

UHD *magazine*

Major Opportunity



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'Major Opportunity'
Branding Campaign

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By Dr. William Flores,
UHD President

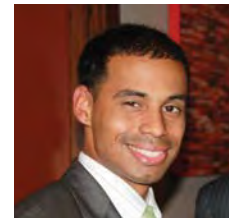
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Summer 2012

The Increasing Value of a Higher Education



By: Dr. William Flores
President,
University of
Houston-Downtown

As I write this, our faculty, staff and students are preparing for UHD's 52nd commencement exercises. The last finals and projects are underway, robes have been ordered, graduation invitations are in the mail. Held at Minute Maid Park for the 10th year, over 1,000 new graduates will walk across the stage on Saturday, May 12, ready to take on new responsibilities in their existing jobs, anxious to begin job searches and new careers, or simply proud that they have reached a milestone – a long-awaited baccalaureate degree.

My favorite part of the commencement exercise is when I have all of our new graduates “on their feet.” I ask those who are graduating with honors to stand for recognition. Then, I ask our veterans to stand so we may honor them. Those who are first in their families rise to add to the growing numbers of UHD graduates standing for recognition. Those who worked more than 30 hours a week while pursuing their degrees stand. Finally, those who are parents and have cared for children while attending school stand to be recognized. By this time, most of our new graduates are on their feet and Minute Maid Park is booming with the cheers and applause of graduates, their families and friends. It is always a moment that puts a knot in my throat and brings back memories of my own path toward higher education.



“

Over the next decade, the share of jobs (those requiring an associate's, bachelor's degree or higher) will increase from 59 percent to 65 percent.

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As a third grader, my father decided to return to school after having dropped out of high school to serve in World War II. Long after his children were born, he earned a high school diploma by taking night courses. I studied alongside my father at breakfast and dinner, while my mother – a high school graduate – tutored us both. My father's sacrifices and his educational aspirations created a better life for our family. And, his ambition to earn a high school diploma helped fuel my appetite for education.

84%

Individuals will earn about 84 percent more over their lifetime with a bachelor's degree than with only a high school degree.

Today, the path to a better life for families, stronger communities and financial stability continues to be linked to education, but a high school diploma is no longer enough.

- ❖ Over the next decade, the share of postsecondary jobs (those requiring an associate's, bachelor's degree or higher) will increase from 59 percent to 65 percent. (Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce)
- ❖ While just 4.3 percent of Americans with four-year degrees are unemployed, 15 percent of those without a high school diploma currently do not have a job. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 2011)
- ❖ The likelihood that children go will to college increases if at least one parent has gone to college. (Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2001)
- ❖ Individuals will earn about 84 percent more over their lifetime with a bachelor's degree than with only a high school degree. (2007-2009 American Community Survey)

Our new UHD graduates have seized a Major Opportunity and it will reap benefits for them, their families, and our city. You will meet some of those graduates and UHD alumni in this issue of our UHD Magazine. I think you'll agree with me that they deserve our recognition, our respect, and our accolades. Join with me in cheering for them.

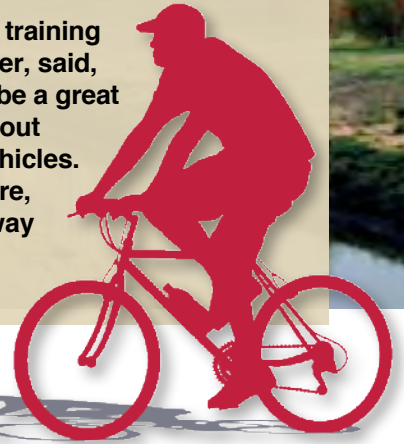


Dr. William Flores
President

For more information about UHD's involvement in helping Houston to increase the number of college graduates in our region, visit **My Degree Counts** (www.futurehouston.com) and, **Grad TX** (www.gradtx.org).



Luis Sanchez, manager of IT training and MS150 UHD team member, said, "The hike and bike path will be a great way to explore Houston without being in direct traffic with vehicles. Biking to work is an adventure, great exercise and an easy way to 'go green'."



Getting Around the UHD Campus

By: Mary Ann Cozza

While UHD doesn't currently have any major construction projects underway, two major transportation projects will make the campus friendlier and more accessible for students, faculty, staff and visitors.

Heritage Corridor Bayou Trail

The City of Houston offers over 300 miles of interconnected bikeways across 500 square miles. The network includes bike lanes, routes, shared lanes and paths, and other multi-use paths. One segment of recently constructed bikeway will benefit the UHD community.

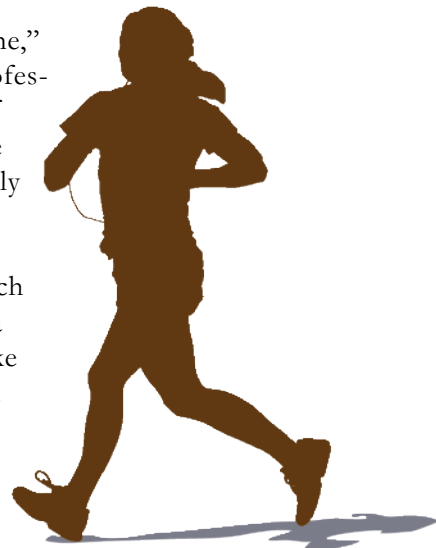
The completion of the Heritage Corridor Bayou West Trail provides students a pedestrian and bike pathway to access the UHD One Main Building from the Daly Street parking lot, near the UHD College of Business. The trail, which was built along a former railroad line, opened in mid-March.

According to Dan Raines, Bicyclist-Pedestrian Coordinator for the Houston Bikeway Program,

the Heritage Corridor offers recreation and transportation opportunities, as it will provide direct access into downtown Houston and the UHD campus.

"I am noticing more and more bikes on campus, which I take as an excellent sign of things to come," said Sarah Farris, associate professor of English and member of the UHD MS150 team. "I bike to work nearly every day, mostly because I never outgrew a bicycle. I also bike for fitness and mental health and I'm much happier all day if I've coaxed a dog into chasing me on my bike rather than sitting in traffic on the freeway."

For more information on Houston's bikeways, visit www.houstonbikeways.org.



Metro Continues Expansion

Houston's first light rail line has borne the "UH Downtown" station name since 2004. Operating well ahead of expectations, the line carries 45,000 passengers daily making it the nation's most heavily-traveled line per track mile.

This year the landscape around the "UH Downtown" station has changed dramatically, as the Houston METRO Authority continues construction on Main Street in accordance with its Expansion Project, adding five rail lines across Houston. The project will extend the light rail's North/Red Line past UHD to northwest Houston, ending at the Northline Transit Center near Crosstimbers Street and Interstate Highway 45.

Over the previous year, construction crews dismantled a majority of the Main Street bridge north of UHD in preparation for the new light rail tracks. According to Chris McCall, assistant vice president of the UHD Facilities Management Department, reconstruction of the bridge has already begun and will be pedestrian accessible in Fall 2012.

To aid students, faculty and staff traversing Main Street during and after the construction, a pedestrian tunnel was built near the UHD College of Business. This tunnel will allow east to west foot traffic beneath Main Street and the rail line and increase pedestrian safety. (See www.ridemetro.org)

The completed construction of the Heritage Corridor and the expansion of METRO's light rail will provide UHD students, faculty and staff greater access to all parts of UHD's growing campus as well as the surrounding areas of Houston.



"I will ride on the new trail as I cross White Oak Bayou by Willow Street Pump Station for my daily commute," said Spencer Lightsey, director of International Programs, who bikes to UHD daily.

"For me, biking definitely beats driving to work. It saves our family a considerable amount of money on gas and forces me to do cardio exercise every day. I'm thankful I live close enough to have that option."





CLASSES OF UH

Government • Public Service • Community

Are you one of our amazing UH alumni?

Drop us a note and tell us your story. We'd love to hear from you!

alumni@uhd.edu

UH Alumni Impacting Our Community

You'll find UH graduates in many prominent places in government, public service or as elected officials. When visiting with the following graduates, we found they were driven by a sense of service to others as well as the chance to create a positive impact in our community.

Often masters of multi-tasking, they manage professional roles, public roles and businesses.

Our alumni hold fond memories of their experiences at UH, and are eager to see UH alumni involved in shaping our city.

UH CLASS OF 2001



Mario V. Gallegos, Jr.

Mario V. Gallegos, Jr., served for 22 years in the Houston Fire Department where he retired as Senior Captain. Gallegos continued his public service in the Texas Legislature. Elected to the Texas State Senate in 1994, he is the first Hispanic Senator elected to represent Harris County. Prior to his election to the Senate, he served two terms in the Texas House of Representatives. Senator Gallegos has been a champion of continued growth and prosperity for Senate District 6, and is known as an advocate for fire safety and law enforcement.

Gallegos serves as one of his alma mater's strongest voices in Austin, working to ensure that levels of funding for the University of Houston System meet the growing demands of Senate District 6 and the greater Houston region.

UHD CLASS OF 1980

Judge Brent Gamble, 270th District Court

UHD alumnus Judge Brent Gamble was first elected to serve the 270th District Court in 1998, and has been reelected for three consecutive terms thereafter. Before becoming judge, he served as a trial lawyer representing both plaintiffs and defendants. He takes pride in running his court in a friendly and efficient manner, having disposed of more than 14,000 cases since 1999 and having one of the lowest numbers of pending cases in the county. Gamble was named Civil Judge of the Year by P.O.L.I.C.E., Inc, and is a life member and long-time committee volunteer with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Association. Married for over 30 years to his wife, Gale, he has a son and daughter who attend UHD.



UHD CLASS OF 2000

Ed Gonzales, Houston City Councilmember, District H

Elected in 2009 as City Councilmember for District H, UHD alumnus Ed Gonzales has recently been appointed by Houston Mayor Annise Parker to serve as the Mayor Pro-Tem. Before becoming a member of the Houston City Council, he served for 18 years with the Houston Police Department, during which time he was a homicide investigator, and was promoted to sergeant and served on the elite hostage negotiation team. He holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from UHD and a master's degree in political science from St. Thomas University. "UHD was a great place for me, because I enjoyed the diversity of the student body and the flexibility of classes," he said. "It's a terrific university. I felt at home here and I always recommend UHD to others."



UHD CLASS OF 2003

Mary Ann Perez, Houston Community College Board of Trustees Chairman

Mary Ann Perez was like many UHD students when she enrolled, a working parent trying to better herself professionally and personally. Graduating in 2003 with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree, she now operates a Farmers Insurance and Financial Services agency and is the 2012 Trustees Chairman for the Houston Community College Board of Trustees. “Without my education, I wouldn’t be where I am today,” Perez stated. “The classes I took at UHD in marketing, finance, accounting and speech were invaluable because I wore so many hats when I first started my business and I needed knowledge in numerous areas.”



UHD CLASS OF 1995

Mariselle Quijano-Lerma, Pasadena ISD Board of Trustees

As an owner of several McDonald’s franchises in the Pasadena and Houston area, Quijano-Lerma values the undergraduate degree in accounting she earned at UHD. Active in many community organizations, including the McDonald’s Texas Invitational Basketball Tournament, Quijano-Lerma is proud to have been elected to the Position 2 spot of the Pasadena Independent School District Board of Trustees. She is currently in her third year of a four-year term. One interesting note about her family is that her mother and father were creators of the McDonald’s breakfast burrito—now enjoyed by millions of people every morning. She and her husband, Horacio, have two children.



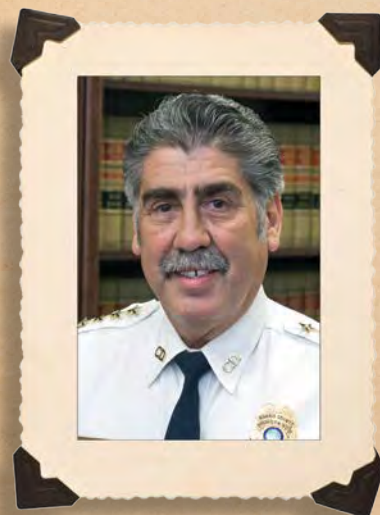
UHD CLASS OF 2013

Mike Sullivan, Houston City Councilmember, District E, and Current UHD Student

Now serving in his third term as City of Houston District E Councilmember, Sullivan is a small business owner, serves on three city committees, and was recently appointed by Texas Governor Rick Perry to a task force on local government. This busy man stopped out of school several years ago, but made the commitment to finish his education. Sullivan attends classes in the evening at UHD working on his degree in political science. After graduation, he plans to continue his education towards a master's degree. "Going back to school has improved my critical thinking skills and my confidence. I have been able to use things I've learned at UHD to help me work with my employees," states Sullivan. "UHD is a great place. I love it here and I wouldn't trade it for anything."



UHD CLASS OF 1993



Victor Trevino, Harris County, Constable Precinct 6

Victor Trevino has served over 20 years as a Harris County Constable, a position he has been elected to six consecutive times. A graduate of UHD's criminal justice program, Trevino earned his Bachelor of Science degree in 1993. Prior to becoming Constable, Trevino served Houston as a police officer for 13 years. He is licensed as a Master Peace Officer. Constable Trevino and his wife, Sylvia, have three children and have been married for over 35 years.

Veterans Find Guidance and Aid through UHD Veterans Services

UHD alumnus Sandy Reyes successfully completed a tour of duty in Iraq with the U.S. Army, but navigating the complex web of college admissions and veterans' benefits alone proved to be a challenge.

Reyes, like many veterans, joined the military after graduating high school, was trained as a soldier and then returned to civilian life after years in the service.

"For me, UHD Veterans Services was a gateway for understanding and successfully utilizing my veterans benefits," Reyes said. "They provided me with the guidance I needed."

UHD Veterans Services has only been open for two years, but its outreach and support of UHD veterans is inspiring.

UHD Veterans Services provides multiple services, including assisting with enrollment, navigating the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs system, completing paperwork to receive G.I. Bill benefits, preparing for interviews and coping with post-military life. The office also provides free access to a computer lab, resume workshops and other career services, financial management programs and scholarships.

"We are here to help these veterans in any way we can," said Michael Records, director of Veterans Services. "My goal is to be a single point-of-contact for these men and women. In this office, they can get answers to their personal and educational questions from someone who has been in their shoes."

Records is a former U.S. Army infantryman who served in Iraq in 2003 and 2004. He received a medical discharge and enrolled at San Jacinto College, followed by UHD. He began working as a student assistant in the UHD registrar's office in 2007 and completed his bachelor's degree in 2009. While working for the registrar, Records said students and staff alike would ask his help with processing paperwork for G.I. Bill educational benefits.

Records saw the need for an office dedicated to helping veterans and submitted a proposal to the UHD Department of Student Services to create a Veterans Services office.

"UHD is a great school for veterans because of the small class size, cultural diversity, faculty to student ratio and reasonable cost," Records said.

One of UHD Veterans Services' greatest strengths, according to Records, is its close ties



Director of Veterans Services Mike Records helps a veteran navigate scholarship applications online.



UHD alumnus Sandy Reyes praises the help he received from UHD Veterans Services.

“

For me, UHD Veteran's Services was a gateway for understanding and successfully utilizing my veteran's benefits. They provided me with the guidance I needed.

—Sandy Reyes
Veteran and UHD Alumnus

”

to the community, including the Lone Star Veterans Association and the City of Houston Office of Veterans Affairs. UHD also maintains a relationship with Impact a Hero, sponsoring its annual 5K race for two years, and brings veteran-serving nonprofit organizations like the Worklife Institute, Goodwill Industries and Family Services of Greater Houston for an on-campus information fair geared towards veterans.

UHD recently received a \$25,000 grant from the Hamill Foundation which will provide ten \$2,000 scholarships for student veterans and fund professional workshops.

“

The population of veterans at UHD is above average, around 800 men and women. These veterans often come to UHD because they know our office can help them.

—Michael Records
Director of UHD Veterans Services

”

“Tom Brown, Grants Director for the foundation, served in the Army prior to beginning a career in the oil and gas industry. Brown felt a special affinity for the personal assistance Records provides through UHD Veterans Services,” said Johanna Wolfe, Vice President for Advancement and External Relations. “In Fall 2012, UHD veteran students will also benefit from a grant for textbook awards provided by the the George and Mary Josephine Hamman Foundation.”

According to Reyes, Records and the office are critical to the success of UHD's veterans.

“UHD Veterans Services made sure I took the right classes, knew about deadlines for my benefits' paperwork and received good guidance,” he said. “I truly believe the office is a big advantage for retaining student veterans like myself.”

Reyes was deployed to Iraq from 2004 to 2005. He graduated from UHD in December 2009 with a bachelor's degree in sociology and currently works as a program manager for the Veterans Workforce Investment Program.

“I want to give back to veterans using all the experiences and information I gained from UHD and from its Veterans Services office,” Reyes said. “I want to help veterans so they can eventually help themselves, and then pay it forward and help other veterans. Working together, we can smooth the transition to a successful civilian life.”

UHD STUDENTS HELP MULTIMILLION DOLLAR COMPANY UNDERSTAND ITS CUSTOMERS

By: Diane Summers

“

This project has been my largest UHD undertaking at a collegiate level. It turned out to be the most rewarding experience I've ever had at UHD.

Claudia Pineda, UHD Student
Commenting on her involvement in
the Marketing Research class project

”



UHD students visit the corporate headquarters of Farouk Systems. Pictured left to right: Carol Khalaf, Maribel Torres, Gladis Torres, Claudia Pineda, Evelyn Avila, Mayra Garcia, Maria Cisneros, Monica Abril.

A class of UHD marketing students had the opportunity of a lifetime this semester when they conducted a market research project for a multi-million dollar Houston corporation and received high praise from the CEO.

It began with a class project in professor John Dillard's Marketing Research course, taught in the UHD College of Business and initiated by an informal discussion that Dillard had with Farouk Shami, chairman and founder of Farouk Systems. The company markets multiple product lines in the hair care industry, including coloring products, styling tools, shampoos and conditioners—often sold under the CHI brand name.

Shami and Dillard discussed how students in Dillard's Marketing Research course might assist the company to analyze an important product line. Dillard states, "There were four products in the silk product category that had different fragrances and different target markets. Some had been in the market for a long time, others for a short time. We wanted to understand the differences in consumers' brand perception for each of the four products."

The class built a plan and began their work.

Developing a questionnaire, students sought out consumers who used the products. After visits to malls and public places to gather the data, the class collected 356 surveys from current product users familiar with one or more of the products being investigated. The data revealed that 64 percent of the customers surveyed were "heavy users," and 44 percent were "highly brand loyal." This ensured that the data was from customers familiar with the product lines and enabled students to feel confident in the validity of the multiple dimensions of data they wanted to investigate.

Students compiled findings that included customer demographics, reasons for staying loyal to a product, reasons customers defected and perceptions on advertising for each product.

"I was pleased the class found 17 attributes that were distinct in understanding a customer's decision to use a product and stay with it—or to defect," stated Dillard. These attributes included variables like price, fragrance, eliminating frizz, protecting hair from heat and other criteria.

Under the guidance of Dillard, the class used a statistical software program called SPSS, which allowed

the data to be dissected in many ways. This allowed students to dig deeper into understanding customer behavior for each of the products—and more fully understand competitors' products.

“The first thing that came up that was quite interesting was that CHI showed up poorly on three attributes: price, reducing hair breakage and on making hair appear thicker. But they scored very well on other attributes,” states Dillard. This information would give the company an immediate action plan for product improvement.

Additionally, the 17 attributes were measured and quantified into those that mattered most to customers. If customers weren't happy, the students learned which products had the highest defection rate and why.

Students also found which of the four products had the most devoted customers. The top end of the product line, Royal Treatment, held the most loyal following, indicating customers who were twice as likely to stay with the product. Conversely, the BioSilk product had customers who were twice as likely to defect. By investigating the attributes that were most important to customers—and attributes that each of the products held—students were able to understand why customers behaved the way they did.

The class project culminated at the end of the semester with a presentation of findings at corporate headquarters to the CEO, Farouk Shami, and the President, Gregg Emery. Listening to their presentation, Shami was impressed with the quality of data and the extensiveness of the report. Dillard noted that Shami honed in on the report's seven recommendations. Dillard states, “The CEO and President were definitely interested in the results and discussed the importance of immediately plugging these findings into their marketing plan.” Student Claudia Pineda recalls the meeting. “I never thought the class and I would end in a round table meeting with Mr. Shami. I also never thought we would be invited to his office to present to him and his staff our findings. I was completely caught off guard by the reaction we received . . . They were so interested in what we presented and actually took our analysis seriously. They expressed an interest in continuing our analysis with the brand questionnaire we devised.”

The company was so pleased with the analysis that they have asked Professor Dillard to assist with another project: to investigate the perception customers hold on their products' impact on the environment. Known as an environmentally-friendly company, Farouk Systems will likely be quite interested in the incoming Marketing Research class' findings as well.

Four Products Were Studied



Monica Abril, UHD student, with Farouk Shami, chairman and founder of Farouk Systems.

To South Sudan With Love From A UHD Student

By: Mary Ann Cozza

UHD psychology senior Achol Mayen is determined to change the world, or at least her portion of it. As a native of South Sudan, the world's newest nation, she has big plans to bring aid to the war-torn and famine-stricken country.

Mayen, a poised and beautiful young woman, was born in the southern region of Sudan in 1986. When the civil wars became too dangerous, her family was forced to flee to Egypt, where they remained for two years waiting for permission to enter the United States. The Mayen family moved to Austin in 1996 and began living the American dream.

Even in a new country, Mayen was passionate about helping her community. She volunteered with Catholic Charities, the same organization that helped her family resettle in Texas, and networked with other South Sudanese in the area. She began to see a need for an organization committed to the growth and cultural education of South Sudanese youth.

"My family and I were always discussing the need to start a movement or an organization for the youth of my homeland to influence our nation building, bring about social change and promote our ethnic identity," she said. "There are now entire generations of South Sudanese that were born in America and don't have a strong connection to our homeland. I want to change that."

Mayen, along with several friends and family members, started Y.E.S.S. – Youth Empowering Society through Service, an organization that will focus on bringing aid and self-sustaining farming methods to South Sudan, as well as promoting youth action.

"For now, Y.E.S.S. is focusing on helping South Sudan, but I want this organization to become global," she said. "I want to create a model that other young people across the world can adopt and use in their own societies."

To jump start her initiative, Mayen was invited to attend the Clinton Global Initiative University, held March 30 through April 1, 2012 at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

"I knew this would be a great opportunity to learn how to turn this idea into action," she said. "I truly enjoyed being in a room with hundreds of other youth who were passionate about making real changes in the world. It was so energizing and motivating."

While at the conference, Mayen also had the opportunity to speak personally with President Bill Clinton. During a community service project, Mayen was able to share her Y.E.S.S. initiative with Clinton, who offered advice and even collected her contact information.

"I explained to him my initiative of bringing students together to relieve the food shortage in South Sudan and he seemed genuinely interested. He asked questions and was surprised to learn how many South Sudanese reside in the U.S.," she said.

Mayen's hard work and dedication have also caught the attention of UHD faculty and staff.

"She has courage, commitment and compassion," said Jean DeWitt, director of UHD Community Engagement and advisor to Mayen. "Her work reminds us that we are all global citizens. Soon she will be a UHD graduate and continue her outreach to South Sudan. I am very proud she chose UHD as her academic community."

To gain a greater understanding on the region's needs, Mayen and several Y.E.S.S. executives will travel to South Sudan upon her graduation from UHD in May. She explains that visiting the country and speaking with locals will help her understand what aid tactics will be successful there.

Mayen also models, works as a social work intern at Catholic Charities, and will graduate in May 2012. After returning from her research trip to South Sudan, Mayen plans to enroll in a graduate social work or psychology program.



Above: Former President Bill Clinton with Mayen.

Opposite page, left:

- Mayen with Chelsea Clinton.
- Attending Clinton Global Initiative University, spring 2012.
- With President Clinton and youth at a community service project.

Opposite page, right:

- Mayen enjoys modeling and hopes to one day walk the runway in New York and Milan.



Achol Mayen



UHD Launches New Branding Campaign

UHD is known for the transformative educational experience it offers students. We are proud of our reputation for changing lives, and are launching a new branding campaign that highlights the “Major Opportunity” many of our students and alumni have experienced. The “face” of the campaign features outstanding UHD students and alumni. Their personal success stories will be featured on the UHD website in the near future.

Along with the advertisements shown here, which will appear in print and on billboards and websites, UHD is sponsoring several city-wide events, such as the Buffalo Bayou Partnership Regatta, the Discovery Green Thursday Concert Series and the El Festival de la Salsa. Segments of the campaign will launch throughout the year, so check www.uhd.edu regularly for more information.

Marlyn

For senior biology major Marlyn Davila, being accepted into UHD’s Scholars Academy was life changing. As a bright high school student, Davila was unsure of how she would pay for a college education until a counselor mentioned UHD’s unique academic program, the Scholars Academy, in the College of Sciences and Technology.

“I always knew I wanted to study science but I didn’t know where to go or how I was going to pay for college,” Davila said. “Then I learned about the Scholars Academy at UHD



“I used to experiment with haircolor. Now I experiment with proteins.”

Marlyn D.
Former Hairdresser
Biology Major

and how they offer great scholarships to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) majors, send students to national conferences and help them find research opportunities. I knew it was the place for me.” In addition to her scholarships, Davila worked as a hairdresser to save money for college.

Davila has taken advantage of all that the Scholars Academy has to offer. She is a Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Scholar and a Peer Mentor, has attended scientific conferences nationwide and received numerous scholarships and academic awards. Davila visited UCLA in 2011 to conduct research in neurobiology studying Huntington’s Disease and she is currently doing genetics research at Houston’s MD Anderson Cancer Center.

“I’ve really enjoyed the research I’ve been able to conduct at UCLA and MD Anderson and after graduating from UHD, I hope to get my doctorate degree in neuroscience or genetics,” she said.

For Davila and others like her, UHD provided a structured, academic-focused environment, small class sizes and engaging professors.

“UHD is a really wonderful school and the Scholars Academy is an amazing program,” she said. “I’m glad I came to UHD because the personal attention I received from the faculty and staff helped me stay on track to reach my academic goals.”

Lofton

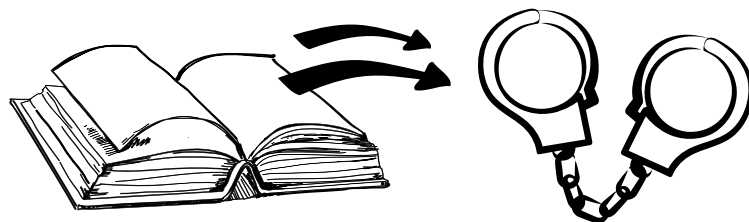
Lofton Harrison left college behind nearly 30 years ago to care for his growing family. He began working with the Harris County Sheriff’s Office in 1988, where today he is a Lieutenant with the department and an instructor at the HCSO Academy.

When a colleague suggested Harrison return to college, he started part time at a community college. He later transferred to UHD and dove into the criminal justice curriculum. “I’ve learned so much,” Harrison said. “It all carries over to the real criminal justice field and makes it so much easier to do my job.”

While at UHD, Harrison found his studies to be relevant and his professors to be understanding, with real-world knowledge of their subjects. Several of his instructors worked with Harrison at the Harris County Sheriff’s Office.

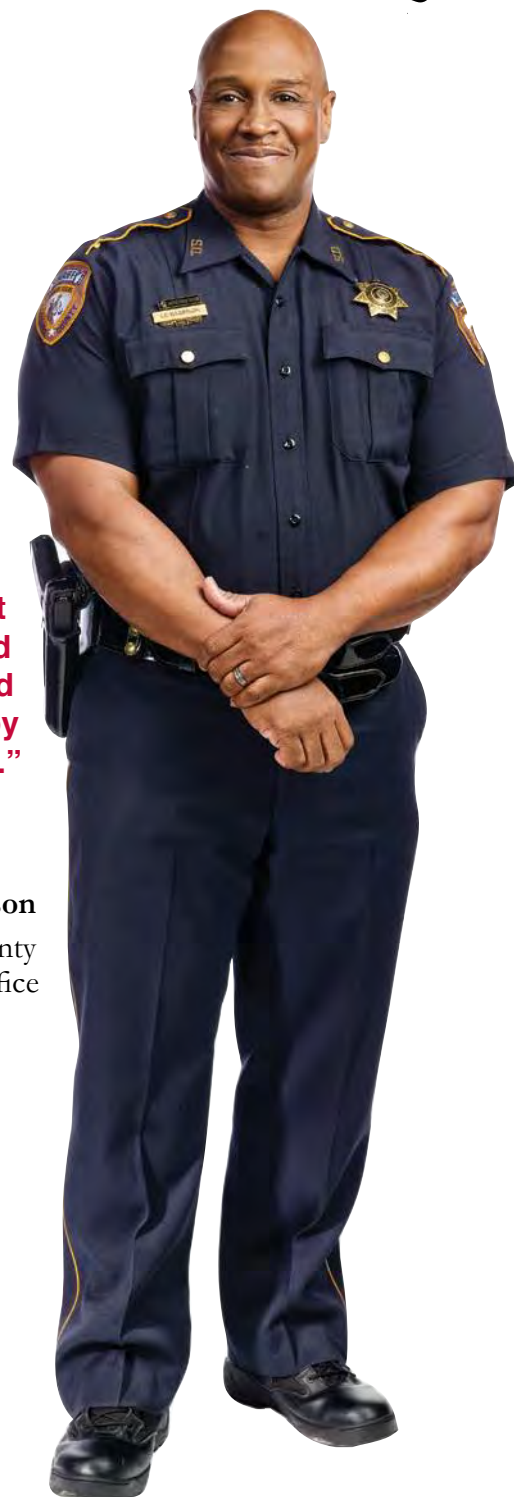
“I’ve broadened my horizons and really achieved something that enhances my knowledge of the world and ensures my continued professional success,” he said. “I’m going to continue taking classes because I want to keep learning and growing. Opportunities never stop and I want to be prepared.”

In 2011, Harrison completed a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from UHD. He dedicated many hours and much hard work to earning his degree, but he said he couldn’t have succeeded without the support of his wife



“I can hit the books at night and book bad guys by day.”

Lt. Harrison
Harris County Sheriff’s Office



of 24 years, Ola, and his three children, Cortney, Pierre and Jasmine. He is passionate about education and is encouraging his son to return to college and complete a degree.

A'Tondra

A'Tondra Gilstrap always knew she wanted to graduate from college and become a doctor, but for her, like many students, life got in the way.

A smart, over-achieving young woman, Gilstrap graduated from high school at the age of 16 and was recruited to attend

a large Texas university. Soon, feelings of anonymity in a large student body and growing concern for an ailing mother forced Gilstrap to leave school and forego her dreams. She began a career in sales, which was successful due to her hard work and natural talent, but not fulfilling. After several years, she knew she wanted to finish her education and jumpstart her medical ambitions. Gilstrap enrolled at UHD and was accepted into the Scholars Academy to pursue her passion for chemistry.

Her academic career soon skyrocketed. She received the UHD Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) grant, funded by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences, and landed an internship with the University of Texas School of Public Health. She is anticipating the release of her first co-authored publication, a remarkable feat for an undergraduate student.

"After beginning my internship, everything took off for me," Gilstrap said. "I met so many scientists and industry professionals, attended conferences and had experiences that would have been impossible anywhere other than UHD."

Gilstrap plans to continue her education after graduating from UHD and earn a dual MD/PhD, which will allow her to practice as a physician, as well as conduct research. In addition to her academic achievements, Gilstrap is a mother to four boys under the age of 10 and she is already encouraging them to work toward setting their educational goals. According to Gilstrap, "It's never too early to have a plan."

David

David Hinote is a UHD student making waves in the computer science industry. Hinote was part of a UHD student team that tied for first place in an international computer science competition, i2b2, which included teams from Microsoft and Toyota.

Remarkably, Hinote didn't always work in computer science. For eight years, he was an auto mechanic, working with engines rather than computer programs. Now, Hinote's work could aid physicians to more quickly diagnose and treat patients with help from evaluating machines.

"Doctors have piles and piles of documents to read," Hinote said. "Wouldn't it be great if doctors could have a machine assess the documents and provide meaningful information? A doctor could pose a question and have a computer answer, based on the documents it analyzed."

In addition to attending school and competing internationally, Hinote works in the UHD Artificial Intelligence Laboratory with the help of a stipend funded by the National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates.



"The formula for my big dreams? Small classes."



A'Tondra G.
Biology Major



David H.
Computer
Science Major

**“I was
changing oil.
Now I’m
changing
computer
science.”**

**UHD Sponsors Discovery
Green Concert Series**

UHD is proud to be the title sponsor for this year’s Discovery Green concert series held at 7 p.m. on Thursday evenings. Join us for any of these upcoming concerts!

May 3

Grupo Fantasma
Opening act:
Patricia Vonne

**Hard charging
Latin funk**

May 10

**Glen David
Andrews Band**
Opening act:
Journey Agents

**Electrifying New
Orleans funk**

May 17

Buckwheat Zydeco
Opening act:
Zydeco Dots
**Grammy Award
winning Zydeco party**

May 24

Buxton, The Tontons
Americana folk rockers

May 31

**Two Tons of Steel,
Mike Stinson**
Two ton Thursday

June 7

**George Porter Jr.
and Runnin Pardners**
Opening act:
Paul Ramirez Band
**New Orleans funk
and bass master**

June 14

**The Gourds,
Mary McBride**
**Kaleidoscopic
roots rock roll**

June 21

The NiceGuys, Kydd, Zin
Hip hop on the Green

June 28

**Los Skarnales,
Wild Moccasins**
**Explosive Latin
ska and pop rock**



New UHD Admission Standards

Beginning Fall 2013,

UHD will implement automatic admission standards for incoming freshmen. These standards were unanimously approved by the University of Houston System Board of Regents in late February and will greatly impact the UHD community, alumni, students and faculty. The adoption of admission standards will help UHD meet key goals outlined in the university's Strategic Plan.



Admission Standards Guidelines

- I Prospective freshmen that graduate in the top 25 percent of their high school class will be automatically admitted.
- II Prospective freshmen that graduate in the 26 through 50 percent must have an SAT score of 850 or greater, an ACT score of 18 or greater, or a minimum 2.5 grade point average to be automatically accepted.
- III Students who rank in the lower half of their high school classes will receive individual review, including testing and assessment by an admissions counselor, to determine college readiness. Those students that are subsequently admitted will have a personalized success plan created by a UHD academic advisor. Those that are not fully prepared for a four-year university will be offered joint admission through a community college partner.

Q&A with the President

Below, UHD President William Flores answers questions relating to the new admission standards.

Q: What are the benefits to students and alumni of these new standards?

Flores: UHD remains dedicated to opportunity and academic success for its students. We have developed new advising, mentoring, early alert and student engagement programs to provide students with every tool possible to not only remain in school, but excel at UHD.

Alumni will also benefit from the raised standards. The value of their degree will increase as the community associates high academic achievement with UHD graduates.

Q: What were the motivating factors behind the decision to raise admission standards?

Flores: The primary reason for implementing the standards is to better support student success. Also, a key element in UHD's strategic plan is to increase student retention and graduation rates. With automatic admission standards, we can create individualized pathways for our students that will put them on a strategic road to academic success, which will in turn raise these graduation rates.

Also, policy leaders in the Texas Legislature and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board have been encouraging UHD and other universities to increase admission standards and allow the community colleges to handle more of developmental education. The board has made their desire clear through statements and proposed funding formulas. Add to this, changes to federal aid regulations that hold universities liable for students that default on federal loans, and UHD was in need of a financial solution. Community colleges operate under a financial model that permits them to offer more development education.

Q: What is the "Gator Guarantee?"

Flores: The "Gator Guarantee" is the agreement between UHD and partnering community colleges to provide students with joint admission and reverse transfer capabilities. Students that are in the bottom quartile of their graduating high school class, score poorly on placement exams and require significant remedial coursework will be referred to a partner community college near their home. They will be provided with a detailed student success action plan that outlines the courses they must take at that community college and the GPA needed to guarantee re-admission to UHD.

This program is designed to increase student success, lower the cost of college and allow students to develop the necessary academic background to ensure degree completion. "Gator Guarantee" students that earn a 2.5 GPA or higher at a community college will be offered scholarships upon returning to UHD.

Q: Do you expect these higher standards to negatively affect enrollment going forward?

Flores: Based on analysis of the Fall 2010 entering freshmen, 81 percent would have been automatically admitted or admitted under the individual review process. The remaining 19 percent would have been jointly admitted to UHD and a community college under the "Gator Guarantee."

The adoption of these admission standards will have a collateral effect of increasing the number of freshmen students who arrive at UHD prepared for college. It demonstrates to high school students that college is serious work and they must prepare to be successful. Many area high school counselors have demonstrated positive feedback for the plan.

The Offices of Student Services and Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs are already working on making this a seamless transition. We might experience a slight decrease in enrollment of freshman students for the first year, but we fully expect this change to have a positive impact on the university and our students long term.

Center for Retail Management Offers Webinars



Since 2010, the Center for Retail Management (CRM) has been focused on serving the educational needs of retail store managers at UHD, and the new webinar certificate program is the newest development.

The 12-session webinar certificate program started on January 17 and runs consecutively as part of a continuing education program. The program targets non-degree seeking students who seek a career in retail management. The curriculum is delivered online every two weeks, with a new speaker each session. The webinars last 75 minutes each and include reading materials and various activities. Industry retail experts speak on relevant topics such as ethics and social responsibility, leadership, risk management, working with suppliers and distribution centers, budgeting, forecasting, setting trends and other subjects.

Some of the speakers include Scott McClelland, President of H.E.B.; Jeff McAllister, Senior Vice-president of Innovations at Walmart; Gary Huddleston, Director of Consumer Affairs for Kroger; and Ron Lucas, EVP, Human Resources at Stage Stores.

Ron Lucas from Stage Stores recently commented about their participation in the program.

"We are excited and committed to the development of the UHD Center for Retail Management and its expanded program. It will offer a one-of-a-kind educational opportunity to help local people prepare for an exciting career in one of our community's fastest growing segments of the economy. We are proud partners with UHD on this project and look forward to participating in the development, work and benefits of this very worthwhile project," Lucas said.

The total cost of the certificate program and all 12 webinars is \$1,250. (UHD alumni and employees of companies that are members of the Texas Retailers Association get a \$100 discount.) Each individual session is \$125.

To receive a certificate, applicants must complete all 12 topics and pass a competency exam. The sessions are archived so that students can make up any sessions missed by registering again later for a course.

Even if all 12 sessions are not completed within the same semester, the curriculum provides valuable information for those who have the desire to run their own business or for those who seek to get into a management program in the retail world.

"The retail industry has been overlooked by many seeking careers today. The industry has for many years been tagged with long weeks and long work hours with low pay. That is certainly not the case today. Many managers work five day work weeks and earn well over \$100,000 annually. The Certificate in Retail Management is a great opportunity for those who want to begin a career in retail to get a jump on the competition," said Tracy Davis, Director of the Center for Retail Management.

Davis talked about the future expansion of the retail management program at UHD and said, "We are in the process of developing a retail lab that will focus on retail operations and retail support activities, and will have a BBA with a major in retail management available in the very near future."



By: David Slaughter

UHD Student
Interdisciplinary
Studies Major

UNIVERSITY

The **Center for Houston's Future** interviewed several UHD students for a public service announcement called "My Degree Counts." The videos feature students explaining the importance of their degrees and a college education. Students that participated include **Olivier Beohon, Cassandra Brown, James Castillo, Jr., Zakiyyah Hassan, Charles Kennedy, Wayne Lake, Tomy Le, David Parra, Cassandra Rodriguez, Carrie Sullivan, Jacqueline Thorn** and **Julia Toval**.

The *Houston Press* named the **2011 Halloween Film Festival** at UHD, "**How Does Horror Work,**" the best "Free for All" event in Houston. The film festival was organized by **Chuck Jackson**, associate professor of English.

UHD co-sponsored the annual **Kemah Boardwalk Jazz Fest**. UHD music artist-in-residence **Robert Wilson** and Bob McGrew of the Houston Professional Musicians Association (HPMA) Local 65-699 started the festival 14 years ago to spotlight local talent and it has grown into a nationally-known jazz showcase.

LyondellBasell, one of the world's largest plastics, chemical and refining companies, donated a Provox Distributed Control System (DCS) valued at approximately \$250,000 to UHD's **College of Sciences and Technology**.

The UHD **men's basketball club team** captured the LLSSC title in November. This is the third conference title for UHD and the first since Fall 2007.

The UHD **powerlifting club team** won its fifth consecutive World Association of Benchers and Dead Lifters (WABDL) National Collegiate Championship in April.

The **men's soccer club team** won its fourth consecutive Houston Club Sports Conference title during the fall.

PEOPLE

Jose Linares and **Claudia Tierrablanca**, both urban education students, were recently published in the online and print journal, "*The Advocate*," produced by the Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children.

UHD Students **Elfego Chavez, Jhinelle Graham, Perla Lambrosa, Diana Lopez, Edwin Narvaez, Nigar Safarova, Omar Vargas** and **Jasmine Williams** attended the Harvard Model United Nations Conference, winning several awards for Best Delegate.

Antonio Ford, UHD criminal justice alumnus, has been named Police Chief of the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe.

David Hinote and **Carlos Ramirez** with faculty advisor **Ping Chen**, associate professor of computer science, tied for first place in an international computer science competition held by Informatics for Integrating Biology and the Bedside.

Two students won first place for their research presentations at a conference for the American Society of Microbiology. **Doug Litwin**, who worked with associate professor **Phil Lyons**, presented research on laccase enzymes in fungi, while **Kimberly Walker**, who worked with associate professor **Poonam Gulati**, presented work on mathematical model growth of bacteria as biofilms.

Mohsen Mobasher, associate professor of social sciences, has authored *Iranians in Texas: Migration, Politics, and Ethnic Identity*, a book that reveals the difficulties thousands of Iranian immigrants experienced in fleeing to the United States and settling in Texas during the late 1970's.

Faculty Award Winners recognized include **Susan Henney** (Social Sciences) and **Mian Jiang** (Natural Sciences) for the Excellence in Teaching

Award; **Leigh Van Horn** (Urban Education) for the Excellence in Service Award; **Rahul Verma** (Finance, Accounting and Computer Information Systems) for the Excellence in Scholarly and Creative Activity Award; **Mitsue Nakamura** (Computer and Mathematical Sciences) for the Outstanding Lecturer Award, and **Ben Aderholt** (College of Business) for the Outstanding Adjunct Award. Finalists for Faculty Awards included Excellence in Service Award: **Maria Benavides** (Natural Sciences); Excellence in Scholarly and Creative Activity Award: **Anisul Islam** (Finance, Accounting and Computer Information Systems); Outstanding Lecturer Award: **Suzette Mouchaty** (Natural Sciences).

University Funded Faculty Development Leave recipients include **Chuck Jackson** (English), **Jane Creighton** (English), **Kenneth Johnson** (Natural Science), and **Leena Thacker-Kumar** (Social Sciences).

Farnoosh Moshiri, adjunct lecturer of English, crafted a libretto based on her life in Iran for the Houston Grand Opera. The *Brick Layer*, premiered by Houston Grand Opera is based on the story of a family torn apart by the Iranian Revolution.

Linda Bressler, associate professor of accounting, received the Creative and Innovative Teaching Award from the Academy of Educational Leadership. The award recognizes innovative and creative teachers across the country.

Jovanni Lota, instruction reference librarian, was named to the 2012 American Library Association's Emerging Leaders program.

Jacqueline Sack, assistant professor of urban education, was awarded a Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Teacher Quality grant to bring middle school math teachers in for graduate coursework in mathematics and instructional strategies. Her co-principal investigator is **Tim Redl**, associate professor of mathematics.

Janusz Grebowicz, associate professor of physics, received a grant from Exxon-Mobil to perform research on "Thermal Properties of Oil Shales." **Mike Matson**, assistant professor of chemistry, serves as co-principal investigator of the project.

Gene Preuss, assistant professor of history, received a grant from the Texas Faculty Collaboratives' College & Career Readiness Initiative for his collaborative, "Closing the Circle: Infusing Social Studies College and Career Readiness Standards into the Texas History Course."

Rahul Verma, associate professor of finance, was awarded a grant from the Institute of Financial Markets, a nonprofit educational foundation focused on providing unbiased and balanced financial information to the public. Verma's research proposal was "Behavioral Finance and Pricing of Derivatives-Implications for Dodd-Frank Act."

J.J. Johnston, adjunct professor of arts and humanities, was selected for the Houston Press' 100 Creatives 2012 list. This list comprises "the many creative movers and shakers of Houston, from fashion designers to street artists to dancers and members of the art community, both underground and mainstream."

J. Greg Getz, professor of sociology, is the UHD program director for a grant from the Health Resource Services Administration.

Donald Bates, dean of the College of Business, was selected as a member of a peer visitation team by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business-International.

Cassandra Booker Narcisse, assistant director of the Upward Bound Program, received a *TRIO Award for 20 Years of Service* at the 39th Annual Texas Association of Student Special Services Programs Conference.

UHD WELCOMES THE FIRST MBA CLASS IN THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Bright.
Ambitious.
Intellectually Curious.

You'll find these attributes in all members of UHD's first MBA class which started last January.

With job titles ranging from "Project Scientist" to "Associate Superintendent" to "CEO," all students are working professionals, and the organizations where they work represent a diverse array of industries including banking, government, non-profit and Fortune 100 companies.



Professor Adrian Gil teaches Strategic Management to UHD's first MBA class. Gil states, "The first cohort is truly diverse. They bring with them a wide variety of insightful managerial perspectives."

This diversity in professional experience and industries helps strengthen the education experience. With an average age of 37, the classroom is often lively with discussions based on each student's real-life experiences and course material.

The candidates for the MBA class of 2013 meet in the College of Business every Tuesday and Thursday evening and appreciate the hybrid format, which enables them to earn graduate course credits through face-to-face instruction combined with online learning. As MBA student Gerardo Barrera states, "UHD catered to our needs. With the demands of work and our personal lives, the structure of the

hybrid program is optimal. The face-to-face sessions allow us to engage in discussions and put what we learn to use, while the online segment deals with formalities such as quizzes and tests, so they don't cut into valuable face-to-face instruction time." Barrera is a Contract Administrator for the City of West University Place.

In the first semester of the program, students are noticing the immediate impact it has made in their professional lives. "The program helps you think more like a leader as opposed to a manager," said Alma Pedraza, a Trust Associate with the Bank of New York Mellon. "Many of us believe we are acting as leaders, when we are actually just behaving like managers. This awakening has helped me see my job from a leader's perspective."

MBA student Glenn Wyers has been able to take his classroom knowledge immediately back to work. A Senior Database Engineer with Insperty, Wyers states, "I have already been able to present my ideas to subordinates, peers and superiors, and champion a movement to implement plans using leadership skills I've learned in the first few weeks I've been in the program."

Applications are being accepted now for the class that will begin in fall 2012. Information sessions held on campus and at locations around Houston enable prospective students to learn more about the program. Visit uhd.edu/mba for more information.



Professor Whitney Botsford-Morgan instructs MBA Students on Leadership, Team Building and Team Management Skills. "The students bring a range of real-world experiences to the program that creates lively classroom discussion and practical learning," said Botsford-Morgan.



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David H., Student, Computer Science

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