Crafting a Future

See related article, page 3
“Esperanza” leans over a demonstration quilt she and members of Mujeres Productoras (Rural Women’s Co-op) have hand-sewn in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico. They will use it to market their work and benefit justly from the fair-trade cooperative.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has allowed trade and investment among Mexico, the U.S. and Canada to flow more freely. Signed in 1993, NAFTA impacted the economy, environment and people of these countries in different ways, often with controversial outcomes.

Dawn McCarty, assistant professor of social work, lived among the Mexican people to study the effects of NAFTA on their earnings and lifestyles. Mexican women affected by the shift in the rural economy, including members of Mujeres Productoras are learning how to develop new skills and to create small businesses that will sustain them and contribute to the stability of their small villages.

Wherever you stand on the issue, you will see in McCarty’s study a new reality for rural Mexicans.

She examines the shift from an agrarian economy and hope that has blossomed with new ventures.

Photos (cover, above and page 3) are courtesy of Dawn McCarty, assistant professor of social work, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Houston-Downtown.
Effects of Trade Agreement Impact
Women and Children in Mexico

Americans use and enjoy everyday products from all over the world, but how do they get here? Where, and under what circumstances, do they come? Specifically for Canada, Mexico, and the United States, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has eased the flow of trade, investment, and capital across borders. Signed in 1993, NAFTA opened new and significant avenues for investment and trade among the nations of North America.

An action this large often has profound, unanticipated outcomes. The agreement created an area of research interest for Dawn McCarty at UHD.

McCarty, an assistant professor of social work, is studying the impact of NAFTA on rural families in Mexico. She spent nine months in village communities in Hidalgo and Guanajuato.

With the help of interpreters and translators, she conducted 65 in-depth interviews with Mexican women, lived among the people in various communities she observed and participated in community programs.

What she discovered did not align with the original projections economists made on the pros and cons of the trade agreement. Her research, she says, shows that “NAFTA has had a devastating effect on Mexican agriculture.” She also says it has led to an unprecedented migration of people from the Mexican countryside to the United States, with serious consequences to the women and children left behind in rural Mexico.

“I studied first-hand the effect that NAFTA is having on small rural villages,” McCarty said recently. “Large agribusiness companies have reduced opportunities for once-sustainable small landowners and farmers, who are left with little choice but to seek work in the United States.” McCarty’s interviews document the hardships experienced by those left behind and the impact on families and the future. With so many family members living in the United States, both legally and illegally, a different dynamic has developed for those in Mexico, and their experiences are important to the larger debates and policy considerations.

McCarty lived and worked beside the women and children whose lives have been permanently changed as a result of the economic shift. She asked the women to talk about the impact of migration to the United States, and the solutions to the issue. She took up this research because she found little information about how individuals at the grassroots level were coping with the effects of NAFTA, and little consideration given to these issues in the current immigration debate.

During her study, McCarty provided consultation for and was interviewed by Reel Futures International, an independent production company documenting the societal changes brought about by the migration of family members. She also worked with nongovernmental organizations, including The Center for Global Justice. “There is a lot of strength in Mexico, and women in particular are developing leadership and survival skills,” McCarty says. “But young people don’t see much opportunity for jobs or a future in their country. Many times, they find their only choice is to go north.”

Although relatives contribute monetarily to the villages from their earnings in the United States, money is not always consistent or adequate, and it doesn’t make up for their absence. Since 1991, U.S. border controls have increased and trips back to Mexico to reconnect with family have decreased, breaking up these relationships. The Mexican women interviewed voiced a hope that work contracts and other progressive components would be added to U.S. immigration reform so their families could be regularly, if not permanently, reunited. During the interviews, McCarty heard women and children express a sense of abandonment by all sides in this debate.

McCarty (second from left) traveled to remote villages in the mountains where climate and living conditions are extreme. Leaders in this small village are building greenhouses to grow organic tomatoes year-round, an emerging, lucrative market world-wide. Residents had only acquired electricity the week before McCarty’s visit in August 2007.

Basketweaving has become a source of income for families in rural Mexico that had to find new sources of income after economic shifts affected their agrarian lifestyles.

Some of the children have not seen their fathers in a long time,” McCarty says. “To them, he is a stranger. They talked about the sadness of not seeing a parent for years in most cases, and wondered whether they would ever see them again.”

Yet in her study she also found success stories rising out of the sadness. Many communities have discovered new ways to cope. They are developing community-oriented child-care and school programs such as Casa de los Angeles (Home of the Angels). Mothers of the children had the opportunity to go to school or work to support their families.

“If they want their children to be reunited,” McCarty says. “They want them to return to a place of hope and prosperity.”
Friends and supporters celebrate the

Red Rose Ball 2008

The University of Houston-Downtown President’s Office is proud to announce 2008-09 Red Rose Scholars. The 25 scholarship recipients will be recognized at the 2008 Red Rose Ball, 6 p.m., Friday, April 18, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Houston.

Red Rose Scholars are selected based on their academic achievements, leadership potential, community service and commitment to higher education.

Proceeds are also used to fund scholarships for outstanding transfer students and students in the Scholars Academy, a program for high performing science, technology, engineering and mathematics students.

Scholars

Arady Barrera, Computer Science
Richard “Dustin” Bryant, Chemistry
Jennifer Cantrell, Psychology
Dennis Garcia, Biology
Nicola Gilbert, Chemistry
Lizzette Gromidal, Psychology
Maria G. Hernandez, Finance
Joseph Irving, Biotechnology
Nguyen Lam, Chemistry

Eloy Leyva, Interdisciplinary Studies
Demetria Lisk, Elementary Education
Leigh Ann Love, Accounting
Liem Luong, Computer Science
Jennifer Macchio, English
Mohamedwesam Mohamed, Biology
Shaqueer Noorudeen, Chemistry
Marcus Paley, Finance
Kristi Pennington, Microbiology
Brenda Rios, International Business
Danil Safin, Computer Science/Applied Mathematics
Eiko Sierra, Chemistry
Nicolas Spampinato, Biology
Tarfa Tarar, Biology/Criminal Justice
Leah Wallace, English
Eduardo Zapata, Psychology

Rainey divides his time between teaching and professional acting. He performs regularly at Alley Theatre productions as well as in other companies around the United States.

Resident companies allow actors to set down roots, yet they have found the benefits of lending actors to other companies. Rainey has shared his talent with companies in Berkeley, Chicago, Dallas, Hartford and Minneapolis.

“Acting with other companies gets people talking about the Alley and it improves our skills,” Rainey says. “That’s important when I work with students, because I am a working actor. It gives them an opportunity to work with a professional.”

This spring, Rainey was selected as the lead in the Alley’s spring production of Othello by William Shakespeare. The tale of jealousy, prejudice, revenge and destruction of innocence is meant to take an actor out of his comfort zone. That is a place Rainey also likes to take his drama students.

Rainey says his real satisfaction in teaching comes from watching his students. “To see the students change and grow. It’s not like in other classes,” he says. “They have to learn how to explore emotions that run very deep. They have to allow themselves to go to places they have never been before.”
The Greater Houston Partnership’s marketing material says, “Houston is one of the few cities in the country with resident companies for all four major performing arts—ballet, drama, opera and symphony.” Clearly, it is also one of the top marketing messages used by the Partnership to attract new business and tourism.

As part of Houston’s vibrant arts community, UHD’s alumni, faculty and students can be found in positions throughout Houston’s creative and performing arts outlets. For example, Ruthie Rodriguez (‘85), box office manager at the Alley Theatre, credits Dr. Thomas Lyttle, professor of drama and director of the O’Kane Theatre, for encouraging her love of the arts that led to the career path she follows today. Lyttle also recruited working professional actor David Rainey (Alley Theatre) to teach courses to beginning acting students. (See Rainey’s faculty profile on page 4.)

Until recently, UHD students had to look outside the university to complete a major in fine arts, but in recent months the Texas Higher Education Board approved a new bachelor of arts in fine arts at UHD.

The change will let students such as Brenda Valdivia continue fine art studies at UHD. “I really like the teaching style of the professors here,” says Valdivia, who wants a professional career in art therapy. “Now that the new degree is approved, I will get a double-major—one in fine arts and one in psychology.”

Graduates of the program will have a polished portfolio and field experience as they enter the job market. The field experience, or internship, encourages students to build professional relationships in the field. Courses that provide a basic understanding of accounting, marketing and management principles, design and graphic software are also required. Students may concentrate their studies in art, drama or music—whichever suits their professional goal.

Susan J. Baker, chair of the Department of Arts and Humanities, explains why the program includes a business component. “Arts administrators in the city expressed the need for arts managers who have some business acumen, but who also have a profound understanding of visual and performing arts traditions and who have some sensitivity regarding the creative process,” says Baker. “We think students who want careers in the arts will find the new degree program a good match.”
D uring the 1970s, the University of Houston-Downtown became a four-year university. At the time, the 5,000 students enrolled had about 10 degree programs. All classes were held in the One Main Building, and the historic structure was undergoing renovations.

Evan S. Cohen worked at odd part-time jobs back then, one as a projectionist in a movie theater two blocks from campus. He knew he wanted something more, and every time he reported to work, the university down the street reminded him of a better future. Eventually, he enrolled.

“UHD gave me the opportunity to change my life,” Cohen says. “It is a good place for people who work—maybe they are married and have kids—but aren’t in a job they want to be in. UHD gives you a chance to improve your future through education. It gave me a chance that I wouldn’t have had otherwise. I don’t know of any other four-year college that can say that.”

His professors were skeptical at first, but in time they saw how motivated Cohen was.

“Evan was a very good student, but he didn’t start off that way,” says Larry Spears, professor of chemistry. “He made a lot of progress with his oral and written communication skills. I think that’s why he appreciates the time he spent at UHD. The faculty worked a lot with him. By the time he left he was a completely different person.”

When he reached his senior year, Cohen had decided to be a medical doctor. In fact, he was accepted into the Baylor College of Medicine based on his UHD coursework. He had to transfer to another university to complete an undergraduate biology degree because UHD did not have one at the time.

“Over time, I saw Evan become more confident,” says John Capeheart, professor of biology. “When he first came to UHD you wouldn’t have seen him as a surgeon, but by the time he left, you could see he would do well in that profession. And he has. He is a world-renowned surgeon in his field. Over my 50 years at UHD, I don’t think I have had a student who has undergone a greater transformation.”


Cohen was invited to be the keynote speaker for the Seventh Annual UHD Student Research Conference—a showcase of special academic projects undertaken by UHD students and recent UHD graduates.

At the conference, Cohen awarded the Evan S. Cohen Premedical Studies Scholarship to a student who expects to become a doctor.

“The scholarship is my way of giving back.” Cohen says. “I want it to help students who are really motivated and help them a chance to make a difference in their lives.”

This year, junior Nicolas Spampinato was selected to receive the scholarship based on his desire to become a doctor, his academic achievements and his leadership potential. Spampinato’s research focuses on genetics. He is among the students presenting at this year’s conference.

Since he was a young boy, Spampinato wanted to become a doctor. A significant event cemented his determination.

“When I was 16, my grandfather contracted lung cancer. He lived in a poor town in Argentina and did not have proper medical assistance,” Spampinato says. “Witnessing my grandfather’s struggle, I realized my true calling was to be a medical doctor who would help those who could not help themselves.”

Spampinato is a Jesse H. Jones and Red Rose Scholarship winner, and a member of the UHD Scholars Academy. He tutors in the sciences, works in the Science Learning Center and is a former officer in the student Health Professions organization, among many other accomplishments. He plans to graduate in spring 2009 and then go to medical school to study cardiovascular surgery.

Does Spampinato sees a little of himself in Evan Cohen?

“I think I have a lot in common with Dr. Cohen,” Spampinato says.

“I admire that despite roadblocks, he made the best of what was offered and persevered to succeed in medical school and eventually became a surgeon. I want that to be my path, too.”

Steve Jones (’99) has accepted a position as vice president of Merrill Lynch Commodity Partners. Merrill Lynch Commodity Partners is the private equity arm of Merrill Lynch that focuses on middle-market energy and commodity-related assets. Prior to his move to this business role, Jones served as primary legal counsel for this principal investing group. Earlier, Jones worked...
Insect Lures Bug Researchers into the Field

Pecky, persistent and potentially dangerous, there are 57 species of mosquitoes in the Houston area and about 80 species in Texas, says Jeff Flosi, an associate professor in the natural sciences department at UHD, whose expertise on mosquitoes may only be surpassed by his love of teaching UHD students how to conduct field research.

Flosi, who started studying mosquitoes decades ago while a graduate assistant, says despite what people might think, there is a place for field studies in Houston’s urban environment, particularly when it comes to mosquitoes.

His students work hard and learn about the time and discipline that is involved in research as they plan a semester project. Usually, they take basic research projects Flosi has developed and break them, creating their own variation of a particular scientific question. Then they follow up, designing their own detailed experiment, conducting the field research, collecting specimens, completing needed laboratory work and finally evaluating the results.

Armed with mosquito traps that serve as human decoys as they emit carbon dioxide from chunks of dry ice, Flosi’s students stalk the slender flies in Houston’s Glenwood Cemetery (where, incidentally, Howard Hughes is buried) and in other promising locations.

Ben Benedict, a UHD senior majoring in microbiology, says his research under Flosi’s direction has been his most rewarding experience within a short time period. “It brought me back to my roots as a biologist in the microbiology area,” said the Singapore native, who moved to Houston when he was 16.

“Field biology was something I had never done before, and I think the most important thing he taught me was planning activities down to the minute and hour of the day—having my activities well prepared and drilled.”

Benedict trapped mosquitoes—Southern House Mosquitoes or Culex quinquefasciatus to be specific—and tested them for a general category of viruses transmitted by mosquitoes. Mosquitoes are known carriers of the West Nile Virus, St. Louis Encephalitis, yellow fever and other diseases that affect humans. They also carry and spread heartworms in dogs.

In Houston, the Southern House Mosquito and the Asian Tiger Mosquito are both common. They are two of the hardest species found in the metropolitan area and survive well under harsh environmental conditions.

Benedict evaluated two different kinds of mosquito traps. One used carbon dioxide as bait, the other used a “stinky grass and yeast mixture,” he explained. In both cases, live mosquitoes were caught, transported back to the university and then quick-frozen to keep the viruses intact. Samples collected during the week were analyzed on Fridays, when they were divided by sex and species on tabletops filled with petri dishes. Benedict then ground up the female insects’ exoskeletons into a mixture that was tested for some of the common viruses the mosquitoes carry. Female mosquitoes feed on human and animal blood and transport viruses, Benedict explained. Male mosquitoes feed on plant nectar and other organic materials, he said.

“We used testing strips that let us know if the strips were working and would also detect the viruses, but we never found any,” he said. “But what we learned was still very valuable.”

Flosi understands this completely. When he first came to Houston he worked as the laboratory supervisor for the Harris County Mosquito Control District. He studied mosquito population dynamics in the county. During that time, he discovered the Asian Tiger Mosquito had made its way to the United States.

“We think they either came in tires shipped here after they were retread abroad or came in bamboo plants that were imported at the time,” he said. Now the variety is very common in 24 states, including the Gulf Coast states, and has displaced other mosquito species.

It is relevant research such as this and UHD’s dedicated faculty that continue to attract top science and math students to the university.

According to the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services, more than 50 of the 3,000 kinds of mosquitoes worldwide live in Harris County.
Political Science Seniors Intern on Capitol Hill

George Thomas "Mickey" Leland was a six-term U.S. congressman from Houston who served as chairman of the House Select Committee on Hunger. He died in a plane crash in Ethiopia during a mission to alleviate hunger in the African country.

Before his death, Leland founded the Mickey Leland Congressional Internship Program, now sponsored by the University of Houston Center for Public Policy (CPP). It provides an opportunity for students to participate in government at its highest level—in the nation's capital.

University of Houston-Downtown political science seniors J. P. Cortez and Ralph Weatherspoon are following in the congressman's footsteps. They are serving as congressional aides this spring in Washington, D.C. Cortez and Weatherspoon are the first UHD students to participate in the program, which recently began accepting UHD applicants.

Interns receive a monthly stipend and round-trip airfare, as well as paid housing at Boston University’s Washington Center. Upon successful completion of the program, they can earn up to 12 credit hours toward their degree. Students from UH, Texas Southern University and UH-Downtown are eligible.

Renée Cross, associate director of the CPP and director of the internship program, says the interns participate in the political process in tangible ways that provide long-term rewards. “It is an incredible opportunity for politically minded students to get real-world experience in a legislative office,” says Cross, who also teaches political science at UH-Downtown.

The interns work an average of 40 hours per week over the spring semester in the Washington office of a congressional member. Their responsibilities include legislative research, project planning and attending events and meetings, as well as routine office duties. In addition, they attend a weekly seminar led by an on-site instructor.

The UHD interns are not strangers to politics.

Cortez has campaigned for several candidates in local races and is active in the Harris County Tejano Democrats, a political action group. He is working in the office of Congressman Gene Green, D-Houston.

“Washington, D.C., is a fast-paced city,” Cortez says. “With all of the excitement of the presidential elections, there is a lot going on. You may see a powerful congressional member on CNN one minute and share an elevator with them the next. The ‘Potomac’ Primaries allowed us to see a lot of the candidates up close and personal.”

Weatherspoon will be returning to Washington, D.C., where he served in the U.S. Marine Corps Guard for presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush from 1999 to 2003.

“My experience in D.C. thus far is different than the first time I was here,” Weatherspoon says. “Instead of protecting our nation’s leaders, I am working side-by-side with them. Last time, I was taking orders from a lieutenant. Today, I am holding a conversation with a general. This experience is priceless.”

Currently, Weatherspoon is in the Texas Army National Guard with plans to become a military lawyer. He is working in the office of Chet Edwards, D-Texas.

Not only will Cortez and Weatherspoon fulfill hours toward graduation in May 2008, but they will also help fulfill the legacy of the late Mickey Leland—to assist others through public service.

Unusual Partnership Succeeds in Attracting Future Teachers

A partnership that started in 2006 between UHD, Lone Star College–CyFair and Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (CFISD) in northwest Houston is filling a pipeline with new, qualified teachers who will begin filtering into the classroom in fall 2008.

“We started collaborating with Lone Star and Cy-Fair schools in 2006,” said Louis Evans, director of Advising Services at UHD and an adjunct faculty member for Lone Star College–CyFair. “We wanted students to be able to complete an associate degree at Lone Star College and then enroll in a bachelor of arts degree in interdisciplinary studies at UHD—a degree designed to meet teacher certification requirements in Texas.”

In fall 2006, an initial class of 70 students enrolled, and by this spring some 367 students are working their way to a degree at UHD, while studying on the Lone Star College campus. The rapid-fire growth shows that when barriers are removed, anything is possible, organizers at the three institutions say.

The partnership has been so successful that it was chosen for a conference presentation at the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs on March 1, 2008, in Denver, Colo.

“School districts are really struggling to find qualified teachers, and teachers with special training or expertise such as bilingual education, math, science and special education are particularly difficult to find,” Evans said. “We decided to try something new that removed barriers to starting a new career.”

Why is the program so successful? Beth Pelz, dean of UHD’s College of Public Service, says UHD’s success has “primarily been due to the hard work of Louis Evans and Janice Nath, associate dean of the college, in cultivating the relationship between the teacher education faculty and the Lone Star College staff, coupled with the effort of Myrna Cohen, chair of the Department of Urban Education, to make sure the program earns a sterling reputation in education circles.”

“It’s a triple win-win-win situation,” Cohen said. “Lone Star College can offer a four-year degree on its campus that builds on its associate degree, CFISD can recruit more highly qualified teachers, and we, in Urban Education, can extend our programs to more students who are outside of our immediate geographic area.”

Students liked the idea of finishing degrees close to home without fighting Houston’s traffic. Jennifer Gonzales, a student in the program, explains it this way. “The idea of taking all classes at the Lone Star College–CyFair campus, saving gas money and not having to drive all the way downtown convinced me to be in this program,” she said. “The partnership with UHD is awesome!”

There are some unusual strategies that help make the program a success. To start, the partnership targeted paraprofessionals already working in the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. CFISD is one of the nation’s largest school districts, covering some 186 square miles and enrolling more than 96,000 students as
**College Adds Center for Insurance and Risk Management**

The Texas Gulf Coast economy thrives on a variety of industries such as agriculture, technology, international relations and energy, making it one of the most diverse in the world—and all of them need protection.

“In Houston, opportunities are abound for careers in insurance and risk management, more than any other place in the nation,” says Donald Bates, dean of the College of Business at the University of Houston-Downtown.

Bates believes that UHD’s proposed degree program in insurance and risk management (IRM) demonstrates that the college is looking forward and says it will fill a real-world need for qualified professionals in the field.

Most major carriers of insurance for Texas companies are located outside the state. Since IRM programs are not yet well-developed at any of Houston’s four-year universities, the companies are forced to look outside the state for interns or entry-level employees with experience.

Another strong industry indicator of the need for qualified professionals is the loss of “baby boom” workers to retirement. Replacement workers are just not entering the market fast enough.

“In five years I think we will have 200 students majoring in the program,” Bates says.

Bates, working with UHD alum David De Roode of Insurance Concepts, a division of RanconySouth Insurance Services, Inc., has assembled a strong advisory board that will play a key role in developing the program. He found great willingness on the part of local insurance professionals to support the program. The industry has responded by contributing $300,000 for operating costs and scholarship funds.

Corporate executives promise to provide paid internships, which will be a requirement for a major or a minor in insurance risk management.

Bates will leverage corporate support into scholarships for every UHD student who declares a major or a minor in the program.

Ongoing certification is integral to the professional insurance industry. Bates is calling on board members and Houston practitioners to conduct workshops for the university program. The sessions will be open to working professionals as a way of keeping up with industry standards.

Members of the board did strongly voice their opinion that the program should be developed as a major in the College of Business and not just as a departmental track.

Students in other degree programs could minor in insurance risk management.

Industry professionals know a program like this will help develop local talent with ties to Houston, and UHD provides a good fit for the program because 88 percent of UHD graduates stay in the area.

The university’s student diversity in age, ethnicity and gender provides a rich pool for the workforce of the future.

With annual commercial construction permits in Houston reaching approximately $7.5 billion, project owners require professionals who can effectively coordinate protection of construction projects.

of fall 2007. The district expects to continue to grow as communities in northwest Houston expand. Lone Star College-CyFair’s paraprofessionals were already working in the district and knew students and faculty, and they had a good idea what a career as a teacher would be like.

Lone Star and UHD organizers also focused on enrolling adults who wanted to switch careers. Night and weekend courses delivered in a mix of face-to-face, flex and online formats made changing careers feasible for individuals continuing to work while they earned new degrees.

Nath says the first wave of students will be ready to teach after finishing their degrees this summer or fall. “This is an exceptionally motivated group who will provide their district with qualified teachers who have had considerable experience with students and with the district,” she said. “All of these students will have had experience either as a paraprofessional or as a student teacher within a CFISD host school.”

Lone Star College organizers Dean of Instruction Jo Fey and Program Manager Dell Burditt have helped find classroom space and other needed resources as the program continues to explode.

Brenda Lozano, assistant director of professional staff at Cypress-Fairbanks ISD and an adjunct professor teaching in the program, says the results are promising. “We have encouraged many of our paraprofessionals to take the next step,” she said. “Our school board also opened another door by providing a leave of absence to paraprofessionals who have worked for the district for at least three years to complete their student teaching assignment. Upon completion of this assignment, they may return to a paraprofessional position while applying for a teacher position.”

In April, students in the program will receive interview tips and learn what to expect as they apply for their first teaching jobs, Lozano said. “We know they may not all be hired in the Cy-Fair district, but we want them to look and do their best when they step out into the work world.”

Early in January, individuals from the college, the university and the school district took time during a spring recruitment event to celebrate. UHD President Max Castillo, Lone Star College–CyFair President Diane K. Troyer and many others enjoyed a celebration dinner that night, after registering and advising students.

During the dinner, Troyer said Lone Star College is proud of the partnership and recognizes its potential to help children in northwest Houston. Castillo said the program’s flexibility fosters a high level of student success, and he pointed to the program’s remarkable growth as a sign of how much demand there is for flexible degree programs in teacher education.

Another student in the program put it this way: “The joint admission to Lone Star College–CyFair and UHD made it easy for us to go to school and take the classes we needed. I will finish with the courses in May and begin student teaching in fall 2008. I have been going to school for about six years, so I am really excited.”
Book Donation
The University of Houston-Downtown community donated about 20 boxes of books for “Books for Africa” in the fall. The volumes make their way to villages that survive on the most meager of resources. The books fill libraries where previously the shelves lay bare. The UHD donation was collected by the Community Involvement Center, a clearinghouse for community involvement opportunities at the university.

Professional Women
“You are important to your institution and the State of Texas,” said Laurie Bricker, a member of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Bricker spoke to colleagues at UHD during the Gulf Coast regional meeting of Texas Women in Higher Education (TWHE). TWHE is the Texas network organization of the American Council on Education Office of Women in Higher Education. It is dedicated to developing, advancing and supporting women employed at colleges and universities across the state. Molly Woods, UHD provost, hosted the meeting.

Black History Month Luncheon
KRIV FOX 26 investigative reporter Isa-iah Thomas and S.H.A.P.E. Community Center were recognized at the J. Don Boney, Sr., Scholarship Luncheon in February. Dr. Boney was the first chancellor (now called president) of the University of Houston Downtown College (now the University of Houston-Downtown).

The theme for the luncheon was “Black History—Celebrating Activism in the Community.” The event raises funds to grant two book scholarships to deserving UHD students. S.H.A.P.E. Executive Director Deloyd F. Parker, Jr., and Thomas helped to honor UHD Image Award winners, individuals who model continuous dedication and meritorious service to the university and the community.

International Students
The English Language Institute hosted a group of students from China’s Central Police University for two weeks of English immersion and cultural excursion. The 39 students and two guides were part of a larger Bayou Connection program that introduces students from the Republic of China to the University of Houston-Downtown.

UHS News
Gov. Rick Perry has appointed four indi-viduals to the University of Houston Sys-tem Board of Regents. Attorneys Jacob Monty, Carroll Robertson Ray and Nelda Blair, and philanthropist Mica Mosbacher were sworn in at a meeting of the board Feb. 5. The 10-member Board of Regents is governing body of the UH System, which includes UH, UH-Clear Lake, UH-Downtown, UH-Victoria, UHS-Sugar Land and UHS-Cinco Ranch teaching centers, as well as KUHT television and KHUF radio stations.

Read-in
The Black Student Alliance, the English Department and the Center for Cultural Enrichment hosted the 19th Annual National African American Read-in in February. This event is a component of an international collaboration of edu-ca-tional institutions, libraries, book-stores, churches, community groups and professional organizations, as well as individuals whose objective is to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month.

Participants shared poems, fiction and inspirational works written by African Americans. Appreciation of African American literature and thought served as a catalyst for celebrating the achievements, contributions and history of African Americans.

Executive Speakers
James Calaway, president and CEO of Calaway Interests LLC, was the featured speaker at the Executive Speaker Series in February. Calaway retired as founding CEO of the Center for Houston’s Future to form Calaway Interests, a private investment and development company.

Michael Holthouse was invited to pres-ent at the March Executive Speaker Series. A successful entrepreneur, Holthouse sold his computer network services firm to Sprint just shy of his 40th birthday. In 1999, he created the Holthouse Foundation for Kids, a nonprofit organization that helps at-risk children learn critical life skills.

Business Research
The College of Business published the first edition of “Bridge Over the Bayou,” a document that connects business theory to practice. It showcases faculty research that can help businesses become more prof-

itable. The first issue includes “Morale and Productivity Do Affect Your Profits,” by Carolyn Ash; “Emerging China: Opportunity or Threat to the U.S. Economy?” by Damir Tolic and Stijepko Tolic; and “Socio-economic Factors Affecting Household Expenditures on Fresh and Prepared Food: The Spanish Case” by Justo Manrique. The fler was distributed across the Houston metropolitan area as part of the Houston Business Journal. UHD’s Division of Public Affairs designed and helped market the piece.

Leadership UHD
Civil rights icon Dolores Huerta spoke to UHD students about activism, leadership and women’s rights in early February. Huerta joined Cesar Chavez and the National Farm Workers Association, the predecessor to the United Farm Workers Union (UFW) in the early ’60s. Her appearance was sponsored by Project Leadership UHD, which develops individuals’ strengths and skills as collabora-tive leaders in a student-friendly environment.

Community Service
The UHD community shared the holiday spirit in December with families of the House of Tiny Treasures, a day-care facility for SEARCH Homeless Center. Furniture, household and personal items came at just the right time for a family of three. The project, spearheaded by the College of Public Service, included the goodwill of the Criminal Justice Training Center community service project. The officers-in-training provided sleeping bags for the children at House of Tiny Treasures, as well as clothes and shoes. A partnership with the Lamar High School swim team

Isiah Carey of Fox 26 News and Deloyd Parker (right) of S.H.A.P.E. Community Center celebrated Black History Month with the UHD community at the J. Don Boney, Sr., Scholarship and Image Awards Luncheon.

Jacquelyn Smith (left) and Marie Stone Gates (right) were honored with the 2008 UHD Image Award. Isiah Carey of Fox 26 (center) congratulates the award winners.

James Calaway, entrepreneur, was the guest speaker at the Executive Speaker Series in February.

Dolores Huerta, civil rights icon and political activist, shared her views of leadership with students at “Leadership UHD.”
New Chancellor Visits UH-Downtown

President Max Castillo welcomed UH's new chancellor and president, Renu Khator, to the One Main Building early this spring semester.

Khator met with UHD administrators early on Jan. 29 and went on a fast-paced walking tour that included stops in the Shea and Commerce Street buildings, as well as a tour of the Student Life Center.

“I want to know how I can help you reach your destination,” she told UHD’s Executive Council and Deans’ Council as the day started.

Castillo said he appreciated Khator’s understanding of UHD’s unique mission and role.

“Her engaging style and her commitment to students, faculty and staff, is very clear,” Castillo said. “She already had a good feel for UHD and knew that we have a special mission, and the visit let her experience UHD’s energy. She is a quick study and knows that UHD plays a critical role in the UH System, and she understands how important this university is to the community it serves.”

While Khator was at UHD, she learned more about the strategic planning process that is under way and spoke about the importance of higher education in today’s society.

“I firmly believe we cannot even allow an ounce of intellectual energy to be wasted,” she said while talking about the importance of obtaining a college degree.

During the tour, she asked questions about UHD’s future and learned more about UHD’s successful distance education program. Her visit included stops in the College of Business and the College of Public Service, and a look at some of UHD’s computer and learning facilities.

While touring the Student Life Center, Khator met with student leaders who had gathered at a basketball court and shook “claws” with UHD’s costumed mascot, the “Edu-Gator.”

Her visit to the campus ended with a luncheon that included some of UHD’s closest friends and donors in the greater Houston region.

“I wanted to give our friends a chance to meet with Chancellor Khator in a small-group setting, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity,” Castillo said.

Khator came to Houston to assume her new role in January, and during her first 100 days in office she has met with leaders across UH, the UH System, Houston and the state of Texas.

As she builds a foundation for making UH one of Texas’ flagship universities, she is seeking input and insight from the greater Houston community and beyond.

Alumni, friends, faculty, staff, students and the public can learn more about UH’s future plans by going to http://www.uh.edu/100days. The Web site allows visitors to send their ideas and comments to Chancellor Khator.

Khator is the eighth chancellor of the UH system and the 13th president of UH.

She was born in India, where she completed her bachelor’s degree in liberal arts.

She holds master’s and doctoral degrees in political science, with particular training in environmental policy from Purdue University. Her areas of specialization include water policy and the impact of globalization on the environment.

She came to UH from the University of South Florida, where she served as provost and senior vice president.

Khator has a long history of community engagement. She is a prolific author and has published five books, numerous book chapters and journal articles.

Peter Schmidt, senior writer with The Chronicle of Higher Education, was the guest speaker at UHD’s Achieving the Dream speakers’ forum, “Success in Education.”

Schmidt is the author of Color and Money. The book poses the question: What’s behind the legal and political struggles over affirmative action on college campuses? Schmidt argues that the debate has been distorted by both sides’ unwillingness to discuss issues of class and the grip that the economically privileged have on selective colleges and universities. He suggests that “affirmative-action is a Band-Aid of dubious value, which might be worsening the wounds inflicted by past discrimination.”

Town Hall Meeting

The UHD Student Government Association sponsored the 2008 Town Hall Meeting, gathering decision-makers from university administration to answer questions from students. SGA President Christopher Sharpe moderated the meeting.

SGA President Christopher Sharpe (far right) moderated the UHD Town Hall Meeting 2008.
An Vo and Antonio Tito submitted abstracts for poster presentations to the 22nd National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR). The abstracts were accepted for the April conference in Salisbury, Md. Allen Jiang, assistant professor of chemistry, supervised the students’ research.

Sudeep Noorudeen will begin medical school in the fall of 2008 at UT Southwest Medical School in Dallas. Noorudeen has been with the Joint Admission Medical Program (JAMP) of the state of Texas, a special program created to support and encourage highly qualified students pursuing a medical education. He is majoring in chemistry with an emphasis in biochemistry.

Adolfo Aranzalez’ abstract “Tests with Concrete Having Different Fly Ash Content” was accepted for poster and oral presentations at the Texas Section-American Society of Civil Engineers Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas. Jorge Tito-Izquierdo, visiting professor of engineering, supervised Aranzalez’s research.

Professorship Path
The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded UH-Downtown and the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez a grant for “Paving the Road to Professorship for Female Students.” The project is part of the NSF-funded “Computing Alliance Hispanic Serving Institutions,” of which the two universities are members. It focuses on female computer engineering and computer science students. Four UHD students will be recruited each year and undergo a two-year program of research experience and skills, to put them on a professorship track in fields where women are significantly underrepresented. The gift covers at least three years of activity.

Loss Prevention Scholarship
The Loss Prevention Foundation awarded Ashton Bowie, a junior in criminal justice, a scholarship to enroll in a loss prevention qualification certification training. The foundation awards entry-level loss prevention professionals with scholarships to further their career and uphold the standards of the loss prevention industry.

Faculty Research
Hank Roubick, professor of communication studies, has made the narrative text to the textbook titled, Public Speaking: Choices for Effective Results (Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 2008), written by John Makay, Marc Burfield and Gayle Mason. Roubick’s knowledge and experience in instructional communication, combined with the commitment of several UHD students and a skilled UHD multimedia production team, result in one of the most innovative and creative teaching resources associated with any text in public speaking.

Aaron Gillette, assistant professor of history, recently published Eugenics and the Nature-Nurture Debate in the Twentieth Century (Palgrave MacMillan), which discusses scientific claims that behavior influenced by heredity was suppressed for ideological reasons in the 1930s.

Elizabeth Walden, assistant professor of psychology, published her work, An Exploration of the Experience of Lesbians with Chronic Illness, in the Journal of Homosexuality. The work explores this population’s struggle of living with chronic illnesses, often without the help of their families or knowledge of social services.

Business News
UHD students in the College of Business finance degree program will benefit from a gift from the Fondren Foundation. The foundation provided a gift for an endowed professorship in finance and to establish long-term resources for projects at the cutting edge of educational development and research.

The endowed professorship will provide resources for recruiting a leadership faculty member in finance and for establishing long-term resources for projects in the vanguard of educational development and research.

The number of finance majors in the UHD College of Business has increased by 11 percent over the past three years.

The Fondren Foundation was established in 1948 by Ella F. Fondren, the widow of Walter W. Fondren, one of the founders of the Humble Oil and Refining Co. (Exxon Company, U.S.A.). Located in Houston, the foundation supports agencies for education, health and human services.

Olwede Sekoya, graduating senior in marketing, and Qisheh Zhang, graduating senior in international business, were among the top five finalists for the 14th Annual Capstone and Foundation Challenge, hosted by Management Simulations Inc., the founding member of the the ASCB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) Leaders’ Circle. Stephen Maramvole, associate professor of management, is the faculty sponsor.

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) awarded Ryan Stuart a $3,000 scholarship by the AICPA Minority Initiatives Committee.

BMC Software Inc. has hired these UHD students to intern at the West Houston office. Nathaniel Nouri and Brenda Rios, international business, and Najia Ansari, accounting, will intern this semester.

Dan Ghosh, lecturer in marketing, presented the paper, “U.S. Foreign Direct Investments in India: A strategic partnership,” at the UNIPD conference in Orlando, Fl. The paper received a research award for its insight into the market potential between India and the U.S. Ghosh was recognized for his service as a session chair for the conference.

The Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) has chosen Christine Mastroache as the first 2008 intern. She will receive the Gopal Savjani Scholarship for the 2008–09 academic year. Mastroache will join university interns from throughout the Houston area to work at the Chamber’s annual events.