she hit over .300 with seven dingers and 30 RBI.

It will be a treat for Miner fans to witness Clayton don the uniform of the Orange and Blue on the softball diamond in 2017 and 2018 before she puts on her cap and gown for graduation. - **Drew Bonney**

RACHAEL SCHOENROCK

HOMETOWN: CORTLAND, NEBRASKA

CLASS: SENIOR

MAJOR: KINESIOLOGY

SPORT: RIFLE

The UTEP rifle program has a proud history, including capturing the school's first national championship during the 1952-53 season – 13 years prior to the men's 1966 NCAA basketball title.

In 1994-95 the Miners became an all-female squad, and since then there have been many talented ladies representing UTEP. Continuing that tradition today is senior Rachael Schoenrock, who is one of the best and most determined shooters on the range in program history.

Schoenrock lives to compete, and her achievements are also raising awareness for the sport on campus and in El Paso. Since embarking on her career for the 2013-14 season, the Cortland, Nebraska, native has been a standout performer for the Miners.

Schoenrock is responsible for four of the top-10 individual smallbore scores in program history. She fired a personal-best 588 at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks on Feb. 18, 2016, which tied for third all-time at the school. Schoenrock also has scores of 585 (at Texas Christian University in 2015) and 584 (vs. Ohio State in 2016 and vs. the University of Nevada in 2015) to her credit in the difficult shooting discipline.

Schoenrock also claims two of the top-five aggregate scores in Miner history. Her effort of 1,176 at Alaska-Fairbanks on Feb. 18, 2016, ranks second and the score of 1,172 at Nevada on Oct. 4, 2015, is tied for fourth.

This season Schoenrock has the best average aggregate (1,154) and smallbore average (572) on the squad while placing second with an air rifle average of 582. Her hard work has helped UTEP post three of the top-10 team air rifle scores in program history.

Off the range, Schoenrock proudly serves the United States as a member of the Texas Army National Guard. Upon graduation from UTEP in December 2017, the kinesiology major has aspirations to become a nature and wildlife conservation officer. - **Mark Brunner**





SPREADING THE GIFT OF *MUSIC*

By Leonard Martinez

Claudio Ordaz couldn't have chosen a more different place than the Chihuahuan Desert to take his musical talents. Seven years ago, he moved to Finland. He returned to El Paso for the first time in about 10 years in September 2016.



Claudio Ordaz, B.M. '01

"IT'S HOT,"

Ordaz said with a laugh when describing what it was like to be back in the American Southwest. "But I really miss the weather here, the beautiful sunsets and the mountains. And the warmth of the people is something I always bring with me in my heart." Ordaz is one of several UTEP alumni and faculty who share their musical talents around the country and the world. He visited the El Paso area this past fall to conduct a symphony concert in Chihuahua to commemorate the 10th anniversary of his father's death. His father, Moises, founded and conducted Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua's symphony orchestra.

Ordaz, who graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance in 2001 from UTEP, founded the Savonlinna Camerata orchestra in Finland in 2013 as the first Mexican conductor to start an orchestra in Europe. It started with 12 musicians and has since grown to include 34 members. The orchestra has performed throughout Finland.

Ordaz's musical journey started at about the age of six in Chihuahua City, Mexico, when he began learning how to play the violin.

"I believe that curiosity is very important and I also believe music chooses people," Ordaz said. "Italians say that we should listen to our hearts. But mine always comes in sound, in terms of music, and for me it has been a certain guide that moves me around the world."

At the age of 14, he started taking a more-than-four-hour bus ride from Chihuahua City to El Paso to take private lessons with longtime El Paso Symphony Orchestra conductor and UTEP Professor Abraham Chavez.

Ordaz continued his musical education at UTEP, studying with Chavez and Laurence A. Gibson.

"I had the opportunity and privilege to be the concertmaster of the University symphony orchestra for four years," Ordaz said. "That gave me a good opportunity to be in a position where you have responsibility and you have to lead the orchestra. That was very important to me and that gave me a good base, and inspiration to move forward to more challenging opportunities."

Gibson, a former UTEP music professor, calls Ordaz one of his favorite students. Ordaz looks up to Gibson as a mentor.

"The greatest gift Claudio gave me was when he was my concertmaster in the University orchestra and I would look down from the podium and he always had a wonderful twinkle in his eye," Gibson said. "He's just a wonderful guy. He combines the charisma with the craft, and that's a powerful combination."

Having alumni like Ordaz and current faculty performing and conducting across the U.S. and overseas is a unique way of letting people know about UTEP.

"It's very important for the University in terms of spreading our reputation," Gibson said. "Let's face it. El Paso is a bit isolated and even with media being what it is, knowing somebody personally, having been personally in their presence, is a powerful recommendation."

Plans are underway for Ordaz and his orchestra to celebrate Finland's 100 years of independence in 2017, which will include a series of concerts.

Ordaz also has taken another big step in his musical growth – writing his first orchestral piece. Studying music in

Estonia inspired him to take the leap, and he began writing the piece at the end of 2015.

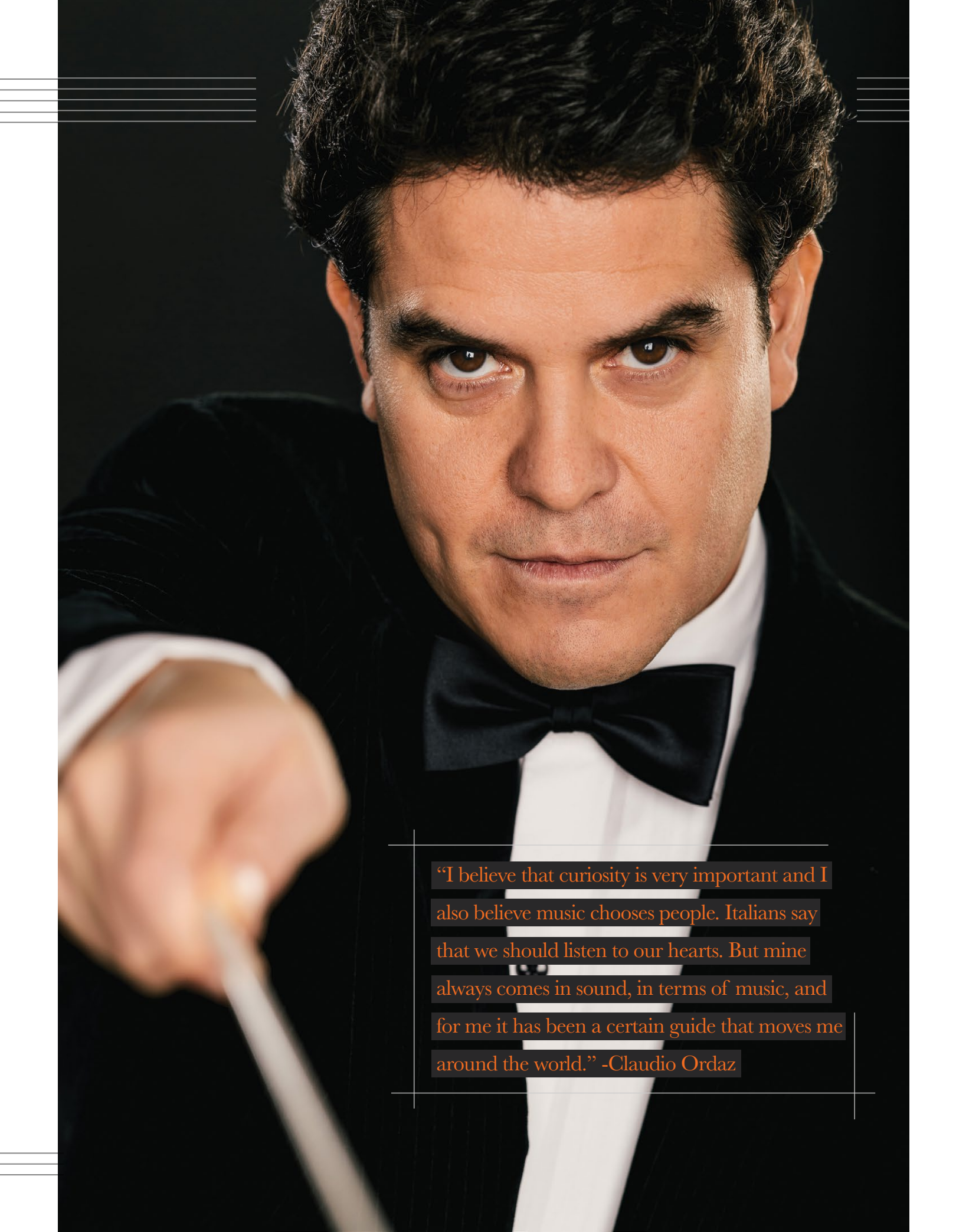
"It's not finished yet, but I'll be sharing my first piece with everybody soon," Ordaz said.

For UTEP students and others at the beginning of their musical journey, Ordaz has this message.

"I believe it is very important for young musicians to find out if music is an essential need for them," Ordaz said. "Once they find out that is what they want to do – that they have something important to say, that they can't live without the music – then they must concentrate as much as they can to achieve their goals and make a career out of it."



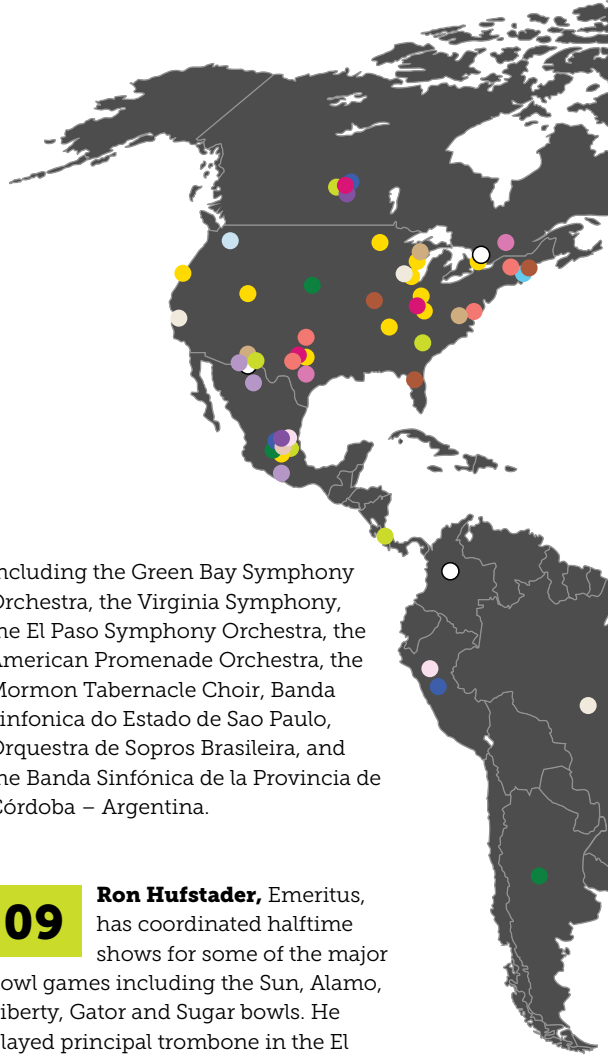
See a video interview with Claudio Ordaz at utep.edu/magazine



“I believe that curiosity is very important and I also believe music chooses people. Italians say that we should listen to our hearts. But mine always comes in sound, in terms of music, and for me it has been a certain guide that moves me around the world.” -Claudio Ordaz

Music Faculty Make Their Mark Globally

Like Ordaz, some UTEP music faculty share their talents across the world in addition to their teaching duties, enhancing the learning experience for their students.



01

Zuill Bailey, Cello, has performed as a concerto soloist with symphony orchestras around the United States in cities including Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Honolulu, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee and Nashville, to name a few. His international appearances include celebrated performances with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra in its 50th anniversary tour of Russia, as well as concerts in Australia, France, Hong Kong, Israel, Jordan, Mexico, Spain, South America and the United Kingdom. Bailey won two Grammy Awards in February 2017 for his performance on composer Michael Daugherty's album "Tales of Hemingway."

02

Kenneth Capshaw, Conducting and Ensembles, has toured in Italy and England as a trumpet soloist with the Choir of the Southwest, and in Turkey and Germany as a member of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. Capshaw has been a guest soloist, clinician, and adjudicator around the United States.

03

Blythe Cates, Voice, has performed as a soloist with the Inland Master Chorale, the Austrian American Academy, Central Presbyterian Church of Austin, Concordia University Choir, and the Texas Early Music Ensemble.

04

Dominic Dousa, Music Theory/Aural Skills/Composition, has compositions that have been performed at recitals, festivals and conferences in the U.S., Canada, China, the Czech

Republic, Finland, France, Korea, Mexico, Peru, Poland and Scotland.

05

Brian Downen, Voice, performed in Bhutan for the king and queen's wedding anniversary in 2013 as part of UTEP's Opera Bhutan. In spring 2016, Downen played the supporting role of Lord Cecil in the New York Metropolitan Opera's production of "Roberto Devereux." Downen will have a featured part in Pyotr Tchaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin" at the Met in March 2017.

06

Cherry Duke, Applied Voice/Opera UTEP, performed as a guest artist with the Bay View Music Festival and Missouri Symphony Society in 2013-14. Some of Duke's credits include performing Siebel in "Faust" with Winter Opera Saint Louis, the Third Lady in "The Magic Flute" with Opera Tampa, and Isabella in "L'italiana in Algeri" with Opera Company of Middlebury and singing Beethoven's "Symphony No. 9" under the direction of Gerard Schwarz with Symphoria in Syracuse, New York.

07

Brad Genevro, Director of Bands, had a busy 2016 including guest conducting in Delaware, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania and Texas. He also has done some work in China and Australia during his career. In December 2016, he spent a week as a guest clinician, adjudicator and conductor for the largest band festival in Hong Kong.

08

Lowell Graham, Director of Orchestral Activities, has conducted ensembles

including the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, the Virginia Symphony, the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, the American Promenade Orchestra, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Banda Sinfonica do Estado de Sao Paulo, Orquestra de Sopros Brasileira, and the Banda Sinfónica de la Provincia de Córdoba – Argentina.

09

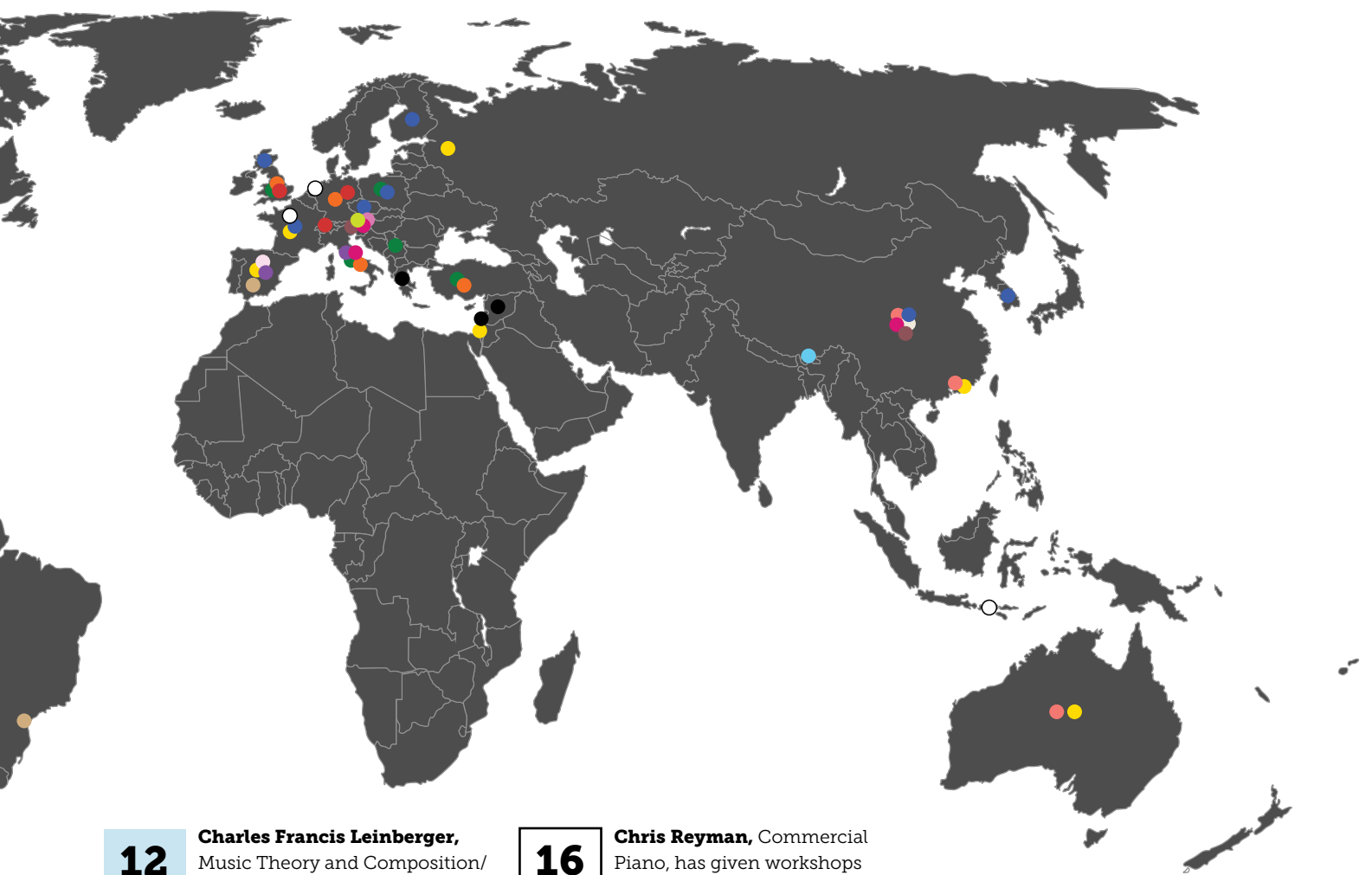
Ron Hufstader, Emeritus, has coordinated halftime shows for some of the major bowl games including the Sun, Alamo, Liberty, Gator and Sugar bowls. He played principal trombone in the El Paso Symphony Orchestra until 2005 and has played with orchestras such as the Greensboro Symphony, the Winston-Salem Symphony and the Classical Music Seminar Orchestra in Austria. Hufstader has served as a guest conductor and adjudicator in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Costa Rica.

10

Juanita Ulloa, Voice, has performed vocal works from Mexico of both a ranchera mariachi as well as classical nature on international stages in Spain, Mexico, Peru and the U.S.

11

Dena Kay Jones, Keyboard Division Coordinator/Piano, has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the U.S., Spain, Italy, Mexico and Canada. She was awarded a grant from the Spanish Embassy in conjunction with U.S. universities for a Spanish music CD recording project.

**12**

Charles Francis Leinberger, Music Theory and Composition/ Film Musicology, has lectured on the music of Ennio Morricone at the Manhattan School of Music, Northwestern University, the University of Leeds (England), and the Hawaii University International Conference on the Arts and Humanities.

13

Cara Luffey, Bassoon, has a career as an orchestral musician that has taken her from Graz, Austria with the AIMS Festival Orchestra, to a tour of China with the Mantovani Orchestra.

14

Oscar Macchioni, Keyboard, has performed extensively in his native Argentina, England, Italy, Mexico, Poland, Serbia, Turkey, and the U.S.

15

Stephen Nordstrom, Violin, has performed with the Lexington (Kentucky) Philharmonic, the Richmond (Indiana) Symphony Orchestra, and the Abilene (Texas) Philharmonic and served as concertmaster for festivals in Italy and the United States. Nordstrom has performed recitals and with his quartet in Austria, Canada, China, Italy and throughout the United States.

16

Chris Reyman, Commercial Piano, has given workshops across the U.S. and at the 8th World Congress of the International Drama, Theatre and Education Association in Paris, France and in the communities of Juárez, Mexico and Bogotá, Colombia. Reyman also is a versatile pianist and has performed throughout the U.S. and at festivals in Montreux, Switzerland; the Netherlands; Toronto, Canada; Bali, Indonesia; and Paris.

17

Hiram Rodriguez, Guitar, has performed at solo and ensemble recitals at venues including the Fine Arts Museum in Juárez, Mexico; the University Cultural Center at Juárez University (UACJ); City Theater in Delicias, Mexico; City Festival in Guerrero, Mexico; and Juárez's City Cultural Center.

18

David Ross, Clarinet/Music History and Literature, has worked nationally and internationally as a performer, clinician and lecturer. Recent highlights include giving the opening lecture at the Edinburgh (Scotland) Woodwind Symposium, lecturing at the Berlin (Germany) exhibition "Faszination Klarinette," and speaking at the famous Schola Cantorum in Basel (Switzerland) on 18th century music editing.

19

Andrea Shaheen, Ethnomusicology/Oboe, has toured with the Aegean Verdi Festival Orchestra in Greece and was principal oboe with the Syrian Philharmonic Orchestra of the High Institute of Music in Syria for the 2009-10 season. Shaheen also maintains a national and international symphonic performance schedule. In March 2012, she performed Stravinsky's "Pulcinella" suite under the baton of Matthew Coorey as principal oboist of the Palestinian National Orchestra.

20

Demetrius Williams, Drum Set Studies, has a busy schedule that includes traveling to the southwest United States and Mexico to perform and teach jazz, percussion and drum set as a clinician.

21

Steve Wilson, Department of Music Chair/Trombone, has been active nationally and internationally both as a soloist and as a member of the Continental Trombone Quartet, having given recitals and master classes in Los Angeles, Chicago, Brazil and China.

WINNING THE



It moves quickly, faster than you'd believe or fear, an invader slinking through tiny spaces, using its host's own system to further its multiplication, proliferation, path of destruction.

It is a terrifying threat that has ended many lives and irrevocably altered many more.



FIGHT AGAINST

CER



And it takes
an army to
face it.



Derrick Oaxaca

Robert Kirken, Ph.D.



contrast to the dark, closed environment of the body in which cancer creeps, the students and faculty within the Kirken Molecular Mechanism Cancer Laboratory move in light. Sunshine from windows streams onto countertops, where run-of-the-mill test tubes sit in holders adjacent to machines usable only by those highly trained – which in this case includes students from The University of Texas at El Paso where the laboratory is housed. The students are at all levels of collegiate education, but what unifies the eager freshman with the seasoned postdoc is a passionate belief that their work can tip the domino it takes to topple the system by which cancer grows, and by doing so, save lives.

The leader of this army is Robert Kirken, Ph.D., dean of UTEP's College of Science and principal investigator for the University's Border Biomedical Research Center (BBRC), which studies health issues that most affect the Paso del Norte region and its majority Hispanic population. Kirken's lab is primarily focused on understanding the complex communication inside cells so that new therapeutic strategies can be developed to treat diseases such as cancer, rejection of transplanted organs and autoimmune disorders.

Kirken's lab is also cultivating greater diversity within the scientific community, providing early access to research work for the mostly Hispanic student body at UTEP. Research Assistant Professor Georgialina Rodriguez, Ph.D., keeps things running by overseeing the day-to-day needs of every project.

"We're a big lab, 16 strong, and that's three postdocs, some graduate students, and quite a number of undergraduate students," she said. "These guys are sharp. Before one semester is even over, they're working independently on their own. We're very much like a family. In a way, we're all doing this work for somebody."

Roberto "Bobby" Garcia is a senior majoring in biology with a concentration in biomedical science. He is in the process of interviewing with medical schools for the fall 2017 semester and hopes to one day work in pediatric oncology. He began volunteering in the lab during his freshman year – one year after he was diagnosed with cancer as a high school senior.

WHEN A
CANCER IS
SO RARE,
RESEARCH
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THERE'S
HARDLY A
PLAN A FOR
TREATMENT,
MUCH LESS A
PLAN B
OR C.

"That's what got me interested in the research and medical aspects of science," Garcia said. "So, for me, it was 100 percent personal."

Junior Edmundo Esparza – a biology major with a biomedical concentration and a participant in the University's A-PRIME TIME accelerated medical school preparation program – appreciates how the lab has helped him hone practical skills like time management and prepared him for medical school in the fall, hopefully in Houston, to gain more expertise in oncology and eventually return to El Paso to practice medicine.

Blanca Ruiz received her bachelor's and doctoral degrees from UTEP and is now a postdoctoral fellow in the Kirken lab, where she has been continually inspired to persist in her microbiology investigations.

"You listen to all the research that the professors are doing here and how it's expanding into working with hospitals, and how you can actually get your hands on some patient samples and really contribute to the health of individuals," she said.

Elisa Robles is a third-year Ph.D. student in pathobiology who is motivated by the fact that the lab works with samples from patients in the area.

"I think that is very good because a lot of the research that has been done is on other kinds of populations," Robles said. "That's the thing that I like – to try and do research that is going to have an immediate impact on my community."

And then there's Derrick Oaxaca. Like Garcia and Esparza, he asked to work in the Kirken lab early on in his undergraduate studies, and came to the lab "as green as green could be," Kirken recalled with both affection and admiration.

Oaxaca was placed under the lab manager at the time, Jeremy Ross, Ph.D., who has since left UTEP to work as an oncology scientist with pharmaceutical company AbbVie. Together, they investigated rare and aggressive cancers seen in El Paso. After several years in the lab, Oaxaca received his bachelor's degree from UTEP and Kirken recruited him into the graduate program to pursue a Master of Science degree under his mentorship.

"I was placed on my own project dealing with investigating how cell signaling within cancer can be manipulated to overcome disease," explained Oaxaca, who is now a second-year medical student at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Paul L. Foster School of Medicine. "My research was specifically focused on chronic myeloid leukemia containing the T315I mutation, which is a mutation known to be resistant to almost all therapies." He also involved himself in other lab projects, including sequencing the genome of tumor samples from El Paso-area patients in order to identify genes that may be driving cancer, and exploring personalized medicine by developing ways to identify more precise therapies for aggressive cancers.

These experiences were possible in part because of partnerships Kirken developed with

local physicians. One of these alliances was with pediatric oncologist Benjamin Carcamo, M.D., and pediatric pathologist Harry Wilson, M.D. Both knew that even though the survival of pediatric patients had improved over the years, a group of patients remained that would fail all therapy. The doctors also believe that the presentation and behavior of pediatric cancer in Hispanics was unique and unrepresented in the medical literature, and that the strong Hispanic presence in El Paso made it ideal to study pediatric cancer in this growing but poorly understood population. For these reasons, they were very willing to contribute to the greater understanding of pediatric cancer by collaborating with Kirken. The collaboration started several years ago with the submission of tumor samples to Kirken's lab and continued when Carcamo and Wilson joined the El Paso Children's Hospital pediatric oncology team in 2012. The understanding of the biology of pediatric cancer they had gained through this collaboration made them believe they were ready for the next step.

It all came together when Lisa Hartman, M.D., a pediatric oncologist at El Paso Children's Hospital who works with Carcamo and Wilson, sent a brain tumor sample from a 2-year-old female patient to Kirken's lab. Hartman had first met Kirken when she came to El Paso to interview for her position, at which point they discovered mutual research interests.

"We talked about how we could collaborate with getting clinical samples to his lab and really work together to further the personalized medicine approach of using targeted therapy that we both share an interest in," she recalled.

The toddler with a brain tumor provided a perfect opportunity to do so.



Most cancer occurs in adults, which means that the most research and treatment options are geared toward those over 18 whose bodies are almost completely opposite those of

children. They've reached a stopping point when it comes to the kind of development it takes to grow into a whole, healthy human, and are strong enough to tolerate a battery of drugs and radiation that can often destroy cancer but also decimate healthy cells in the process.

The most common cancers among children are leukemia, lymphoma and brain tumors. The first two zip through bodywide networks that serve as highways for the cancers to wreak havoc in many places at once. The third takes root in the most important organ we possess, the one that gives us language and memory and emotion and self-awareness and everything else that



makes us human alongside the vital processes we need to survive – breathing, a beating heart, the ability to eat, the circulation of our blood.

In children, brain tumors present a difficult conundrum for the physicians who encounter them due to how much change the organ is undergoing; change that affects a child's future. Attack the tumor too aggressively and critical function can be destroyed. Approach it too timidly and the tumor may spread to become uncontrollable.

When the pediatric oncology team at Children's Hospital encountered a 2-year-old child with a brain tumor that wasn't responding to treatments in their arsenal, an approach that resulted from countless hours of students and educators running experiments in the Kirken lab is what worked.

The child had been diagnosed with a supratentorial primitive neuroectodermal tumor, or SPNET, which means it was found in the cerebrum, the largest part of the brain. It controls voluntary muscle function along with speech, emotion, thought, reading, writing and the capacity to learn – so much critical to a child's development and later well-being.

SPNETs are rare, accounting for approximately 2 percent of all cancers that affect the brain or central nervous system in children. The tumors are notoriously aggressive. The survival rate ranges from 30 percent to 60 percent.

"You'll read in the textbooks, 'This is rare condition; you'll never see it.' However, in El Paso, you'll see it," Oaxaca said. "That's the perk of going to medical school on the border – you see patients from a third world country come in, patients come in from Mexico who have diseases that are listed as rare in any medical textbook."

When a cancer is so rare, research on it is just as elusive. There's hardly a plan A for treatment, much less a plan B or C. Much of the work done in the Kirken lab is on understanding cancer on a molecular level so that any weakness in those molecules can be exploited and a treatment already in existence can be matched up to attack them.

And that's where Oaxaca – the guy who first thought he wanted to be an engineer, the student who had scarcely left childhood himself – came in.

"Derrick was studying. He was learning the pathways, he was understanding the assays, he was trying to troubleshoot why things weren't working," Kirken said. "He was critical because he took on the challenge to better understand these medically complex tumors."

Oaxaca explained, "We were able to see inside of the tumor at a molecular level the switches that were turned on. And these switches that were turned on coincided with the drug that treated leukemia, so we were like, 'You know what? In theory, it should work.'"

What wasn't working were standard treatments for the tumor.

"We didn't want to give her radiation, which is considered a possible option for this type of brain tumor, but we try not to do that to avoid the side effects on the developing brain," Hartman said. "So we were talking about what would be the best treatment for her that would cause the least amount of side effects so that she could grow and have a normal childhood."

Conventional chemotherapy – where drugs are given to kill the cancer, but may also kill off healthy cells and cause dire side effects in the process – is typically used on rare cancers. But that method had failed the 2-year-old and the tumor was growing, compromising her life. Furthermore, her tumor was so large that performing surgery would have had potentially fatal results.

When the little girl's parents were presented with the choice of an experimental approach and informed of its risks as well as benefits, they agreed to try it. Within a month of receiving the drug, the child's tumor had shrunk significantly. Within several more months, it had retreated to the point where a surgeon was able to go into the brain with minimal invasion and remove what was left of the tumor completely.

These therapies are referred to as targeted because they bind within the cancer molecule and keep its reproductive switch from flipping on while leaving every other healthy cell in the body alone. Side effects plummet. Damage is minimized. This is what the Kirken lab, and every physician treating cancer patients, is going for.

But none of this innovation would have made it out of the lab were it not for the willingness of local physicians to join forces with the researchers.

"What do you do then when there's really no schematic to treat the disease?" Oaxaca asked. "You need people like Dr. Hartman and Dr. Carcamo, who collaborate with experts in the area and utilize local resources to combat these really aggressive cancers."

"That it was actually feasible to get a tumor sample, test it in the lab, bring that information then back to the patient, offer a drug that we could actually have access to – the stars all aligned the proper way in this case," Hartman said. "It has to be just a lot of collaboration that happens, a lot of working and not giving up."

This child's story isn't the end. Another patient, this time an adolescent whose tumor was growing fast and not responding to standard methods, also experienced a successful outcome from a treatment developed by the Kirken lab.

"[DERRICK] WAS CRITICAL BECAUSE HE TOOK ON THE CHALLENGE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THESE MEDICALLY COMPLEX TUMORS."



As a medical student, Oaxaca eagerly works on an astonishing range of projects to better healthcare locally. As a board member of the Cielo Vista Optimist

Club, he proposed that the organization give proceeds from its annual fundraising events to the Kirken lab to be used for lab and testing supplies as well as fees required for students to attend conferences or travel to present papers on their work. The organization's board agreed that those efforts make the student learning experience stronger and continue progress toward successful clinical trials that can turn into advanced lifesaving treatment right here in El Paso.

The UTEP alumnus also is a delegate for his medical school to the Texas Medical Association and serves as its representative at caucuses throughout the year. He recently visited Washington, D.C., to meet with members of Congress to discuss issues involving medicine and politics. When he's not juggling all of this and more, he is still working with Hartman on new research related to beating childhood cancer.

"We want to have a regular, systematic way to get patient samples, get them to the labs where they need to be tested, get all of the regulatory requirements all in a row, so that's what we're looking at in the future," Hartman said. "Up till now, we've kind of done it just on a case-by-case basis."

However, the knowledge gained with Kirken's collaboration and the experience with this and other selected cases is helping the pediatric oncology team at El Paso Children's Hospital put together a research protocol to treat patients who had failed all standard therapy and to better understand pediatric cancer in Hispanics. This protocol will include the collaboration of pediatric oncologists, pediatric pathologists, pediatric geneticists at El Paso Children's Hospital and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, chemotherapy researchers and the Kirken Molecular Mechanism Cancer Laboratory at UTEP.

In addition to the scientific breakthroughs, the whole team is aiming for a total cultural shift that will change local perceptions about cancer and its treatment.

"At the end of the day, it's about educating everybody; it's about educating even people who have been in the business for a very long time," Kirken said. "You're never too old to learn, and I think we really owe it to the people here in this region to try to do the best that we can to provide cutting-edge care. And part of that is what we're doing right now. We're training this next generation of scientist-clinicians. If we can keep 20 Derricks, think about how much better El Paso would be."



UTEP AND VICTORIA UNIVERSITY:

A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

by Laura L. Acosta

While traveling in the United States on business in 2006, a story in an inflight magazine about The University of Texas at El Paso piqued Professor Elizabeth Harman's interest. She was intrigued by UTEP's mission to provide access and excellence to low-resourced, primarily Hispanic students who traditionally lacked access to higher education opportunities.

At the time, Harman was the vice chancellor of Victoria University (VU) in Melbourne, Australia. She had been searching globally for innovative strategies to expand educational opportunities for VU's blue collar, culturally diverse, first-generation student body. That's when she learned about UTEP and became engrossed in the prospect of forming a partnership with the University.

Harman discovered that UTEP and VU not only shared similar missions, but the two institutions also encountered many of the same challenges, despite being on opposite sides of the globe.

Of the 46,000 students enrolled in VU's vocational and higher education programs, most are from migrant families hailing from countries in Europe, Asia and Africa with little experience or tradition in higher education. At UTEP, 80 percent of the

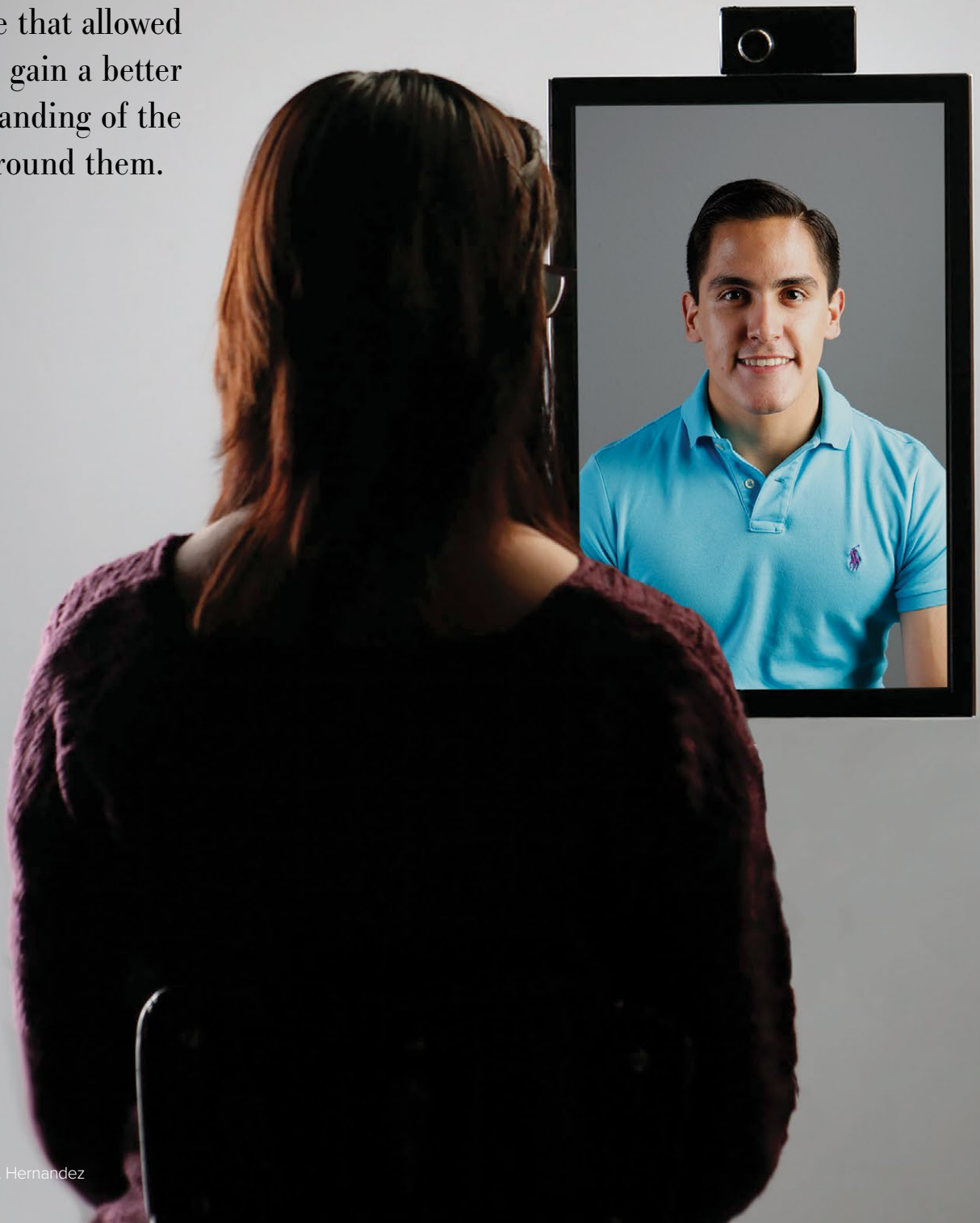
University's nearly 24,000 students are Hispanic and 62 percent of UTEP seniors are the first in their families to graduate from college.

When Harman returned home to Australia, she eagerly phoned UTEP President Diana Natalicio to exchange ideas on how best to serve their surprisingly similar student populations.

"Among my many treasured memories of President Natalicio was her warm and encouraging response when I first rang over a decade ago to introduce Victoria University," recalled Harman, who retired from VU in 2010. "It was essentially a cold call. UTEP was almost half a world away on the U.S.-Mexico border. I felt that despite our obvious differences, we might have much to share, and Diana agreed."

Ten years later, the partnership between UTEP and VU has created a world of opportunities for student exchanges, faculty teaching and research collaborations at both institutions. UTEP also has gained international attention from other like-minded universities in Scotland, London, Mexico, and Central and South America eager to build educational programs and joint research initiatives influenced by the success of UTEP's affiliation with VU.

Through discussion boards, video lectures and real-time video conferences, students at UTEP and VU engaged in an international dialogue that allowed them to gain a better understanding of the world around them.



"Liz (Harman) was clearly a kindred spirit eager to help VU more authentically serve a population whose talent was too often squandered through lack of higher education opportunities, and I was delighted to discover a university leader who shared a passion like mine for UTEP's access and excellence mission," President Natalicio said.

She had discovered a very special partner in vice chancellor Harman. They were both determined to develop closer ties between their respective universities.

"And the rest, as they say, is history," President Natalicio continued. "The sustainability of the relationship that we built – now with the leadership of VU Chancellor George Pappas and VU Vice Chancellor Professor Peter Dawkins – has validated the authenticity and alignment of our mutual opportunity of interests and aspirations."

Familiar Territory

For the past 100 years, UTEP and Victoria University have each provided students from diverse socioeconomic, cultural and educational backgrounds access to higher education opportunities that would create for them a pathway to prosperous professional lives.

VU has a large multicultural student population, with students coming from more than 100 countries. Nearly a third of VU students come from non-English speaking backgrounds, with more than one-fifth of families from low socio-economic backgrounds. Eighty-four percent of UTEP students come from El Paso County, and nearly 70 percent of undergraduate students at UTEP come from the ZIP codes with an annual per capita income of less than \$20,000.

"VU and UTEP students all have a willingness to improve themselves," said Tegan Cockram, a 2015 VU graduate who traveled to UTEP in 2012 as part of a student exchange program. "(They're) always looking for the next way to make a difference and give back to the community. Also, both groups of students understand it takes hard work to achieve good things these days."

For President Natalicio, the challenge was to create, through the partnership, a strategy that would enable low-resourced students to gain the kind of international awareness and experience usually reserved for students in more affluent settings.

An exchange of visits between VU and UTEP officials resulted in a cross pollination of ideas for programs and initiatives that would enhance learning for 21st century students at both institutions.

Among them were the library exchange, which influenced thinking around libraries as interactive learning spaces at each university, and the VU Early-Uni Pathways (EUP) program. Since 2013, hundreds of students in the final two years of Australian secondary schooling have transitioned

into higher education through the EUP, which was modeled after the successful partnership between UTEP and Early College High Schools in El Paso.

"There is much we can learn, and each time we spend time with our UTEP colleagues, we can be deeply reflective about all aspects of our work," Dawkins said. "In the early days, we learned about student retention, entering students and student exchanges. Then we collaborated on the learning commons and UTEP was able to learn from us. Mutual benefit is important, and there's a commitment on both sides."

Online Connections

Although UTEP and VU exist in different hemispheres, technology has enabled faculty and students at both institutions to forge meaningful connections without physically being in the same classroom or in the same time zone.

Thanks to videoconference technology, Fabricio Saucedo, a student in UTEP's Interdisciplinary Health Sciences Ph.D. program, presented his research on the effects of visual deprivation on balance during walking to faculty and students at VU's School of Biomedical and Health Sciences in March 2016.

Saucedo's presentation was part of the UTEP/VU seminar series between UTEP's College of Health Sciences and the Australian university. During the monthly, hour-long video conference, UTEP and VU doctoral students each take 20 minutes to present their research, followed by a question-and-answer session where participants from both countries exchange ideas.

"They may have a different opinion on the research that we're doing, and they can provide feedback that we could implement in our future research," Saucedo said.

The VU/UTEP Global Engagement and Learning Program linked students in UTEP's UNIV 1301 freshman seminar with their peers in the land down under via a social networking site on the Ning platform. Irma Montelongo, Ph.D., an associate professor of practice in Chicano Studies at UTEP, and Effy George, Ph.D., a lecturer at Victoria University, developed the program in 2009.

Through discussion boards, video lectures and real-time video conferences, students engaged in an international dialogue that allowed them to gain a better understanding of the world around them.

"When we first began talking through our video conference, it was a huge culture shock for all of us," said Ilse Hernandez in 2010 about her experience with the program. She graduated from the UTEP School of Nursing in 2015. "We were talking to students halfway around the globe. It made me want to pursue a deeper and closer interaction with different people from different parts of the world."

Although UTEP and VU exist in different hemispheres, technology has enabled faculty and students at both institutions to forge meaningful connections without physically being in the same classroom or in the same time zone.



Trading Places

The VU/UTEP Student Employment and Exchange Program has been one of the partnership's most successful initiatives, allowing UTEP and VU students to trade places for a semester to study and work at their institution's sister university. The program is an affordable alternative to traditional study abroad programs because students work on campus while studying overseas.

VU student Sheridan Buesnel-May worked in UTEP's Office of Student Life during the fall 2016 semester. The paid internship allowed Buesnel-May to cover her living expenses in El Paso and keep up with her financial responsibilities at home.

"I see a lot of similarities between VU and UTEP students," said Buesnel-May, a first-generation college student. "They live at home with their parents and mostly work to put themselves through college, which is something I do also."

Since 2010, 18 VU students and 19 UTEP students have participated in the program, including Audrey Russell, a UTEP organizational and corporate communication senior, who traveled to VU in 2012.

"Most of the students had jobs," recalled Russell, who worked in the student life program at VU. "It was cool to be able to relate to the students that way. I was working and going to school at the same time, so that felt familiar to me."

New Partnerships

UTEP and VU's successful partnership serves as a model for new partnerships between UTEP and other international universities with similar missions that are also seeking new strategies to educate historically underserved students.

When Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), the economic development agency for the University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland, began searching for U.S. institutions to develop collaborations in research and education, UTEP was one of three Texas universities that NASA officials recommended to the HIE contact.

A visit by a delegation from Highlands and Islands to UTEP in June 2015 set the wheels in motion.

While still in its early stages, the partnership between Highlands and Islands and UTEP has the potential to create research collaborations between faculty at both universities in mass spectrometry, Arctic environmental science and archeology. Other areas of interest include distance education, student and faculty exchanges, sponsored and collaborative research, and fee-for-service models in economic development.

"This partnership provides an opportunity to get our students to make international connections as well as broaden their horizons," said Stephen B. Aley, Ph.D., associate vice president for research and biological sciences professor, who traveled to HIE in Inverness, Scotland, in November 2015.

The progress that UTEP and the University of the Highlands and Islands have made is a prime example of how international relationships can develop and make a global impact.

"If you look internationally, the research from top universities has a global footprint," said Craig E. Tweedie, Ph.D., associate professor of biological sciences, who also is exploring research collaborations with Highlands and Islands faculty. "It's very important to do research regionally to understand the environment that we live in and serve our community. But as a university, I think it's important that we spread that knowledge and explore our understanding on a global level."



Happy 100th Anniversary, Victoria University!

"Dr. Natalicio has pioneered strategies that have assisted traditionally underrepresented sectors of the community to participate and excel in their studies."

- Peter Dawkins

UTEP President Diana Natalicio received a very special gift from Victoria University (VU) on her birthday, Aug. 25, 2016. The Australian university bestowed an honorary doctorate on President Natalicio for her outstanding leadership and innovative practices in higher education for more than 45 years.

"Dr. Natalicio has pioneered strategies that have assisted traditionally underrepresented sectors of the community to participate and excel in their studies," said VU Vice Chancellor Professor Peter Dawkins. "And in doing so, she has become an esteemed and influential adviser for higher education sectors across the United States and internationally."

The event was one of many celebrations in 2016 that marked VU's 100-year anniversary as an education provider.

"From all of us at UTEP who have been involved in one way or another in this partnership with our esteemed colleagues and friends at VU, we are truly delighted to be able to join you today in celebrating your centennial," President Natalicio said to VU officials who gathered at VU's City Flinders campus to watch her accept the honor via videoconference from UTEP's Undergraduate Learning Center.

Gary Edens, Ed.D., vice president of student affairs, and Donna Ekal, Ph.D., associate provost for undergraduate studies, traveled from UTEP to VU to participate in the festivities on behalf of the University. In 2014, a delegation from VU visited UTEP to celebrate UTEP's Centennial.

"We all look forward to the many exciting opportunities ahead for our collaboration and our shared future," President Natalicio said.

Victoria University began as the Footscray Technical School, which was founded in the western suburbs of Melbourne in 1916.

Like UTEP, VU has been committed to serving a 21st century student population characterized by students who are from largely urban backgrounds and who have been underrepresented in higher education.

The mutual interests shared by both universities resulted in a thriving partnership between UTEP and VU over the past 10 years.

To commemorate this partnership, UTEP and VU released a monograph titled, "Ten Years of a Global Partnership," in time for VU's centenary. The monograph highlights the stories of the people, programs, collaborations and knowledge-building activities between UTEP and VU since 2006. Limited print copies of the monograph are available.

Please contact Donna Ekal for information at dekal@utep.edu. The electronic version is available at books.vu.edu.au. **-Laura L. Acosta**

The Alumni Lounge

ALUMNI NEWS, PROFILES, OBITUARIES AND PHOTOS

1970s

Kay Becker (M.Ed. '77) and her husband, Jed, will fund the Becker Scholarship Fund through the Medical Center of the Americas Foundation to assist high school seniors as they pursue a higher education.

Alejandro Escarcega (B.S. '75, MPA '86), who retired from the Texas Youth Commission and the Federal Bureau of Prisons, has formed Escarcega and Associates, LLC, a small consulting business dedicated to the development, implementation and evaluation of juvenile justice policies and procedures. The business will provide consulting services to local, state and federal detention administrators and their staff.

Ruben Guerra (B.S. '74), president and CEO of the Ruben Guerra Company LLC, was elected to the Paso del Norte Health Foundation's board. He is a registered investment adviser with more than 29 years of experience.

J. James Rohack (B.S. '76) was granted the title of Professor Emeritus in Internal Medicine by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. He retired in May 2016 after 30 years with Baylor Scott & White Health with the designation of emeritus staff. He will continue to serve as a senior adviser to the American Medical Association in the areas of integrated leadership, professional satisfaction and practice sustainability.

Richard Rubio (B.S. '76) retired from Chevron and Western Refining as a senior laboratory petroleum inspector after 28 years. He served in the United States Navy and was a member of the El Paso Fire Department.

Joe Wardy (BBA '76), former El Paso

mayor and businessman, is the new CEO of the Hub of Human Innovation, a nonprofit technology incubator that launched in El Paso in 2011 as part of a broader effort by city leaders to create more high-skill, high-wage jobs by cultivating fast-growth tech companies in the region.

John "Buddy" Winston (M.S. '74) opened Star City Studio Productions in El Paso in June 2016. The performance venue and recording studio were a labor of love for Winston, a musician, and his wife, Pat Olchefske-Winston, an artist.

1980s

James M. Briggs (B.S. '84) was promoted to professor of biochemistry and associate dean at the University of Houston. He recently started his second company, Metabocentric Biotechnologies, after successfully exiting his first one in 2008.

Yolanda Garcia (BBA '83) has been named first senior vice president and chief customer service officer for WestStar Bank. In her new role, she is responsible for overseeing retail banking and directing customer experience strategies. She has 30 years of leadership experience in retail banking and customer service.

Yolanda C. Leyva, Ph.D., (M.A. '89), UTEP associate professor of history, is the recipient of the 2016 Herbert Feis Award by the American Historical Association for her contributions to public history.

Sandy Roland Rioux (MPA '85) retired after nearly 38 years as head of the El Paso Center for Children. The nonprofit center touches the lives of more than 1,000 children a year through programs that range from its on-site Runaway Shelter, to foster care arrangements, to the state's STAR program for at-risk youth.

Nina J. Turley (BSN '84), a school nurse in the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District in Houston, Texas, was selected as one of the top 150 nurses in the Houston Chronicle's 2016 Salute to Nurses. She was recognized for having made a tangible, positive impact in the nursing community.

Paul Yetter (B.A. '80) was named 2016 Attorney of the Year by Texas Lawyer magazine. The award recognizes one lawyer or judge each year whose work makes a distinct impact on the legal profession in Texas.

1990s

Anna Aleman (B.A. '90) is the new executive director of the Paso del Norte Foundation, a nonprofit charity established in 2013 by the Paso del Norte Health Foundation to increase the resources available to improve well-being in the region. She previously served for 11 years as the executive director of the FEMAP Foundation, a nonprofit organization created to support the health, preventive health, microlending and youth programs of FEMAP/SADEC in Juárez, Mexico.

Estrella Escobar (B.A. '93; M.A. '04), assistant to the President of UTEP, is the newest president of the Executive Forum of El Paso, an organization of female executives dedicated to economic, civic and cultural development of the El Paso area.

Maria Castañón Moats (BBA '90) was named U.S. assurance leader at PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the Big Four global auditing firms. Moats previously served as PricewaterhouseCoopers' chief diversity officer for five years, where she led the New York-based firm's diversity and inclusion efforts. During that time, PwC earned the No. 1

ranking on DiversityInc's "50 Best Companies to Work For" list.

Beatriz Salgado (B.S. '90) was appointed principal of Goodlettsville Middle Prep, in the Metro Nashville (Tennessee) Public Schools system. She was previously principal of the Engineering Academy at Overton High School in Nashville. Salgado started her teaching career in the El Paso Independent School District in 1991.

2000s

César Blanco (B.A. '05), a Texas state representative, was named political director of the Latino Victory Project, an effort founded by actress Eva Longoria and businessman Henry Muñoz III. The group aims to elect more Latinos to national office.

Jennifer Y. Castaneda (BSN '01), nurse director at Las Palmas Medical Center, was recognized with the hospital's 2015 Frist Humanitarian Award. She has worked at Las Palmas Medical Center for 15 years.

Francisco Cota, M.D. (B.S. '05), who specializes in interventional cardiology, has joined Cardiology Care Consultants in El Paso.

Luis Fernando Gomar (BBA '02), a partner in the International Energy Practice Group in the law firm Thompson & Knight LLP, in Dallas, Texas, was named a Recommended Attorney in the category of Energy Transactions: Oil and Gas, in the 2016 Legal 500 U.S. directory published by Legalease. The Legal 500 provides commentaries on elite law firms in more than 100 jurisdictions.

Stephen Ingle (BFA '04), co-founder and creative director of Creative Kids, was selected to participate in the third cohort of the Stanford Latino Leaders Program. The six-week program provides

Hollywood's Muse

Kurt Muse '70

UTEP Alumnus' Story to be Adapted into Motion Picture

UTEP alumnus Kurt Muse didn't know it when he walked the halls of The University of Texas at El Paso campus in the 1970s, but he would play a part in removing a Panamanian dictator from power more than a decade after graduating.



Finding cultural parallels that were reflective of his time growing up in Panama, Muse felt comfortable on the UTEP campus, where he earned a bachelor's degree in sociology in 1973. After graduating, he returned to Panama and worked at his family's business before becoming involved in a war with Gen. Manuel Noriega, the narco-military dictator of Panama who was in power for seven years starting in 1983.

Muse recounted the details of his harrowing experience in the nonfiction book "Six Minutes to Freedom." A film adaption of his book is in development, although Muse – at the request of producers – kept mum on key details of the film.

Reflecting on his experiences in Panama, Muse took pride in using nonviolent means to play a part in bringing down Noriega.

"We weren't blowing up things or killing anyone," Muse said. "We were just getting out the voice of liberty."

Muse and his compatriots attempted to overthrow Noriega from 1987 to 1989. Their efforts culminated in the creation of a pirate radio station called La Voz de la Libertad that broadcast messages of democracy and liberty three times a day.

Muse and his team were considered "public enemy number one" and often found themselves in a game of cat-and-mouse with the government.

Until Muse was betrayed and captured.

That, he said with a grim chuckle, "threw a monkey wrench in the plan."

Muse spent nine months in the Carcel Modelo Prison, infamous for the brutal treatment of its occupants. During his time there, Muse was harshly interrogated and saw the sun only four times.

A daring mission by the U.S. Delta

Force, codenamed "Operation Acid Gambit," freed Muse.

"For about 10 years, I never spoke about it," he said. "I put it in a box, locked it and put it in the basement."

Then he had a revelation: he needed to tell the story because no one else would.

Muse found a co-author in bestselling writer John Gilstrap. Muse notes that the book was moderately successful when it was released in 2006, but has largely stayed under the radar. Enter Hollywood.

Marc Butan, whose producing credits include "Killing Them Softly," "Pride and Prejudice and Zombies" and "The Zookeeper's Wife," will spearhead an adaptation of the book under MadRiver Productions.

"I'm unknown, and the story is still unknown," Muse said, "which made it so attractive to Hollywood." - **Kyle Alvarado**

Latino business owners with education, an enhanced network, personal mentorship and a better understanding of how to access capital resources to grow their businesses.

Raquel Jimenez-Kuker (BIS '06), an 8th grade math and STEM teacher at Parkland Middle School in the Ysleta Independent School District in El Paso, was named Region 19 Teacher of the Year for El Paso and Hudspeth County.

Gerina Piller (B.A. '07), a former UTEP golf standout, played for the U.S. women's golf team in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She tied for 11th in the field of 60 women.

Stephanie Townsend Allala (B.A. '00), attorney and owner of the Law Firm of Townsend Allala & Associates, received an award at the El Paso First Annual Accessibility and Empowerment Summit for her work in advancing the cause of people with disabilities. The award cited "Outstanding Contribution to Creating a More Accessible and Inclusive Community."

Elizabeth Zubiate (B.A. '08; B.S. '11; B.A. '11) recently graduated from the Chicago-Kent College of Law and is a patent attorney at Fulcrum Chicago's software division.

2010s

Kim Breitegan (BSN '14) was recently promoted to director of medical/surgical services at the Hospitals of Providence Transmountain Campus. Breitegan has more than 11 years of experience in the healthcare industry and most recently served as the medical oncology unit director at the hospital's Memorial Campus.

Leah Masters (BIS '11) has been named vice president of programs of the Executive Forum of El Paso, an organization of female executives dedicated to economic, civic and cultural development of the El Paso area.

In Memoriam

1940s

Ada F. Long (BBA '42)
El Paso, Texas; July 18, 2016

Ezequiel Montes (B.S. '47)
El Paso, Texas; July 6, 2016

Raymond Norman Sewell (BBA '49)
Sun City, Arizona; July 20, 2016

1950s

Patrick L. Benson (BBA '55)
Draper, Utah; July 8, 2016

Lillian P. Corpening (B.A. '52)
Anthony, New Mexico; July 7, 2016

Lahoma N. Counts (B.A. '50)
Mason City, Iowa; June 24, 2016

Raymond Davenport (BBA '51)
Franklin, North Carolina; July 20, 2016

Michael J. Doria (BBA '52)
Kingston, New York; July 14, 2016

Lorraine T. Elliot (B.A. '57)
New Braunfels, Texas; Oct. 13, 2016

Irene Y. Escobar (B.A. '59; M.Ed. '85)
El Paso, Texas; July 5, 2016

Clinton Hartmann (M.A. '51)
El Paso, Texas; Aug. 1, 2016

C. Charles Monedero (BBA '58)
El Paso, Texas; July 19, 2016

Philip D. Stoner (BBA '50)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 28, 2016

George H. Veytia (BBA '54)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 25, 2016

Ellen Jayne Wheeler (B.M. '58)
Oklahoma City, Okla.; July 19, 2016

Frank Yturralde (BBA '52)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 11, 2016

1960s

Humberto G. Aguilar (B.A. '64)
El Paso, Texas; Aug. 1, 2016

Joseph R. Blot (B.A. '63, M.Ed. '76)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 24, 2016

Rebecca J. Cornfoot (B.S. '64)
McKinney, Texas; July 15, 2016

Laminta H. Crawford (M.Ed. '68)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 6, 2016

Jose B. Juarez (B.A. '66)
El Paso, Texas; July 13, 2016

Jose Francisco Ontiveros (B.A. '62, M.Ed. '69)
El Paso, Texas; Sept. 27, 2016

Helen Hennessy Scasta (B.S. '60, M.Ed. '76)
Wheelock, Texas; Oct. 23, 2016

Mayda Nel Strong (B.A. '63, Ph.D. '78)
Salem, Virginia; July 31, 2016

1970s

Robert Amezcua (B.S. '73)
Austin, Texas; July 20, 2016

Windel B. Andrus (M.Ed. '70)
El Paso, Texas; July 27, 2016

Janis Bombach Bernard (B.A. '78)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 8, 2016

Alicia C. Blanch (B.A. '77)
El Paso, Texas; Aug. 5, 2016

Thomas F. Burdett (B.A. '77)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 4, 2016

Thomas R. Dent Jr. (B.S. '70)
Wilkesboro, North Carolina; July 24, 2016

Bruce Leigh Gordon (B.S. '74, M.Ed. '80)
El Paso, Texas; Aug. 20, 2016

Madlyne C. Guthrie (M.Ed. '71)
El Paso, Texas; July 5, 2016

Ruben Irizarry Jr. (BBA '74)
Carlsbad, New Mexico; Oct. 9, 2016

Michael B. Kohan (B.S. '71, M.S. '76)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 13, 2016

Jesus Ruben Navarro (B.A. '72)
El Paso, Texas; Sept. 4, 2016

Judith L. Persinger (B.S. '74)
El Paso, Texas; July 9, 2016
Yolanda Urrabazo (M.A. '77)
San Antonio, Texas; Sept. 9, 2016

Manuel Rosas (B.S. '76)
Colleyville, Texas; July 22, 2016

Genevieve Waters (M.Ed. '75)
El Paso, Texas; Sept. 23, 2016

1980s

Samuel Barela Jr. (B.A. '82)
El Paso, Texas; July 9, 2016

Donald Raymond Berger Sr. (BBA '89)
El Paso, Texas; Oct. 2, 2016

Gerardo Alberto Licon (B.S. '86, M.S. '99)
El Paso, Texas; Aug. 3, 2016

Wolfgang G. Mitschlati (B.S. '82)
El Paso, Texas; July 9, 2016

Hector Montoya (B.A. '83)
El Paso, Texas; July 24, 2016

1990s

Thomas S. Dively (BBA '90)
El Paso, Texas; July 15, 2016

Clement D. Eagan (M.A. '92)
College Station, Texas; Sept. 22, 2016

Sandra Threadgill (MPA '98)
El Paso, Texas; July 23, 2016

2000s

Charles Neil Bocanegra (B.A. '08)
El Paso, Texas; Sept. 19, 2016

Jesus Manuel Castaneda (B.A. '03)
El Paso, Texas; Feb. 29, 2016

Claudia C. Montoya (B.A. '03)
San Antonio, Texas; Oct. 4, 2016

Coming Home

Anthony Michael Stokes '08

Performer Returns to El Paso to Pursue Teaching Career



"It's an absolute honor to be invited back to perform...I'm proud of the training I got here."

Talent and perseverance has taken Anthony Michael Stokes from El Paso to New York and back again.

After graduating from UTEP in 2008 with bachelor's degrees in dance and music theatre, Stokes moved to New York and worked as an actor, singer and puppeteer. He also appeared in three national tours in addition to TV, film and web work.

Stokes returned to El Paso in late March 2016 and spent the summer and early fall getting his teacher certification through the Teachers for the 21st Century alternative certification program. He said he would like to eventually pursue a master's degree at UTEP.

His educational pursuits have not gotten in the way of his desire to perform on stage. In February 2017, he will showcase his singing

talents in "Suite New Orleans: The Feelin' of Jazz" at UTEP's Wise Family Theatre.

"It's an absolute honor to be invited back to perform," Stokes said. "It's going to be a special journey through jazz, New Orleans history, and also acts as a personal journey for myself as an artist and person I've become. I'm proud of the training I got here."

Stokes was the 2007 Homecoming prince and captain of the UTEP Go Team, a motivational outreach group that performed throughout Texas and the surrounding area.

Stokes performed in several productions for the theatre and dance department, music department and UTEP Dinner Theatre while pursuing his bachelor's degrees.

He has special memories of playing Maurice in the first local staging of "Beauty and the Beast" and meeting renowned lyricist

Tim Rice.

"'Ain't Misbehavin' also marked the first time the area saw an all-black cast," Stokes recalled. "That was special and that cast is very dear to me to this day."

Gregory L. Taylor, director of the UTEP Dinner Theatre and associate professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance, enjoyed working with Stokes.

"My favorite performances of his were in our productions of 'Smokey Joe's Café' and 'Ain't Misbehavin,' where he got to show off his comedic skills and his singing and dancing. The best part of running a theater at a university is seeing the students grow their talents. I remember Anthony getting better and better, year after year, and constantly taking classes and parts that challenged him."

- Leonard Martinez

Obituaries



Ted Banks

Ted Banks, who led the UTEP men's track and field and cross country teams to a combined 17 national titles in nine years as head coach, died at his home in Gunter, Texas on Aug. 25, 2016 at the age of 82.

He was inducted into the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2000 and inducted into UTEP's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2002.

During his UTEP tenure from 1972-81, his teams produced 47 NCAA individual champions, 189 All-Americans, 27 Western Athletic Conference men's team titles (six outdoor track and field, eight indoor track and field, nine cross country) and 152 WAC individual champions. He also coached several Olympians while at UTEP.

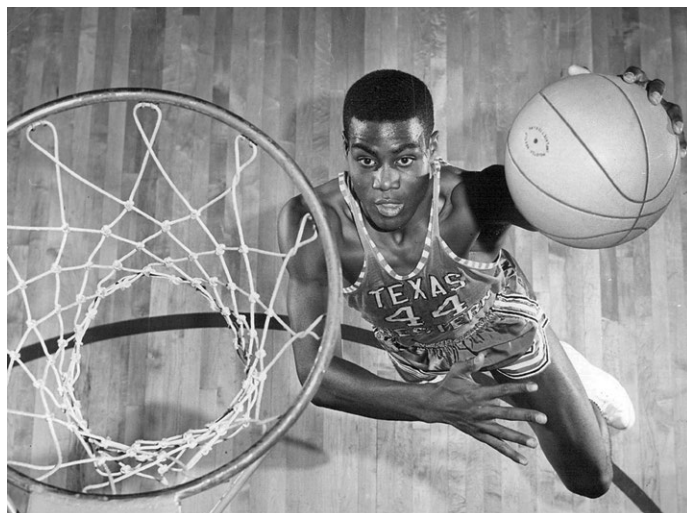
In 1981 the UTEP men's cross country team achieved a record-low score of 17 points at the NCAA Championships, only two points shy of a "perfect" score.

After he left UTEP, he directed promotional programs at major road races and marathons, including the Boston and New York marathons, until 1988. As National Director of Running Promotions for Converse Inc., he developed the company's first line of track and field shoes.

His last coaching endeavor was from 1988 to 1995 at Riverside Community College in Riverside, California, where he coached the team to six state and 12 conference championships.

Banks was a two-year track and field and cross country letterman at the University of California, Los Angeles from 1955-56 and was a part of the Bruins' 1956 national championship team. After graduating from UCLA, he began his coaching career at an Alhambra, California high school in 1959 and coached several high schools and colleges before he arrived at UTEP.

He is survived by his wife, Judy, three children and two grandchildren. - **Leonard Martinez**



Harry Flournoy

Harry Flournoy, team captain and the leading rebounder on Texas Western College's historic 1966 national championship team, died Nov. 26, 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia. He was 72 years old.

Flournoy averaged 8.3 points and 10.7 rebounds in the Miners' drive to a 28-1 record and upset of heavily favored Kentucky in the 1966 national title game. It remains the only national championship won by a Division I men's team in Texas.

The '66 championship game has gained prominence over the years because Texas Western College started five African-Americans against Kentucky's all-white starting five – a first in the NCAA championship game.

"In 1966, we had eight black players, four white players and one Hispanic player and our only purpose was to be the best team in the country," Flournoy said during the '66 team's enshrinement speech at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. "We did not have a social agenda at that time. We were only thinking about winning the championship. We thought we had the best team in the country."

Flournoy played only six minutes in the championship game, grabbing two rebounds and scoring two points before leaving with a twisted left knee. However, following the victory he was immortalized on the cover of Sports Illustrated rebounding a ball over Kentucky's Pat Riley.

Ironically, Flournoy didn't start playing organized sports until high school. But he attracted the interest of college coaches, including the legendary Don Haskins. "The Bear" visited Flournoy's hometown of Gary, Indiana to recruit Orsten Artis, but he left with two names on his list: Artis and Flournoy.

Flournoy appeared in 83 games for Texas Western from 1963-66 and was a part of two NCAA Tournament teams. He ranks fourth in school history with 836 rebounds and is one of only two Miner players (Jim Barnes is the other) to accumulate 300 rebounds in two separate seasons.

After his career at Texas Western, Flournoy became a teacher and basketball coach at an elementary school in El Paso. He then went into sales for more than 30 years.

He is survived by his wife, Sukari, and eight children. - **Leonard Martinez**

The Need to Succeed

Kia Dowell '07

UTEP Alumna Strives for Success to Bring Social Change



▶ **The one thing Kia Dowell knows** for sure is that to change the world, you have to set yourself up to be the change. She knew that she needed to do something to make life better for her people.

Raised in the small Aboriginal community called Warmun in the East Kimberley region of Western Australia, Dowell and her fellow Gija people endured many hardships. In the long clash of cultures between Australian colonists and the continent's indigenous peoples, her ancestors faced persecution, and many were murdered by settlers who wanted the land for livestock farming. Today depression, substance abuse, violence, poverty, incarceration and suicide plague the Gija community.

After moving to Darwin for her high school years, Dowell felt lonely and ashamed of being different from others. Fortunately, she found an escape in basketball.

It was her commitment to the sport that brought her to UTEP, where she joined the UTEP women's basketball team and immersed herself in the college experience by being actively involved with many organizations and extracurricular activities. She graduated from UTEP in 2005 with a BBA in management and again in 2007 with an MBA in international business.

In 2008 Dowell met her future business partner Chantal Harris, and they worked together to create Codeswitch, an award-winning strategic consulting firm aimed at positively impacting the economic and social inequity in indigenous communities around the world. The company encourages collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, communities and companies throughout Australia.

"Codeswitch is a term used a lot in the academic world and defines the skill that allows us to switch between cultures, languages and different contexts," Dowell explained. "It is what I saw every day growing up as a child in Warmun and every day at UTEP. People switching codes is a remarkable and transformational skill."

Dowell's achievements at the helm of Codeswitch helped her land a place in the Global Ambassadors Program, a prestigious mentoring program sponsored by Bank of America and nonprofit Vital Voices Global Partnership – a non-governmental organization (NGO) that identifies, trains and empowers emerging women leaders and social entrepreneurs around the world. Dowell was among just nine female entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs, business owners and nonprofit leaders selected from the Asia-Pacific region to participate in the program.

Taking part in the program has further ignited Dowell's passion for continuing the work she hopes will be the change to help end not only the hardships her people endure, but the hardships of other individuals around the world.

"To be part of such a special, passionate, knowledgeable and exceptional group of women has inspired me to strive for more," Dowell said. "The change we have seen in the past 50 years in Australia has been significant, and I truly believe in the work we are doing because it focuses on the strength of humanity and the things that connect us."

- Christina Rodriguez

Births & Marriages



1. Javier Ramos and Marcia Alcantar (B.A. '15) were married on July 15, 2016 in El Paso, Texas. **2.** Bianca Villanueva (M.S. '13) married Ruben Pinedo (BBA '14) on May 23, 2015 in El Paso, Texas. **3.** Sam Ayala (B.S. '10) and Cara Johnson (BSN '05) were married at Makapu'u Beach in Oahu, Hawaii on March 14, 2015. **4.** Michelle Valdiviez-Hickman (B.S. '13) and Jason Stewart Hickman were married on Sept. 30, 2016 in Biloxi, Mississippi. **5.** Adam Melendez (B.A. '13) and Karyn Mata (B.A. '13) were married on June 17, 2016 in Las Vegas, Nevada. **6.** Limara M. Dominguez (BBA '14) and Ruben G. Dominguez welcomed Eva Olivia Dominguez to the world on July 4, 2016 in El Paso, Texas. **7.** Adam Lee Pena (BA '14) and Angie Mendoza (B.A. '14, M.A. '16) were married on June 18, 2016 in El Paso.



Everlasting Love

Former UTEP President Shows Continued Support



The lasting pride Haskell Monroe, Jr. had for the University Library led to the Monroes' most recent gift of \$250,000 to the Library's Special Collections Department.

Jo Monroe, wife of former University of Texas at El Paso President Haskell M. Monroe, Jr., Ph.D., remembers standing at the lookout point on Rim Road admiring the view of El Paso with a hot, parched wind hitting her face during the summer of 1970.

The Monroes were passing through the city en route to do research in California. She never imagined that the Southwest city and its University would one day hold a special place in their hearts.

Ten years later, Monroe, Jr. was selected as UTEP's president. The family relocated to El Paso from College Station, Texas. Before joining UTEP, he had been an educator, researcher and administrator at universities including Schreiner College, now called Schreiner University, and Texas A&M University.

During Monroe, Jr.'s eight-year tenure with the University, he strengthened university relations throughout the community. He also established the Junior Scholars program that offered local middle and high school students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the college experience and take college-level courses at the University.

Among all of Monroe, Jr.'s contributions to UTEP as president, the one thing that meant the most to him was the development of the

University Library, Jo Monroe said. His knack for securing private funding for the University enabled construction of the \$28 million library.

The lasting pride Monroe, Jr. had for the University Library led to the Monroes' most recent gift of \$250,000 to the Library's Special Collections Department.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for us in recognition of how much Haskell loved UTEP and how proud he was of the University and the library," Jo Monroe said. "I remember when he first saw the new library, he was as proud as a new papa! With this gift, we hope to enrich Special Collections, enhance research and encourage students to take advantage of the space and resources of the library."

The Research Room in Special Collections is now officially called the Jo and Haskell Monroe Jr. Special Collections Research Center.

"Generous gifts to UTEP are always greatly appreciated, and especially so when they come from members of the UTEP family committed to the transformative work that we are doing," UTEP President Diana Natalicio said. "We are deeply grateful to Haskell and Jo Monroe for their continued interest in and support of UTEP and the students we serve."





The University of Texas at El Paso welcomed alumni back to campus during the weeklong Pete's Arcade-themed Homecoming festivities from Oct. 23-29, 2016.

During the week, thousands of students, alumni and friends of the University mixed, mingled and brought their best game to the various Homecoming events. The Miner Nation beamed with spirit and pride as members reflected on the past, made lasting new memories and reveled in Miner glory.

Participants dusted off their running shoes and ushered in Homecoming week at the annual Miner Dash and Family Fitness Fiesta. UTEP students eagerly took part in the Registered Student Organization Olympics, the Student Government Association's Homecoming Pageant, the Student Organization Lip Sync Battle and even an arcade tournament. The University's schools and colleges celebrated their esteemed Gold Nugget recipients throughout the week, and UTEP's Distinguished Alumni received a warm Miner welcome.

The week wrapped up with a day of fun and comradery that started with the Homecoming parade to Centennial Plaza, featuring future Miners from Mesita Early Childhood Development Center at Vilas and Mesita Elementary School. That evening, alumni cheered on their Miners at the Homecoming football game versus Old Dominion.

- Christina Rodriguez



Miners Around the World

To submit a Miners Around the World photo for possible inclusion in UTEP Magazine, send the photo and caption information to univcomm@utep.edu.



Senior biological sciences major **Wesley Stonell** visited the Cradle of Humankind during a trip to South Africa. Stonell proudly wore his Miner orange while exploring the limestone caves surrounding the site.



Joyce Thompson (B.A. Radio-TV, '68) is seen at Malbork Castle — one of the strongholds of the Teutonic Knights — during a trip to Poland.



Nadine Valles (B.S. Biological Sciences, '16) caps off her Hawaiian hike with a quick selfie during a family trip to the Paradise of the Pacific.

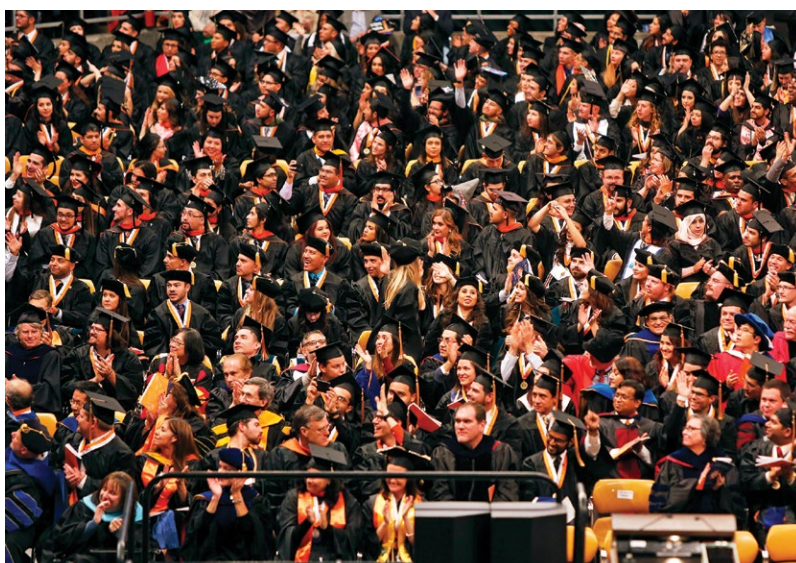
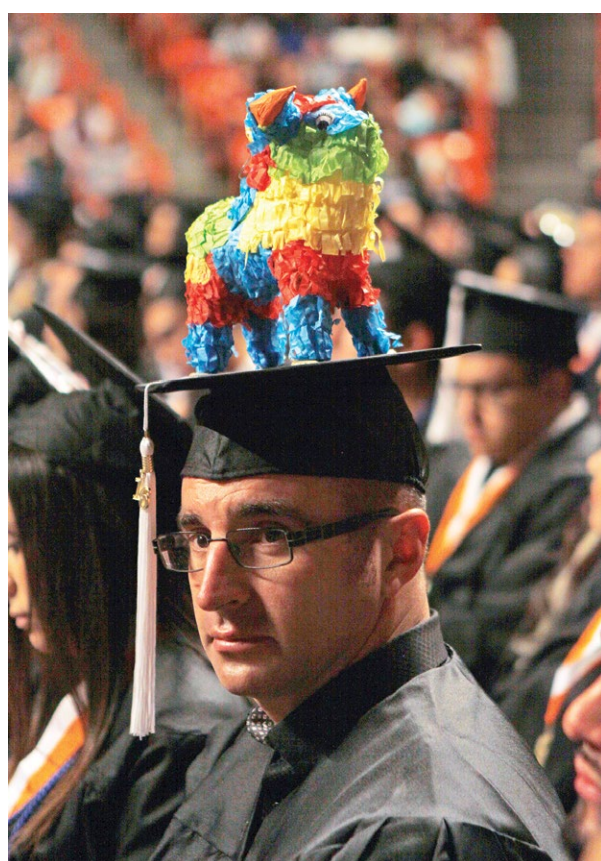


Anthony Beltran (BBA Accounting, '10; MBA '16) and **Gabriel Beltran** (B.S. Electrical Engineering, '06) give a "Picks Up" from a lavender field in Iceland during a month-long summer 2016 trip across Europe.



Frederica Yoshawirja (B.A. Graphic Design, '16) gives a "Picks Up" with her friend during a Seawalker adventure off the coast of Nusa Lembongan Island in Indonesia.

2016 Winter Commencement



More than 2,300 summer and fall graduates celebrated their achievements during UTEP's three Winter Commencement ceremonies on Dec. 10, 2016 at the Don Haskins Center.



See a Commencement video at utep.edu/magazine



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