



UHD magazine

Spring/Summer 2016

Celebrating Achievement, Progress and Student Success

New Programs in Health, Big Data and
Cybersecurity, pg. 6

Public Art Collection Highlights Diversity,
History and Culture, pg.10

Alumni Give Back to Students, pg.14

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UHD Magazine is published by the University of Houston-Downtown Division of Advancement and University Relations.

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University of Houston-Downtown is an EEO/AA institution and is one of four public universities within the University of Houston System.

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Cover: *Cloud Deck*, Jacob Hashimoto
Shea Street Building

From The President



It's been a year of exciting developments at University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). We've added additional acreage to campus, a new building and parking garage and new academic programs. We have been recognized for excellence in a number of ways. From an engaging Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) to building the No. 1 MBA program in Houston, the University continues to reach further and give more to ensure high-impact experiences for our students and community.

The articles in this issue of UHD Magazine illustrate achievement, progress and student success.

I invite you to read about the robust public arts program that enriches the academic experience for our students and brightens nearly every floor of every building on campus. As part of one of the largest percent-for-art programs in the state, UHD features over 50 unique pieces in its collection, with more to come.

Inside, you'll find the inspiring stories of three UHD alumni: Miriam Morales, Frank Garcia and Bill Burnash, who value their experiences at UHD enough that they now spend their own time and resources giving back, providing major opportunities for students.

Further, you'll uncover the excellence in instruction, research and support services that drive student success and institutional growth such as that demonstrated by our 2016 Faculty Awards recipients, professors Travis Crone, Susan Henney, Heather Goltz, Ajay Singh, Dana Smith and Simon Jakubowski; groundbreaking mosquito research conducted by Jeff Flosi, associate professor of biology and microbiology; and services such as those used by student veteran Terran Fontenot.

I am proud to be part of the impactful work being done at UHD. The efforts of our entire community—faculty, staff, students, alumni, nonprofits and businesses—are what drive growth, progress and scholarship and establish the University as a pivotal partner downtown and across greater Houston.

Michael A. Olivas
Interim President
University of Houston-Downtown

A Welcome Impression

University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) faculty, staff and students joined some 200 members of the Houston-area community the evening of Feb. 4 to celebrate the Welcome Center grand opening.

The 26,000-square-foot facility is home to Academic Admissions, Testing Services, Disability Services and Veterans Services, and enables prospective and current students one-stop access to these important resources. Adjacent to the Girard Street parking garage, the spacious new center features a tour room, seminar rooms and student services offices, creating an integrated and striking impression. The O’Kane



We have the best address in Houston. We are where Houston begins.

*Michael A. Olivas
Interim President
University of Houston-Downtown*



Gallery also relocated to the new area, giving artists nearly three times the exhibition space of its previous location. Floor-to-ceiling windows flank the center, providing a dazzling view of downtown Houston’s northwestern horizon, and polished concrete floors add to the modern aesthetic.

David Bradley, vice president for administration and finance, welcomed everyone and thanked UHD staff members Brian Cokes, capital projects manager, and Chris McCall, assistant vice president for facilities management, for their hard work and dedication toward the project’s completion.

“This was actually four projects rolled into one,” Bradley said. “We’ve transformed what was a 50-year-old garage into an impressive, multi-use space with expansive views and convenient access to parking and elevators. We have a new student services facility, a larger state-of-the-art gallery and an attractive point of entry for new students and visitors.”

Mark Cervenka, associate professor and director of the expanded O’Kane Gallery, also greeted the crowd followed by remarks from Michael A. Olivas, interim UHD president.

“We have the best address in Houston. We are where Houston begins—One Main Street,” said Olivas. “Now we have the most dramatic and best welcome facility in Houston. But UHD students are the reason for this Welcome Center. They are committed to success, and we are committed to making their success possible.”

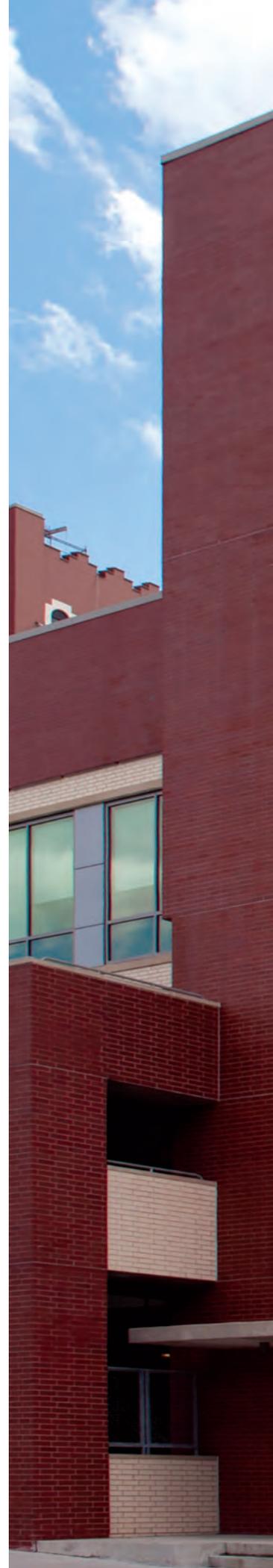
Guests enjoyed refreshments and toured the center, viewing works by noted Houston artists Trenton Doyle Hancock and Lucinda Coble.

Suspended oak beams draw the eye toward the center’s information desk, and discreet lighting supplements the ample natural light that streams into the spacious interior. Students who enrolled in spring 2016 classes were among the facility’s first users.

The lobby features a commissioned 29- by 36-foot permanent wall installation by Hancock. Constructed of Plexiglas,[™] *LEGENDS* is an arrangement of painted panels depicting a tree that visually articulates the familial, nurturing aspect of the University. The inaugural O’Kane Gallery installation was Coble’s work, *matrix*, which remained on view through March 12.

Houston community leaders including Max Castillo, former UHD president; Molly Woods, former UHD provost; Robert Gallegos, city council member for District I; Mike Sullivan, Harris County tax assessor/collector and UHD alumnus; and many more joined in the celebration.

By Brenda Gunter






 University of Houston
 DOWNTOWN

MAJOR OPPORTUNITY

CHANGING LIVES.
 BUILDING FUTURES.



Photo: Duong Tran

Growing for Business

New Programs Added in Health, Big Data and Cybersecurity

University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) is as dynamic as the city it calls home. Our students graduate prepared to meet the demands of the modern workforce, so it's only fitting the UHD Strategic Plan 2020 includes expanding baccalaureate and graduate degree programs.

In fall of 2015, the University offered two new degrees in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and a new graduate certificate program in the College of Business.

Bridging the gap

The Bachelor of Science in Health and Behavioral Science (BSHBS) is the first interdisciplinary program in health offered in the Houston area. The program combines a liberal arts education with hands-on, professional experience. Students may choose between two concentrations: the Healthcare Navigation track prepares students for work in medical case management and patient advocacy, and the Aging and Wellness track readies them for careers in geriatric care, and promoting health and wellness in aging populations.

“With advances in modern medicine, the elderly are the largest growing population in America,” said program director Cindy Stewart. “Studies show that the current workforce is not prepared to accommodate the demand created by this aging population.”

Big data, big value

Big business is inundated with big data. In 2013, Forbes magazine reported a projected 25-percent increase in the demand for data analysts by 2022, suggesting data processing would be a \$50 billion business by 2017.

Collecting and interpreting massive quantities of information is a job unto itself, which is why UHD worked with industry partners to develop an application-based Master of Science in Data Analytics (MSDA). The MSDA curriculum is taught in the classroom and online, with the goal of offering a completely online track within five years. MSDA students learn to assemble, structure, analyze and report large data sets for application in day-to-day business operations. Students receive rigorous training in statistical analysis and computational techniques and engage in faculty research projects and internships with businesses, nonprofits and government agencies. This interdisciplinary program prepares graduates for success in a variety of business sectors, including healthcare, energy, criminal justice and technology.

Safeguarding information and images

Increased connectivity opens doors that were closed tightly just a few short years ago. It also opens the door to cybercrime. With that in mind, the UHD College of Business offers a graduate certificate program in cybersecurity, created with the input of expert computer security managers who protect organizations from cyberthreats and associated risks every day.

By Robin Davidson



University of Houston-Downtown Receives Approval for Expansion

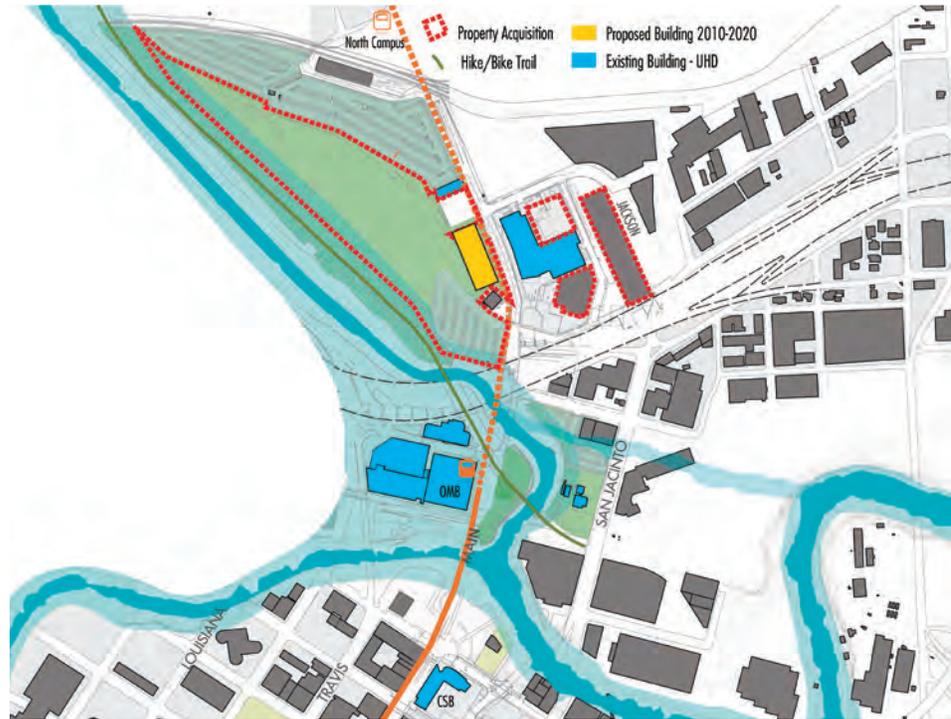
University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) secured approval from the University of Houston System Board of Regents to purchase a 17-acre parcel of land located immediately to the north of campus. Integral to the University's growth and development, the purchase increases the UHD campus to approximately 40 acres.

The additional property provides the preferred location for the construction of a new Science and Technology Building, approved by the Texas legislature in spring 2015. It will also ensure space for other new academic and student life facilities. Architect selection is underway for the Science and Technology Building, which the University hopes to complete by summer of 2019.

"This additional land assures us the room for expansion and building that UHD requires to accomplish its strategic growth objectives," said UHD Interim President Michael A. Olivas. "I believe that the new campus footprint will be viewed as among the most significant developments in the University's institutional history." Board of Regents' Vice Chairman Welcome Wilson Jr. said, "This land acquisition assures UHD has the needed acreage for enrollment growth, campus expansion and development of new academic programs."

When combined with two other adjacent land parcels already owned by UHD, this tract will give the University control of a contiguous 27-acre parcel bordered by White Oak Bayou to the west, North Main St. to the east, the Union Pacific railroad tracks to the north, and the existing UHD campus to the south.

"The purchase of this property has been a University priority for a long period of time, and success finally came through the concerted efforts of Dr. Olivas, with the support of the UH System Board of Regents, UH System Chancellor Renu Khator, METRO leadership, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, and many others," said David Bradley, UHD vice president for administration and finance. "Going forward, the land gives us many more options to broaden the campus master plan."



By Robin Davidson

National Presidential Search Underway



Photo: Terry Vine

The search for the president of the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) is underway with help from Greenwood/Asher and Associates, Inc., a global and national executive search firm.

A presidential search committee, appointed March 4, 2016, and comprised of representatives from UHD and the University of Houston System (UHS), was formed to provide input and guidance.

The committee will review applications through early September, after which selected candidates will be contacted for interviews. Round one of interviews is slated for mid-September at an off-campus location with search committee members. The second round of interviews is planned for October, and will be held on the UHD campus with opportunities for campus and community stakeholders to engage with and interview candidates.

Updates regarding the presidential search may be found at uhd.edu/presidentsearch.

Search committee members include:

*William Staples, president of University of Houston-Clear Lake
Laura Murillo, president and chief executive officer of the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Rick Hartley ('79), executive director of The 100 Club of Houston*

From UHD:

*Ryan Pepper, associate professor and president of the Faculty Senate
John Locke, president of the Student Government Association
Debora Evans ('06), president of the Staff Council
Mary Torres ('98), director of university business services for the Division of Administration and Finance
D. Michael Fields, dean of the College of Business
Lisa Morano, professor of natural sciences
Hsiao-Ming Wang, professor of criminal justice
Carolyn Ashe, president-elect of the Faculty Senate
Jose Alvarez, associate professor of history
Edward Hugetz, interim provost and senior vice president, Academic and Student Affairs
Tomikia LeGrande, associate vice president of student affairs*

Building Business, Growing Leaders

When many universities are facing declining enrollment in their Master of Business Administration (MBA) programs, University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) College of Business is experiencing unprecedented growth.

This momentum is reflected in the Houston Business Journal (HBJ) annual enrollment-based rankings of MBA programs in the Houston region. The UHD MBA program is listed as No. 1 in the HBJ rankings, released in December 2015, up from the smallest of 13 programs in fall 2013.

The UHD program distinguished itself by doing one simple thing: “We listened,” said D. Michael Fields, dean of the UHD College of Business. “We built a bridge between academia and industry. We invited industry to be an active participant in reimagining our curriculum.”

And the award goes to...

Building on that accomplishment, the College of Business is the 2016 recipient of the annual Bobby G. Bizzell Innovative Achievement Award, sponsored by Bloomberg Businessweek. The official entry titled “Developing a Corporate-Driven, Industry-Focused MBA Program,” was submitted in March to the Southwestern Business Deans’ Association (SWBDA). The Bobby G. Bizzell Innovative Achievement Award recognizes business programs from SWBDA institutions and is based on curriculum design, teaching, program development, outreach or administration.

Bizzell, for whom the award is named, served as dean of the UHD College of Business from 1989 to 2004. The college received its initial Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation under Dean Bizzell’s leadership. “I am told that one of his dreams for the college was for it to have an MBA program,” said Fields. “It only seems fitting that the winning UHD entry for the Bizzell Innovative Achievement Award should be the result of the fine work faculty and staff have done with our MBA program.”

By Robin Davidson



Photo: Phil Whitney

Kevin Barksdale, UHD College of Business associate dean for graduate studies, accepting the Bizzell Award at the annual SWBDA meeting in Colorado Springs, Colorado, June 13, 2016.

“ We invited industry to be an active participant in reimagining our curriculum.

D. Michael Fields
Dean, UHD College of Business



Growing a Public Art Collection

Highlighting Diversity, History and Culture

Located in the heart of the Houston arts community, University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) is home to a public art collection that highlights diversity, documents Houston's history and underscores a rich academic student experience. Featuring over 50 unique pieces created by talented and notable artists, the UHD collection can be found in the hallways, meeting rooms and public spaces in every building on campus.

According to Mark Cervenka, associate professor and director of the UHD O'Kane Gallery, the collection "illustrates social and cultural history as well as individual expressions of the human experience."

"I think as a whole, the works reflect many of the disciplines of the University and offer visitors a message that suggests openness, community interaction, and a breadth of knowledge and exploration within the University," Cervenka added.

The collection is part of a larger University of Houston System (UHS) initiative established in 1969 dedicating one percent of the construction cost of all future building projects for art.

"UH was the first state institution in Texas to initiate a percent-for-art program," explains Mike Guidry, UHS curator of public art. "UHS currently boasts one of the largest and most impressive university art collections in the country, with more than 500 works by local and international artists.

A snapshot of the artwork can be found simply by walking the main hallways. The third floors of One Main Building, the Academic Building, and the Welcome Center are home to several prominent pieces.

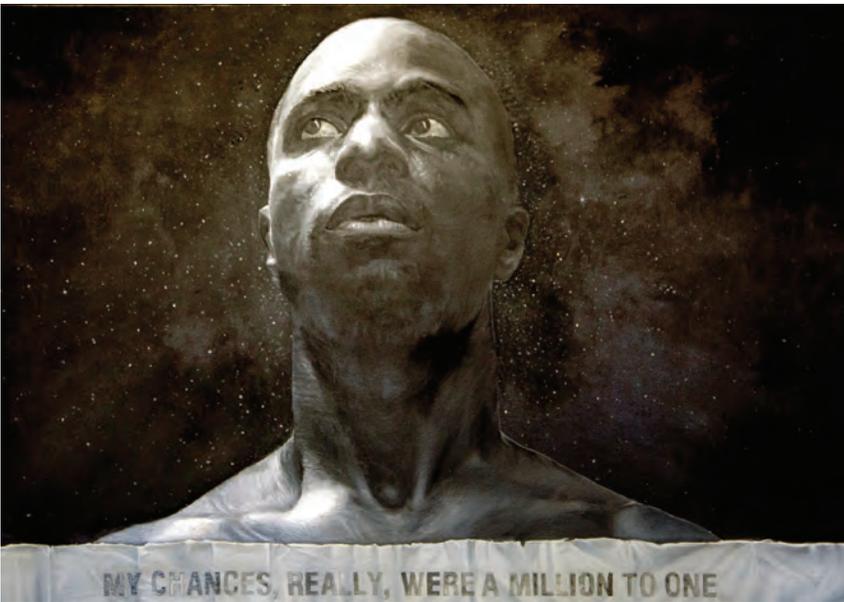
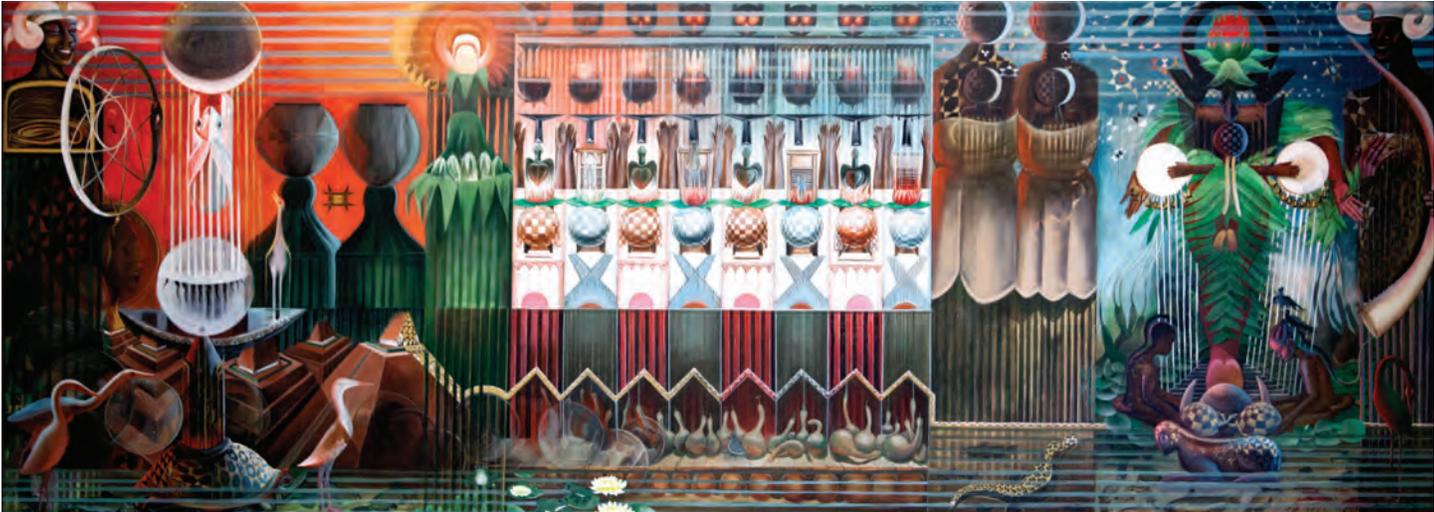
Well known to current students, faculty, and staff, John Biggers' *Salt Marsh* anchors the lobby of the Academic Building. A substantial acrylic on canvas, the piece was commissioned in 1996 to Biggers, an African American muralist and one of the founders of the art department at nearby Texas Southern University.

"Biggers' mural is a treasure and presents visitors with a vision that implicitly links people and cultures," explained Cervenka.

Hanging high above the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson Auditorium facing the South Deck is Rachel Hecker's acrylic on birch panels, *Tailgate*, which references themes of power, nature and technology. Hecker is an associate professor of art at the University of Houston (UH) and is influential in the Houston arts community.

On the University's South Deck is John Scott's iconic sculpture in aluminum, *Prayer Meeting*. Well known for his work in New Orleans, Scott briefly relocated to Houston after Hurricane Katrina. *Prayer Meeting* was installed in 1996, and according to the artist, is symbolic of the rhythmic patterns of paper fans used by parishioners of rural southern churches in the days before air conditioning.

One of the most recent additions to the UHD third floor art walk is Trenton Doyle Hancock's *LEGENDS*. This striking 29- by 36-foot Plexiglas™ wall installation is an arrangement of painted panels prominently ascending the north wall of the Welcome Center reception area. Hancock's prints, drawings, and collaged-felt paintings work together to tell the story of the Mounds—a group of mythical creatures that are the tragic protagonists of the artist's unfolding narrative. The piece is a metaphorical message to students: Create your own path and become your own *LEGEND*.



Clockwise from top: *Salt Marsh*, John Biggers; *Passage*, Carter Ernst and Paul Kittelson; *Contemplating Success*, Floyd Newsom; *One in a Million*, Vincent Valdez.

Photos: John Everett

Continued from page 10

The fourth floor of the One Main Building is another good spot to view a vibrant display of paintings and prints, as well as a glass etching.

Hanging near the circulation desk in the W.I. Dykes Library is a powerful oil on canvas by renowned San Antonio artist Vincent Valdez titled *One in a Million*. Created in 2007, the statement piece is true to form for Valdez as it speaks to the artist's self-described vision, "to interpret and respond to the modern world."

The W.I. Dykes Library is also home to *Mamu Languidly Stirs Songs in The Grip of Shadow and Light*, a stunning work in glass by artist Bert. E. Samples. The piece, which references the four elements—earth, air, fire and water—was installed in 2011 and is composed of dichroic film on sandblasted glass. Impressive at 55×188 inches, it forms a semi-opaque window between study areas. Samples is a founding board member of Project Row Houses, a community-based arts and culture non-profit organization in Houston's northern Third Ward, one of the city's oldest African-American neighborhoods. A native Houstonian, he earned a Master of Fine Arts from UH and a Core Fellowship at the Glassell School of Art, the teaching institute of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

The Academic Building is home to a collection of lithographs by Steven Besselman, depicting the history of Houston and Galveston during the 1970s and 1980s. This understated collection of over 15 prints is split among the hallways of the fourth, sixth and seventh floors and features Houston landmarks including schools, government and public buildings, homes, churches and businesses. Several prints also feature historic locations in Galveston. Besselman moved to Houston in 1976 from St. Charles, Missouri, where he applied his talent to documenting Houston's present and past on paper.

Some of the campus' most impressive artwork is housed in the Shea Street Building, home of the College of Business.

Jacob Hashimoto's *Cloud Deck*, a fluid 'kite' structure that frames the Houston skyline, greets visitors to the Shea Street Building's four-story atrium. Visibility from both inside and outside the building played a role in conceptualizing and designing the piece, commissioned in 2010. "I wanted people to have this sensibility...you could see through the piece to the city and see through the building to the piece," the artist explained. Hashimoto is a New York-based artist who creates lightweight three-dimensional structures comprised of thousands of miniature 'kites'—bamboo-stiffened rice paper hexagons suspended with nylon fishing line.



Trenton Doyle Hancock's floor-to-ceiling work, *LEGENDS*



The Shea Street Building is also host to *Provisional Space*, a series of 10 paintings by Australian artist Janaki Lennie. Installed in 2007, Lennie describes the series as, “tracing an arc of sorts from the vegetation of the neighboring bayou with its plethora of sheltering overpasses, leading the eye up over the city skyline to the sublime forms of the freeway super-lights and gently back to earth and the mundane in the forms of billboards and concrete pillars.”

The art walk continues two blocks north to the lobby of the Commerce Street Building, site of Justin Berry’s *Still Houses*. This mixed media installation, gifted in 2005 by Occidental Energy, features a cluster of white houses in various heights and visible by Commerce Street passersby.

From here, simply turn around to catch the colorful impact of work by UHD professor, painter, and printmaker Floyd Newsum. Newsum’s installation, *Contemplating Success*, includes a 15-foot mural highlighting each of the four floors of the Commerce Street Building.

“I use bright and contrasting colors as well as symbolism to create a feeling of hope and achievement,” Newsum said. “I believe the human spirit can overcome great odds when given the opportunity to achieve.”

By Elisa Crossland

**For a comprehensive description of
all of the art on campus, visit**

uhd.edu/art

UHD Alumni Give Back

University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) students of all backgrounds have major opportunities to reach educational and career goals. Accomplished University alumni assist in this mission through financial contributions and leadership opportunities.

The First Generation Student

For Miriam Morales, attending UHD was a life-changing experience. Like many UHD students, Morales was the first person in her family to go to and graduate from college. She lacked guidance, but not ambition.

“The UHD environment was like a big family,” she said. “I received the attention and support I needed to be a successful student. I love this University.”

Morales’ positive UHD experience instilled the desire to support various outreach and academic endeavors across campus. She is a member of the Alumni Council, supports the UHD Scholars Academy—from which she was one of the first graduates—assisted in crafting the new Master of Science in Data Analytics degree, and recently established the Miriam Morales Endowment.

“I enjoy being involved, from speaking at fundraising events to helping the University grow the field of data analytics,” Morales said. “But now I’m in a place professionally where I can give more than just my time. That’s why I wanted to create this endowment for future students.”

Endowments enable alumni to target their investments. Morales stipulated both full- and part-time students be eligible for her scholarship.

“I had a job while attending UHD, so I was taking classes part time,” she explained. “Many of the scholarships I was interested in were only available to full-time students. I know that some people can only attend school part time because they have families and jobs, but they deserve the opportunity to earn a scholarship, too.”

Today, Morales is the Director of Strategic Analytics with Memorial Hermann Health System, using clinical data to improve patient outcomes and physician performance as compared to national benchmarks.

“I’m lucky that my job gives me the flexibility to attend events at UHD and participate in outreach efforts,” she said. “Alumni participation doesn’t always mean financial support, so I encourage all alumni to give this wonderful University their time and talent.”

The Loving Memorial

Frank Garcia, a longtime UPS employee who earned a bachelor’s degree from UHD later in life, shares Morales’ sentiments. Garcia retired from UPS after 25 years and wanted to stay in touch with his community and his alma mater.

“It’s important to me to give back to causes that I believe in,” Garcia said. “Earning my degree was always a goal of mine, and I’m grateful that UHD gave me the opportunity as an older, working student.”

At the University, Garcia is involved with the Alumni Council, serves as a volunteer at Cap and Gown Receptions and Freshman Convocation. He recently established the Enrique B. Garcia Endowment in honor of his late brother.

“My brother was a very humble and intelligent person who also believed in the importance of education,” he said. “I wanted to honor him while also providing a financial opportunity that could change the life of a UHD student.”

Garcia graduated from UHD in 2007 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. His directed endowment benefits College of Business students.

“I volunteer and participate because I believe it’s the right thing to do,” Garcia explained. “Having the opportunity to finish my degree was an outstanding thing, and it has paid dividends. I’m happy to share my insight and success with future generations.”



Miriam Morales



Frank Garcia



Bill Burnash

Photos: Duong Tran

The Veteran

U.S. Marine Corps veteran Bill Burnash earned his bachelor's degree in finance from UHD following service in the Marine One Helicopter Squadron. He later earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of Notre Dame.

Today, Burnash is the president and owner of Pioneer Freight, a Houston-based transportation company, and serves as a supply corps officer in the United States Navy Reserve. In his spare time, he volunteers by representing UHD at alumni and campus events.

"I'm very proud of UHD," he said. "I look forward to the University's continued growth as a top provider of quality education in the region."

According to Burnash, alumni involvement is important to the overall success of the institution and he is humbled and happy to give back.

"I'm more than satisfied with where my life has led me and I want to see others reap those same rewards," he explained. "I want to see UHD well represented."

Burnash established the Military in Business Scholarship Endowment. This fund provides financial assistance for students who are military personnel—active, reserve or veteran—and working full time.

"I have the deepest respect for our country's military and want to assist those who need it, earn an education," he said.

By donating their time and money, Burnash, Morales and Garcia represent the future of UHD: compassionate alumni who are paving the way with stewardship, leadership and volunteerism—helping ensure UHD students reach their educational and career goals, one scholarship at a time.

By Mary Ann Cozza

Corporate Partnership Invigorates CIET Program

Siemens donates equipment for hands-on learning

Partnership, collaboration and innovation are all key to ensuring institutions of higher education are prepared to meet the changing demands of society and the economy. University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) has long embraced the opportunity to partner with industry leaders to provide students with in-depth, relevant career knowledge and experience.

One of the University's strongest business collaborations is with Siemens. Founded in 1847 and headquartered in Munich, Germany, Siemens is a global technology, electrical engineering and automation powerhouse. The company has collaborated with the UHD Control and Instrumentation Engineering Technology (CIET) program since 2012, when Siemens employee and UHD alumnus, Scott Sorensen, brought the program to the company's attention.

In recent years, there has been a marked shift toward automation in the oil and gas industry to improve profitability and efficiency. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of qualified talent. Siemens recognized the value of investing in UHD and the niche CIET program to develop a future workforce adept in automated technologies.

The CIET program focuses on the application of computer technology and modern electronics to industrial process control and instrumentation systems. Students are immersed in learning about control systems, instrumentation implementation, design and testing.

Since the program's inception, Siemens has provided UHD with more than \$150,000 worth of software and hardware, including six, custom-made programmable logic controllers (PLC)—the SIMATIC S7-300 PLC trainers are widely used in many industry sectors. According to Weining Feng, associate professor of

engineering technology, these trainers offer a versatile platform for students to acquire essential knowledge and skills with PLC applications, but most importantly gain a competitive edge as future automation engineers.

The company also collaborated with CIET students, staff and faculty on the design and creation of a flow test/calibration rig for the program's lab in the One Main Building. Michael Nuber, Siemens vice president of sales for process instrumentation, visited UHD and sketched a rough drawing of the machine on a white board in the CIET lab. Nuber was excited by the idea of the design—both for the potential it held to demonstrate the capabilities of Siemens equipment, and its potential to reinforce for students the principles which made the design remarkable.

One year later, after a significant donation of equipment, Nuber was delighted to return to UHD to see his design come to life. Remarking on how well the project evolved, Nuber noted that it was the only model of its type at any university and he was already in discussions with a Siemens partner university in Russia regarding a similar concept.

Not only does the corporate partnership offer UHD students hands-on learning, but it also prepares them for careers.

"The ability to collaborate with Siemens exposes UHD students to how the technologies they learn in the classroom are applied across a broad swath of industries, including chemical plants, manufacturing facilities and even sports and entertainment venues," said Akif Uzman, dean of the College of Science and Technology. "Siemens also sponsored several scholarships, which extends the company's recognition in the community while greatly benefiting UHD students."

Top

Wolfgang Rubrecht, Siemens vice president of automation (right), recognizes Weining Feng, UHD associate professor of engineering technology (left), and Akif Uzman (center), dean of the UHD College of Sciences and Technology, at the 2014 Siemens Oil and Gas Conference for the UHD and Siemens collaborative partnership.

Middle

UHD student Christina Tran (left), presents her research, "Phylogeography of the Hoary Bats (*Lasiurus*): Molecular Evidence for Species Diversity and Multiple Invasions of the Hawaiian Islands," to Weining Feng during the UHD Student Research Conference.

Bottom

Siemens representatives and UHD students, faculty and staff enjoy a demonstration of the Siemens flow rig in the UHD Control and Instrumentation Lab May 7, 2015.



Photo: Courtesy of Siemens

In April 2014, Uzman and Feng were recognized for the University's relationship with Siemens at the company's second annual Industry Oil and Gas Conference. The conference provided an in-depth look at how innovative automation and drive technologies solve critical manufacturing challenges facing the oil and gas industry. During the conference keynote address, Wolfgang Rubrecht, Siemens vice president of Digital Factory/Factory Automation, recognized the University's commitment to equipping students for the challenges of today's workforce in oil and gas technology.

According to Uzman, the mutually-beneficial relationship between UHD and Siemens may foster new avenues of collaboration.

"The interesting thing about a partnership like this is the way it grows," he said. "Siemens initiated this relationship around the University's distinctive CIET program, but as Houston's economy changes, the way that companies do business will change as well. Recently, Siemens expressed an interest in the new UHD Master of Science in Data Analytics program, seeing it as an opportunity where new ways of thinking may help the company innovate amid difficult economic circumstances."

If the previous results of this long-standing partnership are any indication, students in the UHD CIET and Data Analytics programs can look forward to a bright future of innovation and collaboration.

By Mary Ann Cozza



Photo: Duong Tran

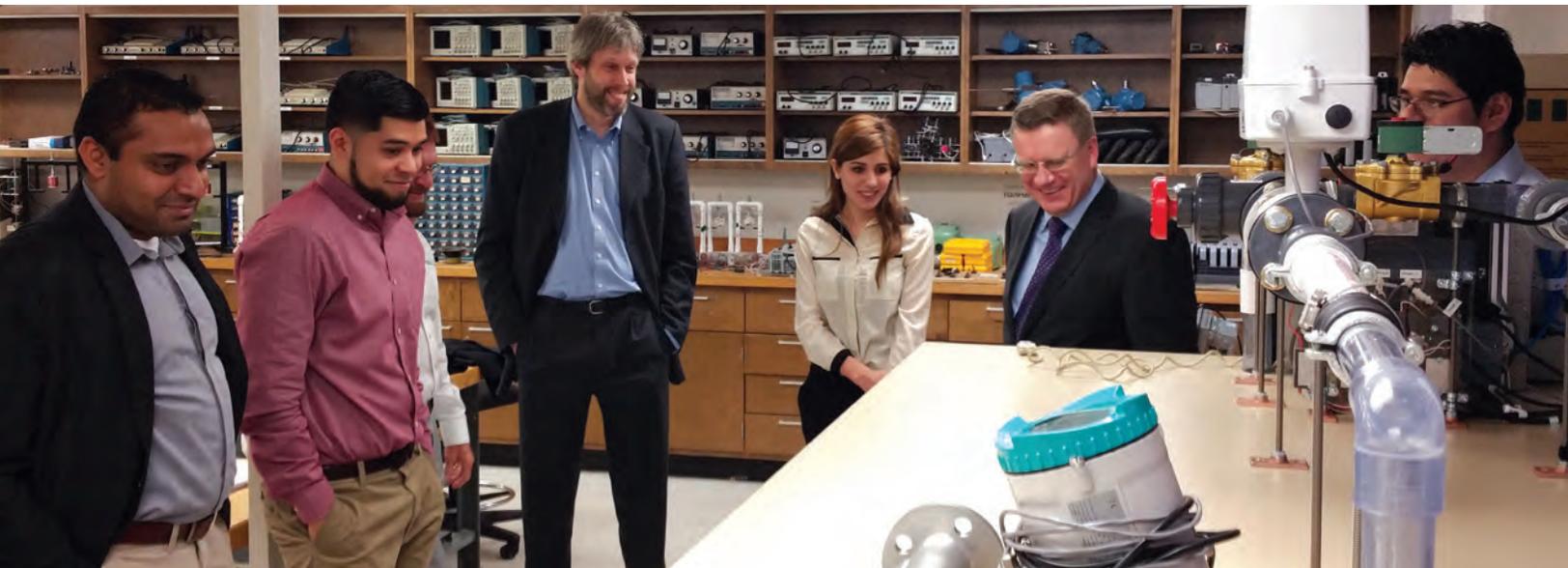


Photo: Bruce Hunter

UHD Professor Conducts Buzzworthy Research

Emerging viruses keep Jeff Flosi and his students busy

Mosquitoes are as common in Houston as traffic jams, but most residents don't know that there are more than 58 species living in the Bayou City. Jeff Flosi, University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) associate professor of biology and microbiology, knows that and more. Flosi's primary interest in Houston's unofficial winged mascot is to research species of disease-carrying mosquitoes and help curtail the spread of Zika virus, West Nile virus, yellow fever, dengue fever, chikungunya and other mosquito-borne illnesses.

Flosi, principal investigator of the UHD Medical Entomology Laboratory, began researching mosquitoes during his entomology doctoral program at Iowa State University. The study of insects captured Flosi's attention as a young boy growing up in El Paso. "I was always interested in critters and picking up bugs," he admits.

After completing his doctorate, Flosi returned to Texas and worked for six years with the Harris County Mosquito Control District as Chief Entomologist and Laboratory Supervisor, while teaching part-time at UHD. It was in the 1980s, while Flosi was studying the Harris County mosquito population dynamics, he first discovered the Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*) had reached the United States. This mosquito can transmit deadly heartworms to dogs and viral pathogens between humans.

"In 1985, we found a breeding population of the Asian tiger mosquito in the United States. We're not entirely certain how the mosquito entered the country, but now this particular species can be found in 26 states. It was a very interesting discovery," Flosi said.

Today, Flosi spends his time working in the field with UHD students, researching in the laboratory and collaborating with other specialists on important issues, including the recent spread of Zika virus.

In the UHD Medical Entomology Lab, Flosi tailors research for undergraduate participation. Students use a variety of traps to capture mosquito eggs and lure adult

mosquitoes, then they bring the mosquitoes back to the lab for further study. Research yields information on mosquito behavior, breeding preferences, flight range and other characteristics.

"My students occasionally ask me, 'Haven't people already studied these species of mosquitoes in this area?' and my answer is, 'Yes, but they have not studied these mosquitoes at this exact time in these exact environmental conditions.' Weather and environmental changes can have major impacts on population distribution," Flosi explained.



Most mosquitoes are pestiferous, but not all bite humans.

*Jeff Flosi
UHD Associate Professor
Biology and Microbiology*



With the surge of reported cases of Zika virus throughout South and Central America, Flosi knows Gulf Coast residents worry about their safety.

Flosi emphasized, "It is important to remember that residents of the United States do not live in the same conditions as the major outbreak zones in Brazil. Standing water is the greatest determinant for the population distribution of the two types of mosquitoes that carry Zika virus, the Asian tiger mosquito and the yellow fever mosquito (*Aedes aegypti*)."



Photo: John Everett

The traditional control method of nighttime chemical spraying is not as effective on these mosquitoes because they are not nocturnal, so Flosi stresses the importance of reducing standing water.

“Mosquitoes will bite the hand that breeds them,” he explained. This saying is also the motto for the Texas Mosquito Control Association, for which Flosi is serving his third term as president. “Those of us in mosquito research and control are not simply waiting for the Zika virus to arrive in the United States. We’re collaborating with other scientists and conducting research in order to be best prepared for its introduction.”

And while mosquitoes have a bad reputation, Flosi notes they have an important place in the food chain.

“Most mosquitoes are pestiferous, but not all bite humans. Actually, only the females of most species are the ones that bite,” he explained. “Mosquitoes serve as a good food source for animals and other insects that live in or near water. They have a valid place in the natural order of things.”

With temperatures on the rise and the world warily watching the proliferation of Zika virus, Flosi and his students have their work cut out for them.

By Mary Ann Cozza

Left: Jeff Flosi, UHD associate professor of biology and microbiology.

Bottom: Flosi and UHD students set up a mosquito trap.



Photo: Emily Pannell



From War Zone to Classroom

Terran Fontenot received support from UHD Veterans Services to help him adjust to civilian life after serving in the U.S. Army.



Photo: Duong Tran

Veterans interested in attending college have more resources available than ever, but veteran students face unique challenges. University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) veteran student Terran Fontenot reached out for support and found it in UHD Veterans Services.

Fontenot, 38, served in the U.S. Army from 1997 to 2001, and was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after returning from Operation Desert Storm. After receiving a medical discharge, he had a difficult time readjusting to civilian life.

“I alienated myself from family and friends, and my life was spiraling out of control,” said Fontenot. “I was at the culmination of many bad decisions and eventually found myself homeless.”

With PTSD treatment from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and counseling from a VA social worker, Fontenot was able to turn his life around. “It takes true strength to ask for help,” he said. Such support, and a meeting with a career counselor, led Fontenot down an educational path aimed at counseling fellow veterans and others who suffer with mental illness and homelessness.

In 2014, Fontenot enrolled at UHD to pursue a bachelor’s degree in social work. He praises the help he received from instructors and staff of UHD Veterans Services, and credits them for his intellectual and personal development.

“UHD Veterans Services provided me with the guidance I needed to succeed, and helped me find ways to live with PTSD,” said Fontenot. “It’s been a bumpy road but I’ve had a lot of encouragement along the way.”

UHD Veterans Services offers specialized resources to ease military-background students’ transition to college and to help them complete their degrees, including assisting with enrollment, navigating the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs system, paperwork preparation to receive -GI Bill benefits, preparing for interviews and coping with post military life. The office also provides a transfer advising program, free access to computer labs, résumé workshops, career services, financial management programs and scholarships.

“The best part of working with the student veterans at UHD is seeing them succeed and accomplishing their education goals,” said veteran Richard Selvera, director of UHD Veterans Services. “Helping students like Terran is what makes serving veterans so special. They are humble, hardworking and grateful for the opportunity to go to college.”

Selvera added, “The work is also rewarding. When veterans receive honors, scholarships and degrees, we get to share in the moment because we played a small part in helping them succeed. They do all the heavy lifting, but we are able to reduce some of their stress.”

Fontenot took advantage of the opportunity afforded him by the Post 9/11 GI Bill to obtain his degrees. He earned an associate’s degree in social work from Houston Community College (HCC), and graduated from UHD in spring 2016.

During his time at the university, Fontenot participated in community service programs and accumulated awards, including the Excellence in Social Work Field Practicum award. He also had the opportunity to intern at Houston’s Open Door Mission, a nonprofit organization that helps homeless men who suffer with mental health and substance abuse.

Fontenot is grateful for the high-impact experiences he’s received at UHD and aspires to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. He’s well on his way, attending the University of Houston (UH) and pursuing his master’s degree in social work in the UH Graduate College of Social Work, Advanced Standing Program.

What Fontenot wants most is to help other veterans.

“I want to give back to veterans using knowledge I obtained from UHD and its Veterans Services office, and the invaluable life lessons I learned as a veteran with PTSD,” said Fontenot. “I want to help veterans so they can pay it forward, too.”

By Toni Carter

For more information on UHD Veterans Services, visit uhd.edu/veterans

Panel Celebrates TEXAS Grant Success

Monday, May 23, University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) hosted “The Evolution of the TEXAS (Towards EXcellence, Access and Success) Grant Program,” symposium in the UHD Welcome Center, Travis Room.

The TEXAS Grant, established in 1999, provides financial assistance to academically prepared, underserved high school graduates interested in pursuing higher education.



Access to education is the great American dream.

Senator Rodney Ellis



UHD Interim President Michael A. Olivas delivered opening remarks and welcomed keynote speaker Texas Senator Rodney Ellis, the panel of presenters, and more than 80 guests and representatives from UHD and other Texas universities.

The panel discussion, entitled, “Politics, Implications and Impact,” featured Linda Ballard, Texas Association of Financial Aid Administrators (TASFAA) legislative committee representative and Texas Southern University director of the Office of Student Financial Assistance; Amaury Nora, professor of higher education, co-director of the Center for Research and Policy in Education, and associate dean for research in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Texas at San Antonio; Morgan

V. McAllister, an alumna and current UHD graduate student in the Master of Science in Technical Communication (MSTC) program; and Fabiola Varela, a recent Houston Community College graduate.

Research suggests students who receive an impactful amount of funding demonstrate a substantial change in attitude and improved academic performance, most likely in part to reduced stress associated with a lessened financial burden.

Ellis, who has served 26 years in the Texas Legislature, credited grant funding for his access to higher education and stressed it was vital to his success.

“Access to education is the great American dream,” said Ellis. “It made a tremendous difference for me.”

By Robin Davidson and Shannon Wright

Senator Rodney Ellis speaks on how the TEXAS Grant has helped underserved students.

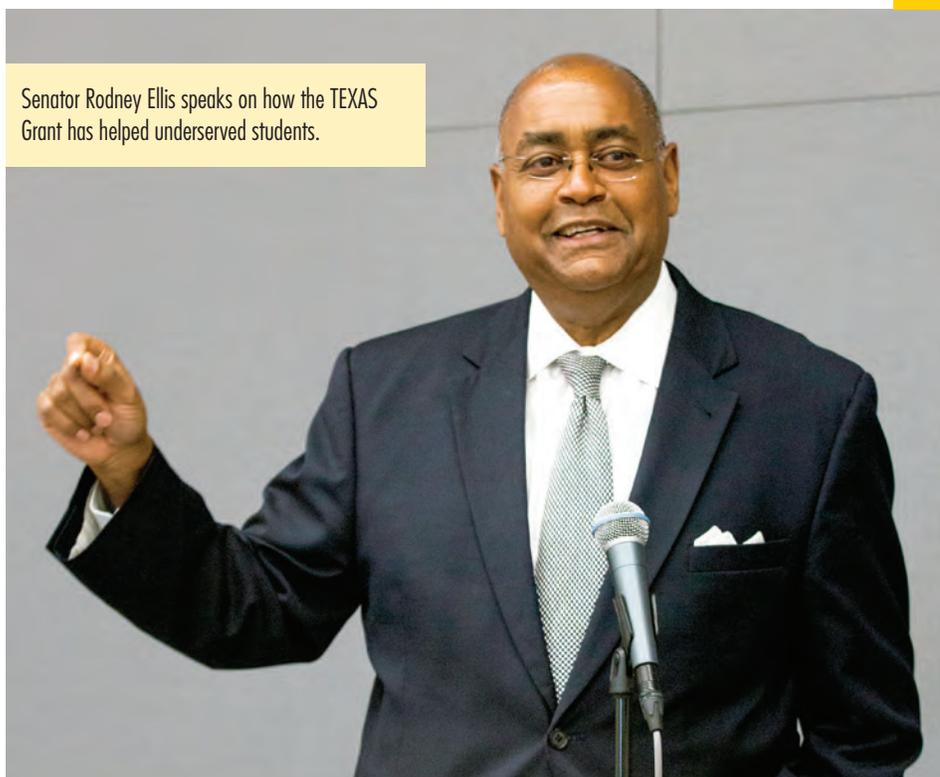


Photo: John Everett

Faculty Awards

Tuesday, April 26, 2016, the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) held its annual Faculty Assembly and Awards Ceremony to honor faculty award winners, announce faculty development leave awards, and recognize faculty for years of service.



Excellence in Teaching

Travis Crone

Assistant Professor, Social Sciences

“I am a firm believer that a single class can change the course of an individual’s life. To that end, my goal is to encourage my students to see the world in new and powerful ways that last well beyond their time with me. I believe students are most likely to do this when they are actively engaging the material, and I try to create an environment that facilitates this engagement in all my courses.”



Excellence in Service

Susan Henney

Associate Professor, Social Sciences

“I believe deeply in the value of service to the workplace, profession, community, and world. Service by faculty is what solves problems, generates new ideas, keeps the institutional wheels rolling, and provides balance to the bureaucracy. I am pleased to be a part of facilitating the UHD mission and improving the work and school experiences of students, faculty, and staff through my service at UHD.”



Excellence in Scholarly/Creative Activity

Heather Goltz

Assistant Professor, Social Work

“In the social work profession, there is a beautifully synergistic relationship between research and practice. One cannot and should not exist without the other. My experiences as a practitioner and the very real ‘lived experiences’ of my patients and their families heavily influence my research. Similarly, my practice as a social worker and health educator would not be as effective without the integration of findings from rigorous, peer-reviewed research.”

Recognize Excellence in Teaching, Scholarship and Service



Outstanding Lecturer

Ajay Singh

Lecturer, Natural Sciences

“I strive to be an instructor who can help his students find answers to their questions; patiently listens to my students’ ideas and thoughts; believes that a solid background of the subject matter is crucial for students’ academic success; practices active learning techniques to engage the whole class; intrigues students about the subject matter and explains broader implications; encourages students to explore their interests, and helps them along the way. Most of all, I want my students to have the propensity to love learning something new.”



Outstanding Lecturer

Dana Smith

Director of Field Education, Social Work

“I enjoy teaching policy, ethics, field seminar, and community practice courses and it is my privilege to help create a culture of engagement, scholarship, and service for my students as we learn and work toward a more just society.”



Outstanding Adjunct

Simon Jakubowski

Adjunct Professor, Natural Sciences

“The professors I found most effective were those that made me want to do well, inspired me to do well and had more belief in me than I had in myself. They were kind, gracious, and had limitless patience. They had the ability to intrigue and engage any person or group on any subject: a power if you will, not so much in what they were saying, but how they were saying it, that made me want to pay attention, and I did. They inspired confidence that one can achieve most anything. And that road to success starts right here, right now. I strive to be that professor.”

UHD to Launch New Alumni Association

From left: Jaha Williams, Reubenjack Long, Albert Alonzo, Frank Garcia, LaQuitta DeMerchant, UHD Interim President Michael A. Olivas, Reyna Romero, Miriam Morales, Eisha Khan, and Deltra Hayes of the UHD Alumni Council meet to discuss ways to promote engagement between current students and graduates.



Photo: Duong Tran

Spring 2017, has been set for the official kick-off of the University of Houston-Downtown Alumni Association, according to Director of Development, Jaha Williams.

An Alumni Council was organized to form the Association. Williams said, “The establishment of an Alumni Council is instrumental in the planning and development process as we work to ultimately build a responsive more comprehensive alumni association.”

The UHD Alumni Council is tasked with the priority to identify, recruit, engage, track and retain alumni, and is the leadership body which represents and empowers the Alumni Association. Additionally, the Alumni Council will act on behalf of alumni and in collaboration with the University to develop an official alumni association. The Council will partner with UHD, in accordance with the UH System policy on university organizations, to provide leadership and shared governance of the alumni association.

Recommended by the Office of Alumni Relations and appointed by Interim President Michael A. Olivas, 12 elected alumni serve on the Council: Phillip Ellison ('94), Andrea Shiloh ('95), LaQuitta DeMerchant ('97), Reyna Romero ('98), Mary Torres ('98), Deltra Hayes ('00), Miriam Morales ('01), Albert Alonzo ('03), J.B. Bobbitt ('05), Frank Garcia ('07), Reubenjack Long ('11), and Ivan Sanchez ('13).

The Council will lead the efforts to create an active alumni association in collaboration with the University that articulates the UHD mission, programs and priorities; strengthen connections within the University community, foster long-term relationships and networking opportunities, uphold philanthropic loyalty and support for the University, and encourage and empower UHD alumni by creating a traditional alumni culture that thrives from volunteerism and event participation.

True to the unique UHD experience, the new association will offer a wide array of programs, activities and events, befitting to different alumni interests, including networking and mentorship opportunities, volunteer work, academic programs and exclusive invitations to events. Membership in the UHD Alumni Association is free and open to all UHD graduates. Participation enables alumni to support campus-wide events and get involved with committees, interest groups and chapters.

Membership gives alumni access to a host of benefits and campus services including UHD Sports and Fitness programs in the Jesse H. Jones Student Life Center, the UHD W.I. Dykes Library, the Career Development Center, and the Alumni LinkedIn group. And of course, alumni will continue to receive the UHD alumni e-newsletter and UHD Magazine to stay up-to-date on the latest UHD happenings.

By Toni Carter

Get Involved

Stay connected with UHD and the Gator community through the new UHD Alumni Association. Here are key ways to get more involved with the Association:

- Update your education section on Facebook and LinkedIn and become a resource for other Gators
- Share and post job openings and internship opportunities on uhd.edu/jobsforgators
- Take advantage of exclusive UHD alumni benefits
- Donate to an existing scholarship for both new and continuing students
- Sponsor a signature event or become an official UHD corporate partner
- Honor your Gator pride by purchasing UHD Alumni Association merchandise from the UHD Bookstore, in person or online at uh-downtown.bncollege.com

Staying True to Tradition: Spring 2016 Cap & Gown Reception

An Alumni Association Event

More than 1,000 graduate candidates participated in a cultural tradition at University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) as they marked their passage toward becoming alumni during the spring 2016 Cap and Gown Reception, May 6–7.

Since its inception in May 2013, the reception recognizes soon-to-be graduates for their accomplishments, encourages them to stay engaged as they transition to alumni, and provides an opportunity to celebrate their achievements. This semester's candidates were joined by UHD Interim President Michael A. Olivas, Interim Provost Edward Hugetz, and the college deans.

“Receiving your cap and gown is a precursor to commencement,” said Director of Development, Jaha Williams. “It signifies they are one step closer to achieving their professional goals.”

A Time to Reflect

For many graduating students, the reception is also a time to reflect on their educational journeys and experiences at UHD. Here are a few of their stories.

Jesus Martin Guevara

Communication Studies

“This journey wasn’t easy. I’ve stumbled, I’ve fallen, and I’ve fallen again but I’ve always lifted myself up because giving up wasn’t an option for me,” said Guevara. “Today signifies the completion of my journey, and it will always be one of the biggest accomplishments in my life. I’m so grateful to have been a part of this wonderful University. UHD has shaped me and prepared me for the real world and it will be an honor to represent this University anywhere I go.”

Drew Campbell

Communication Studies

“This tradition marks an important milestone as I move from college student to college graduate,” said Campbell—who was very excited to finally receive his cap and gown. “Graduating from a prestigious institution like UHD is a huge accomplishment. The Gator family was always helpful towards earning my degree.”

Heather Strange

Psychology

“Today means everything to me,” said Strange, the 2016 student commencement speaker. “The cap and gown symbolize my achievements and accomplishments, not only for myself but for my family who has supported me through the years. During the summer, I’ll be interning in Washington, D.C., combatting health disparities in different communities at The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) institute of Leadership and the American Presidency.”

Angelina Gonzalez

Communication Studies

“Picking up my cap and gown was the moment I realized all my sleepless nights and tears were worth it, and it signifies my parents’ decision to immigrate to the U.S., giving me the opportunity for a better education,” said Gonzalez. “I’m also grateful that I will always be part of a community that is diverse, competitive and well respected.”

The Cap and Gown Reception is a partnership between UHD and the Alumni Association. All cap and gown recipients are granted associate membership into the University of Houston-Downtown Alumni Association. Learn more about the new Alumni Association by visiting uhd.edu/alumni.

Events

Whether it's on campus or around town, University of Houston-Downtown Gators get involved

Discovery Green Thursday Night Concert Series

Don't miss the popular Thursday Concert Series presented by UHD at the Discovery Green Anheuser-Busch Stage. The fun lasts through July 7.

Visit discoverygreen.com for a list of performers.

Graduate Certificate Information Session at UHD-Northwest

Tuesday, June 28; Thursday, July 14

6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Tailored for working professionals, the UHD graduate certificate program offers a real-world instructional platform developed by top industry executives.

Register at uhd.edu/closetohome.

MBA Info Session

Wednesday, July 13 and 27, and August 3

UHD Shea Street Building

6 to 7:30 p.m.

Learn more about the UHD MBA. Find out admissions requirements, meet faculty and administrators, view the curriculum and learn what makes the UHD MBA unique. Information sessions are held at both the downtown campus and the Northwest campus.

RSVP at uhd.edu/mbarsvp.

Transfer Thursday

Thursday, July 7 and Thursday, August 11

UHD and UHD Northwest

10 a.m. to 1 p.m., or 4 to 7 p.m.

Transfer Thursday offers transfer students one-on-one assistance with admission applications, financial aid and scholarship opportunities.

Register at uhd.edu/transfer.

Favorite Poem Project

An Anthology of Houstonians' Best-Loved Poems

Deadline: July 8

As one of her projects as the poet laureate for the city of Houston, UHD Professor of English, Robin Davidson, Ph.D., is working on the **Favorite Poem Project Anthology**. Houstonians are asked to share their best-loved poems, which Davidson will compile into a book. To have your favorite poem considered for inclusion in the Houston anthology, www.calypsoeditions.org/favorite-poem-project-anthology.

UHD Welcome Week

August 22 to 26

The UHD Office of Student Activities and the Welcome Week committee need volunteers to staff a weeklong program of interactive events welcoming UHD students to the fall 2016 semester. This campus tradition gives students the opportunity to meet new people and connect with campus life. Volunteers are needed to man the Gator Pits, assist with the Amazing Race event and more.

Sign up online at studentactivities.ivolunteer.com

O'Kane Gallery

Leamon Green Exhibit

Opens September 2016

Girard Street Building, GSB322

The O'Kane Gallery's first fall exhibition of the 2016-17 academic year features a highly respected Houston artist and educator, Leamon Green. Green is chair of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Texas Southern University. Best known as a painter and printmaker, his works explore the complexities of African identity in an increasingly global society.

George Smith Exhibit

Opens October 2016

The O'Kane Gallery will feature works by retired Rice University professor George Smith. The university is fortunate to own work by Smith, whose art is also found in the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Studio Museum of Harlem. While largely abstract, Smith imbues his art with cultural references that concurrently reflect the universal with the unique paths of human history and experiences.

Visit uhd.edu/okanegallery for dates and times

Community Engagement Luncheon

Junior League of Houston Tea Room

Thursday, September 15

Co-chaired by Lisa and Saul Valentin, the **2016 UHD Community Engagement Luncheon** will raise awareness and funds that support community engagement and service learning initiatives. UHD students logged more than 300,000 hours last year on projects that strengthened their understanding of civic responsibility and critical societal issues. Proceeds from the luncheon will serve to both continue and expand these efforts. For more information, visit uhd.edu/celuncheon, or contact Jacob Lipp at 713-226-5585 or lipp@uhd.edu.

Fall Family Festival

UHD One Main Building

October 2016

Hosted by the UHD Office of Student Activities, the annual **Fall Family Festival** is one of the most popular on-campus traditions. The event allows students, faculty, staff and alumni to bring their families and enjoy a day full of fun and features games, rides, a craft show, food and more.

UHD magazine

A publication of The University of Houston-Downtown

www.uhd.edu

Division of Advancement and University Relations
One Main Street, Suite S990
Houston, Texas 77002-1014

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Houston, Texas
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Photo: John Everett

Istvan Ban, *The Middle Ages*