With enrollment surging to 11,484 students—a staggering increase of 28 percent in just five years—the University of Houston-Downtown began construction in January on a new $35 million building for its College of Business. Undergraduate students in business make up about 45 percent of UHD’s majors.

The new four-story building at the corner of North Main and Shea Streets, scheduled for completion in 2007, combines high-tech classrooms, computer labs and lecture halls in 132,000 square feet of space. With an adjoining multi-story parking garage on its three-acre site, the building features a glass enclosed entrance that will provide stunning views of UHD’s One Main Building and the downtown Houston skyline.

The architect of record is Pierce Goodwin Alexander and Linville (PGAL) and the general contractor is Manhattan Construction Company.

Internationally accredited, an honor achieved by only one fourth of U.S. undergraduate business schools, the College of Business graduates students who play pivotal leadership roles in the financial, energy, high-tech, transportation and healthcare industries.

“We’re bursting at the seams,” said Dr. Max Castillo, UHD President. “It’s just a joy to watch our university grow and provide the educated workforce and leaders of tomorrow.”

Dr. Donald Bates, Dean of the College of Business, welcomes inquiries from individuals interested in making a philanthropic investment in the college and its new building through a corporate or legacy gift. Watch for updates on the College of Business Web site, http://www.uhd.edu/academic/colleges/business/.

Above: College of Business faculty and staff and UHD administration break ground for the new building scheduled to open for classes in Fall 2007. Left to right: Dr. Forrest Aven, Kimberly Morisak, Chris McCall, Dr. Donald Bates, Cherrey Anderson, Dr. Woody Woods, Dr. Alex Castillo, Dr. Kristin Omer, and David Bradley.
The University of Houston-Downtown is celebrating 25 years of the Red Rose Ball on Friday, April 28. Since 1980, students representing the best in academic achievement, community service and leadership have been recognized with a scholarship highlighting their accomplishments. The scholarship helps alleviate the financial obligation of a higher education. These high-achieving students are examples of the success often accomplished after overcoming great odds.

Quijano Family Legacy

The Red Rose Ball has become the university’s signature fundraiser of the year and helps feature the special efforts of individuals in the community and direct supporters of UHD-Downtown. This year the community legacy of Dominic and Nelly Quijano is being honored with the first ever Red Rose Awards. The Quijanos have been longtime supporters of education, and community and economic development in the Greater Houston Area.

The Quijanos first came to Houston in 1984 from Cuba, via New York. Their dream to own a single McDonald’s franchise grew into a chain of 15 area locations. They have used their success to support local programs including schools, churches and civic organizations and were recognized by McDonald’s with the “Golden Arch Award.” It is the highest award given by the corporation for outstanding professional achievement, community involvement and contributing to the growth and development of the McDonald’s brand. The Quijanos are known for creating the restaurant’s popular breakfast burrito which is now served worldwide.

Honored Guests

Because of broad community support, UHD is able to offer the opportunity of a higher education to many who would otherwise not pursue an advanced degree. Among the many UHD supporters, someone stands out each year who has helped the mission of the university move forward. This year, Charles and Bethi Saunders will be honored for their support of higher education and the University of Houston-Downtown. Through the Charles and Beth Saunders Foundation, they have provided much-needed support to religious, charitable, educational, scientific and literary purposes. They have supported the UHD O’Kane Theatre program through scholarship and patronage throughout the years.

A Friend Remembered

Special friends of the university will become a part of the UHD family. Larry Jones was such a man. He and his wife Lyn generously devoted time, energy and leadership to the Red Rose Ball as significant contributors and fundraisers. They took every opportunity to be involved with the scholars. Mr. Jones was managing partner of the Houston office of the international accounting firm Deloitte and Touche where he worked for 35 years. Mr. Jones passed away in 2005.

The Scholars

Through the years Red Rose Scholars have represented a diverse mix of students who work hard for high academic achievement. Many are already working full-time and have family responsibilities. Oftentimes, they are the first in their families to attend a university. This year’s scholars will receive $3,000 for the 2006-07 academic year. At UHD, this covers tuition and fees for two semesters.

For endowment or table information, please contact Gilda Parker at 713-221-8563 or email her at parkeri@uhd.edu.

Historical Highlights of the Red Rose Ball

1981

Latin American Student Organization holds first Red Rose Ball at the Shamrock Hilton. They raise $20,000. The Ricky Diaz Orchestra provides entertainment, and wife Belen Compean Diaz shepherds the event.

1995

Red Rose Ball held in the Grand Foyer of Wortham Center. Honorary ball chairs are (ticketed right) Mayor Bob and Elise Lanier.

2001

Five scholarships are added to the Red Rose Scholarship and the award amount is raised to $3,000 in honor of the event’s 20th anniversary. Due to the ball’s success, community college transfer students and Scholars Academy members benefit from proceeds.

2003

Endowed scholarships kick off to fund scholarships in perpetuity. Dr. Ralph O’Connor is given the honor of passing the torch to step up. The UHD Red Rose Ball Committee, co-chaired by Don Wang and Tom Harper, raises $500,000 — the most ever.

2005

The goal of 25 for 25 in absence of the Ball’s 25th Anniversary is announced at the ball to establish an endowment for each scholarship by 2006.
When in Rome, do as the Romans do

by Dr. Donald Bates
Dean, College of Business

"Corruption! Corruption is our protection. Corruption is what keeps us safe and warm, and corruption is why we win!"

These lines from the hit movie "Syriana" – spoken by a Texas oil man character who thinks nothing of offering bribes to successfully do business in the Middle East – are supposed to provoke moral revulsion in filmgoing audiences.

They shouldn’t. Not if you care about the U.S. being able to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

Here’s the truth: Many countries with a long history of global business, including France and Germany, even permit bribes and gratuities to be tax deducted as a cost of doing business.

Like it or not, offering a bribe to gain a contract, speed up a procedure or ensure better service is a common and expected practice in the vast majority of the international business world.

Yet under U.S. law, we make it a crime for an American business man to do what is expected and common in a host country, literally forcing American businessmen to operate in the shadows if they want to compete.

Talk about moronic.

If it’s OK to drive 95 miles per hour in the Middle East, and a Houston oilman visiting there does so, should Texas state troopers give a speeding ticket to him if they find out about it because you can’t go over 70 on Houston freeways?

That’s how goofy the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act of 1977 is. It made giving gifts, money or anything of value to influence foreign officials illegal in countries where there is no objection to the practice.

The exasperation of a fictional Texas oil company owner over that act came through loud and clear in "Syriana": “We’ve all got the foreign corrupt practices act committed to memory – I’ve got a copy of it taped to the wall of my head.”

That 1977 act was amended by the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988 (OCTA), which defined more specifically types of business acts not permitted under the law and provided for substantially increased fines for violations.

Together, those acts make it extremely difficult at best and impossible at worst for the United States to be truly cross-culturally competent and location sensitive, therefore, and perhaps unintentionally, retarding the development of American international business.

In 2004, it is estimated, U.S. firms lost over 50 contracts worth $25 billion to rivals, such as the French and German corporations, whose governments endorse business bribes.

A case in point is the story of a U.S. manufacturing firm that wanted to establish an assembly plant in Turkey. Located in a remote part of Turkey to stimulate economic development, the plant needed a railroad spur constructed so it could operate efficiently. The Turks expected a little something to grease their palms. But the Americans didn’t look anything over.

After three years, the spur still was not built, and the irked Americans sold the company to a German firm. Immediately after the sale, the railroad spur was completed. The Germans knew how to do business in Turkey.

An insidious side effect of these congressional acts is our cultural arrogance as we try to impose our values, our business practices and our way of doing things upon other countries. Imperialism with guns and troops is easily identified and countered. Imperialism of values, such as these congressional acts, is treacherous because it is indirect, subtle, cumulative, and destroys the sovereignty of countries.

The United States, in its cultural arrogance, was the driving force behind the 1997 international agreement called, “Treaty On Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.”

The U.S. and 32 other countries, including Germany and France, signed the treaty. But the only way countries would sign is if the treaty was so watered down that it had no enforcement teeth.

So it isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on.

The U.S. Commerce Secretary, William Daley, upon the agreement’s signing, however, tried to put a good moralistic spin on his hard work: “This will level the playing field.” For 20 years our companies played fair, and now the rest of the world will have to play by the same rules.

What a joke.

The treaty actually has greater potential for harm than good if there are Americans who actually believe the global business playing field has truly been leveled. It hasn’t. It continues to be tilted in favor of those willing to follow the time honored business practices of the host culture. Remember Germany and France, as well as many other countries, still allow their businesses to get tax breaks when they hand out bribes.

We did not invent the concept of bribes and we will not end it. Yes, I wish the rest of the world did business at least as fair and square as we do it in the United States. But it’s not our business to make other countries American colonies. Now, when their businessmen try to do business in our country, that’s another story.

If U.S. business is to strengthen its position as a global economic force, our government must understand modern global competitiveness is based on a simple concept: When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

The Foreign Corrupt Practices and the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Acts should be discarded. If it takes good lobbying by American businessmen to do so – which some might call a bribe – so be it.

Prior to arriving in Houston last summer, Bates was Dean of the College of Business and Economics at the national university in the oil rich country of United Arab Emirates. A portion of this editorial was printed in the Houston Chronicle Outlook Section on January 14.

College of Business
Enjoys Capital Gain

The University of Houston-Downtown College of Business, so popular that a new building is being built to accommodate the demand for its programs, will now have its own development officer.

Steve Sucher has accepted a position as Director of Development and Capital Projects for the College of Business.

His primary responsibilities will be to secure legacy gifts for the new building and for signature academic programs, as well as naming opportunities for the college itself.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for UH-Downtown,” says Dr. Don Bates, dean of the College of Business. “We want to capitalize on the success among our alumni and graduating seniors and the strength of our faculty. As long as classrooms continue to reach capacity, we will continue to offer strong academic programs.

Steve Sucher’s contribution is important to our success.”

Sucher’s previous position as a development officer in the Office of University Advancement makes it easy for him to transition into the “business world.” He will report to Dr. Michele Sabino, UA director, as well as work directly with Dr. Bates.

“I am looking forward to bringing continued support to the university,” says Sucher. “UH-Downtown is a leader in quality higher education in the public arena and has stepped forward to further economic stability in the Houston area. Our graduates are prepared and ready to step into the 21st century workforce.”

The growth of the College of Business has been staggering. While UHD enrollment has increased 27 percent in the last five years, declared majors in the College of Business have increased 47 percent over the same time period.

Nearly half of the graduating class in December 2005 was from the College of Business. The new building to house the college is scheduled for a 2007 opening.
The Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States sent Lt. Gary Scheibe back to school.

“I thought studying for the master of security management degree at the University of Houston-Downtown could help me better respond to security needs in the post-9/11 era,” the Houston police officer said as he waited in December to walk in UHD’s 39th commencement ceremony at Minute Maid Park. “And it has. I have a far better understanding now of how the public sector and private sector have to work together.”

Scheibe, who works in Mayor Bill White’s Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security, was one of the first six graduates of the university’s newest master’s degree program and one of the more than 1,170 in the August and December 2005 graduating class—a record for UHD.

Commencement speaker Aurora Castañeda, who spent 25 years in the oil industry, received a bachelor of arts in interdisciplinary studies and has begun teaching in the Houston Independent School District. She was recruited for her position before graduating in December.

In her speech, she related how her passion for teaching grew from her observations of how her nephews responded so positively to their band director.

“How gratifying it must be to inspire young people,” she thought at the time.

“Now I have my chance to inspire the young,” Castañeda said.

Castañeda is originally a product of Jefferson Davis High School, which is just blocks away from UHD.

This past December, about half of the graduating class came from the College of Business. About one-third was made up of College of Humanities and Social Sciences graduates. The College of Public Service graduates accounted for about one-sixth and the College of Sciences and Technology granted degrees to about one-tenth of the pool.

Each graduate automatically becomes a member of the UHD Alumni Society.

Spring commencement is 2 p.m., Sunday, May 7, at Minute Maid Park in downtown Houston.

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Generous Friends of UHD

Contributions to UHD's downtown are vital to fulfilling our mission 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 generosity shown to UHD by the following corporations, foundations and individuals between October 27, 2005 and December 31, 2005. Please note that numbers following a name signify the year of graduation from UHD.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The 100 Club Criminal Justice Scholarship Endowment Fund

The 100 Club, Inc.

Accounting Excellence Fund

Brenda C. Renetira, ’97

Jay Kevin Anderson Memorial Scholarship Endowment Fund

Chaney and Jo Jean Anderson Jeff Anderson

Robert Browne Memorial Scholarship Fund

Paulette, ’01 & ’05, Robert Browne Memorial Scholarship Fund

Jo Jean Anderson Memorial Scholarship Fund

Jeff Anderson

Paulette, ’01 & ’05, Robert Browne Memorial Scholarship Fund

The UPS Foundation

Calvin L. Williams, ’86

ENDOWMENTS

Jay Kevin Anderson Memorial Scholarship Endowment Fund

Chaney and Jo Jean Anderson Jeff Anderson

Distinguished Faculty Endowment

Anonymous

Carolyn Asher

Forest Aven

Donald L. Bates

Beatrice Christiana Birschak

Anthony R. Ciavarella

Donald H. Derrick

Ralph G. Kaufman

Hong Lin

Khalid Shaheed Omer

Herbert Rehuhn

Sandra Ridgeway, ’87

Michelle J. Sabino

Randal K. Severt

Stephanie S. Turner

Leigh Van Horn

Bea V. Villarreal

MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS

In Memory of Jay Kevin Anderson

Chaney and Jo Jean Anderson

Jeff Anderson

In Memory of Robert Browne

Paulette, ’01 & ’05, and Gordon Purdy

In Memory of Alicia Spencer Castillo

Melissa Rath, ’98

Julia C. Vazquez

In Memory of Rancee Ward

Gail Evans

In Memory of Aqshar Nazemzadeh

Sahrzad Hashemi

Nasrin Nazemzadeh

Herbert Rehuhn

In Memory of Ms. Ruby M. Randle

Beau Huffman

McConnell

Paulette, ’01 & ’05, and Gordon Purdy

In Memory of Dr. Terry Wells

Brett Huffman

McConnell

MATCHING GIFTS

United Beneath the company names shown below are contributions made to other matching gift programs.

American Express Foundation

Lee Callaway

ConanPhillips

Gerald M. Pinto

Hewlett-Packard

Christopher P. Olson, ’00

Monanto Fund

Dwayne E. Young, ’93

Oracle Corporation

Deven S. Oza, ’95

SBC Foundation

Frank M. Viridamado, ’84

UBS

Catherine E. Woods, ’97 & ’99

The UPS Foundation

Calvin L. Williams, ’86

Alumni Notes

Alumni crusades to save lives in honor of her twin sister

By Israel Salazar, Alumni Relations Coordinator

They graduated from Elsk Affel High School together. They played soccer together on scholarship to Lindsey Wilson College in Kentucky.

And in 1997, Kindel VanCronekite and her identical twin sister, Courtney, graduated together from the University of Houston-Downtown with degrees in professional writing.

“Her is someone whose memory you would not want to see die,” Kindel said in a recent Houston Chronicle article.

Unfortunately, another commonality the sisters shared was a rare heart disorder called Long QT syndrome, a condition which causes rapid, chaotic heart rhythms.

In 1999 the ailment took its toll on one of the sisters, Courtney, as she slept. She went into cardiac arrest and died.

“I am committed to helping others who contribute to their communities.”

Courtney’s Crusade has raised $80,000 and contributed 25 life-saving AED units to Houston schools. For more information, visit www.courteynystraw.com.

Have an inspirational alumni story or want to update us about what is going on in your life? Send a note to Israel Salazar at salazarisr@uhd.edu, or call the university at 713-221-8993.
During a recent trip to Taiwan to reinforce UHD’s existing relationship with several university partners, UHD President Max Castillo met with Dr. Y.F. Chang, president of the Evergreen Group. Dr. Castillo extended a greeting from the Bayou Connection, an exchange program which supports the security management degree program in the UHD Department of Criminal Justice. That meeting ended with a new scholarship made available to international students.

Accompanied by Dr. Beth McConnell, chair of the department and Dr. Hisiao-Ming Wang, director of the Bayou Connection and associate professor of security management, Dr. Castillo met with Dr. Chang in the company’s offices in downtown Taipei. Their discussion included Chinese students studying abroad, global trade and international security. International security has grown in importance among corporations that do business around the world especially since September 11.

Dr. Chang proposed a $50,000 gift to the university in support of the Chinese students eligible for the UHD Bayou Connection. A scholarship will be established to offset their cost to study at UHD. It will be called the “Dr. Y.F. Chang Criminal Justice Scholarship.”

In his book, Do Members of Congress Reward Their Future Employers? Santos writes, “Evidence suggests that former members of Congress who become lobbyists behave differently than their counterparts who do not become lobbyists during their last term in office.”

Santos deals with the question of whether public policy is being compromised and jeopardized by their behavior. Excerpts include:

“As the nation prepares for the fallout from a scandal involving former high-rolling lobbyist Jack Abramoff and several high ranking members of Congress, including Houston Rep. Tom Delay, a new book by University of Houston-Downtown professor Dr. Adolfo Santos reveals that lawmakers may be sponsoring legislation that helps win positions as high paid lobbyists once their political careers are over.

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"... In their becoming lobbyists, former members of Congress could potentially jeopardize the very public policy that they are entrusted to create."

"The fear is that members of Congress may use their public posts for private gain, either by rewarding, or at least by sponsoring legislation that send signals to prospective employers. It is the purpose of this book to evaluate the extent to which former members of Congress become lobbyists, and the implications of this career choice on public policy."

"The conclusion that can be drawn is that those with greater experience and political power become valuable to lobbying firms and special interests. This is underscored by the fact that a sizeable number of high-ranking members of the most powerful committees have had a greater frequency of becoming lobbyists."

Dr. Santos has been teaching at UHD since 1997. He teaches American Government, American Legislatures and Hispanic Politics.

Dr. Santos has also conducted research on Houston and Texas Politics. His research agenda focuses on the U.S. Congress, with particular focus on Hispanic representation in Congress as well as focusing on the “revolving door” and members of Congress. Dr. Santos has also conducted research on Houston and Texas Politics.

Dr. Peter J. Li, assistant professor of political science in the Department of Social Sciences, has become an international voice for animal welfare in China. His study of animal abuse in China began in 1998. In 2004, a survey of Chinese Bear Farms found widespread abuse of the animals.

Animal Instincts

Dr. Peter J. Li, assistant professor of political science in the Department of Social Sciences, has become an international voice for animal welfare in China. His study of animal abuse in China began in 1998. In 2004, a survey of Chinese Bear Farms found widespread abuse of the animals.

Since the Ming Dynasty, bears have been farmed in China for their bile — which is believed to have healing powers for a variety of illnesses ranging from kidney ailments to cancer. However, it was only when modern bile recovery practices became commercially profitable in the 1970s that wide scale animal abuse began.

Li’s research on the damaging effects to the bears in a growing number of small and state-run farms helped bring the practice to light. Among the farmers, he discovered considerable disregard of the laws by the Chinese Forestry Ministry. His findings helped activists push for change. An agreement between Chinese officials and the Animals Asia Foundation was signed in 2000 resulting in the rescue of 300 bears, and a mutual long-term goal to end bear farming.

More recently, Dr. Li found a connection between the consumption of wild animals and the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). His findings have prompted officials in the province of Guangdong to take important steps to outlaw the consumption of wild animals.

Dr. Li is assistant professor of political science. He teaches U.S. Government and Asian politics. He has a Ph.D. from Northern Arizona University and has studied at Syracuse University, as well as Kiangsi University and the Institute of Foreign Affairs in China.
To most people, “Saving the Whales” is simply an expression used to promote environmentalism and animal protection. To UH-Downtown student Patricia Ramón, however, it is what she did in Alaska last summer.

After spending the first half of her summer conducting research at the prestigious Scripps Institution of Oceanography in California, she joined researchers working to keep whales in the wild in Alaska. Said the junior who is studying biology at UHD’s Scholars Academy, it was a dream come true.

“I can say that Scholars Academy helped me to accomplish my childhood dream,” she said. “It all came about because of the presentations I was required to do. It helped me meet the right people and exposed me to challenges most undergraduates would never have.”

Ramón’s study of whales started once she boarded the Cobra, a fishing vessel equipped to study the mammals. She joined researchers off the coast of Sitka, Alaska who were studying whale habits around fishing boats.

“Whales are amazing,” says Ramón. “You see their incredible power when you are in a small boat right up next to them. The tail can eclipse the small boats we use to observe them. It can make you seem small and vulnerable, but I never felt threatened or in danger.”

They studied how the whales reacted to the boat noise and were attracted to a potential source of food. Underwater audio recorders, or hydrophones, captured the unique sounds created by the whales. The researchers searched for vocalization patterns and studied changes in the natural behavior of the sperm whales.

The researchers are part of the South East Alaska Sperm Whale Avoidance Project (SEASWAP), sponsored by the North Pacific Research Board (NPRB). The goal of the project is to investigate how sperm whales have learned to feed off of fishermen’s lines.

The research findings will be used to help determine how whales continue to survive in an environment where man and pollution encroach more each day.

Ramón will present her research on April 21 at the upcoming UHD Student Research Conference. The conference is a cross-disciplinary opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to present their results from various research projects. Paul Frison, President and Chief Executive Officer of Houston Technology Center, is the keynote speaker.

Ramón, whose current work is studying the effects of noise pollution on the bird population of Houston, is still excited about her summer study.

“To learn that I was selected from thousands of applicants to a place so many scientists want to go amazed me,” she said. “It has opened doors and proven to me that I can accomplish whatever goals I set for myself.”

New Director of Communications and Marketing

They say the good guys always wear white hats, so we’re expecting the trademark, oversized fedora of Paul Harasim, seen with increasing frequency on campus, will also become the trademark of an increased public presence for UHD through a proposed advertising and marketing campaign.

Harasim has an impressive résumé with award-winning experience in print and broadcast journalism, media relations, publications and public affairs. He is widely known from Channel 2, “Hats Off To Houston,” and as a columnist with The Houston Post from 1984-95. He is a published author and taught journalism, public relations and speech as an adjunct professor at the University of St. Thomas and Texas Southern University. He also brings great expertise from the medical field, having served as the head of media relations and publications for the St. Luke’s Episcopal Health System.

Harasim received his undergraduate degree in English and drama from Alma (MI) College and his master’s in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati. A Vietnam veteran, he served as a war correspondent for several military publications.

He comes to us from the Las Vegas Review-Journal in Nevada where he was senior medical writer at the state’s largest daily newspaper. His feature writing recently took top honors from the Nevada Press Association.

Paul Harasim joined the University Advancement team in late November as the Director of Communications and Marketing.
President’s State of the University Address 2006

On January 31, UHD President Max Castillo addressed university supporters, community leaders, and elected officials. Following are excerpts from his speech.

"As I share with you today the state of the University of Houston-Downtown, I do so with the knowledge that in the international competition to have the biggest and best supply of educated workers, America is falling behind. The United States has dropped from first to fifth in the percentage of young adults with a college degree."

"In 2001, India graduated almost a million more students from college than the United States did. China graduates twice as many students with bachelor’s degrees as the U.S., and they have six times as many graduates majoring in engineering."

"Patrick Callan at the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education states that if current policies continue unchanged, the Texas workforce of 2020 is going to be less educated than today’s workforce. As a result, the state’s per capita income will not just stagnate, it will actually drop."

"When the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board unveiled its Closing the Gaps plan in the year 2000, the marching orders were clear: nearly 500,000 additional students had to be enrolled in Texas colleges and universities by 2015 to make us competitive with the other ten most populated states. Put in perspective, that’s the equivalent of about 45 UHD’s. The state also said the number of degrees and certificates awarded from high quality institutions would have to increase by 50 percent by 2015. Reaching these goals requires increasing participation from every population group, but especially Hispanics and Blacks."

"UHD is definitely doing its part to shift the state into higher gear. We have been at the forefront in higher education since our founding more than three decades ago. Approximately 60 percent of UHD’s new freshmen are first-generation students while 43 percent come from low income families. This fall’s enrollment of 11,484 represents a 27 percent increase over our fall 2000 headcount of 8,951. The number of baccalaureate degrees jumped from 1,159 in 2000 to 1,647 in 2005, an overall increase of 42.1 percent."

"We have talked the talk in Texas about closing the gaps in college degree attainment between Texas and the rest of the nation and among the state’s major population groups. But are we going to walk the walk?

"Fortunately, today, the college preparatory curriculum is now the de-facto curriculum for graduation from Texas high schools. That’s a move in the right direction. But the current public policy agenda in Texas is uneven and reactive. I’m afraid we’re stumbling as we try to walk the walk when it comes to closing the gaps in higher education. We no longer consider higher education a public good, but rather a private benefit; students are seen as consumers, instead of seeing them as an investment in the future. We’re simply failing to invest the necessary resources."

"Congress recently voted the biggest tax cut in history to the student loan program at a time when college is more important, and more expensive, than ever. When you think about the fact that banks provide 17 times more money for cars than students, it just doesn’t make sense, does it?"

"Make no mistake: we at the University of Houston-Downtown will continue to do all we can to promote access and opportunity. It is the heart and soul of our mission. We have done very well at fulfilling our mission even though there are times when we wish we had more tools with which to do our work. We need to continue our collaborative and partnerships with both the private and the public sectors who benefit from the educated workforce we are preparing."

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