UHD Earns Kudos for Wi-Fi Connectivity

The University of Houston-Downtown ranked 34th out of 50 schools cited in Intel’s Second Annual Most Unwired College Campus survey. The study assessed wireless Internet accessibility on campuses of colleges and universities with enrollments of 1,000 or more. It rated each school on the percentage of its campus covered by wireless technology, the number of undergraduate students enrolled and the school’s computer-to-student ratio.

UHD Information Technology (IT) began introducing wireless services to the university four years ago. Today, coverage is available anywhere on campus, around the clock. Computer users can connect to the Internet, access library databases, send and receive e-mails, access WebCT online courses and more. All they need is a laptop, Tablet PC or handheld device with wireless capability, any standard Internet-ready web browser and a user account, which is available to faculty, staff and students. UHD alumni may request an account as well, and guest accounts are provided as a courtesy for official visitors.

Wireless technology “allows us to stay connected with the students, faculty and staff while providing them with the flexibility they need,” Hossein Shahrokhi, IT executive director, explains. IT is committed to continue improving the quality of our wireless service and to make it faster and more reliable, he adds.

Save the Date!
Red Rose Ball
Friday, April 28
Four Seasons Hotel
1300 Lamar
Call 713-221-8563 for information

UHD Joins Baylor College of Medicine in Statewide Gerontology Program

UHD Departments of Social Sciences and Natural Sciences are joining a nine-university consortium related to geriatric education in the state of Texas. Coordinated by Dr. Robert Roush at Baylor College of Medicine’s (ICOM) Huffington Center on Aging, the initiative is part of a federally funded grant from the Department of Health and Human Services Administration, recently renewed for 5 years. Dr. Greg Getz, associate professor of sociology and assistant chair of the Department of Social Science, co-directs the initiative, joined with Dr. Akif Uzman, chair of the Department of Natural Sciences.

UHD student Leticia Lopez can access the Internet from anywhere on the campus campus without being tethered to a fixed line. Computer users can also access library databases, e-mail, WebCT online courses and more. All they need is a laptop, Tablet PC or handheld device with wireless capability, any standard Internet-ready web browser and a user account, which is available to faculty, staff and students.

There’s more good news inside!

- President’s Journal .................................................................................................................. p. 2
- UHD TV ................................................................................................................................. p. 3
- Urban Education Alternative Certification ............................................................................. p. 4
- O’Kane Theatre ......................................................................................................................... p. 7
Plan with the Government of Spain in Washington, D.C., where he helped represent the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). The plan promotes educational experiences in Spain for U.S. Hispanic students and faculty, through the sharing of cultural and educational experiences. As chairman of HACU’s International Education Commission, he underlined some of the benefits that result from visiting faculty and students as institutions experience the internationalization of higher education.

Closer to home, members of the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce heard the president’s message about the status of U.S. higher education and what the challenges will be in the future. For Hispanics, “closing the gap” in higher education means finding ways to prepare individuals for the rigors of university life and the means to fund the growing cost. Dr. Castillo was joined by Dr. Abelardo Saavedra, superintendent of Houston Independent School District (HISD), and Dr. Bruce Leslie, chancellor of Houston Community College System.

In November, Dr. Castillo was recognized by the National Hispanic Professionals Organization-Houston for his achievements in education. He was recognized at the annual gala alongside other leaders in public and community service, the news media and business. He also received a special honor from Anheuser-Busch. Anheuser-Busch’s Latino geographic marketing and community relations manager, Paco Bendaña, presented him with the Golden Eagle Award, for his commitment and dedication to education.

At the beginning of the academic year, the UHD president addresses the university community during Convocation. After congratulating the faculty and staff for accomplishments in 2004, he set forth the university priorities for the coming academic year. Briefly, they include: expanding student access, supporting academic excellence for faculty and staff, expanding physical facilities and technological support, and supporting the UH-System initiatives.

Community and business leaders will hear Dr. Castillo’s State of the University Address on January 31, 2006. The president’s theme will be “Today’s Challenges to higher education: An Impending Crisis for the Texas Economy.” For more information, please call the Office of University Advancement at 713-221-8563.

Technology for a new age

During hurricane season, Texas Gulf Coast emergency agencies depend on geographic information systems (GIS) to predict and warn people of possible disaster. In New Orleans, rescue agencies pinpointed homes with life-saving accuracy to locate and retrieve survivors after Hurricane Katrina. Houstonians use GIS to get driving directions or track a package during the holidays.

Geographic information technology is a space age development we have come to depend on in our every day lives.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing objects and events. It combines the power of a database with the visualization capabilities offered by maps. GIS technology is used throughout the world to solve problems in such areas as environmental protection, health care, land use, business efficiency, education, social inequities.

Public agencies, private businesses and enthusiasts celebrated “GIS Day” at UHD in November as part of the week-long activities nationwide. Organizations like the National Geographic Society, the Association of American Geographers, the University Consortium for Geographic Information Science, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Library of Congress support further interest in the technology to better acquaint individuals with the uses and benefits of GIS. Students from local high schools were invited to learn more about GIS through sponsored activities by the Houston-Galveston Area Council’s Geographic Data Committee. The importance of training the next generation to understand the technology is underlined by the increased demand for technically skilled workers in the field.
Technology at UH-Downtown:
Tune in to UHD-TV

The UH-Downtown website has its own television channel: UHD-TV. The new channel is accessible from the Computing/Technology link on the front of the UHD home page and includes live broadcasts and previously recorded “on demand” audio-visual programs from the UHD-TV program library. The goal of UHD-TV is to provide information, entertainment, and training to the UHD community. UH-Downtown’s TV channel will feature a varied program library that includes live or pre-recorded broadcasts covering such topics as the Red Rose Ball, special events, commencement ceremonies, award presentations, interviews with authors, and other university highlights.

Using RealNetworks server technology, an audio-visual program can be viewed “on demand,” that is, played whenever you want. You can stop, play, pause, fast forward or rewind the program at any time. Live audio-visual programs may be viewed using RealNetworks’ streaming technology. The program is “streamed” to your PC and broadcast immediately when you click on the program you want to view. RealPlayer plays the audio-visual clip just as a television does. Play continues until all of the data has been transferred. No download occurs — you are viewing either a live video event or archived material in real time.

The latest audio-visual “on demand” and streaming technology checks the user’s computer workstation prior to play and adjust the transmission rate of information to accommodate bandwidth restraints of the Internet connection. Both audio-visual “on demand” and live streaming technology allows you to watch a broadcast with the same high-quality resolution and accurate sound representation that you would get while watching television. The new technology will benefit the UH-Downtown commuter campus and faculty and staff who miss important events. They will be able to access programming on UHD-TV to stay informed and advised of university news and activities.

Closing the Gap

Ford Motor Company and the Hispanic Scholarship Fund partnered with UHD’s Houston PREP (Precollege Enrichment Program) to educate about 300 high school students and their parents at the first “Steps for Success” Saturday Workshop in November. UHD’s precollege programs are concentrating efforts to “close the gap” between higher education and the Texas population. In 2000, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board adopted the initiative to boost enrollment of Texans in higher education from 1 million in 2000, to 1.5 million in 2015. By fall of 2004, that number had reached 1.2 million.

“Steps for Success” provided workshops to help high school students and their parents better prepare for college life, especially those with little experience in higher education.
New program offers certification, master’s in teaching

Starting this spring, the Department of Urban Education at UHD will introduce a program which will enable aspiring educators to earn both their state-mandated teaching certification and a graduate degree in education. The focus of the department is on preparing students to teach at-risk children and adolescents in inner-city schools. The new program combines the department’s requirements for a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), offered to certified educators, with its Alternative Certification Program (ACP) for college graduates who want to become teachers but have not earned their certification. It also conforms to the teacher quality requirements of the “No Child Left Behind” educational reform act.

“ACP is a strong program, but we wanted to make it stronger,” Dr. Leigh Van Horn, director of the MAT program, explains. “We’ve worked to develop a program that will create ‘super-teachers.’” During the first two semesters, students in the MAT-ACP program will take graduate-level courses in curriculum, technology, reading, critical theory and research to obtain a probationary certificate and employment as a teacher. While continuing their coursework during the next two semesters, they will also work as teachers with support and supervision from university faculty and will take the state certification exam. After becoming certified, they will continue in the graduate program to earn their MAT.

Alumna helps science professionals launch careers

Clay, who graduated from UHD in December of 1999 with a B.S. in biological and physical sciences. Catherine represented Kelly Scientific Resources, a staffing agency which specializes in helping scientists and professionals in the field to launch their careers. After graduating, Catherine started her own career as a clinical laboratory technician in Tupelo, Mississippi. Once she gained the critical experience in the clinical lab field, she decided to move into the chemical industry. Catherine accepted a position with BASF Corporation in her hometown of Aberdeen, Mississippi, as a polymer quality assurance technician and worked there for four years. She returned to Houston a year ago to work with Kelly Scientific Services.

Catherine says she is looking forward to giving back to her “new and improved” alma mater, both as a recruiter and as an active alumna.
Contributors to UH-Downtown are invited to fulfill our promise of providing quality educational opportunities to all students and opening doors to many who might not otherwise be able to pursue a college degree. We greatly appreciate the generous contributions to UH by the following corporations, foundations and individuals between July 1, 2005 and October 26, 2005. Please note that numbers following a name signify the year of graduation from UH.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT
100 Club, Club Scholarship for Criminal Justice Program
The 100 Club, Inc.

ASIS/Herbert Wayne Johnson Memorial Scholarship Fund
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Houston Chapter

ASIS Master’s Scholarship
American Society for Industrial Security
Houston Chapter

College of Business
Excellence Fund
Dallas

Red Rose Scholarship

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Richard C. Sperandio, Jr.
Christine Stevens
Robert Stewart
Don Salisberry
Utpal Bose
Josefina T. Salazar
Joyce A. Murphree
Dr. Ben S. Benjamin
In Memory of Jay Anderson
In Memory of Jeffrey C. Willemain
Lambeth and William C. Stevens
Teresa T. and Peter Wright
Mary B. Cook

College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Jocel Adaklagon
Anonymous
Edith E. Ballard
Branden M. Brand
Valerie C. Bassett
Sheila Clayman
Paul D. Cobb
Charles A. Farland
Qwesi Gano
Mary Apila Gilbert
Karen Klawe Grabowski
Veronica Leovaldo Holmes
Sue H. Houston,
Ron and Riddell
Patricia Lynne
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Sherry Jefferson
Charlotte Ann Kohr
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College of Sciences and Technology
Norwalk (Charles Ewell)
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ENDOWMENTS
Jay Anderson Memorial Scholarship Endowment Fund
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Beaumont Christian Church
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Dr. Rosario Martinez-Castillo
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What’s New? Send a Note!

Update your former UHD classmate on your life by submitting an item for the “Alumni Notes” in New Horizons. We’ll also post your item in the alumni section of UH’s website.

You can also submit directly from the website at www.uhd.edu/alumni/notest.htm. Or, send an e-mail to Israel Salazar at salazar@uhd.edu. Or, mail your item to Israel at UH-Downtown, One Main Street, Suite 9955, Houston, Texas 77002.

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Students at UHD and UH who depend on scholarships have received a helping hand from a $200,000 contribution by the Texas Pioneer Foundation, on behalf of Smart Financial Credit Union, a Houston-based financial services provider. The gift to the Texas Pioneer Scholarship will be disbursed over a four-year period.

“Their generosity and vision of an educated Texas benefits the economic prosperity and future of our state.”

The non-profit Texas Pioneer Foundation has partnered with Smart Financial to support student learning at UH and UH-Downtown “in recognition of Smart Financial’s longstanding relationship with the Central Texas Student Loan Corporation (CTSLC) which established the Foundation,” said Fred Markham of the Texas Pioneer Foundation.

Scholarship and Financial Aid Director, LaTasha Goudreau, played a key role in establishing the relationship with the lender. Her history and association with Smart Financial Credit Union helped clear the path for the significant gift.

Smart Financial Credit Union, formerly First Educators Credit Union, is a Houston-based, full-service financial services provider with more than $300 million in assets. Today it serves a diverse field of more than 82,000 members, including Houston-area educators, employees of more than 700 private companies, and residents of Harris and Montgomery Counties.

LENDER GIVES UHD A BOOST

The Office of Admissions hosted “Destination UHD,” UH-Downtown’s Autumn Open House for freshmen and transfer students.

Guests toured the UHD campus, met with faculty, previewed colleges and learned about financial aid. Eligible individuals were able to register on-site with the Office of Admissions. The open house boosts enrollment and eases the admissions rush at the beginning of the semester.

The Office of Admissions will host another open house in the spring.

Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson to speak February 23

The J. Don Boney, Sr. Scholarship Luncheon has been set for Thursday, February 23 in the Special Events Center, Third Floor Academic Building. Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson, the first African American Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, will be the keynote speaker. He was first appointed to the court in 2001 and was promoted by Governor Rick Perry to Chief Justice in 2004.

Named for Dr. J. Don Boney, Sr., the first chancellor (president) of UH-Downtown, the luncheon is held during Black History Month to celebrate UHD’s diversity and the contributions of African Americans to American history.

Proceeds from the luncheon help fund scholarships awarded to UHD students for books associated with their courses. Students must be in good academic standing and present an essay about the accomplishments of an African American leader.

For ticket information, contact committee chair Dr. Sakile Camara, assistant professor in the Department of Arts and Humanities, at camaras@uhd.edu or 713.221.8106.
Houston’s 20th annual Poetry Fest was held in early October at the Willow Street Pump Station. Over 250 poetry enthusiasts gathered for workshops and open readings.

“Houston Poetry Fest celebrates language and the unique voice of the individual,” said Dr. Jane Creighton, English professor and Interim Director of the Cultural Enrichment Center. “That the Fest at UHD began with a tribute to Lorenzo Thomas illustrates the point. In expressing their love and respect for Lorenzo Thomas, students and faculty also gave expression to the remarkable power of their own voices. It was a terrific tribute to a remarkable poet and scholar.”

Guest poet Bernadette Mayer, author of numerous books of poetry and prose, was a natural choice for this year’s festival because of her work with Professor Thomas at the Poetry Project at St. Mark’s Church in New York City. Thomas was a beloved English professor and director of the Cultural Enrichment Center at UH-Downtown. A memorial for him was held in November at the Rothko Chapel in Houston. Houston Poetry Fest is co-sponsored by UH-Downtown’s Department of English and the Cultural Enrichment Center.

O’Kane Theatre

The O’Kane Theatre will feature the spring production, The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde, March 31 thru April 8, 2006.

Oscar Wilde’s brilliant play makes fun of the English upper classes with light-hearted satire and dazzling humor. In the play, Jack Worthing is in love with Gwendolyn Fairfax, but is scorned by her mother because of his place in society. Gwendolyn is in love with “Ernest” whom we find out is actually Jack’s mischievous alter ego.

Tickets go on sale Monday prior to opening night. Contact the O’Kane Theatre for more information: 713-221-8104.

Celebration of life and poetry

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UHD Joins Baylor College of Medicine in Statewide Gerontology Program

Continued from page 1

The role of these UHD departments is to offer several new courses related to aging, to establish a minor in gerontology and create a bridge program to some local high schools designed to sensitize students to gerontology issues and potential careers in the field.

“The initiatives will seek to promote a multidimensional understanding of the aging process, educating college students about demographic changes, issues associated with aging and implications of these factors for individuals, cultural institutions and public policy,” said Getz. “An additional goal is to motivate college students to seek career paths in areas related to geriatrics and gerontology.”

Uzman envisions plans to integrate issues on aging into the science curriculum—biology, genetics, physiology, anatomy courses—as well as providing research opportunities for undergraduates.

Joining Baylor COM and UHD in the statewide consortium are The University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston, Texas Southern University, Texas Women’s University, UT-Pan American University in Edinburg, Texas A&M University, University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth and UT Health Science Center-Tyler.

Competition of Questions

Students put their minds to work at UHD’s Intramural College Bowl Tournament in November. Book smarts, knowledge of pop culture and common sense helped students compete at the local tournament which will help determine who represents UHD in regional competition.

Playing in teams, students went head-to-head, testing their knowledge on anything from insects to Kevin Costner movies. The Jeopardy-like format helped build the momentum and tension as judges threw out questions and competitors rushed to answer. Only five students will be chosen from the intramural competition for regional competition this February. UHD has placed in the top four in past tournaments.

The chosen students will also participate in the “Smackdown at Downtown” where they take on a faculty and staff team in the spring. Last year the crowd was standing room only, as the Faculty/Staff team won by one question for the first time in three years.

Calendar of Events

- Fall Commencement December 18
- Winter Holiday December 23-January 1
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday January 16
- Spring Classes Begin January 17
- Welcome Week Activities January 17-19
- President’s State of the University Address January 31
- Black History Month February
- UHD Mardi Gras February 15
- J. Dan Boney, Sr. Scholarship Luncheon February 23
- Women’s Month March
- Spring Break March 13-18
- Student Research Conference March 31
- One Main Event March 31
- O’Kane Theatre, The Importance of Being Earnest March 31-April 8
- Culture on the Bayou April 20
- Red Rose Ball April 28
- Cinco de Mayo Celebration May 4
- Spring Commencement May 7
- O’Kane Theatre, New York Trip May 14-21
- College of Humanities & Social Sciences, London Trip May 15-25

New Horizons is published by the Office of Communications and Marketing, UHDowntown, and distributed to friends of the university with updates on campus activities. Call 713-221-8010 for more information or e-mail: zamorac@uhd.edu.

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