Gender neutral restrooms coming soon?

Student Government Association is introducing a bill to push for gender-neutral/family restrooms. According to the SGA members and officers introducing the bill, this will benefit students with families, students who do not conform with binary gender classifications and students with disabilities.

(continued on page 2)
The G2C Pilot Process will allow faculty and staff to analyze students' and institutional performances in lower division gateway courses.

by Elizabeth Padgett
Web Content Editor

The John N. Gardner Institute chose UHD out of only twelve institutions across the nation to participate in the Gardner Institute’s Gateway to Completion (G2C) process.

The G2C is a process that allows faculty and staff to analyze students’ and institutional performances in lower division gateway courses. The Gardner Institute created this process with guidance from the G2C National Advisory Committee, which is composed of experts of higher education organizations, policy makers, and scholars.

“Gateway courses enroll large numbers of undergraduate students,” Drew Koch, Executive Vice President of the Gardner Institute said. “Research studies show that students who do not succeed in gateway courses are significantly less likely to complete their stated programs of study and they also are less likely to complete college degrees anywhere.”

The G2C program was developed in order to combat the traditional model of courses, typically designated for first and second year students, that have served to “weed out” students rather than to promote success.

“UHD has made improving student success its top priority and we recognize the crucial role barrier courses play,” Bill Waller, Ph.D., and Associate Dean of University College at UHD said. "We are excited to be a part of G2C and work with experts at the Gardner Institute. The impact of our participation with G2C and the lessons we learn will ultimately benefit students in many courses beyond those chosen for the project." President of the Gardner Institute, John N. Gardner said in his January 7 “Looking Ahead to 2014” address that "As the originator of the concept of a ‘first-year experience,’ I have seen multiple meanings develop in its name. But, the work to improve success of first-year students has not been in the domain of the college experience where they have the highest failure rates: gateway courses. So I and my colleagues in our Institute will be trying to further ratchet up a clarion call that the academy needs to be paying much more attention to gateway courses.”

Restrooms continued from page 1

rooms already on campus and have signage that would formally designate the facility as being "family/gender-neutral". Eight in total: two in every building, including the UHD-Northwest at Lone Star College-University Park (20515 SH 249, BLDG 12).

The bill – which is officially called SENATE RESOLUTION SR-2014JAN10 – is meant to protect transgendered and gender-nonconforming students. Under duress, students have refused to use restrooms on campus or they travel away from the campus to use a safe restroom. Reportedly, students have even faced harassment while using the restrooms on campus.

As Sharp pointed out during our phone interview, “it’s a discriminatory practice” and he is striving to rectify it. "There is no need for students, having all paid the same amount of tuition, to have to encounter this type of harassment and discomfort," said Sharp.

But Sharp and the SGA are also confident that this idea will benefit everyone; that this issue goes beyond the scope of sex and is a largely pragmatic effort that will ultimately help a wide range of UHD students.

In a television interview with KHOU 11 News regarding the issue, SGA Representative John Locke, mentioned that “there are a lot of single-parent families that go to school here that need adequate resources.” A designated family restroom would be good for them. Also, there are many differently-abled students who require the work of caretakers/as-sistants. If their caretaker is of a different gender, a gender neutral facility would be a great asset.

We asked Sharp if he has faced any opposition to this proposal. He says so far people have been fully comfortable with the idea and, furthermore, many UHD faculty and staff have also advocated SGA’s resolution. Sharp says it’s a matter of “educating people on what ‘gender neutral’ really means” and that this bill will ultimately show UHD’s commitment to diversity.

“UHD is a university of acceptance and a university that is proud of the diversity within it.”
The World Trade Center: A bittersweet commemoration

9/11 Memorial in the footprint of the fallen WTC is a fitting tribute to the dead, but other sites in the vicinity of Ground Zero put tragedy in context.

NEW YORK -
by Ted Shull
News Editor

Millions of Americans are drawn to the site where almost 3,000 men, women and children perished on the clear, sunny morning of September 11, 2001. The city of New York has made sure visitors and locals have a place to go to pay tribute to the feeling of national loss. The tickets were free, with only a suggested donation of ten dollars. Because of the throngs of people clamoring to enter, there was a three hour wait in the freezing New York winter wind.

When approaching ground zero, one's vision is immediately drawn to the massive 104-story construction site of the new World Trade Center building, however scattered across several blocks there are several other museums, monuments and reminders of the most damaging attack on U.S. soil by foreign invaders in our 200-plus year history.

Directly across the street from the memorial ticket office stands St. Paul's Chapel, opened in 1766. "President George Washington prayed there following his first inaugural address in New York and his pew was used for treating the sore and tired feet of relief workers," explained tour guide Denise Gonzales as she told visitors that one pew at St. Paul's holds a particular significance in the nation's history.

The chapel suffered not even one broken window or misplaced brick as the twin towers collapsed directly across the street. It served as a safe haven for many fleeing the tumbling debris. Later, thousands of volunteers worked around the clock to provide solace, comfort, and care for 2,000 rescue workers and first responders.

"Volunteers from over 150 nations came to St. Paul's immediately after the tragedy to assist in rescue and support efforts," said Gonzales.

One block away from St. Paul's chapel, the survivors of those lost in the tragedy have opened their own museum to commemorate and celebrate the lives of their loved ones. This somber display tells the personal story of all the victims through the private and public artifacts that are on loan for visitors to see.

As you enter the main hall of the building, you immediately see a floor to ceiling panoramic view of Manhattan and beyond from the 109th floor of the North Tower, as it must have looked before the unthinkable happened. There is a very recognizable section of aircraft windows from American Airlines flight 11 that crashed into the North Tower and was recovered from the debris. A United Airlines Boarding Pass in pristine condition that was discovered in the field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania where flight 93 crashed, and a collection of World Trade Center keys and dishes from the Windows on the World Restaurant near the top of the tower combined with frantic audio clips of police and firefighter communication produced a spine-tingling jolt of what reality those trapped were faced with.

The next exhibit shows the huge amount of missing persons fliers that were posted in the area by frantic loved ones and individual snapshots and mementos of all the dead, leaving the curious visitor feeling a connection with both those who died and their families who go on without them.

After finally gaining admission to the official memorial site just after dark, tourists were momentarily stunned by the sheer beauty of the two masterfully designed reflection pools that now stand in the sacred footprint of the north and south towers. The lighting and inscription of the names of all those lost on the walls surrounding the two pools was beautiful on its own and seemed like the perfect finish after spending a few hours exploring the life and death of all those gone, but never forgotten. The official 9/11 Memorial Museum will open between the two reflection pools later this spring.

Hydration stations

continued from page 1

promoting a healthier and eco-friendly lifestyle. With support from students via a survey sent out in November of last year, plans went into motion regarding the stations.

Students have shown their support and approval of the hydration systems through SGA’s official Facebook page. The hydration system has received over 100 Likes and is being shared throughout the social media page to inform fellow UHD students and alumni of the progress the school is having.

SGA asks for students to stay tuned for an upcoming hydration station water bottle campaign after the installations are complete.

You can look for the hydration stations across from the SGA mural on the third floor of the Main building near the water fountains.
At what cost?

In an effort to present an independent image to the world, Russia has passed legislation that has resulted in numerous human rights violations as they anticipate to gain 65 billion dollars in profit from the Sochi Olympics this February.

by Dana Ayres
Staff Writer

It’s 2014 and the Winter Olympics is almost upon us. Russia is trying to present an independent and improved image to the world in light of the Sochi Olympics in February. Part of purifying the Russian image is grounded in the anti-gay legislation that was passed in the Russian Duma.

This legislation clearly violates Russian LGBTI constitutional rights in Russia. Passage of the anti-gay legislation has also opened the door to various human rights violations—violations that Russia has paid fines for in the European human rights arena, but refuses to change internally. When it comes to Russia’s violation of LGBTI rights in its own land, it exists in a schizophrenic state. Russia wants to comply with rules on the world stage to preserve its reputation and to secure its economic future. However, it rejects any of what it sees as Western hegemonic decadence within its borders. Within its anti-gay legislation, that Western decadence is described as “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations.” This legislation is targeted at Russian youth and erroneously classifies homosexuality alongside pedophilia. This legislation has led to numerous human rights violations and stigmatizations that vilify LGBTI people, organizations and advocacy groups within Russia. This legislation is also catalytic for homophobic violence. One may see all this as a clear opportunist attempt of a homophobic leader, Vladimir Putin, Russia’s leader, to flex his muscles as well as make money for the Russian coffers, as well.

According to reports, Putin recently pardoned people he considered to be “hooligans” (30 Greenpeace activists and a few others) for the sake of gaining favor on the World stage as a reasonable and rational leader. However, in politics, there is usually an ulterior motive. In this case the motive is 65 billion dollars. That is, roughly, what Russia stands to gain in profit from the Sochi Olympics this year. American companies, like Coca-Cola, are under immense pressure to boycott the games and this puts them in a difficult position. Coca-Cola, as an entity, doesn’t tolerate homophobia, but it has a vested interest in their LGBTI employees in general, the Winter Olympics, in particular. If they engage in the Sochi Olympics, down the line, they would be doing a grave disservice to their LGBTI employees in Russia—a land that stifles and systematically destroys the very humanity of LGBTI people. How sad!

One could recall the Beijing Olympics, where 1.5 billion of its residents were reported to have been evicted against their will in order for China to host the 2008 Olympics. These people were given no notice, no compensation, and were inconveniently displaced from their jobs and families so that the country could build stadiums to accommodate the games.

I understand that the Olympics are a time-honored, world-wide tradition that has been carried on for centuries. The games represent unity and peaceful competition across all human lines in the face of cold politics and inhumanity. However, like everything else that starts out goodly intended, it ends up becoming a money-making, commercialized and highly politicized event. (One can lump Christmas in the same category!) The very people who are supposed to reap the goodness of this peaceful display of humanity suffer as a result of it. I believe humanitarians have to get back to the roots of what the Olympics are truly supposed to represent. Perhaps we can make the right decisions concerning the human rights violations and outright greed committed on its behalf.

Do you agree or disagree? We want to know -- gives us your two cents about this topic. Email us at datelineldowntownweb@yahoo.com. Please refer to the "Submission Policy" on page two before sending us your response.

Mayor Annise Parker’s Inaugural Address

01/02/14

I love this city! Thank you for trusting me to continue in what I believe is the best job in America. To serve you is my greatest honor. I remain excited to go to work each and every day.

As Mayor, I am the public face of our city. I celebrate the triumphs and articulate the pain. I call protests and invite action.

I must have the big picture, knowing where our ship is sailing, the route we take, and the dangers we may face. I must be able to convey these to the dedicated men and women who make our city run, and to you, the Houstonians who depend upon our work, so that together we face the dangers as they come.

But the details matter as well and here is where the nearly 21,000 women and men who are our city workforce perform the complex choreography that is a city in motion. All cities have challenges, and sometimes fail, but we wouldn’t be America’s 4th largest city unless, day in and day out, our city team comes together to make Houston a better, more livable place.

People come to cities seeking; education, entertainment, employment, emancipation, companionship.

For all the reasons someone may have come here, I believe that there are shared values that make us Houstonians, regardless of race, creed or color, who are born whatever our native language, however we came to be here.

My family taught me to accept responsibility. To live with integrity. To work hard. To finish a job begun. To contribute time, talent and treasure to my community.

Those are the same values on which Houston was founded, and the values that continue to shape our future. But those values are wrapped in optimism that this is a city in which anything is achievable, shaped by men and women from every corner of the world who come believing it is possible for anyone to succeed here, and imbedded in the shared truth that all are welcome in this most diverse of cites.

But diversity by itself is chaos. Diversity where ideas meet and those seeds germinate can be a garden of plenty. To ensure the full participation of every Houstonian in the business and civic life of this great city, it is time to pass a comprehensive nondiscrimination ordinance that adds sexual orientation and gender identity to the protections most Houstonians take for granted.

To protect the vast economic engine that sustains us, it is time for all of us in this region to come together and take concrete steps to create storm protections for our coastal communities, whether the Centennial Gate or the Ike Dike.

Two years ago I announced that we would tackle homelessness in ways never done before. Our success has been such that I say today that it is time for us to eliminate chronic homelessness within the next two years.

Houston is a city that invests in itself, so that business can flourish and families can build their lives. We will continue to rebuild Houston. It is time that you see real progress in the street and drainage system improvements.

Each time I have stood before you, I asked for your prayers. I asked for your patience. And I asked for your perseverance. I ask this again, for all of us who serve you as your city workforce.

We rise or fall together. We succeed or fail together. The ordinary becomes extraordinary when you add something extra.

A great city imagines its own bright future—and sets about to make that happen.

Please join me as I continue to imagine all the possibilities of our great city.

Thank you.
Top 2013 stories that are important to you

by Theodore Shull
Staff Editorial

The past year has been filled with a constant stream of news which can make it difficult to sort out what information is most relevant to you. I remember my first semester at UHD after transferring from another university and I had a difficult time finding my way around the buildings, let alone understanding what was going on in the student body or the school administration. I would pick up a new edition of Dateline Downtown every time I saw one and rely on friends, who were usually just as clueless as I was, for any question I had. In this first spring edition of our newspaper, I decided to culminate the most impactful news stories for all students in one easy to read article and just for your information we always invite our audience to ask questions or add comments to the information we present to you.

Metro Light Rail System Expansion Program

On December 21, 2013 the Metro North Line opened, extending the downtown light rail system an additional six miles north, from UHD's doorstep onto a partly elevated system that ends at the Northside Commons, north of the Interstate 610 loop. UHD students and faculty who live south of campus have long enjoyed the option of commuting to school by light rail, instead of having to fight over limited parking spaces. The City of Houston has announced plans to extend this line eventually to reach George Bush Intercontinental Airport and F.M. 1960 Road. A criminal justice junior who lives north of Beltway 8 commented that "instead of waiting up to an hour or more in traffic each morning, a light rail system could help students help him save money on gas, parking and the hassle of having to fight over limited parking facilities on campus."

While this seems like a win-win situation for student commuters, one frequent rider, a social sciences faculty member remarked that "the northbound intersection near the Shea building can become so bottlenecked with traffic waiting to cross the tracks that emergency vehicles with sirens blaring can't even get through as quickly" and that the city "may be less concerned with diverting pedestrian traffic safely away from these new transportation systems and may be more concerned with creating attractive new transportation technologies to spur more energy and gas business to move operations locally."

Student Parking Changes

Student government representatives have also worked relentlessly to achieve a remedy for our current student parking nightmare by lobbying city council officials and Houston Mayor Anise Parker to renovate and upgrade the 30-year old metered parking facilities underneath the Interstate 10 overpass. Because of poor lighting and the distinction of city and university property some students have been reluctant to park there, especially after dark, even though these spots are much safer than the various school buildings than the permit-only student lots. Student Government President Isaac Valdez reported that "the city of Houston has allocated over $500,000 to upgrade three public lots frequented by students with new lighting, better cement paving, and extra security."

Hiring Discrimination Research

A UHD-authored research study on pregnancy and hiring discrimination, conducted jointly between Rice University, George Mason University, and the University of Houston Downtown was featured on the Huffington Post news site on Dec. 16, 2013 and received critical acclaim for producing tips forpregnant women to overcome negative stereotypes in the hiring and interview process.

The study's lead author, Whitney Botsford Morgan, an assistant professor of management at UHD added, "we know this type of discrimination exists. This research helps us understand what can be done to reduce it," she said.

"Statements that refute stereotypes about being inflexible and lacking commitment are particularly effective."

Gender Neutral/Family Restrooms

A recent proposal to convert some existing UHD restroom facilities to gender-neutral / family restroom status has been sent to the entire UHD student body for approval by the Student Government Administration. SGA President Isaac Valdez said that "this is not a gay, lesbian or transgender initiative, but instead it is a symbolic gesture to make all students feel welcome."

Valdez said that "from his perspective it shows UHD's commitment to student welfare by not just talking about diversity, but actually taking action. That if only one student feels confused about his or her sexuality or gender then the school should attempt to accommodate that student."

The UHD proposal suggests converting only two restrooms in each building, and completing the renovations during spring semester breaks and days that classes are not in session. After the announcement from UHD officials, other area businesses also bought into the concept and plan to implement their own gender-neutral restroom facilities.

$10,000 Bachelors Degree Program

Another top choice for news impacting college and university students is a plan announced by Texas Governor Rick Perry to create a statewide $10,000 bachelors degree program. Perry pushes all state public institutions to offer a relatively affordable bachelors degree, as nationwide student loan debt climbs to over one-trillion dollars and tuition prices rise, on average, by almost 450 percent since 1988 alone. Also, since many students are seeking graduate-level degrees in order to be competitive in today's job market, this program would help limit the amount borrowers have to earn a bachelor's degree. In 2013, UHD saw an increase in graduate enrollment by almost 30 percent.

Increase Deportations of Undocumented Immigrants

Fiscal year 2013 has seen a dramatic spike in deportations of undocumented immigrants, according to Houston Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. The United States has deported 386,644 people in the past year alone, reaching historic levels. According to Immigration and Customs Enforcement statistics, less than half of those were apprehended within the interior U.S., and only 82 percent were convicted of prior criminal activity. These figures seem confusing for college-aged voters and Hispanics who overwhelmingly helped to re-elect President Obama in return for promises of immigration reform. With current immigration reform bills stalled in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, the only branch of the federal government which could have ordered increases in deportations is the executive branch, which propelled 24.4 million to 24.6 million by January 2014. These statistics deserve a more certain future for both themselves and their families. Representative Lee has promised to do more for Houston and national residents who live everyday under the constant threat of deportation.

Do you agree or disagree? We want to know -- gives us your two cents about this topic. Email us at datlinedowntownweb@yahoo.com. Please refer to the “Submission Policy” on page two before sending us your response.
Eddie Trunk coming to Houston in February

After popular demand, legendary radio DJ Eddie Trunk will be hosting a live show on Saturday, February 8 at the Concert Pub North in Houston, Texas.

by Juan A. Hernandez 
Sports Editor

There is no other DJ in the radio world today that has maintained the credibility that Eddie Trunk has for the past 30 years. The hard rock and heavy metal community know him very well and fans around the world have been embracing Eddie’s legacy through his Sirius XM radio show “Trunk Nation” on Hair Nation, “Friday Night Rocks with Eddie Trunk” on New York’s Q104.3, and VH1 Classic’s critically-acclaimed TV show, “That Metal Show.”

For over 30 years, Eddie has been promoting his love for hard rock and heavy metal, and has done so by not being a hit-oriented DJ like most in the radio business. Before his first stint in radio, Eddie wrote album reviews in high school for credit which quickly elevated him to landing his first gig as a DJ at a local community college. Since then, Eddie has worked as an employee in the music business while still doing radio, such as being hired by Megaforce Records and eventually becoming Vice President of the label. Megaforce is recognized for hiring Metallica and Anthrax, who went on to find commercial success and become 2 of the “Big 4” of Thrash Metal.

During his time at Megaforce, Eddie was credited executive producer for some of his favorite bands that were on the label, such as Anthrax, Raven, TT Quick, Manowar, Overkill, King’s X, Prophet, Icon and Ace Frehley. Much to Eddie’s credit, he was the catalyst in bringing back Ace Frehley into the music scene since leaving KISS in 1983. Aside from radio, Eddie has been taking part in the TV show “That Metal Show” alongside fellow friends and comedians Don Jamieson and Jim Florentine, who share the same taste in music as Eddie. The TV show, which debuted 2008, has served as a visual extension of Eddie’s radio shows and has since been upgraded to the one hour format. With 12 seasons under their belt, the crew is ready to debut their 13th season starring on January 18 in New York City, with new and returning guests from the hard rock and heavy metal community.

No stranger to writing, Eddie recently released his second book titled “Eddie Trunk’s Essential Hard Rock and Heavy Metal Volume II,” after the success of his critically acclaimed debut book “Volume I.” The first book features bands that have had mainstream success accompanied with Eddie’s introduction to those bands, full discography’s, Eddie’s favorite songs and stories that include his relation to some of those bands. “Volume II” is simply an extension of “Volume I,” and features bands that were overlooked in the first book, including obscure bands that people might not have known about.

Eddie Trunk is an example of an individual with a strong passion for music both old and new, and has established himself as the person that he is today through hard works in writing, radio, and television. His success has enabled him to earn the trust of many musicians in the hard rock and heavy metal world and fans alike. Whether he is playing obscure Riot songs to the new Winery Dogs album, Eddie Trunk’s knowledge on the subject is beyond incredible and impressive.
Houston Texans hire new head coach Bill O’Brien

The Houston Texans have made drastic changes within its organization by hiring former New England Patriots and Penn State Nitanny Lions coach Bill O’Brien as the new head coach.

In light of the Texans disastrous performance in the 2013 NFL season, head coach Gary Kubiak was finally relieved of his duties after suffering 14 straight losses with the Texans. This makes for the worst record in NFL history making the Texans the worst team in the 2013 NFL. This also spells humiliation for fans of the Texans, as they had been in the playoffs twice in the last 2 years.

Many were in favor for letting Kubiak go, as his decision for starting quarterback Matt Schaub was starting to enrage fans, and only placed Schaub with tremendous amount of pressure. Kubiak promised to get the team back on its feet when Schaub suffered an ankle injury and prompted the introduction of former University of Houston quarterback Casey Keenum. This introduction favored Keenum in his first game, but would then get in the pattern of having a bad game, and then a good one the next game. Perhaps the lack of experience was a major factor in Keenum’s bad games.

On November 3, coach Kubiak suffered a mild stroke on the field as halftime went underway. He was immediately treated in the hospital and doctors concluded that he did not suffer any permanent damage from the stroke. Defensive Coordinator Wade Phillips took over the head coach duties for the remainder of the game, and again after Kubiak was fired in December.

Many thought that Phillips could help the Texans win a few games as interim coach, even though the playoffs were clearly out of their sights for good. This proved nothing, as Wade Phillips was also let go in light of Kubiak’s firing.

The writing is now on the wall and the Texans owner made that perfectly clear after hiring former Patriots and Penn State coach Bill O’Brien as the new head coach for the Texans. O’Brien stated that he is willing to work with the Texans organization to help the team get back on track, and did just that by letting go some of the current Texans staff in favor of hiring new people.

O’Brien means business and has already named former Cleveland Browns and Kansas City Chiefs head coach Romeo Crennel as his new defensive coordinator, who also had stints with the Giants and Patriots serving under their head coaches.

Having coached a successful team like the Patriots, the quest for success is now O’Brien’s primary goal, and will definitely do everything in his power to make the Texans franchise something that Houston fans can be proud of in the years to come. 2-14 records cannot be the fans’ perception of the team, and the hunt for the playoffs will be a hard task to achieve.

Student Health Corner

Weight management and healthy lifestyle for 2014

increase metabolism are often caffeinated products that are not healthy for your body, and should NOT be taken to lose weight and improve health.

The best approach to weight management is a systematic mix of exercise and dietary changes that are reasonable to start and maintain. It is a great time in your life to improve your eating and increase physical activity habits in your daily routine.

STEP 1: IMAGINE A NEW HEALTHIER YOU.

Imagine yourself looking and feeling healthier and with more energy. How can you be more active and eat healthier foods? Think about some of the small changes you can make now.

STEP 2: CREATE A PLAN.

What’s stopping you? Identify your roadblocks and how you will overcome them. No time? Go for a short walk before work, during your lunch break, or after dinner. Don’t want to give up your favorite meal? Make it in a healthier way. For example, try grilling or roasting, rather than frying.

STEP 3: PUT YOUR PLAN IN MOTION.

Act on your plan and make the changes you set out to achieve. Try fun activities like dancing or biking. Plan time into your schedule to use the UHD gym. Ask your family and friends to motivate and support you. Track your progress and reward yourself for meeting your goals.

STEP 4: ADD VARIETY AND STAY MOTIVATED.

Congratulations! Your healthy habits are now part of your routine. Do not be discouraged if you slip up once in a while. Keep going! Challenge yourself. Think of ways to add other healthy habits to your life.

If you are ready to change your habits and maintain a healthier lifestyle, there are many resources for you. UHD Student Health Services employs nurse practitioners that can help to evaluate your overall health and weight management needs. Please visit 445 South or call 713-221-8137 to schedule an appointment. There are many online resources available. Contact the Weight-control Information Network (WIN) for FREE information.

Weight-control Information Network. Toll-free number: 1–877–946–4627 | Email: WIN@info.niddk.nih.gov | visit the web site at: win.niddk.nih.gov Make 2014 your best year yet!

Eileen Giardino, PhD, FNP-C, RNC Nurse Practitioner, UHD Student Health Services
14 New Year’s Resolutions for college students

by Jessica Hernando
Feature Editor

The beginning of the year marks the perfect start to turn over a new leaf. Here are 14 resolutions to help guide you to start 2014 out right.

1. Work out regularly
   It is ironic that the most common resolution also happens to be the one that is most frequently broken. Make a promise to yourself to follow through with your work out goals this year! Exercise does not have to be a burden - some chores. Find activities you enjoy that gets your heart pumping. Don’t overwhelm yourself. Start with realistic, achievable goals and build them up as you move forward. Set certain times and days in your week to work out. Commit to them and motivate yourself to keep on going!

2. Eat healthier
   To healthily lose weight and to maintain a healthy lifestyle, this resolution must be a must. You do not know how much you may be missing out on when you decide to skip. Do not let your money go to waste and aim for perfect attendance this year.

3. Save your money
   Being a "broke college student" is inevitable but that does not mean you should live up to the title. Manage your money and save up! You never know when you may need a little extra cash. Set weekly and monthly budgets for yourself. Be thrifty. Most important, resist the temptation to splurge on things you do not aren’t necessary.

4. Talk to your professors
   Believe it or not, professors love it when you give them a visit. Though it may be daunting, do not be afraid to drop by and ask them any questions you may have. Their office hours are created just for you so you might as well utilize them.

5. Go to class
   To be academically successful, this resolution is a must. You do not know how much you may be missing out on when you decide to skip. Do not let your money go to waste and aim for perfect attendance this year.

6. Be active in your education
   Attendance is the first step but it only goes so far. Learn for the sake of learning and gaining knowledge, not just to get the grade. Ask questions when you do not understand something. Become confident with the material. Hand in nothing but your best work. Your education is coming out of your pocket so make the most out of it.

7. Manage your time
   This resolution goes hand-in-hand with one phrase: do not procrastinate! Your time is valuable so make the effort to get things done as soon as possible. Do not wait until the last minute to start studying or to write a paper because this will only hurt you in the long run. Get a calendar, mark important dates and plan your time accordingly. In the words of Jefferson, “Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.”

8. Get organized
   Organization is yet another one of the keys to academic success. Make sure you keep important books, papers and files in places you can find them. Keep an agenda, and write out assignments, deadlines and to-do lists. This will significantly reduce confusion, anxiety and stress.

9. Volunteer
   Volunteering opportunities are present all year round, on and off campus. Find time to volunteer a couple of hours each month. Giving back to the community will give you the chance to take your mind off the hectic college life while helping out people who may need it the most.

10. Be friendlier
   It does not cost a thing to be a little friendlier and kinder. Even the smallest of compliments and gestures have ways of brightening up people’s days. Make new friends! You never know who you will meet and who will make a difference in your life.

11. Get out of your comfort zone
   Challenge yourself to step out of where you feel most comfortable. Take an elective completely unrelated to your major. Attend interesting seminars. Try new cuisines. Join a club. Go to school events. Take a chance and embrace the opportunities presented to you all around campus.

12. Find time for yourself
   It is easy to get caught up in the fast, busy college life. Slow things down a bit and dedicate some time for yourself. Do what you enjoy to help you relax, de-stress and take your mind off things.

13. Do good deeds
   Be there for the friend who needs someone to talk to. Help your parents around the house. Pick up your little sibling from school. Teach a classmate who is having trouble in class. Give way to a fellow driver. Do good deeds and spread around the good karma because it will come right back to you in the most positive way.

14. Be optimistic
   Life will be hard. It will be stressful, imperfect and things will not go the way you plan them. This is to be expected but the most important thing is that you find the good within the bad. While negative thinking has a way of bringing out the worst in us, positive thinking has a way of helping us reach our goals and finding happiness and peace. You cannot change a situation, you can only change yourself and how you think about. Find optimism within the New Year as you live your life and strive to be the best that you can be.

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For advertising information, contact the Business office at 713 221 8275 or email us at thomasti@uhd.edu.

*Submissions should be no more than 300 words, include the author’s full name, phone number or email address, and affiliation with the University, including classification and major. Letters to the editor may be edited for space. They will be edited for spelling, grammar and malicious or libelous statements. All submissions become property of Dateline Downtown and will not be returned.
Two local journalists inspire viewers

by Vanessa Olivares
Staff Writer

ABC15 reporter Pooja Lodhia and CW39’s Maggie Flecknoe spoke about their careers and their advice to the students. Both journalists shared the same view when it came to advising students pursuing a journalism career.

“Work as hard as you can, because anybody can be on television. It doesn’t take anything special, only determination of how badly you want it,” said Lodhia.

Maggie Flecknoe replied, “Don’t give up and continue improving your writing skills such as writing on a blog and connecting with people in the media to develop a relationship so they can keep an eye for you.”

Pooja Lodhia joined KTRK as a general assignment reporter in the spring of 2012. She believes that every person has a story to tell and is honored to be able to do so. KTRK is not exactly known as a youthful station in the Houston market, but bringing Lodhia as a young reporter with energy can resemble and bring young viewers to ABC. She was born and raised in Louisiana, but her family resides here in Houston.

Flecknoe is a Houston-based television writer, producer and host of the nationally segment "The Online Dish" for Tribune and CW39 KJJA. She also performed on stage, film and was a voice-over actress. Flecknoe, a native of Colorado, usually dishes on entertainment news and weird news notes, and has done a number of anime films and even a few video games.

To catch Pooja Lodhia’s live reports check her Facebook or Twitter for her schedule and as well Maggie Flecknoe’s. Maggie’s Online Dish starts Monday through Friday mornings around 5:50 and 7:50 a.m. on CW 39.

UHD ranked third most affordable online college in Texas

by William Sharon
via uloop.com

In a perfect world, the answer would be “No, it does not.” Gay marriage should not be a controversial political issue, but because it is, college students are involved.

The number of college students who are directly affected by the legality of gay marriage is relatively low (just as the overall number of married college students is low), but when it comes to politics, our interest and involvement is anything but. Ultimately, the question boils down to the meaning of the word “affected.” For example, a person can care a great deal about starvation in third-world countries, though the issue may not directly “effect” him or her. He or she has the power to act upon how he or she feels (perhaps by donating money), regardless of actual involvement. Thus, it is not unreasonable that someone who is totally removed from an issue such as gay marriage may be able to decide to effect the issue, even if the issue does not directly affect him or her.

If, for example, a college student wants to support the rights of others, standing up for gay marriage is one way in which he or she may achieve this goal.

The problem is, the freedom to effect an issue should not extend to repression. If a college student is not directly affected by gay marriage, but disagrees with the institution for whatever misguided reason, then that student should not have the power to repress those people who are directly affected by gay marriage. It is not an issue of viewpoint, it is an issue of rights. I am not black, so what right do I have to limit the freedom of black people?

Some would argue that any governmental institution that they disagree with does, in fact, affect them, and therefore they should have a say in whether or not gay people should be allowed to marry, no matter their view. This is a common misconception, and frankly, it is why the legality of gay marriage is a controversial political issue to begin with. The reason this opinion is flawed is that political decisions are not directly affected by gay marriage. It remains “no.” Inherently, and as a representative body, college students are not affected by gay marriage. That is, they are not affected by gay marriage any more than the rest of society is. To some, it may mean the freedom to marry as they please, to others it may be a matter of complete indifference, and to yet others, it may be offensive on a visceral level or for religious or other reasons. A difference between college students and the rest of society, however, is that college students are traditionally a force that drives change. They often lead the protest that results in rejection of societal norms and adoption of new norms that their own children will be left to protest when they inherit the mantle of revolution. So, whether college students are affected by gay marriage in any way that differs from that of the general public is less the question than whether college students will take on the issue and drive its rhetoric. And if they do take it on, in what direction they will drive it.

Does gay marriage affect college students?

by Vanessa Olivares / Dateline Downtown

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Return to the
Feminism rings in Beyoncé’s self-titled album

by Alicia Callender
Feature Editor

Beyoncé made headlines due to her album. Some people oppose the concept, but a topic regularly mentioned is feminism. She tackles social issues, but central questions remain: Is this album about feminism? Is feminism in former albums?

By definition, feminism is an “organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.” Feminism has been mentioned before, but, ironically, there seems to be more discussion about it. Musicians are like artists: they produce a piece of work that comments on cultural standards. In fact, she speaks about body image in “Pretty Hurts,” and roles in relationships, in “Flawless.” Other topics focus on her experiences as a black female, but this is the problem. She used to able to speak to a wide audience, but has switched to the struggles of black females. This makes the response to this album strange.

This isn’t the first time her songs have tackled feminism. We recall the power of “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)” and “Run the World (Girls).” Her references to changes in her life are understandable. But these topics should not alienate her audience. Other artists, have reflected changes in their lives, while remaining loyal to their fans, like Taylor Swift, whose latest album, Red, reflects her emergence into young adulthood. Even her youngest fans can still listen to her music.

And the black female experience is not unique either. Many artists have commented on black females and relationships in their songs, without any reference to sex while subtly nodding to feminist issues. For example, Angie Stone tackles the existence of black womanhood alongside the recognition and support for the struggles of black men, in “Brotha.” Ella Fitzgerald playfully comments on relationships, between men and women, focusing on friendship or the possibility of more in “Can’t We Be Friends.”

Now some of her songs are not appropriate for a segment of her audience. She, like many celebrities, supports causes and helped promote Michelle Obama’s, Let’s Move, to fight obesity. She even commemorated this with a music video of students from a school, dancing alongside her, in it. Many of these kids are probably among some of her fans. One has to wonder, though, if the album would be a wise choice for any child under twelve years old.

Her appeal though is widespread and discussions about black females and feminism are necessary. But the topics in her songs are no longer appropriate and they have not added much to a discussion about womanhood. Most applauded her, but a common complaint has been the focus on particular details. People will continue to like her music, but there are lingering questions: At what cost is she willing to alienate a portion of her audience, who she may need when she releases future albums? And do the more explicit songs truly reflect a feminist slant?

Contact Lenses 101

by Francine Fluetsch
via uloop.com

Whether you are transitioning from glasses or having your first go at correcting your eyesight, contacts are definitely something that takes a bit to adjust to. Sure they are a pain in the butt, but I love them now, especially on days where I just really don’t feel like wearing glasses. Here are a few tips and tricks to help your transition go a bit smoother:

Getting them in:
So at the eye doctor, they have a “putting in contacts” lesson, but I decided to skip it since my mom wears contacts and she could just show me. Now what I didn’t think about was the fact that my mom has been wearing contacts for about 20 years, so her eyes are used to being opened and having fingers stuck in them. Mine on the other hand, weren’t at all. I watched in awe as my mom easily stuck the contact directly on her eye. My first attempt didn’t go so well. I wasn’t even close enough to touch my eye, and it was already trying to close, not wanting a finger and some foreign object invading its space. After four days of trying without success, I was about ready to give up and just stick with glasses. That is, until I saw a “how to” video on YouTube. Instead of sticking the contact directly on the center of the eye, the video said to look either left or right, and then put the contact on the white part of the eye. The contact will shift to the center by itself as you slowly blink. I screamed with excitement when I finally got it in for the first time. Here’s the link: How to put on and take off contact lenses.

Getting them out:
Now this might sound scary, at least it did for me, but getting them out is almost easier than putting them in. Gently put your finger on the tip of the lens and slide it to the white part of your eye, creating a crease in the lens. Use your fingers to slightly pinch the lens, and it will pop right out!

To color or not to color:
There are tons of really cool colored contacts to choose from, though the contacts feel a lot different. I tried this ocean blue color, which looked so cool, but I just couldn’t stand the contacts. They were bigger, and the color kept sliding up into my vision. The brand I tried was also more flimsy, and my eye doctor said I’d have to be really careful not to rip them out. Instead you shouldn’t get colored contacts, just that you should sample the brand before you get a pack of them! Essential things you should always have with you:

- Mini contact solution, contact case, eye drops, and glasses. I always have my glasses in case I lose a contact, and the rest of the stuff is handy for if your contact is being irritating or accidentally falls out (which thankfully doesn’t happen too often).

Make-up and contacts: I always put make-up on after my contacts are in, so no make-up will get on your eyes. If you have contact solution always streams down my face, which would totally smudge newly done make-up.
New Libsearch is now live at UHD

by Elizabeth Padgett
Web Content Editor

For those who did not take a winter 2013 course, you may not have noticed that UHD has a new Libsearch. The updated Libsearch was unveiled by the W.I. Dykes Library on Thursday, December 19, 2013. Systems Librarian Billy Hoya explains that the UHD Libsearch was not working for students and for that reason they were prompted to change it.

“The old Libsearch just didn’t work because we used a discovery service provided by Summon. When you see the Libsearch online, you see the branding but it’s not the actual name of the product,” said Hoya.

Like products, database services have technical problems that can create a difficult pathway for students to obtain the information they are searching for.

“Students would search for information and the program would generate some books, but not all of the books. Other times the records would be wrong,” said Hoya.

For incoming freshman and transfer students, the new Libsearch will be simple and easy to use. For advanced students searching for course specific material, such as psychology major students, the new Libsearch will allow for more complex search structures to refine their search.

“The new system we have now is provided by EBSCO and most students will be familiar with EBSCO’s format because we subscribe with them for various databases. The new Libsearch has that same format. It has the same feel that the EBSCO databases have,” explains Hoya.

The system is fairly new so the staff has not heard of technical problems, yet. At sight, there are only visually receptive problems being worked on such as cosmetic problems including the customization of the site.

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“One of the problems we were having earlier was that it wasn’t listing the campuses. It’s a problem because our program searches not only our library, but all of the libraries in the UH-System,” said Hoya.

UHD has used Summon as their database discovery service since 2009, but that service ended in 2013. Hoya compared the services provided by Summon to vendors who promise to do many things for their customers, but in the end have no results. The redesigned Libsearch promises to bring better search results and more functionality including:

• access to most of the library’s electronic and print collections with one search
• improved relevancy and sorting of results
• detailed records that provide easier access to all full text options
• ability to limit searches to databases and journals of a specific field
• APA or MLA citations for any document

“The idea is to provide one search box that covers approximately 200,000 physical books and videos in onsite library collections, as well as the 520,000 e-books and 92,000 e-journals in UHD’s online library,” said Assistant Director for Technical Services Steven Ring.

Ring also explained that in the past, students needed to pick from a long list of separate database like Academic Search Complete, JSTOR, LexisNexis, or FilmsOnDemand. With the new discovery service, the results will be placed under one place with links to the other databases.

As with any technology update, there can be minor glitches. The library asks that you report any problems or unexpected results to them via their Ask a Librarian form: http://answers.library.uhd.edu/q.php

You may also view a basic introduction to the new LibSearch at: http://prezi.com/hozyfernrmxs/welcome-to-uhd-libsearch/

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