

NEW ACCREDITATION STANDARDS MAY REQUIRE STUDENT COMMUNITY SERVICE

By Jason Rivas and Ted Shull
 Campus Life Editor/ Editor

UHD has maintained the integrity of its programs and students' degrees by earning and renewing its accreditation through various curriculum enhancements as the student-body evolves and existing programs are evaluated. New education techniques, known affectionately as Quality Enhancement Programs (QEP), are developed to maintain the University's reputation as an innovative and responsive learning environment. With the impending renewal nearing, a Community Engagement QEP, crafted to elevate the student body's writing and critical thinking skills, will be implemented with a wide array of consequences to follow.

A major concern within UHD are the students' writing and critical thinking skills. Reports indicate that students struggle with grammatical and writing mechanics, particularly transfer students from various community/junior colleges with lower standards than UHD. They indicate that one-third to one-half of all UHD students lack the necessary professional writing skills in-demanded for today's job market.

Several anonymous UHD professors have pointed out that today's text-friendly environments have deteriorated students' basic composition skills. In addition, UHD's core curriculum has, in comparison to other peer institutions, been identified as lacking in its writing-oriented components necessary to develop critical thinking abilities. The Community Engagement QEP hopes to boost composition and critical-thinking skills by aligning with both the mission and vision statements of UHD and provide students with high-impact practices such as service learning and community engagement. A recent trial run in a nearby area gave credence to further expand the QEP. Professors of particular classes would create a new agenda, with community engagement implemented as a portion of the overall curriculum for the class. Students would participate in local communities, and then write reflection pieces of their efforts for the professor to critique. The writing assignments would emphasize and improve their writing and critical

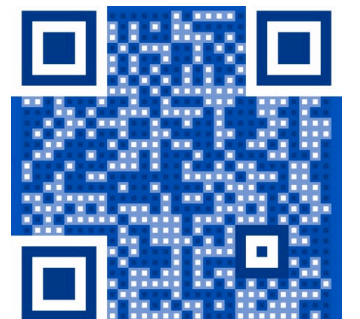
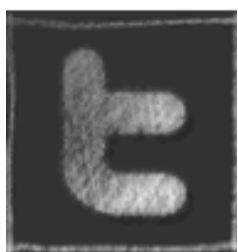


thinking abilities, crucial skills demanded into today's workforce.

However, the QEP does have some issues. Requiring students to participate in community engagement may be a deterrent for students with work and family issues that require their immediate attention and time, cause low retention rates in classes that require it, and "water-down" the positive effects of community service, as communities may feel as though they are being used by students for grades, instead of being served by students who willfully want to serve. The lack of student participation in the focus group that determined this QEP as best is also noteworthy, however, proponents argue that the QEP will build upon students' experiences within the community, build upon their resumes, and correlate to more job opportunities from employers seeking individuals with 21st century writing and humanities skills. This may also help facilitate more community involvement by students, outside classroom settings, and bring more positive public relations for the university.

Reaffirming the school's accreditation is essential for both the future of UHD and the students. With community engagement set as the new QEP, time will tell if the new direction will serve the university and student body's best interests.

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GLOBAL MARKET TUG OF WAR

By
Paul Burgman
By Joshua Burgman

As the price of crude oil continues its downward trajectory, consumers enjoy a break at the pump, while major oil producing countries and companies sweat over the loss of revenue and the new normal in the global oil market.

In 2014 the world saw the beginning of a steady decline in oil prices, the outcome of which has yet to be determined. In July of last year oil hovered around an average price of 107 USD per barrel, and six months later prices dropped 50% to under 50 USD per barrel. New technologies like hydraulic fracturing ("fracking"): the forcing open of fissures in rocks below ground by introducing liquid at high pressures, are seen as reasons for the decline. It is actually old economic fundamentals of supply and demand, and the protection of market share that bear the main responsibility for the fall in prices.

While discussing the global oil market with the Middle East Economic Survey, Saudi Arabian oil minister, Ali al-Naimi commented that "oil 'may not' trade at 100 USD again," while also adding that "it is not in the interest of OPEC [Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries] producers to cut their production, whatever the price is."

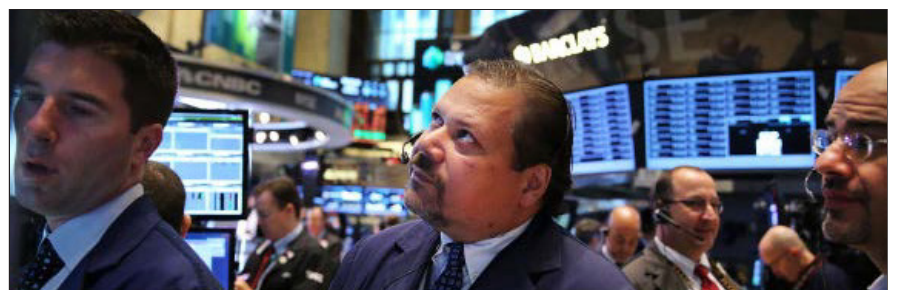
Al-Naimi's comments highlight a stark turnaround from the previous Saudi oil policy: stabilizing the price of oil when it fell to around ninety USD a barrel, by cutting production and allowing global oil prices to appreciate. Al-Naimi has convinced fellow OPEC member nations that it is not profitable to cut oil production no matter how low prices may

fall, instead vowing to protect their market share from other oil-producing countries. The Saudis are gambling with oil prices with the belief that OPEC can withstand a period of volatility within the global market, but can private investors and U.S. shale gas say the same?

For the average U.S. consumer, economists argue that the fall in prices at the pump is a de facto raise for the American middle class, allowing large portions of wages to be spent on consumption. However, the oil and gas industry has also been crucial to American high quality jobs in the energy sector. The recent fall in crude oil prices is anticipated to slow the accelerated pace of job creation Americans enjoyed in 2014.

In the Middle East, the fall in oil prices has caused alarm for oil-producing countries whose budgets are dependent on high oil revenues. In Persian Gulf Arab states, budget shortfalls have raised the possibility of a decrease in subsidies for gasoline, water and public housing. Increases in government spending that were promised to citizens to quell demands of the Arab Spring may now have to take a back seat to a petrol price war that has no end in sight; a price war that students at the University of Houston-Downtown welcome with open arms.

As students gear up for the new semester, the drop in oil, most notably gas prices, has come at the perfect time. There are books to be bought, parking passes to be paid for and an array of other expenses that go along with attending university. Lucky for students, the Saudis intend to protect their market share at all cost, and we do not mind letting them.



APPEALS CONTINUE OVER TEXAS ABORTION LAW

03

By Ryan McCall
Staff Reporter

Arguments will be heard this month over a lower court's ruling on key provisions of controversial Texas abortion laws. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals will hear opening remarks this month in New Orleans. In a 2-1 decision the court has already allowed the laws to go into effect.

Of interest are two provisions of H.B. 2 passed by the Texas legislature in 2013. These provisions would require abortion providers to have admitting privileges to a hospital within 30 miles of the clinic, as well as requiring centers to meet the minimum standards of ambulatory surgical centers, effectively shutting down more than half of Texas abortion clinics. A San Antonio district court stayed these provisions of the law calling them unconstitutional as they "place an undue burden" on women seeking an abortion. This is a key part of the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*. The district court opined that the law would "create a brutally effective system of abortion regulation."

While the Supreme Court declined to hear the case pending the appeals court ruling, they did place an injunction on certain parts of the law. The Court allowed the admitting privileges portion of the law to go into effect in all clinics with the exception of the McAllen and El Paso clinics. The ambulatory surgical center requirements were not put in effect statewide.



The law would close all but six abortion centers in Texas. These centers would be located in Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Fort Worth, and Austin, as they are the only centers in the state that would be able to meet the requirements set forth in the new law.

The result of this could be that more than 900,000 Texas women would live farther than 150 miles from the nearest clinic. If the clinics in McAllen and El Paso are allowed to close, it would leave no clinics west or south of San Antonio. If the law is challenged before the Supreme Court it could have a nationwide impact, possibly requiring all abortion clinics across the country to comply with the new regulations.

ISIS INFILTRATES U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND'S TWITTER AND YOUTUBE ACCOUNTS

by Elisa Gonzales
Staff Reporter

A January 12th tweet on the U.S. Central Command's Twitter profile announces the reactivation of their accounts, "We're back!" Earlier the same day, Centcom, the defense department's command responsible for U.S. military presence in Iraq and Syria, was forced to temporarily suspend its Twitter and YouTube accounts following what the organization has referred to as "an act of cybervandalism."

ISIS supporters hacked into Central Command's social media profiles posting ISIS-promoting videos and tweets. Despite speculation that Centcom's accounts were accessed through the Pentagon, both organizations have since reported that only their social media profiles were compromised. The hacker, calling itself Cyber Caliphate, continues a growing trend in which

ISIS has taken to social media to promote its agenda, enlisting what might be described as an unsettlingly sophisticated public relations strategy. The second half of 2014 saw the Islamic State's use of Instagram and Twitter expand its presence into the far-reaching realm of mainstream social media with internet memes. Demonstrating a thorough understanding of western popular culture, graphic design, and Photoshop, the rebel group released (and continues to release) photos that appropriate various qualities recurring in today's viral media such as cats and pop culture references. One of their most circulated and least blatantly violent Twitter campaigns has been a series of pictures of kittens with high-powered assault rifles. While Twitter and Instagram continue to delete accounts related to the extremist group, the nature of social media is such that anyone is free to join, and users are not held accountable for

explicitly violent behavior unless they are reported by fellow users or until they release widely circulated evidence of their own personally documented acts of terrorism.

The terms under which accounts are reviewed and suspended by Twitter are effective, but, tragically, fail to prevent the mass dissemination of evidence of extremist executions. It was reported that Friday, January 16th, an ISIS-affiliated Twitter account released photos and video of public executions of gay men in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. In an age when social media has solidified its presence among society and expanded its reach into every faction of global culture, the extent to which this extremist group's social media profiles are able to exist uninterrupted has allowed them to reach an unprecedented and terrifying level of mainstream exposure.



NEWS



By GeRoyal D. Jackson
Staff Reporter

In an unanticipated move, the United States Supreme Court announced on Friday, January 16th, that the court will make a decision on the historic issue of whether gay and lesbian couples across the country have the right to marry, and whether those marriages should be recognized by all the states in the country. The Supreme Court, or SCOTUS, as it is widely referred to by watchers of the court, will hear cases that are challenging the single appellate ruling from the United States Court of Appeals Sixth Circuit that upheld the ban restricting gay marriage in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

The justices of the court will hear oral arguments on the issue for two and a half hours in April, allotting the cases an extra hour and a half of oral argument, and setting a precedent for the significance of the case. SCOTUS passed on making an ultimate decision on same-sex marriage in 2013, instead striking down a section of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act that restricted U.S. federal interpretation of marriage to only recognize heterosexual marriages. The court simultaneously

ruled on a separate case that reinstated same-sex marriages in California.

In 2013, only 12 states and the District of Columbia permitted same-sex marriage. Since then, based on rulings of lower courts, that number has tripled to 36 states, leaving only 14 states where gay and lesbian couples are not permitted to wed, nor have their out-of-state union recognized by their home state. But with the 36 states that now allow same-sex marriage, that means that more than 70 percent of Americans now live in a state where gays can marry.

In October, Indiana, Utah, Wisconsin, Virginia and Oklahoma petitioned the Court to hear cases to maintain their gay marriage bans. The Supreme Court declined, allowing gay marriages to take place in those states.

The prevalence of the lower courts' rulings on allowing same-sex marriage seemed inevitable until the Sixth Circuit ban in November. Now with the lower courts in conflict on the validity of same-sex marriages and recognition, the Supreme Court is poised to make a definitive ruling that will set a nationwide precedent on gay marriage.

While there is still a chance that SCOTUS may punt on the issue yet again, national opinion is on the side of a

SUPREME COURT CAPITULATES, JOINS NATIONAL DEBATE ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

same-sex marriage victory. Even Attorney General Eric Holder signaled that he and the Obama Administration would urge the court, "...to make marriage equality a reality for all Americans."

With Texas being one of the remaining 14 states that neither permit gay marriage, nor recognize out-of-state gay marriages, the Supreme Court decision stands to offer a profound and potentially dramatic shift in attitudes in the state regarding gays and lesbians.

The news of the pending decision already has a few members of the University of Houston-Downtown student body excited. Although UHD Junior Joshua Burgman says he has no plans to marry anytime soon, he looks forward to the day that he can do so freely without any legal roadblocks.

"As an openly gay man, I believe that it is about time the [Supreme] Court decided to step in and settle the matter for good," he said. "If the United States wants to continue being a symbol of equality and justice, it would be wise to disavow laws that exclude large sections of the population."

The Supreme Court will announce their decision on the landmark issue when the current Supreme Court session ends in June.

CRASHES AS A RESULT OF CELL PHONE USE ON THE RISE IN HOUSTON

by Kayla Foster
Staff Writer

Houston, Texas is one of the worst cities in the nation in number of reported car accidents a year. Yet laws regarding cell phone usage still do not reflect a city pushing for change. The Texas Department of Public Safety website states that, "one in five crashes involves driver distraction." The DPS site also proclaims that, "drivers who use cell phones in their vehicles have a higher risk of collision than drivers who don't, whether holding the phone or using a hands-free device." Yet out of the hundreds of cities in Texas, only forty made the decision to pass an ordinance that prevents texting while driving.

Texas has zero laws preventing drivers from talking on their cellphones

while driving, but many local areas have made their own laws prohibiting or limiting the use; Houston is not one of



those cities. The only cell phone laws that Houston has in place are the ones that the state of Texas requires each city to have. These laws include: you cannot

talk on the cellphone during the first six months of having your learner's permit, you cannot talk on the phone if you are under the age of eighteen, you cannot talk on the phone while in a school zone, and lastly, you cannot talk on the phone while operating a school bus when children are present.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), the city of Houston was the top city in number of accidents in 2011, with a total of 38,538 reported accidents. And while the numbers are high, the cell phone laws (or lack thereof) in Houston remain the same. In the future, Houston may decide to revisit the idea to change the cell phone usage regulations, but right now, they remain few and far between.

RECENT ATTACKS IN PARIS STOKED NEW FEARS OF COORDINATED, 9/11 STYLE TERRORIST PLOTS

05

Je Suis Charlie:
Terror Strikes in Paris, as the World
Comes to Grips with a New Generation
of Terrorists
By GeRoyal D. Jackson

Paris, France

On Wednesday, January 7, 2015, two masked gunmen armed with assault rifles and an assortment of other weapons stormed into the offices of weekly French satirist magazine, Charlie Hebdo. While chanting, "Allahu Akbar" or "God is the Greatest" in Arabic, the gunmen fired up to 50 shots during the ensuing massacre, killing 12 people and wounding 11 others.

The gunmen also killed a French National Police Officer in the streets of Paris and fired on a police car, killing the officer during their subsequent getaway.

The motive for the Charlie Hebdo shootings, the worst terrorist attack in France in recent memory, was retribution for the satirical magazine's continued commitment to spoofing Islam. The magazine had been inundated with threats and actual attacks, specifically for several controversial cartoon depictions of the Islamic religion's prophet, Muhammad.

Thousands of Parisians defiantly took to the streets that night to hold a vigil for the victims of the massacre. A common theme and chant of the vigil was the slogan, "Je Suis Charlie," or "I am Charlie." The phrase has since become a global slogan that symbolically shows solidarity with the French and the victims of the tragedy.

Simultaneously, French authorities released the names of the men identi-

fied as the two shooters, brothers, Said Kouachi and Cherif Kouachi. The name of a third suspect, 18 year old Haymd Mourad, was also released, but that suspect turned himself in within hours, after seeing he had been identified as a suspect via social media.

The French President Francoise Hollande responded to the attacks by raising the nation's terror threat level to its highest level. Heavily armed French law enforcement fanned out across the country in a massive manhunt, mobilizing teams on foot, by air and in vehicles to locate the Kouachi Brothers. In addition, French forces began identifying and arresting dozens of other suspects related to the shootings.

The initial manhunt culminated on Friday January 9, when police engaged the Kouachis in a hostage situation at a signage company. The siege ended after nine hours, after police stormed the building and killed both assailants.

As the Kouachi hostage situation was winding down, French authorities encountered a new front to the terror attack, with another hostage situation at a kosher grocery store by a Kouachi accomplice, Amedy Coulibaly.

Coulibaly would later be linked to several point blank murders in the Paris area in the two days prior, including that of a female police officer. Coulibaly murdered four hostages before police stormed the grocery store and killed him during the raid. However, his female accomplice, 26 year-old Hayat Boumeddiene, escaped capture when the hostages ran from the store. At this time she is still at large.

In total, 17 people were killed during the three-day terrorist melee. In addition to the terror attacks, there were

also several reports of cyber-attacks on the websites of French government, businesses, universities, and religious groups. In the aftermath, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula has claimed responsibility for the attacks, and said, "it was years in the making."

Culminating in the week following, European countries have been boldly seeking out would-be terrorist cells in their countries. With Belgium launching a raid on January 15th that killed two suspects and "thwarted a major terrorist plot."

Many see the development of these younger terrorists as not only a generational shift but a watershed moment where global terrorism is returning to a more organized system, similar to the 9/11 terror attacks.

On January 11th, again in defiance of the terror attacks, more than 2 million people including French President Hollande, and over 40 other world leaders led a "Unity March" in Paris, to show solidarity after the attacks and to honor the victims.

Globally, and especially in the United States, American President Barack Obama, suffered harsh criticism for his absence during the unity march after CNN reporter Jake Tapper, admitted that he was embarrassed by his country's lack of visible presence.

The President was reportedly prevented from attending due to his Secret Service need for more planning and time to ensure the President's security. However White House spokesman Josh Earnest concedes that they could have been more visible. "I think it's fair to say that we should have sent someone with a higher profile."

NEWS



BATTLEGROUND WASHINGTON

By Joshua Burgman
Assistant Editor

With the final two years of his presidency on the horizon, President Obama and his administration scrambles to make major changes in public policy. So far the president's checklist is looking more like a compilation of campaign promises yet to be fulfilled. Immigration policies have been overhauled, the Keystone pipeline's construction remains in limbo and the president has just announced a new education plan that has a \$60 billion price tag.

In late 2014 the White House announced an immigration plan that would allow nearly 5 million undocumented immigrants to remain in the country indefinitely. Immediately republican lawmakers and voters alike responded in a resounding show of unity in denouncing the president's plan, while democrats praised the administration for what they say is leadership that is long overdue. In early 2015 as republicans took back control of congress; one of the first issues on their agenda was to drastically roll back what Mr. Obama has implemented through executive action.

During a series of closed-door meetings in early January, House GOP leaders drafted legislation that will boldly attack the administration's immigration plans. By attaching the amendments to the president's new immigration policy to a \$40 billion

spending bill that funds the Department of Homeland Security, republican leaders in the House are trying to force the president's hand. The House bill funds DHS through the end of February 2015.

Some republican lawmakers cringed at the thought of attaching the amendments to the president's immigration plans to a DHS funding bill. It's a move; they say which sets the party up for failure by setting up a potential government shutdown sparring between democrats and republicans once February arrives. "We have to keep D.H.S. funded, it's as simple as that," said Peter King, the republican member from New York.

Also on the president's list of things to accomplish before the end of his tenure at the White House is the issue of the Keystone XL Trans-Canadian pipeline. The Keystone pipeline came to fruition in the second Bush administration, but quickly became a problem for Mr. Obama once in office. Since then, the administration has tried very hard to stall when coming to a final decision regarding the pipeline's future. Initially Mr. Obama asserted that the pipeline could not move forward until a State Department review of the project was complete. The State's review was then put on hold because of a case under review by the Nebraska Supreme Court; which was deciding on the fate of the pipeline's pathway through that state. In January the Nebraska Supreme Court threw out the decision of a lower court, which

paved the way for the State Department's review to continue. Because of the decision made by the Nebraska court, significant pressure has been put back on the Obama administration to move forward with the plans for construction of the pipeline. After the court's decision, the House voted 266-163 in favor of Keystone XL. "Finally, it's time to start building," said Speaker of the House John A. Boehner. But during a press briefing aboard Air Force One en route to Tennessee, White House spokesman Eric Schultz reiterated veto plans made by the president if any such bill crosses his desk. "The President believes that the process should unfold at the State Department and that any legislative end-run around that process is misguided, and he will veto that bill." Following his trend of introducing new policies that positively affect the middle class; in a speech meant as a preview to the President's annual State of the Union address, Mr. Obama announced an education plan that will make two years of community college free for "students who are willing to work for it." The President's new initiative is modeled after a new program recently implemented by the state of Tennessee, and is expected to make two years of higher education the norm for American high school graduates. The plan is estimated to cost the federal government \$60 billion over a ten-year time span, and hopes to affect nearly 9 million students.



by Miguel Nunez
Staff Reporter

President Obama is intent on getting legislation passed to help illegal immigrants even if it means more Executive action but with Congress now fully in the control of the Republicans things might be changing when it comes to immigration policy. President Obama has been in favor of passing legislation that would benefit the children of illegal immigrants such as Ana Zamora, who upon turning 1 year old along with her family made their way to Dallas, Texas as undocumented immigrants. Now because of President Obama's immigration policy she has had the ability to graduate from college through a policy enacted by the Obama administration in June 2012. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA for short grants certain illegal immigrants who came to this country prior to turning sixteen like Ana did, to receive a renewable two-year work permit and exemption from deportation. According to Ana it is because of legislation like this that President Obama enacted through his Executive action that she was given this crucial opportunity to better her life and achieve what every child of undocumented citizen



wishes, which is to live the American Dream. That is why in some circles children of these undocumented immigrants are even sometimes called DREAMers, because they are chasing the American Dream.

According to MSNBC, Ana went on to say about the DACA that, "The program adds to who I am, yet it is not what defines me, it's truly life changing, it's a blessing. I don't have to worry on a daily basis what will happen to me for now."

Legislation like this though will likely find challenges in the near future. With the Republicans making a brutal victory sweep in the midterm elections things are not looking good for undocumented immigrants. Republicans are so passionate about going against President Obama's immigration policy that they are even taking a hostage. The Department of Homeland Security which ensures the safety of all U.S. Citizens within the U.S.A. needs funding and Repub-

licans are using the funding bill for Homeland Security as a an excuse to force the president's hand. Either the president can go against his whole immigration policy or the Republicans will cut funding for Homeland Security when it ends in February. Fortunately all this is more for show than anything else. Since the president is in favor of his own immigration policy he will veto anything the Republicans throw at him.

Yet every undocumented citizen and every child of undocumented citizens that is bold enough to use the title of DREAMer should be aware of what exactly is in the bill concocted by the Republicans. For example some parts of DACA could be undone if the Republicans can get their bill passed. Certain actions would still be possible for the children of undocumented immigrants such as being able to apply to the deferred-action program, but their application would not be processed because of the restrictive funding.

All this of course is only the beginning. Undocumented immigrants and all those that call themselves DREAMers will have to wait and see how the Obama administration handles the newly empowered Republicans and what President Obama will throw back at them.

by Kayla Foster
Staff Reporter

As a mother of two amazing children, and a woman who breastfed one of them until she weaned on her own, I know the stares and whispers from others all too well when I fed my children in public. What many do not understand, is that breasts are also milk-making machines! According to the American Pregnancy Association, breast milk contains many proteins, healthy fats, vitamins, and carbohydrates. But it is the antibodies, living cells, enzymes and hormones that make a mother's milk ideal for infants, and even toddlers. Breast milk can protect against many infections and reduce rates of obesity, diabetes and asthma at a later age. The list could go on and on about why breast milk is the best for children. If all of this is true, then why is public breastfeeding looked so down upon? Society in this day and age sees the breasts as a part of the body which is to be covered at all costs (unless of course you are famous, and then it's obviously okay. Right?). Many may say, "Why don't you just use a cover?," "Couldn't you do that in the restroom?"



or "just pump and feed your baby from a bottle." Would you like to eat underneath a blanket? What about eating under a blanket in the ninety-five degree Texas heat? And I am sure everyone has been in a public restroom as well, so do those look like places to eat? Pumping, though it works for some, does not work for all; I was one of those unlucky people. During a pumping session, I was merely capable of extracting two ounces total, and my daughter was able to get way more latching on naturally. In the state of Texas, it is upheld by law that women are allowed to breastfeed wherever they please, but that does not protect them from harassment and establishments that refuse service. Luckily, HB-1706, a bill that was introduced by Texas House Representative Jessica Farrar, is working to expand state provisions by ensuring women are legally protected from harassment when they breastfeed in public places. Though dismissed in 2013, in January 2015 Farrar is expected to reintroduce this bill. This would be a huge win for breastfeeding moms in Texas! The photo attached, was created by University of North Texas design students Kris Haro and Johnathan Wenske, in an attempt to start a campaign to stop the harassment. These ads would be placed on the back on bathroom stalls to show what breastfeeding mothers have endured. Breasts should not be considered sexual and inappropriate when providing nutrition to children, but instead these mothers should be praised for trying to do what is best for their little ones. To find out more about the campaign go to <http://whennurturecalls.org/index>.

UH-DOWNTOWN MAKES HISTORY WITH INAUGURAL HOMECOMING BALL

by Sonia Sanchez
Campus Life Editor

On October 23, 2014, the inaugural UHD homecoming coronation ceremony took place on campus in the Wilhelmina Cullen Robertson auditorium at 7pm. The royal ball immediately followed in the dining area and balcony at 8pm to honor homecoming royalty, Jackie Tarango, and the rest of the royal court. There was a reception at the ball, where food, drinks, and desserts were served. Prior to the event, a blast email was sent out to all students via Gatormail announcing that UHD would hold its first-ever homecoming week October 20th through the 25th. UHD Campus Activities Board (CAB), and The Sports & Fitness Department invited all students via Gatormail to run for Homecoming Royalty, and also join in the festivities for the week.

Thanks to teamwork between the Campus Activities Board, Sports & Fitness Department, and other UHD organizations, they pulled together a week full of events for Homecoming to build school spirit, and created an atmosphere in which students could unite with UHD pride. There were events to participate in each day during Homecoming week. Monday was Sports Day when you were encouraged to wear your favorite college or professional football team attire. There was also a Monday Night Football Watch Party for the Texans vs. Steelers game.

Tuesday was Throwback Tuesday in which students were to take it back to the 80's, and there was a Karaoke Showcase in the Student lounge for students to show off their singing skills. Wednesday was Culture Wednesday. UHD took this day to celebrate the many cultures at UHD. The Homecoming Royal Court Finalists were presented that day on the south deck. Later that evening, UHD alumni also got the opportunity to come together at St. Arnold's Brewery. Simultaneously, Sports & Fitness had a Volleyball Game vs. Lone Star College-North Harris.

Thursday was a very big day. It was UHD Spirit Day, and students were to wear "as much UHD paraphernalia or colors as possible". The day also consisted of a pep rally on the South Deck to meet the "Gatorettes" dance team, the UHD cheerleaders, and the other Sport Clubs at UHD. After the pep rally, SGA held their second annual Walk 2 Vote event with DJ Mr. Rogers, and special guest appearances by Mayor Annise Parker, Tax Assessor Orlando Sanchez, Rocco Steady, Sara Alavi, and Houston Rapper Bun B. Students gathered around on the south deck to hear words of encouragement to exercise their right to vote. Local rapper Bun B, who spoke on the topic, led the way for UHD students to begin their walk to the polls.

Later that evening, the homecoming coronation and ball took place. At the coronation, the stage was decorated with mini thrones for the runners up court, and a larger throne was elevated on a small stage for the reigning monarch. The props on stage all gave a regal touch to the evening, and it appeared as if all the guests were in a kingdom waiting to see their new "King or Queen." The event began with the contestants performing a special bachata dance together, which is a Latin dance that orig-

inated in the Dominican Republic, and was popularized in America during the 90's. After the performance, all of the contestants' classifications, degrees, and endeavors were announced as they each seemed to effortlessly glide across the stage. "We were very detail oriented" said Student Activities Director Patrick Edwards. The students only rehearsed the coronation ball one time, but appeared as they had done it many times. There were eight contestants running, but in the end Jackie Tarango was crowned as Reigning Monarch, first runner up was Deepika Dhadral, second runner up was Elizabeth Garcia, Third runner up was Jennifer Bassett.

Even though this homecoming court has only happened for the first time, the royal court assures you that it is worth it to run. Junior Elizabeth Garcia says "Just go for it, because it will be an amazing experience knowing that you tried." What you can also get out of running for Homecoming court is that you will most likely make new life-long friends! First runner up Deepika Dhadral said "Don't fear that you would lose, but be happy about what you gain during the whole process." Homecoming court is a work in progress, and will continue to get better as the committee improves it.

The Homecoming ball did not disappoint either. The dining area was completely transformed with a live DJ, lights, and round tables. The entire court was honored at the beginning of the ball. The catered food served was stuffed chicken with pasta, and salad, and cups of tiramisu on the side. Third runner up Jennifer Bassett said "It was a beautiful occasion, and I was just so honored that I had such a big part in a new UHD tradition" The rest of the court was just as honored, and they enjoyed dancing with their friends for the rest of the night.

The reigning monarch of UHD embodies school spirit, and is the kind of student all UHD students should drive to be like. Jackie has UHD spirit, is involved with many organizations, and she is a leader. She has important ideas, and they will now be heard thanks to winning Homecoming Court. "I want to form a group on campus," says Sophomore Jackie "where students and I talk about ways we can increase student retention rate and school spirit."

Friday was Greek Day, so Greek affiliated students wore their Greek letters. There was also a Greek Step Show that night in the Cullen auditorium. Saturday was Homecoming, and the theme was "UHD Past, Present, & Future". An open house was presented for future gators that morning, afterwards students enjoyed on-campus tailgating, and UHD's annual Fall Family Festival. UHD student clubs and organizations were able to reserve a parking spot or volunteer for the event. Men & Women's Homecoming basketball games occurred at 2pm and 3pm that same day.

UHD's first homecoming was truly a success, and this event can only continue to get better with the full participation from all Gators. Jennifer says "We must do our parts, and influence students to want to participate and support our incredible school." Now that we all know that we will have Homecomings and a royal Homecoming Court let's all participate to make it even better the next time around.

BEHIND OPEN DOORS SGA CONTINUES WORKING FOR YOU

09

by Jason Rivas
Campus Life Editor

As the students of UHD spring forth into the semester, Campus Life is fresh with news and perspectives for its readers. From raising awareness of the honorsociety.org scam, to the successful Toys For Tots campaign, the creation of a student and alumni-friendly app, the green and gator statue initiatives, and possible creation of a UHD banner district.

A recent surge in emails for the website, “honorsociety.org,” is being sent to various students of UHD. Unfortunately the website is fraudulent and shares no ties with UHD in any form. Students are advised to ignore these emails as UHD continues to work on eliminating the spam from UHD-affiliated email addresses. Students receiving emails on their personal accounts are advised to ignore those messages as well.

Anthony Butcher’s “Toys For Tots” campaign this past winter raised over \$1,000 in donations and toys, all of which were donated to a non-profit organization, in order to be distributed to various less fortunate families residing in Harris County.

Student Body President John Locke is pushing for the creation of a new, downloadable app for Apple and Android users. The app will provide students with a plethora of student discounted eatery options, as well as an option for alumni to support and donate to UHD. Locke is locked in, saying: “I’m very happy to bring this initiative to the students, and is another way to bring food options to our students, as well as encourage Aramark to be more competitive with their pricing.”

UHD and SGA’s commitments to green initiatives continue to be a model for similar peer institutions. The planting of live oak trees around the soon-to-be completed Visitor’s Center will provide a mesmerizing backdrop to students, faculty, and visitors as well as clean air and

natural shade.

The water bottle filling stations that have been installed throughout the UHD campuses have saved more than 31,000 plastic bottles from becoming waste. A soon-to-be-released seal will be placed over both old and new water stations to further facilitate the importance of waste saving measures. SGA’s Sustainability Committee is working on a measure to one day install a small recycling station that will further push UHD towards a near-zero waste environment. Another initiative calls for the creation of a Gator statue. The statue will be unique in that it will be made from recyclable materials.

Finally, recent efforts by the university and SGA, along with help from UHD alumnae and Councilman Gonzalez has led to the soon-to-be-posted sign along Interstate 10 West, signaling the exit for UHD to commuters. Future measures call for banners around the streets that border UHD to signify the “UHD District,” similar to banners that signify the various districts that make up Downtown Houston.

Best wishes this semester to all the students of UHD!



CHANGING OF THE GUARD WITH NEW SGA VP

by Jason J. Rivas
Campus Life Editor

Fall is a time of change and new possibilities for the students of UHD. And as one leader chooses family over government, another transitions, from behind the scenes, to the grand stage.

This past May, Senator Weston Gameson campaigned vigorously alongside Senator John Locke and won the positions of Student Vice-President and President. Together, the dynamic duo pledged to give their all in opening doors and welcoming as many students as possible in participating in student government. And while they have found success to a varying degree, life outside of UHD has led Gameson to a difficult decision. In a passionate address to the General Assembly, Gameson resigned from his post. Life happened in the beauty of a young son, who needed his father’s attention far more than SGA. “I am a family man and it goes without saying that my son trumps student government,” ushered Gameson to a supportive crowd. President Locke accepted the resignation and praised Gameson’s tenure, “It

is a fact that you have made an impact on SGA and the school and we thank you for your time and presence.”

With big shoes needed to be fill, three candidates stepped forward at Locke’s request to vie for the role. Speaker of the Senate Aaron Burgess, Student Secretary Heather Strange, and Assistant to the President Graham Williamson. After an intense Q and A session, a vote and decision was reached. Aaron’s resilience and Heather’s dedication were commended as Graham’s demeanor and experience carried him to the office of the Student Vice-President. Then-Chief Justice Audrey Natividad was on hand to swear in the newly elected Graham. A poised Graham said of the result, “I am not a man of many words. I look forward to getting to work”

Gameson congratulated Vice-President Williamson before announcing to an animated crowd his new, subdued role at UHD. “I’m not going anywhere! I will still be involved but in a more narrow-focused manner and continue supporting student-focused initiatives.” In particular, the green initiative fund that Gameson has been advocating for. As the semester springs into action, so too will Weston and Graham in their new roles.

COLLEGE LIFE

ENROLLING HOUSTON

By Joshua Burgman
Assistant Editor

For the second year in a row Young Invincibles host's its annual National Youth Enrollment Week Kick-off Party. The organization, in affiliation with the City of Houston and various other institutions, sponsors the annual event, aimed at encouraging young people to sign up for affordable healthcare. Jose Sanchez, the Southern Director for Young Invincibles, expressed his joy at being able to have the event in downtown Houston. "This is our second year," he said. "We were very lucky to have this event last year, also at Discovery Green. We are very excited to make this a tradition, in which we can engage young people, have some fun, enjoy music and also learn about how to save a lot of money on health insurance and staying healthy."

The program consisted of performances by various musical talents such as, Rocko Stedy, Sugar Jioko, Brinna Burns, and Jessie McDaniels. It also featured an array of speakers like, Congressman Gene Green of the US House of Representatives, and the Hon. Marty McVey, a Houston businessman and 2016 contender for Mayor. Moderating the event was UHD's very own president of SGA, John Locke.

There were food trucks set up close by, Laughing Yoga on the lawn, and several tents and tables scattered about; stockpiled with information about signing up for affordable healthcare or just there for support. Houston based radio stations Boom 92.1, Magic 102.1 and 97.9 The Box all attended in recognition of the "need for young people to have access to affordable insurance," said Boom 92.1's Kelly Kegley.

Open enrollment for federal health insurance began November 15, 2014 and the deadline is just around the corner - on February 15, 2015. The City of Hous-

ton, in particular Harris County, has one of the nation's highest rates of young people who are uninsured. "We know that Texas has the highest uninsured rate. About thirty-four percent of Texas youth are uninsured. So we definitely know that Harris County has a lot of young people that are still lacking access to affordable insurance. That's really why we are so focused here in Houston and the surrounding areas, because we have really large numbers of uninsured folks," said Jose Sanchez. Rochelle Bell, the Marketing Director for Second Wind for Life Initiative in partnership with the Houston area Urban League, echoed Mr. Sanchez. Stating that, "We're out here today to promote getting coverage for our young people from the ages of eighteen to thirty-four. Insurance coverage is important for everyone, and we are out here to educate everyone."



The Affordable Care Act, President Obama's keystone legislation, faces challenges in 2015. The newly controlled US House and Senate have vowed to make changes to the law, possibly affecting thousands of uninsured low-income families in the Houston area. "[The Affordable Healthcare Act] is like a seed that's been planted. We have to keep enrolling people in order for that seed to grow," said 2016 Mayoral hopeful, the Hon. Marty McVey. "Affordable healthcare is not only good for Houston citizens, but also for the city's economy."

SUPERBOWL 49 PROMISES TO INFLATE FAN INTEREST WITH POWERHOUSE MATCHUP

Jason J. Rivas
Sports Editor

The 2014 NFL season has reached its pinnacle event with the league's two top teams meeting in Arizona on February 1. Will Seattle's Legion of Boom (L.O.B.) deflate the Tom Brady and Bill Belichick's hopes for a fourth Lombardi Trophy or will the Patriot way take the air out of Russell Wilson and Pete Carroll's hopes for to repeat?

Controversy and puns aside, both the Seahawks and Patriots have earned the right to be in the championship. The Seahawks pulled off an improbable win over Aaron Rodgers and his chocking Green Bay Packers. As for the Patriots, they blew out Houston local Andrew Luck and his Indianapolis Colts. Both teams are the number one seed from their respective conferences after 12-4 seasons that started slow before each team found their stride through their respective strengths.

For the Seattle Seahawks, their defense is their bread and butter. Ranking third and first in rushing and passing defense, Seattle has been dominant with Richard Sherman and Earl Thomas representing the faces of the L.O.B and leading Seattle's dominant defense. But their recent injuries may hamper their efforts. On the offensive side, Marshawn Lynch has bulldozed his way through

opponents and helped Seattle achieve the number nine rushing offense in the league. Russell Wilson has continued to show the skills of a top tier quarterback as he continues to impress and receive comparisons to past NFL winners like Roger Staubach and Drew Brees. But Green Bay's defense showed that Wilson is not impervious and Head Coach Pete Carroll will need to tinker with Seahawk gameplay if they wish to repeat.

Since 2001, the Patriot way has been a dominant force in the NFL. Their past 15 seasons echoes the greatness: eleven 11 win season, six Super Bowl appearances, three Super Bowl victories, all with Head Coach Bill Belichick and Tom Brady at the helm. Their current team is the most complete Patriot team since their 16-0 season in 2007. Their eleventh and thirteenth ranked offense and defense are deceptive. Rob Gronkowski and Julian Edelman are a lethal receiver duo, LeGarrette Blount provides a much needed rushing attack, and the golden boy, Tom Brady, is still the best in the business. But Brady's immobility and may fall victim to the Seahawk blitz, and the Seahawk frontline will be the toughest obstacle yet for Blount.

Bottom line, Super Bowl 49 will be a matchup between an unstoppable offense against an immovable defense.

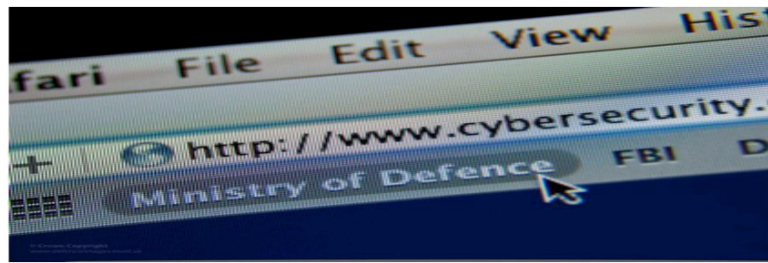
ARE U.S. ENEMIES REDEFINING TERRORISM?

By Joshua Burgman

Recent hacks on major US enterprises stoke fears of increasing cyber-attacks.

In December US officials concluded that North Korea hacked the US-based film production company, Sony Pictures. In early January of this year, individuals claiming to be members of the Al Qaeda offshoot ISIL hacked the Twitter and YouTube accounts of US Central Command. However trivial it may seem to hack a Twitter account or a production company because of an offensive movie, the hacks illuminate a disturbing trend of upward mobility in cyber terrorism.

In 2014 the Pew Research Internet Project conducted a canvassing, and the outcome of that was an article titled "Cyber Attacks Likely to Increase." During the canvassing 63% of participants agreed that by the year 2025 a major cyber-attack would occur "causing widespread harm." Had I participated in that canvassing, my name would appear among the list of that 63%. I believe that in the future we will look back on the Sony and CentCom hacks and see that their implications turned out to be much worse than the attacks themselves. What North Korea and these elements representing ISIL have done is exhibit new forms of brevity that have not been seen from US enemies since 9/11. In the media I have witnessed so called experts downplay the attack on CentCom's Twitter and YouTube accounts as simple hacks executed against social media. Even the White House Press Secretary, Josh Earnest did his best to em-



phasize that this was "just an attack on CentCom's Twitter account." In a press briefing at the White House in January, Earnest issued "a note of caution," to reporters inquiring about the CentCom incident. "There's a pretty significant difference," he quipped, "between what is a large data breach and the hacking of a Twitter account." Quite frankly Mr. Earnest, I don't see the distinction. The attack was carried out on US Central Command, a major US military installation, not Fresno Food Market. I seriously doubt hackers have any real interest in the small food market my grandmother buys her dipping tobacco from, and nobody would notice if its twitter account was hacked. So despite making note of the difference between a large data breach and the hack of a twitter account, I believe it's safe to say that when talking about US military property; an attack is an attack.

In an effort to get ahead of calls for new cyber-security legislation, the day after the CentCom twitter breach, the White House unveiled the President's new legislative proposal meant to combat cyber-terrorism. During the same announcement, the White House gave the new date for the President's Summit on Cybersecurity and Consumer Protection that is to be held at Stanford University in February 2015 - a summit with the original date of October 2014. It's important for the White House to understand that, the time for Summits, something that will only produce reports on how to combat cyber-attacks, has passed. They are happening now, and something must be done now, or, by the President's own admission, "this is not just going to be affecting movies, this is going to be affecting our entire economy in ways that are extraordinarily significant."

HOW TO USE MARTY MCFLY'S NIKE POWER LACES 20 YEARS FROM NOW

by Elisa Gonzales
Staff Reporter

If you've ever taken an environmental ethics class or read anything in the news, you might agree that in reality, life in the year 2015 looks more like a prequel to Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar* than the sequel to *Back to the Future*: a foodless dustbowl equipped with an inadequate number of *Jaws* sequels. Yet somehow, we've made a reality out of Robert Zemeckis's ultimate 2015 technology: a shoe so chic, so sleek and yet so unpretentious as to make even Marty McFly's punk offspring look just the slightest bit cool.

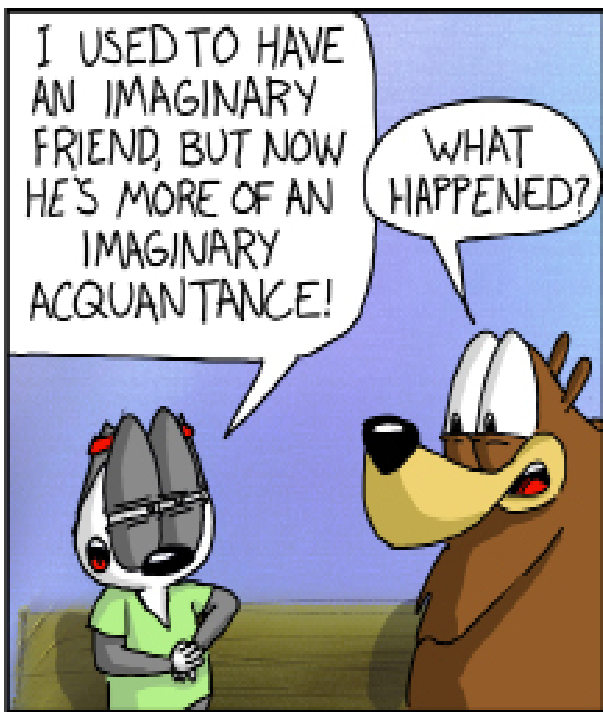
Yes, we have Nike's promise of power laces this year and Google has already delivered digital interactive glasses, a more stylish version of the kind Marty Jr. wears at dinner with his grandparents. Each of these is a handy technology, but so is sustainable energy, and clean water, both of which headline their own global crisis while our creative geniuses hammer out everything from 1980s sci-fi films.

We all have the capacity to change the world, but not before we never have to use our hands to tie our shoes again. And certainly not before we can skateboard without wheels. Is there even enough time? Gravity is so tricky.

So, to the young power lace wearer, myself included, I offer these suggestions for the long-term repurposing of your Nike McFlys.

1. Harness the energy of the power laces to briefly light the dank, abandoned church that is your new home. Beware not to draw the attention of dystopia's looting street toughs.
2. Throw them at looting street toughs. Everything is a weapon now.
3. Fill them with sand and use them as a doorstep in the scorching summer, assuming you haven't already burned said door to keep warm in the arctic winter.
4. Shred the shoe's leather parts and boil them into a soupy, futuristic delicacy.
5. Trade them to a well-to-do collector for a bar of soap. If only soap could wash away the things you did to get there.
6. Melt down the rubber soles into a yoga mat/bed.
7. Use the soft plush lining as gauze. Injuries are like power lacing shoes: abundant.

The power laces are already upon us, and while they won't be responsible for sending civilization into a Nolan-esque dystopia, they should serve as a reminder that technology evolves to suit our demands. We should demand more important things than self-lacing shoes.



By: L. A. Bonté



For more comics and animations visit FilbertCartoons.com

UHD SCHOOL SPIRIT



Photography by Ben DeSoto - Dateline Downtown

