

## UHD Expands its **GLOBAL** Reach

Join us as we catch up with our remarkable students, professors and alumni working and studying around the world. —See page 20 for more!

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UHD Magazine (formerly New Horizons) is published by the University of Houston-Downtown's Office of University Advancement and External Relations.

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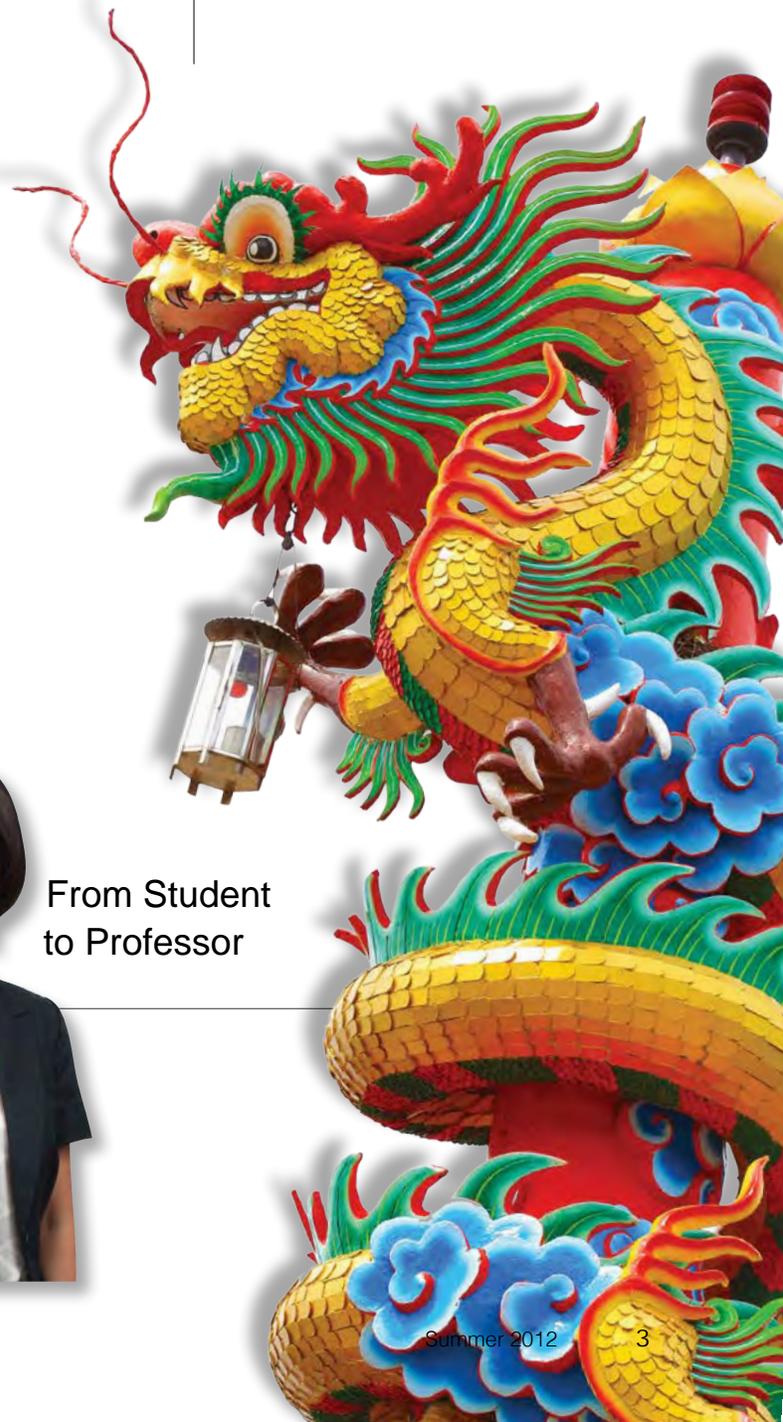


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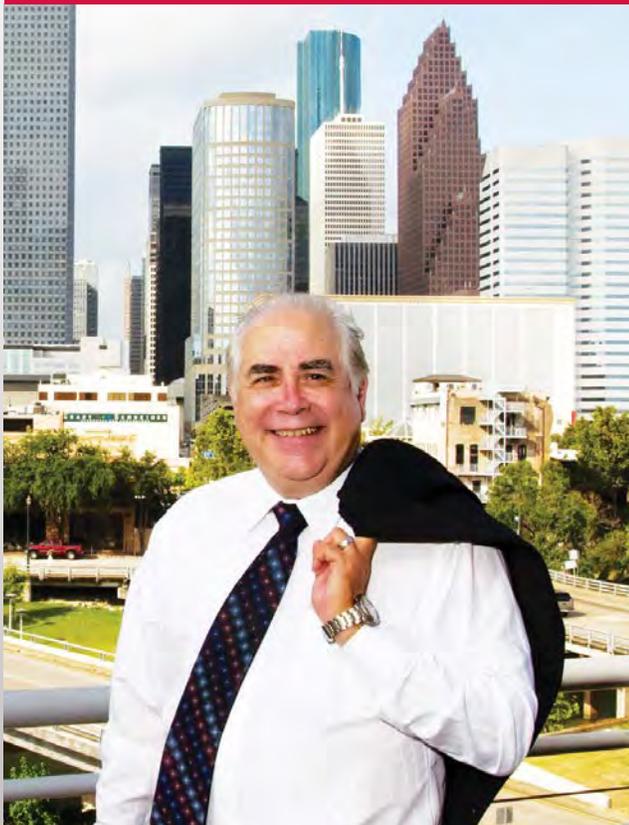
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# Sharing Our View of the Future with the Community



**UHD** is at an important juncture in shaping our university's future role in Houston.

With much planning, discussion and vision toward the future, we recently completed a strategic plan that will bring us into the year 2020. Our goals are ambitious – yet attainable. We were eager and enthusiastic in sharing this plan with stakeholders at our recent Community Breakfast held this past November 2012.

From our campus at the University of Houston-Downtown, we are fortunate to have the perfect vantage point overlooking downtown Houston. While that gives us a unique perspective of the city's phenomenal growth over the last few decades, it also makes us keenly aware of our symbiotic role in its prosperity.

We are deeply aware that our primary goal – the success of our students – ultimately affects a cascade of secondary targets. Secure families, flourishing industry, robust neighborhoods and a strong society all are the positive and lasting effects of educated people.

That is why we are committed to providing major opportunities for our students, and our strategic plan will help us continue this important mission.

Since 1974, UHD has grown rapidly in the number of students we serve and the number of





degrees we offer. In fact, we had a record-setting fall enrollment of nearly 14,000 students – an increase of 8 percent over last year. To put this exceptional increase into perspective, UHD’s growth represents 8 percent of the entire growth in student enrollment for all Texas public universities.

As our strategic plan outlines, we have even more ambitious plans to come. As we provide major opportunities for our students, we need to take advantage of major opportunities for our institution as well. These goals are summarized in the six areas of opportunity listed to the right.

We are dedicated to our academic mission and to our promise to students: UHD will continue to have a positive impact in changing lives and building futures.



I hope you will join us in our enthusiastic quest to become the university we envision in the years to come.

Dr. William V. Flores, President  
University of Houston-Downtown

## Strategic Plan Goals 2012-2020

**Goal #1 – Attract more students, retain more students, graduate more students.** As Houston grows, so must UHD. We project our number of enrolled students will reach 18,000 by the year 2020. We will implement processes to support them and keep them engaged right through graduation.

**Goal #2 – Education, plus hands-on experience, equals real-world skills.** UHD will continue to develop programs that prepare students for the future, offering high-impact experiences while delivering degree programs to address the world’s changing needs.

**Goal #3 – Major opportunities abound for research and specialization.** We will open new opportunities for creative and scholarly activity and academic success, while reinforcing our areas of strength.

**Goal #4 – The better our faculty, the more respected our school.** We will recruit the best and retain the best by increasing professional development opportunities, rewarding excellence, and developing a faculty and staff that supports the needs and diversity of our student body.

**Goal #5 – We are surrounded by potential...our community!** Our ambitious on-campus improvements cannot occur without the dedicated support of our off-campus alumni, friends, local government, legislators and other important academic stewards. We will continue to cultivate and engage these relationships in our pursuit of excellence.

**Goal #6 – Develop and reinforce our tools for success.** We are planning and implementing a series of infrastructure and information-sharing improvements that will help us carry out our plans for promoting connectivity, community and accessibility.

Far Left: UHD student and biology major A'Tondra Gilstrap spoke at the Community Breakfast about the major opportunities she has received as a student at UHD.

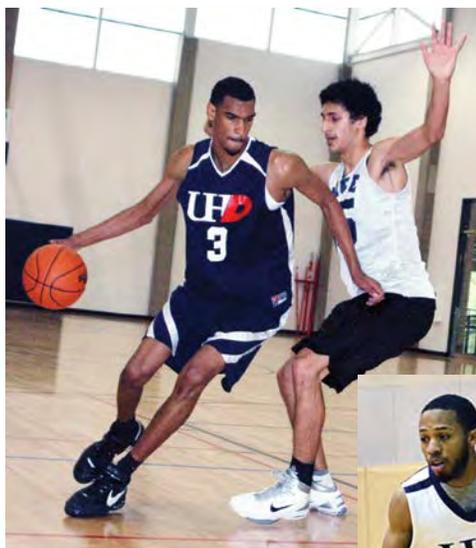
Above Left: The UHD Community Breakfast held on Nov. 9, 2012 was attended by nearly 200 civic leaders, community partners, legislators and friends of UHD.

Immediate Left: President Flores with students who are featured in the "Major Opportunity" campaign. We were honored that these students graciously served as table hosts for the Community Breakfast.

# The Gator Playbook

UHD sports teams and athletes had stellar seasons in 2012, breaking records and defeating rivals. From powerlifting to basketball, UHD proved once again to be a reckoning force in club and intramural sports.

The **men's club basketball** team reached the Houston Club Sports Basketball Conference tournament for the seventh consecutive year, making it to the quarter-final round of competition. The **women's club volleyball** team also reached their tournament for the 11th consecutive season.



A team of UHD students and employees dominated the soccer field during the **2012 Greenstar Recycling Houston Dynamo Corporate Cup**. While the 14-person co-ed team didn't take home the trophy, they played well and made it to the semi-final round.



Left: Bobby Hooper (3), Corey Hines (12) and Alex Weston (15) helped lead the men's basketball team last season.

Above: Members of UHD's team in the Greenstar Recycling Houston Dynamo Corporate Cup scored goals and handled the ball like pros.

**UHD club powerlifting** had another record-breaking season, including placing second at the 2012 Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Junior Olympics.

During the competition, the Gators won eight individual championships, set a number of teen world powerlifting records and narrowly lost the team championship. The meet featured lifters from across the country, Canada and the United Kingdom.

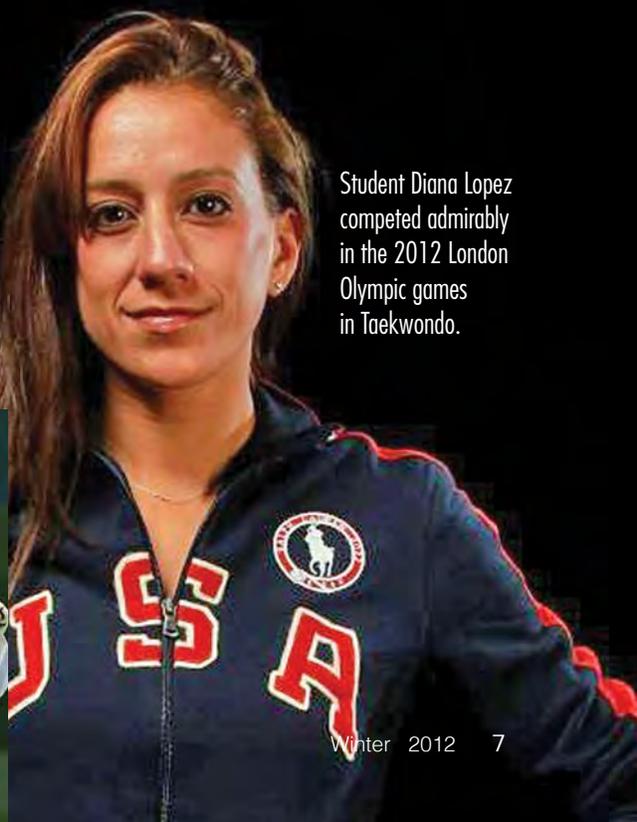
Another group of UHD lifters, including five veterans, three incoming freshmen and one walk-on member, also won the World Association of Benchers and Deadlifters (WABDL) Southwest Regional Championship in late July in Dallas. This is the third consecutive year the Gators have clinched the title.



Left:  
UHD's powerlifting team had another successful season with veteran and freshmen lifters.

**A**lso this summer, UHD was proud to support a Gator in the London Olympics. **Diana Lopez**, who is studying education at UHD, participated in the 57-kilogram taekwondo event. During her first match against two-time world champion Hou Yuzhou of China, Lopez competed admirably but eventually conceded the match 1-0 in sudden-death overtime. Lopez won Bronze in the 2008 Beijing games.

For more news and information about UHD sports, visit [www.uhd.edu/sportsandfitness/](http://www.uhd.edu/sportsandfitness/).



Student Diana Lopez competed admirably in the 2012 London Olympic games in Taekwondo.

## Student Support Systems at UHD Receive \$3.2 Million Upgrade

### US Department of Education Grant Expands Project STAR

UHD's offices of Student Success and Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs work to ensure that all students have the support they need to begin college prepared for success, but a new \$3.2 million, five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education will open many more doors for these undergraduates.

Funded through the Department's Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Program, the grant supports the University's Project STAR (Student Transition and Retention), which seeks to increase student achievement, persistence and graduation rates. UHD is a federally qualified HSI and

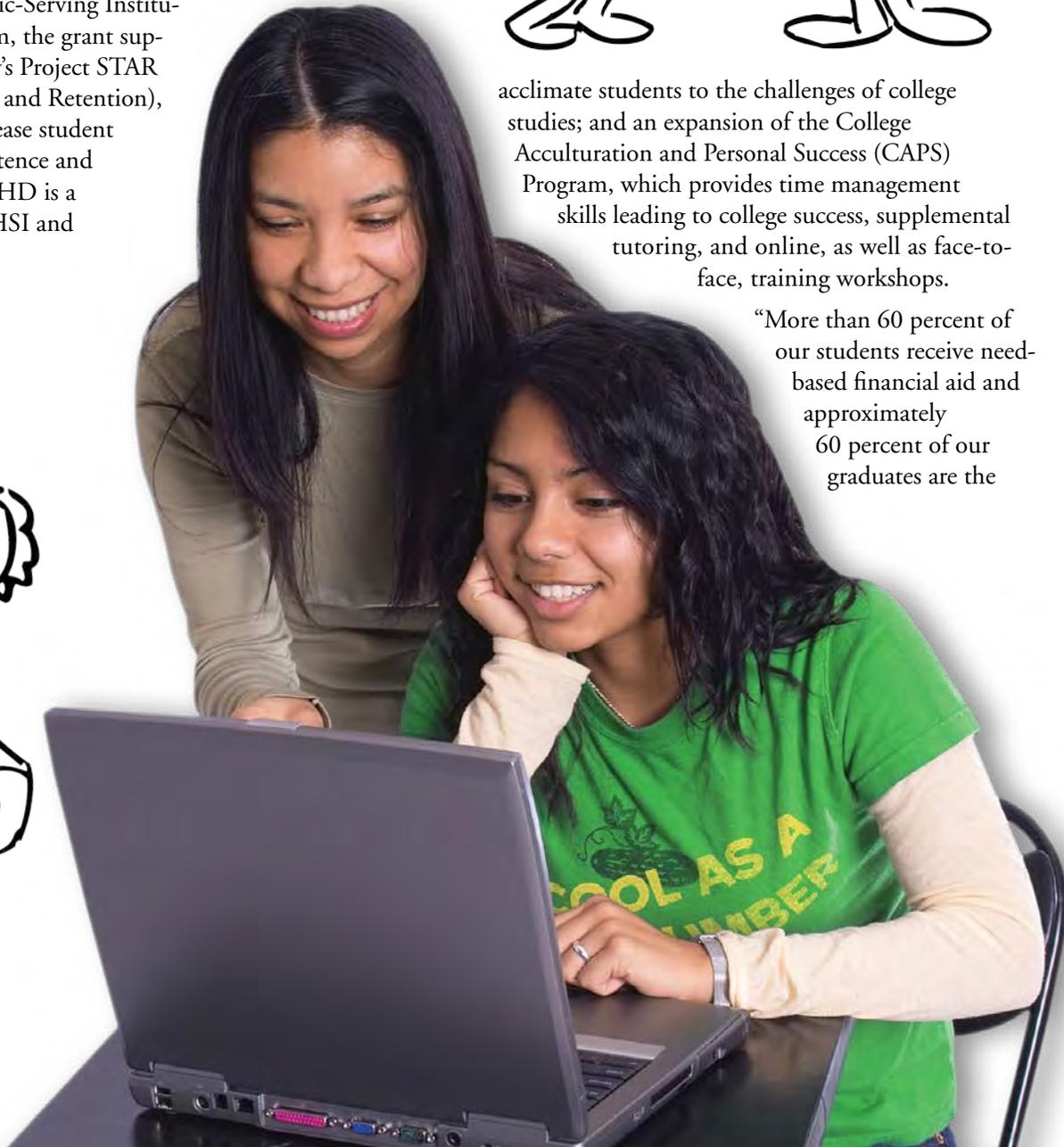
Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) and is one of 19 institutions in the nation – and three in the state – to receive an HSI grant.

Project STAR will advance student achievement and meet HSI goals through three major components, including Summer Fast-Track Institutes, which accurately place students in classes based on their scores on the Accuplacer Test; Welcome Institutes, which help to



acclimate students to the challenges of college studies; and an expansion of the College Acculturation and Personal Success (CAPS) Program, which provides time management skills leading to college success, supplemental tutoring, and online, as well as face-to-face, training workshops.

“More than 60 percent of our students receive need-based financial aid and approximately 60 percent of our graduates are the



first in their families to attend college. This grant speaks directly to our mission at UHD,” said Lisa Montgomery, vice president for Student Success and Enrollment Management. “With these funds, we look forward to expanding the academic and personal support offerings available to our culturally diverse students.”

Much of UHD’s strength lies in its diverse and multicultural student body. One of the most ethnically diverse universities in the country, UHD ranks 33rd nationally for graduating Hispanic students with bachelor’s degrees and 37th nationally for graduating African-American students with bachelor’s degrees.



Hispanics are among the fastest-growing ethnic groups pursuing higher education, but there is a great need to increase opportunities and improve graduation rates for this population. With this grant, UHD aims to strengthen the support structure for these students, positioning them to be successful students and eventually more competitive in the marketplace.

“This award is a cross-collaborative effort between student affairs and academic affairs, and we are thrilled to receive the grant,” said Montgomery. “The timing could not be better with our efforts to improve student retention and graduation rates through enhanced student support services.”

- 1) Students gather with a professor at Freshman Convocation to discuss this year’s Common Reader, “Mountains Beyond Mountains,” a Pulitzer Prize-winning book by Tracy Kidder about the ability of one person to institute lasting change.
- 2) Staff meet with students at a financial aid fair on campus to explain various options for scholarships and other ways to help pay for school.
- 3) Students study together near the bookstore in the One Main Building.
- 4) UHD provides several locations on campus for students to study, socialize and relax between classes.



# Accomplished Alumni

From the globe trotter to the energy liaison



UHD alumnus, Aaron Condray, in his Paris office.

**A**aron Condray's life is anything but ordinary. As the vice president of Human Resources and Communications for Global Remote Sites and Asia-Australia for Sodexo, one of the largest food services and facilities management companies in the world, Condray is responsible for 70,000 employees in 40 countries all focused on improving quality of life in often challenging environments.

"Much of my work involves emerging markets, which I really enjoy," Condray said. "These areas are resource rich but require a great deal of large-scale infrastructure and natural resource development. You truly start from scratch and it is complex work, but I love it."

One of Condray's more complex projects involved the coordination of a major food service operation for NATO forces stationed at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

"That was a massively intricate operation," he explained. "We were serving thousands of meals daily and had to ship food in convoys and fly it into the base on 747s. It was complex, but I enjoyed the multinational and multicultural element of the project."

Condray graduated from UHD in 2002 with an interdisciplinary studies degree. He was working full time for Halliburton as a human resources generalist while he attended evening and weekend courses to complete his degree. He credits UHD's flexibility and accessibility with helping him reach that personal goal.

"I was already a working professional with a handful of college credits under my belt when I began attending UHD," Condray said. "It was very important to me to get a college degree because I knew professional opportunities would be limited without it. UHD offered flexible class times and degree programs and those were really important for me to be successful academically."

Today, this successful alumnus resides in Paris, France with his wife, Natalia, and son, Alexi, and enjoys traveling the world and exploring other cultures.



Scott Sorensen credits UHD faculty for helping to push him to success.

Attending UHD was the result of several serendipitous events for alumnus **Scott Sorensen**. After leaving his home state of New Jersey following high school graduation, Sorensen took to the roads in a cross-country excursion. But when his car broke down in Houston, he took it as a sign to put down roots in the Lone Star State.

According to Sorensen, earning a college degree was never high on his list of things to accomplish. His parents are not college graduates and many in high school encouraged him to find a vocation rather than pursue higher education.

“At 18, I was working in a non-air conditioned warehouse in Houston in the middle of summer for an electronic components distribution company,” he said. “My boss took me under his wing and suggested I take classes at UHD in order to have better professional options for my future. It was life-changing advice.”

Sorensen began attending UHD while working full-time and completed a degree in general business in 1999. Today, he is an oil and gas automation consultant for Siemens Industry, Inc., a global powerhouse in electronics and electrical engineering. He serves as a technical and business resource for his customers, including National Oilwell, Baker Hughes and Schlumberger, and he credits his time working in that warehouse, along with his education, for helping him achieve professional success.

“I’m lucky to have both experience in engineering technology and an education in business,” he said. “It’s great crossover for my profession. UHD prepared me with skills for the real world by teaching a perfect mix of practical and theoretical knowledge.”

Sorensen also praises UHD’s faculty for helping him gain confidence and succeed academically.

“My teachers pushed me and made me believe in myself,” he said. “I can remember earning an ‘A’ grade in algebra after taking remedial math courses and feeling like I could accomplish anything after that. It was an amazing feeling.”

Thirteen years after completing his degree, Sorensen continues to take courses at UHD for professional and personal development. He also recently served as a liaison to the University on behalf of Siemens, when the company donated \$50,000 worth of software and hardware to the Control and Instrumentation Engineering Technology program (CIET).

“UHD is really going places and under the direction of Dr. Weining Feng (program coordinator), so is the CIET program,” he said. “It’s a niche degree that is extremely impressive. By providing UHD students with this equipment to supplement their classroom education, Siemens is providing a future workforce with the necessary experience to head straight into the field. I’m glad to be a part of that.”

# PROFESSIONAL LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



**Energizing Houston's Workforce**

**W**ith its downtown location and corporate partnerships, the University of Houston-Downtown is uniquely positioned to address the workforce needs of the country's fourth-largest city.

In a direct response to Houston's booming oil and gas industry, UHD developed the Professional Land Management (PLM) program to prepare qualified professionals for careers in that growing industry.

"The oil and gas industry, especially in Houston and areas across the country that are experiencing an increase in shale drilling, can offer individuals greater professional opportunities with higher earnings potential than other business sectors," said Forrest Aven, interim dean of the College of Business.

Exploration and production of oil and gas account for 23.3 percent of Houston's gross area product, as reported by the Greater Houston Partnership. Houston also is home to more than 5,000 energy firms, including 17 energy-related Fortune 500 companies.

This large number of employers, combined with recent workforce attrition and a spike in energy prices, has created a robust employment market for landmen, who perform various services for oil and gas exploration companies, including researching and negotiating for the acquisition of mineral rights and business agreements.

“I am very appreciative of UHD and the program,” he said. “The return on my \$3,000 investment was a new job in a growing industry making \$81,000 a year.”

UHD's PLM program bridges the education gap for individuals looking to enter this field and wanting developmental, university-quality instruction in a condensed form. It consists of six courses, available once per month in a face-to-face or online format, each with 24 hours of instruction. These courses can be taken individually to develop specific competencies, or in succession to complete a PLM certificate. According to Aven, the program is growing rapidly and is now one of the largest PLM programs in the country.

Individuals are enrolling in the program from across Texas and as far away as Pennsylvania and Colorado because of the convenience of online courses. Also, a number of companies, including Apache Corporation, Chevron,



Forrest Aven, interim dean of the College of Business, created the highly successful PLM program to address a growing educational need in the oil and gas industry.

ConocoPhillips, Alta Mesa Holdings, LP and Murphy Oil Corporation, to name a few, have sent their employees to the program to ensure a consistent base of knowledge amongst those employees in the field.

"This program has been a great success for UHD and the program participants," Aven said. "We have a high rate of satisfaction and job placement and the program continues to grow. Since 2010, more than 250 individuals have completed the program at UHD."

In addition to the increase in employment opportunities in this sector, individuals are flocking to the program due in part to the earnings potential for qualified landmen.

According to a compensation study conducted by Aven and commissioned by the American Association of Professional Landmen, the mean annual income in 2010 for a landman was \$100,000. In an anonymous survey issued to PLM program participants, one responder stated that he acquired a new position in the landman profession and received a 71 percent salary increase as a direct result of completing the land management program.

"I am very appreciative of UHD and the program," he said. "The return on my \$3,000 investment was a new job in a growing industry making \$81,000 a year."

With the promise of high wages and gainful employment, individuals in Houston and across the country are turning to UHD for the industry knowledge and experience that will prepare them for a career in land management. Through this program, UHD truly is meeting the evolving needs of Houston and the trending oil and gas market.

# UHD EXPANDS LONG-STANDING TIES WITH TAIWANESE LEADERS, UNIVERSITIES

While UHD alumni are making a name for themselves throughout the Houston community in healthcare, oil and gas and the arts, they've also planted the UHD flag half a world away in Houston's sister city, Taipei, Taiwan.

UHD has a long-standing relationship with Taiwan's educational and business leaders that began with the Bayou Connection, a committed group of Taiwanese Houstonians with a vision for building bridges between their two hometowns. This program, established by UHD Associate Professor Hsiao-Ming Wang in 2002, opened the door for increased research opportunities, as well as student and faculty exchanges.

Wang and other UHD leaders first visited Taiwan in 2002 and signed a cooperative agreement between the University and the National Chung-Cheng University, opening the door for Taiwanese students to study security management at UHD. Since that time, UHD leaders have traveled to Taiwan and established additional agreements with Central Police University (CPU) and the National University of Tainan.

This summer, William Flores, UHD president; Brian Chapman, provost; Johanna Wolfe, vice president for Advancement and External Relations; and Wang visited Taiwan to expand the University's Taiwanese partnerships. While there, the delegation signed additional agreements with Ming Chuan University and Chung Hua University and also presented UHD champion and Taiwanese entrepreneur Yung-Fa Chang with a proclamation from the City of Houston for his significant contributions to the University. His most recent gift of \$2 million established the Yung-Fa Chang Endowment for Student Grants-in-Aid.

"It is a clear indication of our global community when a Taiwanese businessman makes a gift to a university half-way across the world to provide educational opportunities for our diverse group

of American and international students," said Flores.

"This generosity from Chang will significantly increase the number and value of scholarships for students with financial need and academic ability."

From this endowment, 12 students already have received scholarships to study at UHD. And, from Chang's initial gift of \$200,000 to UHD to establish the Evergreen-Bayou Connection Fund, more than 20 UHD graduate students – including 12 from Taiwan – have completed their master's degrees in criminal justice or security management. "Receiving the scholarship is a miracle for me," said Lutishie R. Taylor, a junior at UHD and recipient of a scholarship from the Yung-Fa Chang Endowment. "The scholarship enables me to continue my education and keep my momentum in college."

To date, the Bayou Connection has paved the way for:

- More than 100 CPU students to study English at UHD's English Language Institute;
- 40 UHD students to visit Taiwan and learn about the criminal justice system in that country;
- Faculty exchanges between UHD and CPU professors; and
- Enhanced research opportunities on criminal justice, forensic lab management and crime and preventive strategies for students and faculty.

"Our role at UHD is to prepare students to become leaders in their chosen fields, not only in Houston, but across the world," said Wang. "Our collaborations with Taiwanese universities and business leaders prove UHD's global presence and ensure lasting, high-impact experiences for students."



1) President William Flores (left) presents Taiwanese entrepreneur and philanthropist, Dr. Yung-Fa Chang, with a proclamation from the City of Houston designating June 19 as Dr. Yung-Fa Chang Day in Houston as recognition of his philanthropy and support of UHD.



2) During a recent trip to Asia to meet with Taiwanese leaders and universities, Dr. William Flores (center) spent time with students from Central Police University.



3) President William Flores; Johanna Wolfe, vice president for Advancement and External Relations; Brian Chapman, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs; and Hsiao-Ming Wang, associate professor of criminal justice, visited Taiwan this summer to further University relationships and meet with faculty and students from Central Police University.



4) Provost Brian Chapman (left) accepts a gift from Hsieh, Hsiu-Neng, president of Central Police University during a trip to Taiwan this summer.



# Meet some of our scholarship recipients!



*Lutishie R. Taylor*  
Junior • Criminal Justice Major

“I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason and it is never too late to pursue your hopes and dreams. I am not only seeking a higher education and new career, I am also seeking an area in which I can provide a public service.”



*Alba Rubi Banegas*  
Sophomore • Biology Major

“I believe that dedication, perseverance, and the pure intentions of aiding patients with illnesses will define me and how successful I become in the medical field.”



*Tammara W. Sherrod*  
Senior • Education Major

“Thank you for the opportunity of allowing this scholarship to be available to students in financial need, who are striving to pursue a degree.”



*Alma C. Robles*  
Freshman • Insurance and Risk Management Major

“It is no doubt that without education one will end up in a bad situation. This inspires me to believe I must complete college and continue on as much as I possibly can.”

Taken from a "Thank You" booklet specially made for Dr. Yung-Fa Chang in gratitude for the scholarships he made possible.

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*Maria E. Martinez*

**Junior • Education Major**

“**Y**our financial grant will help me tremendously to alleviate my college expenses so I can focus on my studies.”



*Alicia San Miguel*

**Junior • Psychology Major**

“**S**ucceeding in school and fulfilling my interests in research has propelled my aspirations to achieve a Ph.D. in clinical psychology.”



*Jo Ann Y. Lopez*

**Junior • Education Major**

“**I** discovered I had a great passion for educating children, and realized how I could make a difference, of not only teaching them, but granting them support and guidance that may be lacking at home.”



*Gretchen U. Hardaway*

**Junior • Interdisciplinary Studies Major**

“**B**eing a firm believer in public service, I have had the pleasure of working in a variety of community service activities. I can unequivocally say that volunteering has enhanced my growth both as a person, team player, and leader.”



Many graduates of UHD have become leaders in a variety of fields following graduation. But one whistling alumnus is in a category of his own. Taiwanese performer Yu-Lun Lee graduated from UHD with a master's degree in security management, but he is best known for impacting the international music scene with his lips. Lee is a lip musician, otherwise known as a master whistler, who carries his perfectly-pitched tunes across the globe. He has performed on prominent stages in more than 10 countries with a talent that must be heard to be believed.

Lee follows in the successful, musically gifted footsteps of his father, also a master whistler, who began whistling to his son while he was still in utero. Father and son have performed together, whistling popular Western songs including, "Memories" from the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical "Cats," and "My Heart Will Go On," from the motion picture "Titanic." Lee's father helped him to hone advanced whistling techniques, including "rapid-fire whistling," "lightning-speed trills," and "cyclical whistling," which can theoretically linger indefinitely.

"I feel like this talent is a gift from God and it is a pleasure to share that gift with others," said Lee. "I began whistling at age 4 and have never looked back."

Lee gives new meaning to the saying, "Whistle while you work," and – from the thousands who flock to hear his concerts – his work has proven to be both lucrative and rewarding. While he now is a full-time musician and not directly applying his security management skills, he views his time at UHD as transformative.

"Studying at UHD was a real turning point in my life," said Lee. "My experience there opened my eyes to an entirely new culture and way of life and I wouldn't trade that experience for anything."

# Taking It to the Street

## Professor Embodies Service Learning by Living, Serving in Homeless Shelter

**It's** one thing to safely advocate for society's most vulnerable from the sidelines, and another entirely to jump onto the field and play the game.

Dawn McCarty, LMSW, associate professor of social work at the University of Houston-Downtown, knows this firsthand and has chosen to make her home with the city's poorest and most disadvantaged. Each week, she spends three to four nights in her 500-square-foot apartment at Casa Juan Diego, a house of hospitality for disadvantaged women, and the rest of the week at the house she shares with her husband in Galveston.

"I subscribe to the Catholic Worker model that you really can't know the specific needs of a population unless you live side-by-side with them," said McCarty. "Living with these women is a joy and honor, and is in no way a sacrifice for me."

When McCarty first began working with the women's home of Casa Juan Diego in Houston, she thought she would live with the community for three months to provide support and serve as an example for her social work students. But three months turned into four years and she has never looked back.

In addition to eating meals with the guests, she weaves herself intricately into their lives, helping them attain legal documents, file police reports, gain government assistance and work with Child Protective Services. She also works closely with the Houston Food Bank and Harris County Hospital District to arrange appointments for the residents. Many women in the shelter are undocumented immigrants, victims of human trafficking, pregnant, or mentally or physically battered. Other women have left their families in Mexico and Central America, traveled to the United States with their children and remained after their husbands were deported.

Casa Juan Diego provides a free medical clinic for the community, language classes for non-English



Dawn McCarty (left), associate professor of social work, stands with junior Wendy Ramirez in front of a mural at Casa Juan Diego, a house of hospitality in Houston.

speaking women and food and clothing centers that serve 300 people each week. All full-time staff live in the community and donate their services to the approximately 20 women and children who reside in the shelter.

“By living at Casa Juan Diego, I’m able to offer a unique perspective of service to my social work students,” said McCarty. “They’re able to see the ‘real world’ of their chosen careers and witness my failures, as well as my successes. Many of our students also volunteer at the shelter, providing an excellent high-impact service learning opportunity to complement their classroom learning.”

One of her students happens to reside at Casa Juan Diego as well, where she moved with her family at age 10. Wendy Ramirez is a junior and secretary of UHD’s Student Government Association. She graduated at the top of her class at Cypress Ridge High School and aspires to be a doctor. McCarty made a promise to Ramirez years ago that she would find a way for her to attend medical school, though as an undocumented immigrant, she faced many challenges. But with the country’s recently passed deferred action legislation and a sponsor from Casa Juan Diego, Ramirez applied, paving the way for her future medical education.

“Casa Juan Diego and Dr. McCarty have been invaluable for me as I’ve earned my education and sought to improve the academic and educational opportunities in front of me,” said Ramirez. “I’m confident that – without their help – I wouldn’t be in the place I am today, working toward becoming a U.S. citizen and accomplishing my dream of becoming a physician.”

According to McCarty, Ramirez and many of her other students are much more engaged and excited about pursuing public service as a result of her choice to live and work at Casa Juan Diego. She believes that by seeing the challenges faced by this vulnerable population firsthand, they also are exposed to the trials and rewards of the social work profession.

“I wouldn’t teach anywhere but UHD,” said McCarty. “Because of our university’s diversity and urban nature, our students aren’t afraid of tackling tough economic challenges and they embrace change as a way of life. I expect my students to leave UHD and become the leaders of the community agencies that partner with Casa Juan Diego on a daily basis. And I know that they will!”



# Gators on the GO!

Students at UHD have many opportunities to travel within the United States and across the globe as part of a study abroad excursion or a course field trip. From studying granite formations in the Pacific Northwest to watching first-class productions on Broadway in New York and learning about the criminal justice system of Spain, students are experiencing the world and honing their crafts.





## Drama in the 'Big Apple'

Each year in May, the UHD drama program takes a trip to a city of theatrical importance, alternating between New York, London and Athens. Trip participation is open to all UHD students, faculty and staff and their family and friends.

“Some of our students have never been outside of Texas, so traveling to New York is a great thrill for them,” said Tom Lyttle, director of the O’Kane Theatre at UHD. “They’re able to watch theater productions on a grand scale and develop an appreciation for the skill and work that goes into the acting, set design, production, etc.”

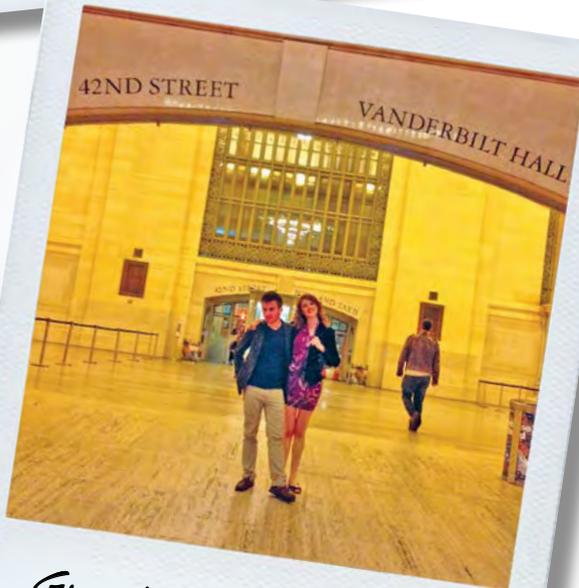
During the trip to New York, participants visited Times Square, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island and other quintessential Manhattan landmarks. In between eating traditional thin-crust New York pizza and roaming the streets of Greenwich Village, the group took in Broadway shows and enjoyed a backstage tour of the renovated New York City Center.

“In 2013, we will visit the birthplace of western theater – Athens, Greece,” Lyttle said. “Because theater was an important part of Greek civilization, students will gain a greater appreciation for their craft by visiting the Theatre of Dionysus, the birthplace of Greek tragedy, the Roman Odeon of Herodes Atticus, Thebes, Delphi and other sites of dramatic historical significance.”

UHD drama students enjoyed the sites of New York, including the Statue of Liberty and Grand Central Station.



*Statue of Liberty*



*Grand Central Station*



*The group!*



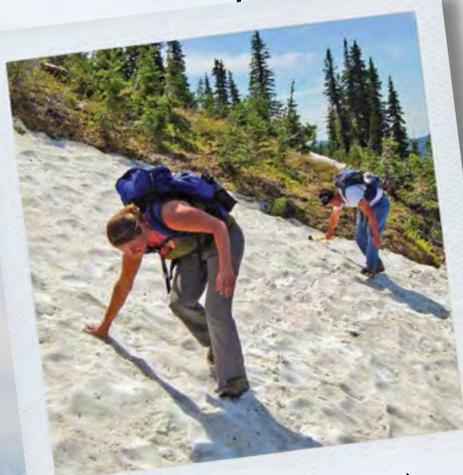
*Everybody hiking!*



*Lots of excitement!*



*Reconnoitering*



*Pollock Mountain*

## Rocking Out in the Pacific Northwest

Every year for the last 20 years, Kenneth Johnson, assistant professor of natural sciences, travels to the Pacific Northwest to study the area's tectonic evolution. According to Johnson, he studies the chemical elements and melt formation of granite, which provides a great wealth of information about the earth's crust.

"Granite is a window to the processes of the earth's crust, which we can't see," Johnson said.

When Johnson came to UHD in 2008, he began taking students with him as a way to expose them to greater research opportunities. During the last trip, Johnson and five students traveled to Oregon and Pollock Mountain in Idaho to collect samples and study the area's granite.

"This was an amazing trip and I learned so much," said Mariel Richter, trip participant and UHD chemistry student. "I was able to extract samples from the earth, see firsthand the area they came from and study them in the lab at UHD. I also presented my findings at a Geological Society of America conference."

Johnson said that one of the most important outcomes of the research trip is propelling students into publishing their findings, presenting at conferences and exposing them to the professional arena and the field of geology research.

"Doing this kind of research as an undergraduate student gives me a huge advantage when applying to master's and doctoral programs," Richter said. "I was so grateful to go on this trip and it will continue to pay dividends for my future long after it ended."

Camping, hiking and examining rocks made for a unique and adventurous trip for several natural sciences students.





## Doing Justice to Spain and Portugal

While most travelers hope to avoid run-ins with foreign law enforcement, nearly 30 UHD students spent two weeks visiting Spanish and Portuguese prisons, police departments and criminal courts as part of a criminal justice study-abroad excursion. Students toured the facilities and spoke with local officials while also exploring and experiencing the rich cultures of the two countries.

The trip advisor, Associate Professor Mark Kellar, said this year's trip was among his favorites.

"I've taken these trips for six years, and Spain and Portugal were as dramatic and beautiful as any place we've ever been," Kellar said. "Many of our students have never traveled outside the United States, and this trip was a wonderful learning opportunity for them."

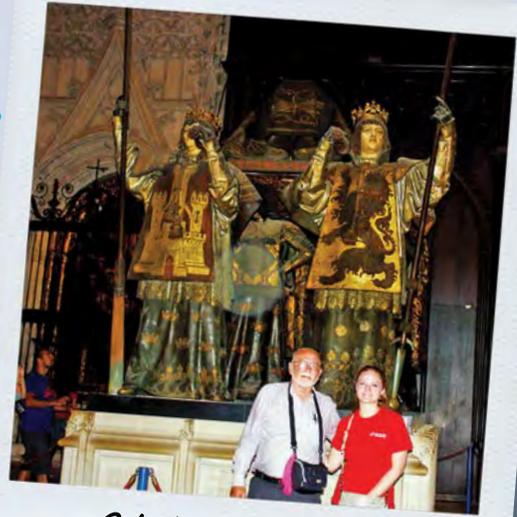
Prior to the trip, students spent three eight-hour days in class learning about the criminal justice systems of the places they would be visiting.

"We want the trip to be fun and enjoyable for the students, but to maintain an academic component," Kellar said. "I also believe that traveling and experiencing new cultures can be educational in itself and incredibly worthwhile for our students."

Past trips have included visits to Hong Kong, Taiwan, London, Vienna, Prague, Italy and Greece.

According to Kellar, each trip has its own unique flavor. Considering that destinations often are chosen based on students' suggestions, who knows the interesting places the criminal justice department will head next.

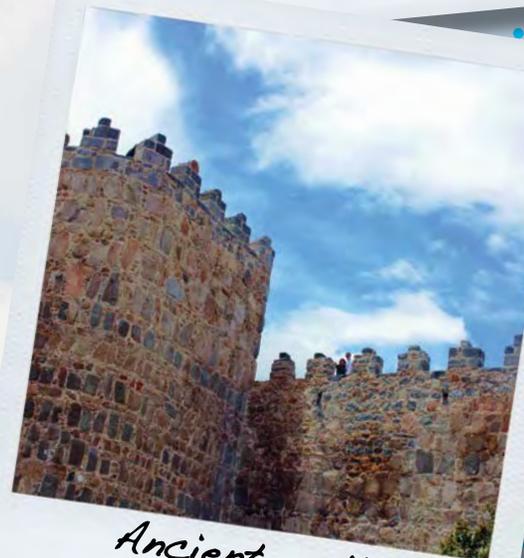
Criminal justice students explored the sites of Spain and Portugal, including Christopher Columbus' tomb, the criminal court of Granada, Spain and the city of Avila, Spain.



*Christopher Columbus' tomb*



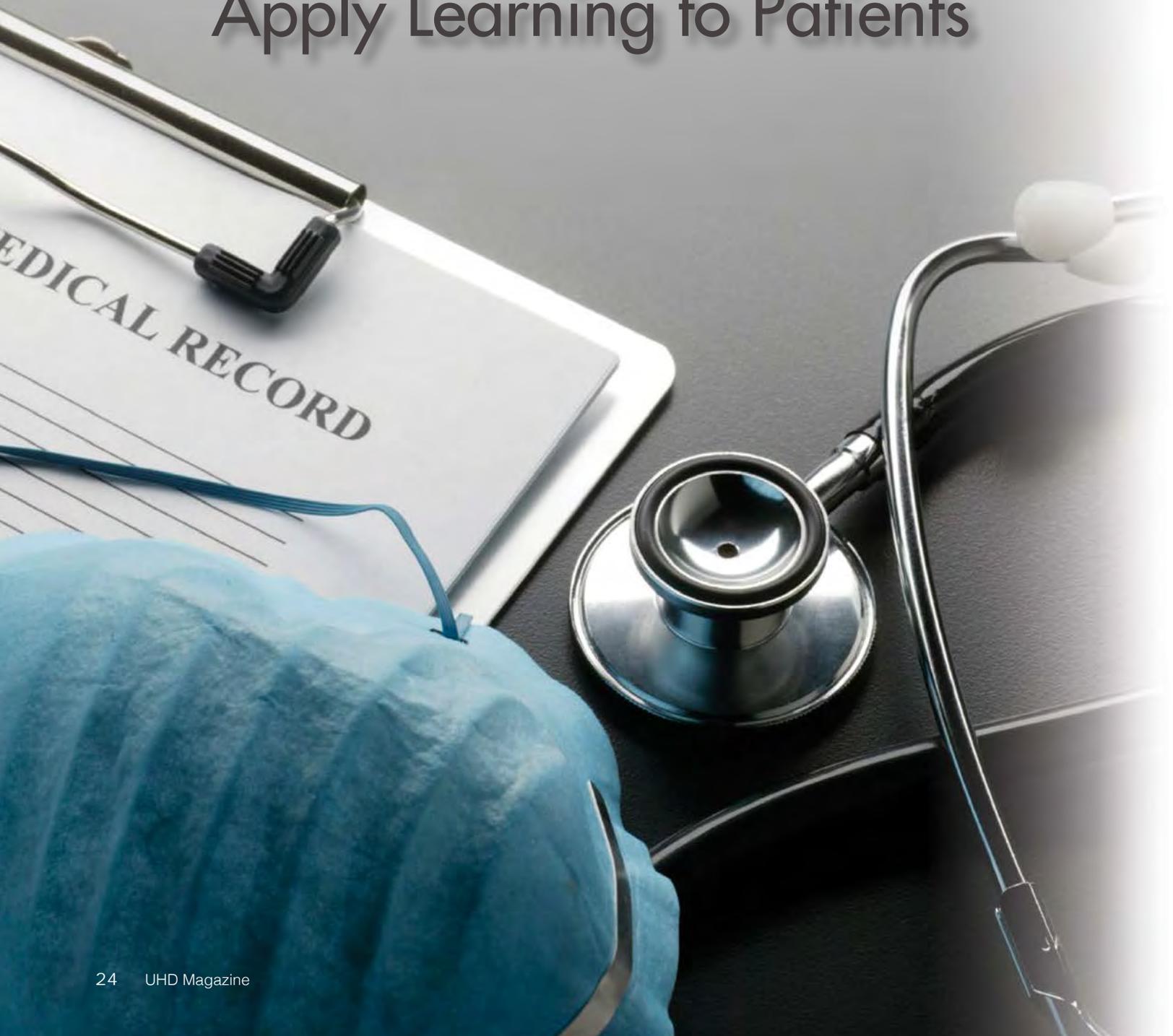
*Criminal Court, Spain*



*Ancient wall, Avila, Spain*

# From Classroom to Examination Room:

Scholars Academy Siblings  
Apply Learning to Patients



UHD's Scholars Academy – an academically competitive program that promotes success for students majoring in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) – has a legacy of successful alumni. But the Lam family of siblings takes this pedigree to a new level.

Blake Lam, and his two older sisters, Mai and Vien, are impacting the field of medicine in their own personal ways. Blake will graduate from The University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas in May 2013 and plans to immediately enter dental school to become an oral surgeon.

And he's following closely in the footsteps of his older sisters who also are in medicine. Mai is a physician assistant in the emergency room at Texas Children's Hospital and Vien, a physician, currently is completing her residency in obstetrics/gynecology at The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

**“It's that hands-on, individualized attention that really makes the difference at UHD.”**

The Lam siblings grew up with limited resources, but they didn't let that stop them. Their father passed away when they were young and their mother worked full-time in the grocery business while raising her children. She set an excellent example of the value of hard work and determination in the face of difficulty.

They chose to attend UHD because of the proximity to home and the affordable tuition. And they stayed and thrived because of the small class sizes, opportunities for undergraduate research and hands-on involvement of the faculty.

“We all received an excellent foundation at UHD for our future medical education,” said Blake, who double-majored in chemistry and biology. “The research experience I gained at UHD more than prepared me for the rigorous coursework and competitive environment of medical school.”

Blake also credits his UHD professors for their personal attention and one-on-one instruction, something he wouldn't have experienced at a larger university. He notes that many of his professors served as significant role models for him and helped to hone his research and study skills.



(From left to right) Blake, Mai and Vien Lam are siblings and UHD alumni who were members of Scholars Academy while undergraduates. All three now are impacting the field of medicine in their own personal ways.

“So many of my professors seemed to go out of their way to share their knowledge and provide me with opportunities,” said Blake. “For example, Dr. Vicky Estrera, who was program director for Scholars Academy, sought out opportunities for me to shadow physicians as I completed my degree. It's that hands-on, individualized attention that really makes the difference at UHD.”

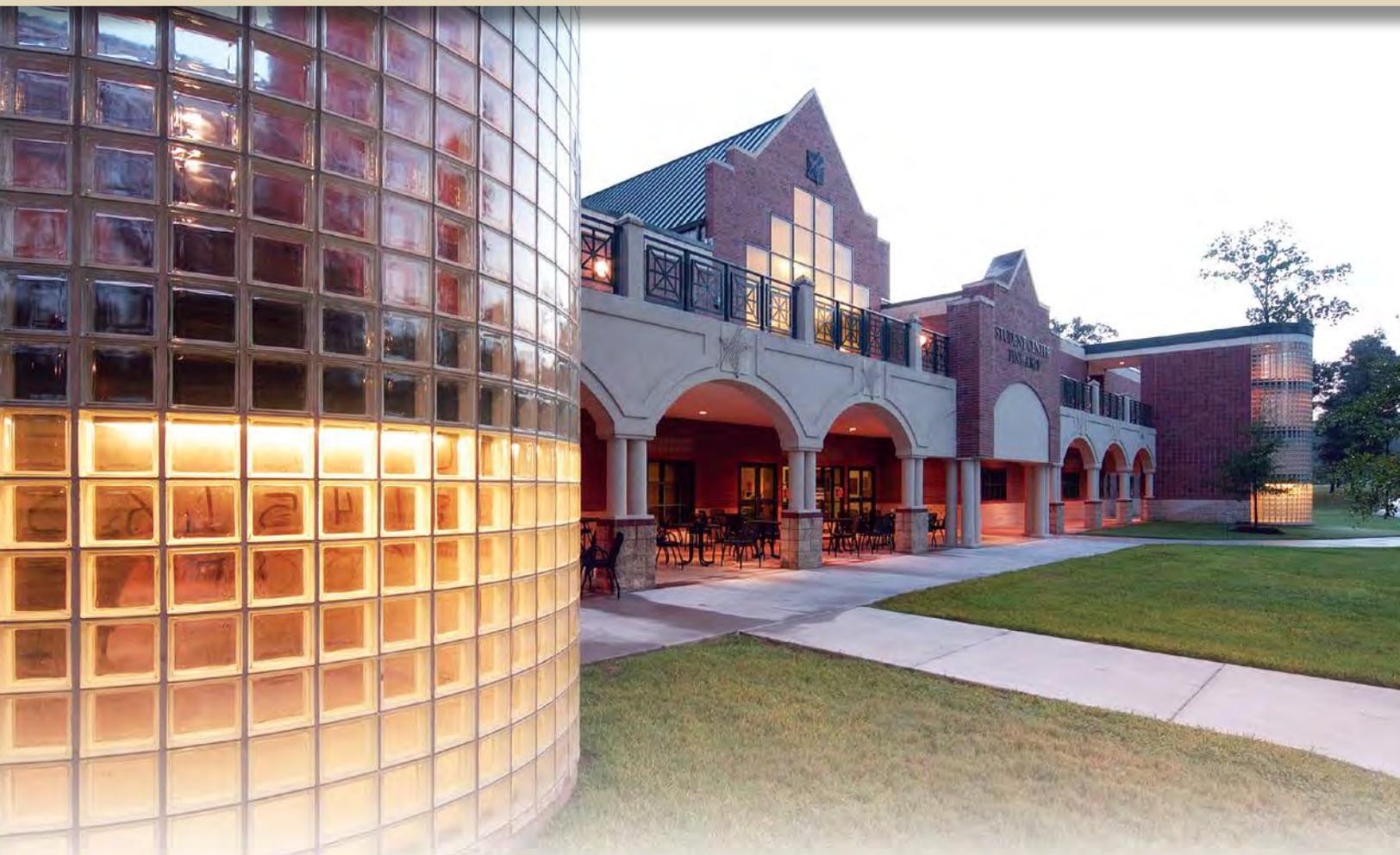
“Scholars Academy continues to offer support systems, such as scholarships, mentoring, tutoring and career-broadening experiences for STEM majors as they pursue a baccalaureate to advanced graduate or professional programs, or enter an industry career,” said Mary Jo Parker, director of Scholars Academy.

While he was accepted at several universities, UHD provided Blake with the most scholarship support. He – along with his two sisters – also worked part-time on campus as math and science tutors and supplemental instructors to help pay for college.

**“The research experience I gained at UHD more than prepared me for the rigorous coursework and competitive environment of medical school.”**

The Lam siblings say their inspiration is their hard-working mother, but they've now become a source of inspiration for current UHD students. They now are helping people, in part, because of the major opportunity they found at UHD.

“We all received wonderful educations that paved the way for our graduate studies and professional goals,” said Blake. “I would recommend UHD to anyone.”



## UHD Distance Education Programs Offer Flexibility and Convenience for Degree Completion

# DISTANCE

education is one of the fastest growing areas at the University of Houston-Downtown. The University places emphasis on reaching students across the Greater Houston area through online courses and satellite campuses and providing them with convenient and flexible opportunities to complete degrees.

With four distance education sites located across the city, including Northwest, Cy-Fair, Kingwood and Atascocita, and 14 online degree programs, UHD is increasing its visibility and accessibility to a wider range of students.

According to Louis Evans, executive director of Distance Education, online courses and satellite locations provide some students the opportunity to earn a four-year degree, which they otherwise might not have.

“I know several students that drive an hour from Tarkington, Texas to our Kingwood location to take

evening courses that fit into their busy schedules,” Evans said. “They’re working professionals who want to earn a college degree and we make that goal easier for them to achieve.”

UHD also is a member of the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC) Consortium, a collection of approximately 1,900 institutions that allow service members and their families the ability to take college courses while on active duty.

“Online education is becoming increasingly popular with students, especially students at UHD who have careers, families and other responsibilities outside the classroom,” Evans said. “With nearly 8,000 online course enrollments for the Fall 2012 semester, we know that it is an integral part of distance education and UHD is continually working to increase the number of programs we offer.”

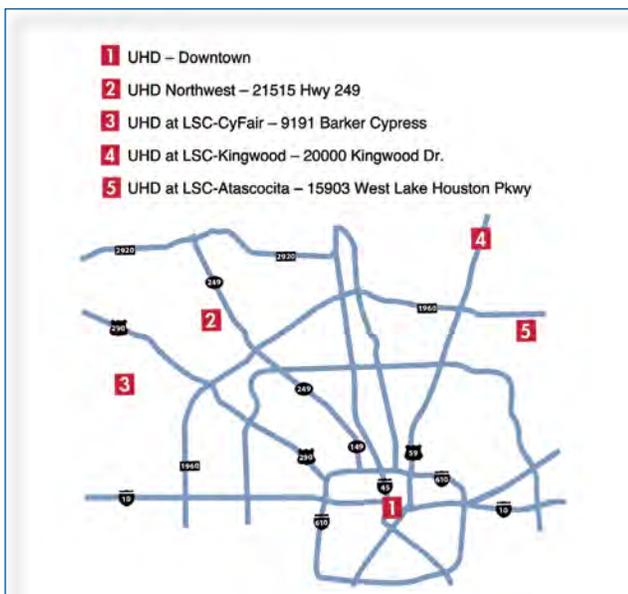
To learn more about distance education at UHD, visit [www.uhd.edu/academic/distance/](http://www.uhd.edu/academic/distance/).

## Online Degrees

- ✦ BBA General Business
- ✦ BBA Enterprise Information Systems
- ✦ BBA Finance
- ✦ BBA International Business
- ✦ BBA Management
- ✦ BBA Marketing
- ✦ BBA Supply Chain Management
- ✦ BS Interdisciplinary Studies
- ✦ BS Psychology
- ✦ BA Humanities
- ✦ BS Criminal Justice
- ✦ BAAS Criminal Justice
- ✦ BAAS Applied Administration
- ✦ MS Criminal Justice

## UHD at Lone Star College – Atascocita:

- ✦ BA General Business



## UHD Northwest at Lone Star College – University Park:

- ✦ BS Criminal Justice
- ✦ BAAS Criminal Justice
- ✦ BA Interdisciplinary Studies with EC-6 Generalist Certification
- ✦ BA Interdisciplinary Studies with EC-6 Bilingual Generalist Certification
- ✦ BA Interdisciplinary Studies with 4-8 Generalist Certification
- ✦ BBA General Business
- ✦ BBA Finance
- ✦ BBA Enterprise Information Systems
- ✦ BBA Management
- ✦ BBA Marketing
- ✦ BBA Accounting
- ✦ BAAS Safety Management
- ✦ BA Mathematics
- ✦ BA Mathematics with Secondary-Level Teacher Certification
- ✦ BS Biological and Physical Sciences
- ✦ BS Biological and Physical Sciences with Secondary-Level Teacher Certification
- ✦ BS Interdisciplinary Studies
- ✦ MA Teaching
- ✦ MS Criminal Justice
- ✦ Master of Security Management for Executives

## UHD at Lone Star College – Cy-Fair:

- ✦ BA Interdisciplinary Studies
- ✦ Teacher Certification
- ✦ EC-6 Generalist
- ✦ EC-6 Bilingual Generalist

## UHD at Lone Star College – Kingwood:

- ✦ BA Interdisciplinary Studies
- ✦ Teacher Certification
- ✦ EC-6 Generalist
- ✦ EC-6 Bilingual Generalist

## Myron F. Steves & Company Establishes Endowment to Support Insurance and Risk Management Center

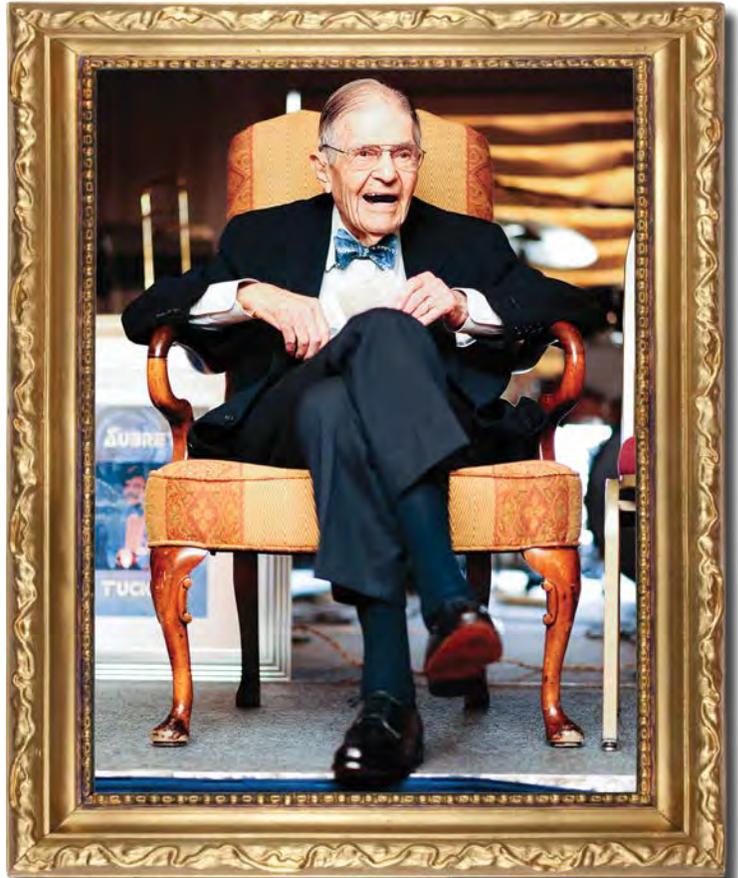
Myron F. Steves is a 100-year-old legacy in the insurance and risk management industry with his finger on the pulse of the field's future.

As a testament to his contributions to the industry and community, Myron F. Steves & Company – a private, general insurance agency now operated by his children Fred Steves, Buddy Steves and Terry Steves Skinner – recently created the Myron F. Steves Endowed Directorship for the Insurance and Risk Management (IRM) Center at the University of Houston-Downtown.

“Steves’ impact on the development and growth of the insurance industry, along with his influence on education and ethical behavior in the field are unparalleled,” said Wendall Braniff, director of the IRM Center at UHD. “This tremendous gift on his behalf catapults our ability to bridge top-quality insurance education with real-world input and collaboration from the region’s insurance and risk management leaders.”

Funds from the endowment will be used to further relationships between students and insurance professionals to facilitate UHD graduates’ transition into the insurance and risk management industry. The endowment also will increase student and faculty community involvement and raise the caliber of the IRM program to the betterment of these graduates and future industry leaders.

“Our family has supported the Insurance and Risk Management Center at UHD for several years because of its foundational role in educating the next generation of skilled insurance professionals,” said Fred Steves, chairman at Myron F. Steves & Company and member of the IRM Center Advisory Council. “My father taught Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter (CPCU) courses at South Texas Junior College before the University of Houston System founded UHD on the property and the



center today espouses the qualities of professionalism, ethics and industry excellence that are hallmarks of Myron F. Steves & Company.”

Among the insurance and risk management faculty are academics and insurance professionals, bringing theory and real-world professional experience into

Above: Insurance legacy Myron Steves, founder of Myron F. Steves & Company, is honored on his 100th birthday.

Right (From left to right): Fred Steves, chairman; Brian Chapman, provost; Myron F. Steves, founder; and Buddy Steves, vice chairman, gathered at UHD to announce the company's recent \$250,000 endowment to the University.

the classroom and teaching classes that enable students to sit for professional designations, such as CPCU, that are critical to success in the field.

“Our primary goal at UHD is student success – both in the classroom and following graduation,” said UHD President William Flores. “This generous endowment by the Myron F. Steves family will help to elevate industry knowledge among students and integrate them into Houston’s vibrant insurance market, which is the third largest in the nation.”

UHD students have the benefit, not only of this endowment, but of Steves’ well-known example and legacy in the insurance and risk management industry. He was a founding member of the Houston chapter of CPCU and served as the organization’s president. He was instrumental in founding the Senior Section of the national CPCU Society and received the national CPCU Standard Setter Award, recognizing his contributions to the local Houston insurance community. Steves also is the only wholesale agent ever awarded the Independent Insurance Agents of Houston Outstanding Service Award, an honor historically reserved for retail agents. Like Steves, his three children also hold the CPCU designation.



**Anna Berry, a senior in UHD’s Insurance and Risk Management Center, knows firsthand the value of faculty and company interaction in her education. Having worked several years in the field while pursuing her college degree, she knew a small portion of the insurance industry – insuring standard automobiles. But when she returned to UHD to complete her degree, she was exposed to the entire insurance industry, which made her even more excited about her chosen career.**

**“The IRM Center at UHD has opened up an entirely new horizon for me,” said Berry. “I’ve been able to see and learn about the other side of the coin and realize that my passion lies in the risk management side of the field. It is so energizing for me to realize everything that exists out there and to learn about the future of this industry from my professors and Houston business leaders.”**

## UNIVERSITY

The **Student Government Association** hosted “Walk to Vote,” to encourage faculty, staff and students to vote during the 2012 presidential election. The event included guest speakers, Houston Mayor Annise Parker and City Council Member Ed Gonzalez. Attendees then walked to the Harris County Administration Building to cast their vote.

UHD co-sponsored the **15th annual Kemah Boardwalk Jazz Festival**. The festival was co-founded by Robert Wilson, UHD artist-in-residence, and Bob McGrew of the Houston Professional Musicians Association.

**The Pathways Project**, started several years ago by the Network of Behavioral Health Providers and UHD’s social work program, received the “**Program that Makes a Difference**” Award from Mental Health America.

The **UHD Chemistry Society** received the **Commendable Chapter Award** from the American Chemical Society. The award is the second highest chapter award given by the prestigious, national organization.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the **Center for Family Strengths** (CFS) at UHD facilitated the second annual **Family Camp** at Echo Hill Ranch in September. The camp brought together eight extended families of abused and neglected children for a week of family activities.

The **U.S. Attorney’s Office** and UHD cosponsored **VALOR**, a training conference designed to help prevent violence against law enforcement officers. More than 200 law enforcement agents and officers attended the two-day conference, which was held at UHD.

UHD received a five-year grant from the **U.S. Department of Education** to extend the **Upward Bound program**, which tailors academic and social instruction for high school students.

**The Department of Natural Sciences** and the **Scholars Academy** hosted a presentation by world-renowned nuclear scientist **Waclaw Gudowski**. Gudowski is the head of the Reactor Physics Group, director of the Nuclear Energy Technology Centre at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden and the deputy executive director of the International Science and Technology Centre in Moscow.

**The Department of Information Technology** was one of 12 finalists for the **2012 AMX Innovation Awards** from the Global Education Alliance. The department was recognized for implementing a control and automation system to proactively address classroom technology issues before instructors or students realize that anything is wrong in the classroom.

For the third consecutive year, the offices of **Admissions and Veterans Services** sponsored the annual **Impact-A-Hero 5K Walk and Run** in Sugar Land, Texas.

UHD received a grant from the **Nuclear Regulatory Commission** in order to increase the number of underrepresented STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) students entering nuclear-related majors and to provide a support system for those students.

## PEOPLE

**UHD President Bill Flores** was elected chair of the board of directors of Campus to Community Coalition of Texas and treasurer of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. He also was named Male Senior Executive of the Year by the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

**Diane Summers**, executive director of University Relations, was selected to participate in Cardinal Daniel DiNardo’s Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, assisting the Cardinal in strategic planning for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and addressing the needs of the Archdiocese for the next decade.

**David Bradley**, vice president for Administration and Finance, was appointed to the Urban Land Institute (ULI) Houston Advisory Board. The mission of ULI is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the environment.

Undergraduate social work students **Yvonne Mendoza** and **Lisa Richardson** received the inaugural **Betsy Schwartz Field Fellowship**. This annual fellowship honors the legacy of Betsy Schwartz, former president and chief executive officer of Mental Health America of Greater Houston.

Assistant professor of arts and humanities **Rey Romero** released, “*Spanish in the Bosphorus: A Sociolinguistic Study on the Judeo-Spanish Dialect Spoken in Istanbul*,” through Libra Books.

**Viola Garcia**, chair of the Department of Urban Education, was selected to serve as the president of the board of directors for the Texas Association of School Boards.

Student **Isaac Valdez** competed in the Hispanic College Quiz, following coaching by **Vanessa Camarena**, events manager for Student Activities.

**Gene Preuss**, UHD assistant professor of history and current Faculty Senate president, received the Educator of the Year award from the East Texas Historical Association.

**English in Texas**, a journal edited by UHD urban education faculty members **Leigh Van Horn**, **Kim Pinkerton** and **Carol Bedard**, won the Affiliate Journal Award given by the National Council of Teachers of English.

**Akif Uzman**, interim dean of the College of Sciences and Technology, was selected to serve as a member of the **Vision & Change Leadership Fellows Team for PULSE** (Partnership for Undergraduate Life Sciences Education), a national leadership group that implements recommendations for biology education at universities.

Adjunct professor **David Rainey** was a finalist for two Houston Theater Awards: Best Director for “Our House” with Black Lab Theatre and Best Play/Production for “In the Blood” with Back Porch Players. Rainey also was selected for the Houston Press’ 100 Creatives 2012 list.

Professor of history **Garna Christian** was honored by the Department of Social Sciences for 50 years of service to UHD (and previously South Texas Junior College).

Students **Preeti Choudhary** and **Denise Montes** were published in the journal, “*Biotechnology and Food Science*.” Their article, “*The effects of immobilization of the PVA films on the fluorescence and phosphorescence lifetime of indole and its derivatives*,” details their 2011 summer research at the Technical University of Lodz in Poland.

**Khursheed Omer**, accounting professor, published a book of poetry entitled “*Chashm-e.Num*” (Tearful Eyes) in his native language of Urdu.

Adjunct lecturer **Kate Emery Pogue** released “*Shakespeare’s Education: How Shakespeare Learned to Write!*” The book is published by PublishAmerica.

**Spencer Lightsey**, director of International Programs, is the 2012 recipient of the Advisor Encouragement Award from GlobalLinks Learning Abroad. The award is given annually to a study abroad advisor who has been in the position for a year or less and demonstrates motivation to work in the field of international education, commitment to improving programming at his or her home university, dedication to students and an overall eagerness to learn.

A team of students were finalists in a social media challenge for Halliburton. The team included marketing students **Lisa Graham**, **Kenneth Hawkins**, **Joseph Murphey**, **Mariana Quijada** and **Veronica Rollandi**.

**Jo Bailey**, associate professor of sociology and social work, released “*Orphan Care*,” a book on worldwide orphan care. The book is published through Stylus/Kumarian Press.

**Jean DeWitt**, executive director of Global Citizenship, received the Leon Goldstein Award from Crime Stoppers, which recognizes a citizen who has made a significant contribution to fighting crime in the community.

**Aaron Gillette**, associate professor of social sciences, was named one of six recipients to receive the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association Travel Grant.

Staff Council Excellence Awards were given to **Roberto Romo**, **Christine Stempinski** and **Kevin Dorsey**. Several other staff members received Academic Awards and Service Awards for five, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of service at UHD.

## From Student to Professor

**T**oni Hoang is an expert on the University of Houston-Downtown experience. This assistant professor of communication also is a UHD alumna.

“I chose UHD as a student because it was recommended to me by my father, an alumnus, and it afforded me an environment that was conducive to success,” Hoang said. “The small class sizes and one-on-one interactions between professors and students really motivated me. And those same characteristics also are why I chose to return to UHD as a professor.”

Hoang’s father, Lindsay E. Siriko, immigrated to the U.S. from Thailand in 1969 as a student in search of greater higher-education opportunities. He earned an associate degree from South Texas Junior College, which would become UHD, and later received a bachelor’s and master’s degree in criminal justice from other universities.

“My father encouraged me to consider this growing university and it was the turning point in my academic career,” she said.

Hoang graduated from UHD in 1999 with a bachelor’s degree in humanities because at the time UHD only offered a minor in communication. Hoang fell in love with the communication discipline and after several years in the workforce, decided to pursue a master’s and doctoral degree in order to teach in higher education. She joined the UHD faculty in 2008 and



has seen the school and communication program evolve and flourish.

“Today, our department has one of the largest number of majors in the university and we just continue to grow each year,” she said. Hoang not only teaches in the department, she also directs the communication internship program and is the degree coordinator.

“I’m motivated to be involved because of the time I spent at UHD as a student,” Hoang said.

“I know how important professors and internships are to students and I want to encourage them all to take advantage of everything their departments have to offer. I am more able to promote the services and benefits of my department and UHD when I’m as involved as I am.”

Hoang also conducts research, focused on a unique area: health and risk communication. During one study, funded by a National Science Foundation grant, Hoang and her colleagues examined hurricane warning messages and people’s physiological responses to them.

While Hoang enjoys her research and finds working with colleagues from across the country very rewarding, she also appreciates her responsibilities and experiences at UHD.

“I truly believe in this university and faculty,” she said. “Our faculty see the complete vision of UHD and always are looking for ways to help students and enhance their educational experience. I can see how much our students benefit from that level of commitment.”

# UHD magazine

A publication of the University of Houston-Downtown

[www.UHD.edu](http://www.UHD.edu)

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