Dear IRM Friends & Supporters,

According to the Insurance and Risk Management Institute’s website (www.irmi.com), only 30 undergraduate programs in the U.S. offer five or more courses in risk management and insurance. Those programs vary widely in terms of their student demographics, teaching goals and outcomes. In the first 18 months of UHD’s IRM undergraduate program’s existence:

- 40 students have registered for IRM courses
- 120 seats have been filled in IRM classes
- 22 students have declared IRM their major or minor
- 19 classes have been taught
- 7 student internships have been completed

By any standard, UHD’s program has had a successful launch. For this, we are grateful to our Founders, Advisory Council Directors, and industry supporters whose vision to create an undergraduate degree in insurance and risk management in Houston led them to contribute their ideas, time, funding and talent to the realization of this education program. They guided us toward using professional designation texts and course materials so that our graduates could earn college credit while also completing professional designation courses, and provide internships and career opportunities to UHD students, making UHD’s one of the most unique and reality-based insurance and risk management educational programs available in the nation.

We have been blessed with experienced and qualified faculty, including:

- Thomas M. Braniff, JD, CPCU - President, Texas Insurance Consulting
- Robert E. Holloway, CIC, CPIA - Senior Vice President, USI Southwest
- Kelly A. Bluhm, MA, CPCU, ARM, CRIS - VP/Asst. Profit Center Manager, Chartis
- Naomi J. Hall, MS, CEBS, RHU - Benefits Manager, PXB
- Irvin Hanks, MBA - Managing Director, Nichols, Hanks & Co.
- Sharon Guillory, MBA - Risk Manager
- Stephanie Degreve, MS, CRM - Risk Analyst, Swift Energy
- Fred Shuchart, JD - Attorney, Cooper & Scully
- Johnna Maxwell, MBA, CPCU, API - Sales/Client Services Manager, Amica
- W. Michael Hanks, MBA - Mutual Insurance Company

Many associations have offered our students the opportunity to connect and build relationships with industry professionals as well, including:

- Independent Insurance Agents of Houston
- Houston Chapter Risk and Insurance Management Society
- Houston Chapter Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters
- National Association of Insurance and Financial Advisors

Others have also generously provided students with honorarium to attend conferences and seminars sponsored by:

- Capstone Consulting Group
- Greater Houston Society of Healthcare Risk Managers
- Houston Marine Insurance Seminar
- Houston Association of Healthcare Underwriters

Finally, we have benefitted greatly from the leadership of Dean Don Bates, whose guidance has paved the way for us to realize our goal of building a nationally-recognized insurance and risk management program.

Thank you, all!

Dr. Wendall Braniff, Director
University of Houston Downtown
College of Business

Volume 1, Issue 1, Spring 2011
Three UHD IRM majors received honorariums to attend the 2010 Houston Marine Insurance Seminar at the Westin Galleria Hotel in September. Adrian Hopkins, Rodney Singleton, Yeni Ortiz and IRM Center Director Dr. Wendall Braniff received registration honorariums and invitations to attend a private reception in the Presidential Suite and private breakfasts throughout the seminar where they had the opportunity to meet and interact with HMIS board members and presenters. Nearly 800 risk managers and insurance carrier, broker, and agency industry professionals attended the two-day seminar. “The value of the contacts and other opportunities provided to these students is immeasurable,” stated Dr. Braniff. “People in the job market know that knowledge and skills are important to advancing a career, but personal relationships are vital to opening doors to career opportunities.”

Steven P. Weiss, Vice President of Marine Engineering and Project Cargo for Liberty International Underwriters, who chaired the 2010 HMIS Board, welcomed delegates to Houston with the message that this year the key theme is one of transition both for the industry and the risks it is asked to mitigate. “The financial crisis and the concerns over what will be the next major loss have created a new set of issues. The Deepwater Horizon loss has been estimated at around $30 billion and it is viewed as a major size loss,” he explained. “But the size and scale of the potential losses we will see in the future are changing and the $100 billion loss in the future is not inconceivable.” Linda Gragg, Senior Vice President with McGriff, Seibels & Williams of Texas, who will chair the 2011 seminar.

The event also provided a unique opportunity for Texas insurance and risk management academic program educators to connect and share information and ideas about their respective and diverse programs. Dr. Dan Jones of the University Houston provided the luncheon keynote presentation entitled “Benefits of Industry and Higher Education Partnerships.” In addition to UHD’s Dr. Braniff, other educators attending included Debra Richardson of University of North Texas, Dr. Jim Garven of Baylor University, Dr. David Sommer of St. Mary’s University, Pat Arnold of the University of Texas at Austin, W. M. von Zharen of Texas A&M University at Galveston, and Dr. Felix Ayadi of Texas Southern University. Three students from each university were invited to meet industry professionals and learn about the opportunities and challenges of a career in the marine insurance and risk management industry.
RIMS Education Day Features UHD IRM Program

UHD IRM students Andy Trevedi and Eric Anaya attended the September Education Day meeting of Houston Chapter of Risk and Insurance Management Society (RIMS) which featured presentations from educators including Jim Drew, Senior Vice President with Bowen, Miclette & Britt who spoke about the Associate Risk Manager (ARM) designation requirements and classes, Gary Sylvester, Senior Risk Analyst with Anadarko Petroleum Company who discussed the Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) designation, and Dr. Wendall Braniff, Director of the Insurance and Risk Management Center at the University of Houston Downtown who discussed its bachelor in business administration degree program that offers a 30-hour major and 18-hour minor in insurance and risk management.

The UHD students had the opportunity to meet and visit with industry professionals including IRM Center Advisory Council members Wayne Dauterive, Metro National Corporation Director of Risk Management and Allen Wilson, GEM Insurance Agency Senior Vice President.

Supported by an Advisory Council that boasts members from all areas of the insurance and risk management industry, the UHD program offers eight CPCU courses as part of its property and liability curriculum. The program has quickly become one of the most comprehensive and diverse insurance and risk management degree programs in the U.S.

"The value of the CPCU designation to professionals in the insurance industry is unchallenged," stated Linda Berryman, Houston CPCU Society President and Liberty Mutual Underwriting Specialist. "College graduates who have also completed courses in the CPCU series will have a definite advantage for positions over those who have not."

"Houston provides many opportunities for graduates desiring careers in insurance and risk management," Dr. Braniff stated. "The market for individuals with the knowledge and skills in this area is outstanding – even in the current economic climate. UHD students tend to be older, more mature, and already have job experience. They are seeking careers with upward mobility and the insurance and risk management industry in Houston, the fourth largest city in the U.S., offers an abundance of opportunities for UHD insurance and risk management majors to meet those expectations."

Eric Anaya, RIMS Education Director and UHD IRM Adjunct Lecturer Sharon Guillory, Ada Ong and Son Pham attend November RIMS meeting.

Andy Trevedi, Wayne Dauterive, Dr. Wendall, Braniff, Allen Wilson and Eric Anaya.

American General Life Insurance Companies
Wendall and Thomas M. Braniff
Capstone Consulting Group
Chartis
CNA Foundation
Dean & Draper Insurance Agency
Fred de Roode
Greater Houston Society of Healthcare Risk Managers
Hotchkiss Insurance Agency, Inc.
Houston Chapter CPCU

Houston Marine Insurance Seminar
Houston Risk & Insurance Management Society
Independent Insurance Agents of Houston
Insurance Alliance Foundation
Insurance Council of Texas
Myron F Steves & Company
Pozmantier Insurance Consulting Services
Vikki Robinson
State Farm
CNA Foundation Funds IRM Center

Matthew Sasso, CNA Insurance Branch Vice President of the Houston and Austin Branches presented a $10,000 CNA Foundation award to the University of Houston Downtown’s Insurance and Risk Management Center for the second consecutive year. CNA, the 7th largest U.S. commercial insurer and the 13th largest U.S. property & casualty insurer, provides commercial insurance products, including standard and specialty lines, surety, marine and other coverages, nationally and internationally.

Accepting the check on behalf of the Insurance and Risk Management Center, UHD IRM Center Director Dr. Wendall Braniff expressed gratitude for CNA’s support. “Houston is an excellent venue for this program owing to the fact that Houston is the fourth largest city and insurance market in the U.S. and provides an abundance of career opportunities for IRM graduates,” Braniff stated. The IRM Center offers a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a major in Insurance and Risk Management, one of only 30 insurance and risk management related degree programs in the U.S.

State Farm Grant Supports IRM Center

For the second consecutive year, State Farm Insurance Companies has awarded a $4,000 grant to support UHD’s IRM Center. The award was made to Dr. Wendall Braniff, director of the IRM Center at the annual Career Expo event at UHD, which featured over 60 employers who reviewed resumes and interviewed prospective UHD graduates for career opportunities.

“State Farm is delighted to continue the partnership with UHD and the IRM program. As the program continues to grow and produce graduates with the knowledge and skills vital in the industry, we hope State Farm can open doors for them,” stated Elizabeth Lineberger, State Farm Agency Field Consultant, who made the presentation and was recently promoted to Agency Field Executive in State Farm’s San Diego South offices. April Roberts, Agency Field Executive for the Montgomery Trace Agency Field Office, will continue the partnership with UHD.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

Go to http://www.uhd.edu/academic/colleges/business/mmba/irm for more information concerning the UHD IRM program, or contact Dr. Wendall Braniff at 713-226-5552 or braniffw@uhd.edu.

For information concerning admissions to the program and evaluation of college transcripts, contact Dr. Carmen Cuevas, Director, College of Business Advising Office at 713-221-8675 or cuevasc@uhd.edu or go to the UHD admissions website at http://www.uhd.edu/admissions.

FACULTY

Qualified applicants must have earned a PhD, Juris Doctorate, or a master’s degree, preferably in business. Candidates with a master’s degree must also have at least three years of industry experience.

Interested persons may apply online for the position of Adjunct Lecturer, College of Business, MMBA Department, Requisition Number 05239 at http://jobs.uhd.edu.

For more information concerning the UHD IRM program, contact Dr. Wendall Braniff, Director, Insurance and Risk Management Center at (512) 924-2216 or braniffw@uhd.edu.