The Office of Information Technology

REFLECTIONS OF 2018
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• I think OIT has become more helpful over the past 5 years. It is very easy for an organization or component to say “that isn’t my job” and then push you off to another office or person. But the overall attitude of OIT staff has been “let me try to help you.” Keep it up!

• I really liked my first work shop. It was very informative. Thank you so much.

• OIT helps me numerous times throughout every semester. I recommend it to colleagues and students all the time. You guys are great!

• OIT has helped me on a regular basis. Hard to just pick one event. Even the little things are important.

• I have had issues with the technology in the classroom at times and every time I called for assistance a representative responded to the classroom within 5 minutes.

• Assistance received over the phone has always been great. Staff is very courteous and generally has been taken care of the issue remotely.

• OIT has supported the move to telecommuting and has responded quickly to all of my questions and helped me get set up to work more efficiently.

• Infrastructure services has helped us enormously and is always available for consult and support.

• OIT has helped me with technical issues, software installation, and general tech support. The expansion of software (e.g. Adobe Suite) available for free to faculty/staff has been great.

• Yes, my first week at work, as a temporary worker, OIT helped me solve a scanner issue and they have been assisting me since then. They are always positive and professional.

• Good job OIT! I enjoy the ongoing partnership between emergency management and OIT, and we are a stronger, more resilient institution because of it! Thank you to all in the OIT Organization!
Vision

To be a world-class organization and a trusted partner in developing solutions that advance educational excellence and research at UTSA.
Mission

The Office of Information Technology is committed to student, faculty and staff success and advances in research through collaboration and innovation. Our staff is dedicated to providing outstanding service to the UTSA community.
Top 2018 Projects

OIT has made it a priority to undertake projects that provide university faculty members with services that advance their day-to-day work in addition to supporting UTSA’s mission of teaching, learning, and research.

Technology Achievements

- UTSA UNITY VOICEMAIL SYSTEM
- ADOBE SITE LICENSE
- MYAPPS VIRTUAL DESKTOP
- UTSA CLASSROOM UPGRADES
- MICROSOFT TEAMS CAMPUS LAUNCH
- LABSTER / GOOGLE / LENOVO VIRTUAL REALITY COLLABORATION
OIT is committed to supporting student success by providing key technology services that strengthen and enhance students’ educational and campus experiences.

Technology Achievements

- INTEGRATED PLANNING AND ADVISING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS
- OIT ACADEMIC SUPPORT SOLUTIONS FUND
- STANDARDIZED STUDENT RESPONSE SYSTEM
- EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD (EAB) GUIDE
- COLLEGE SCHEDULER
- UTSA MOBILE APP
- STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION FOCUS GROUP
HIGHLIGHTS
Quarter ONE

Reflections of 2018
UTSA Department of Political Science and Geography Receives Funding for New Technology

January 18 | San Antonio, TX

Students who are members of the Model United Nations (UN) Society at UTSA will be able to fully immerse themselves in the upcoming Model UN conferences hosted by the university.

Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Geography and Faculty Advisor of the Model UN Society Matthias Hofferberth, Ph.D., recently received a grant from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund. The grant was used to purchase new technology to enhance the conference experience for students and guests.

The UTSA iPASS Grant supports MLK Student Success Speaker

January 24 | San Antonio, TX

Several Office of Information Technology (OIT) teams collaborated in the events for the Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Celebration at UTSA. Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., led several collaborations as she serves as a member of the UTSA MLK Committee and the African American Studies Program.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant, which OIT manages on behalf of UTSA, provided funding and support for the event. The grant is a collaborative effort between the UTSA Provost’s Office, Academic Advising, Institutional Research and OIT.
OIT Collaborates with the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars

February 14 | San Antonio, TX

In spring 2018, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Video Production Group (VPG) and the Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team collaborated with the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars (ADTS).

ADTS hosted a live stream for the Shared Experiences Forum on February 14th featuring “Instructor Initiated Student Drop.” The panelists elaborated on why students aren’t passing classes and UTSA’s adoption of Instructor Initiated Student Drop Policy.

RCSG Hosts Site-Visit with the Texas Advanced Computing Center

February 16 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) hosted a UTSA site-visit with the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC) on Friday, February 16, 2018. The site-visit involved a special guest presentation from TACC Human Translational Genomics Coordinator Ari Kahn, Ph.D., and was facilitated by OIT’s Director of Research Computing Support Brent League. The event was held at the UTSA Main Campus in the Bexar Room (HEB UC 1.102) and was open to all UTSA faculty.

TACC is known to design and deploy the world’s most powerful advanced computing technologies and innovative software solutions to enable researchers to answer complex questions. Every day, TACC’s staff members work with hundreds of researchers, allowing them to discover and develop new products, renewable energy sources, among many other notable discoveries.
iPASS Convening at the DREAM Conference Features UTSA Student Success Journey

February 16 | Nashville, TN

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) held its final convening in conjunction with the DREAM Conference in Nashville, TN from February 19-23.

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Assistant Vice Provost and iPASS grant Principal Investigator (PI) Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Project Coordinator and iPASS Project Lead Rosalind Ong along with Executive Directors of Advising Barbara Smith and Angelica Barrera represented UTSA at the convening.

Benchmarking IT: UTSA to Participate in EDUCAUSE Student Technology Survey

March 29 | San Antonio, TX

UTSA will participate in the EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) annual Student Technology Survey for the first time as the Office of Information Technology (OIT) leads the participation effort.

The survey was sent out to all UTSA students on April 3, 2018 and will remain open until April 20, 2018. This initiative has been organized by Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., who serves as the EDUCAUSE Core Data and survey administrator for UTSA. Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong and Communications Specialist Nicole Duff served as research assistants for the survey administration.
HIGHLIGHTS
Quarter TWO

Reflections of 2018
Laptop Scholarship Award Presented in Collaboration Between the Office of Information Technology, HACU, and the Tomas Rivera Center

April 5 | San Antonio, TX

The 2018 Access College & Excel Program (ACE) Laptop award was presented to Maritza Caballero on April 5, 2018 at the ACE Fiesta y Despedida event held at the Downtown Campus. In a continued partnership, the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) along with the UTSA Tomas Rivera Center (TRC) for Student Success Access College & Excel Program (ACE) provide this award to an outstanding student who has completed the ACE Scholar program.

Global Collaboration and Workplace Learning Opportunities Promoted at the AERA Annual Meeting

April 13 | New York, NY

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Office of Information Technology (OIT) Assistant Vice Provost Vanessa Hammel Kenon, Ed.D., is spearheading an off-site visit focused on workplace learning at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2018 Annual meeting. The annual meeting took place in New York, NY from April 13-17.

The event is open to AERA meeting attendees, which include faculty, researchers, graduate students, and other distinguished professionals with expertise in education research.
Developing and Sustaining Student Success Initiatives: UTSA BMFG iPASS and NIC Site Visit

May 10 | San Antonio, TX

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team hosted a two-day UTSA Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) and Network Improvement Communities (NIC) Site-Visit with Achieving the Dream (ATD). The site-visit also featured special guests from the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Assistant Vice President for Strategy and Practice Omari Burnside, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Director of Innovation Tracey Armstrong.

Assistant Vice Provost, IT Honored at Outstanding Alumni and Scholarship Awards Event

May 24 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) in the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) recently named Assistant Vice Provost, IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., the 2018 Outstanding Alumni. Dr. Kenon was one of two alumni honored at the Outstanding Alumni and Scholarship event held on May 19th at Top Golf in San Antonio, Texas.
Building Student Awareness: Technology Resources Promoted by OIT at Incoming Student Orientation

June 5 | San Antonio, TX

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team collaborated with UTSA’s Office of Orientation and Family Programs for the summer Orientation Resource Fairs. During each fair, OIT was able to outreach and engage with incoming UTSA students to promote technology resources that support student success including the UTSA Mobile App, UTSA Guide App, and DegreeWorks throughout the summer.

OIT Faculty Advisory Committee Meeting Explores Online Tutoring Platform for Student Success

June 14 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Faculty Advisory Committee held its second convening for the year on June 8th in the North Paseo Building (NPB 1.412). The meeting united committee members, invited guests, UTSA students, Online Learning and student success staff, for a first-hand look at the online tutoring platform, TutorMe. OIT is currently considering implementing this platform as part of its continued effort to leverage technology to empower students.

Designed to personalize students’ learning experiences, TutorMe provides students access to on-demand support including homework assistance and test preparation. Currently, the platform is utilized at more than 500 peer institutions across the U.S. such as the University of Southern California, Louisiana State University and New Mexico State University.
The Office of Information Technology

HIGHLIGHTS
Quarter THREE

Reflections of 2018
Department Spotlight: OITConnect

July 2 | San Antonio, TX

Looking for one place for your technical support needs? Look no further than OITConnect! As a branch of the Office of Information Technology’s Customer Service and Operations support area, the OITConnect team prides itself on providing exceptional customer service to the UTSA community.

Every day, OITConnect handles a variety of technical requests from the university community, ranging from passphrase resets, application support and device troubleshooting to computer imaging and reimaging. The team, comprised of both part-time and full-time staff, works diligently in the field and remotely to ensure that the UTSA community has access to technology that is functioning optimally to aid in its academic, administrative, and research pursuits.

OIT Receives Excellence Award From TASSCC

August 7 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) has received a 2018 Higher Education Project Excellence Award from the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communication (TASSCC). The honor recognizes the impact of OIT’s Academic Support Solutions Fund in contributing to stellar collaborative achievements within the university community.

UTSA was one of four recipients for this year’s Project Excellence Award, which honors higher education institutions and government entities that have demonstrated outstanding information technology accomplishments.
UTSA College of Liberal and Fine Arts Has a New Professional Writing and Rhetoric Digital Studio

August 13 | San Antonio, TX

In support of expanding the resources available for a core curriculum Technical Writing course (ENG 2413), the UTSA College of Liberal and Fine Arts (COLFA) was recently awarded funding, from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund. The funding was granted for the project entitled, “Developing a Digital Studio by Increasing the Availability of Interactive Technology (Smart Boards, Drawing Tablets, and Software) to Prioritize Student Marketability,” to assist Associate Professor in the Department of English Dr. Sue Hum with transforming the English Computer Lab into a digital studio with upgraded technology. In addition to the new resources, the lab has been renamed the PWR (Professional Writing and Rhetoric) Digital Studio.

UTSA to Leverage Virtual Reality Tools to Train Biology Students

August 29 | San Antonio, TX

UTSA is expanding its utilization and research on virtual reality (VR) through a new partnership with industry leaders Labster, Google and Lenovo. Led by the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT), the university will provide VR simulations to allow its students to conduct university-level science laboratory work without ever visiting a traditional science laboratory.
Director of Research Computing Support Serves as a Member for NSCC Programming Advisory Committee

September 28 | San Antonio, TX

Director of Research Computing Support Brent League, with the Office of Information Technology (OIT), was recently selected to serve on the National Security Collaboration Center (NSCC) Programming Advisory Committee. The invitation was extended via an email from UTSA’s Interim Vice President for Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise Bernard Arulanandam, Ph.D., M.B.A.

The committee has been formed to assist with the new NSCC and a proposed School of Data Science near the UTSA Downtown Campus. The creation of the NSCC will provide a better collaboration center to expand UTSA’s research and to help develop new innovative solutions for national security issues.

Student Computing Services’ Business Building Computer Lab Now Has a New Look

September 29 | San Antonio, TX

UTSA students who visit the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) student computer lab in the Business Building (2.01.20) will be greeted by a newly redesigned space. The lab, which was initially set up with rows of computer workstations, has now been transformed into a flexible collaboration space with a variety of configurations for student success.
HIGHLIGHTS
Quarter FOUR

Reflections of 2018
OIT Promotes Tools to Enhance Collaboration and Support Telecommute Experience

October 12 | San Antonio, TX

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) recently collaborated with the UTSA Business Affairs Division and the Office of Learning Technologies to offer special information sessions to numerous departments such as Human Resources and Financial Services. The sessions provided an overview of remote work resources and tips including utilizing the UTSA Virtual Private Network (VPN), DUO two-factor authentication, and Office 365 resources such as Microsoft Teams and Skype for Business.

UTSA Students Join OIT for Tech Talk to Learn about Resources to Empower Success

October 24 | San Antonio, TX

More than 100 UTSA undergraduate and graduate students joined the Office of Information Technology (OIT) on October 24th for Tech Talk. The event, which was hosted by the OIT Student Innovation Coalition, was held in the Denman Room (SU 2.01.28) from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Each fall and spring semester, OIT holds its Student Innovation Coalition, an open forum designed to enable students to share their feedback with members of the OIT leadership team on their technology experience. In addition, the event provides students the opportunity to learn about various technology products and services available to enhance their academic and social experiences at the university.
UTSA’s Main High Performance Computing Cluster Cited in Scientific Journal

November 2 | San Antonio, TX

Optics Express, a renowned peer-reviewed, scientific journal, recently published an article in which Shamu, the university’s primary high performance computing cluster (HPC), was acknowledged.

A high performance computing cluster is comprised of several interconnected high speed servers that function similar to a super computer. Shamu, which is maintained by the Office of Information Technology’s Research Computing and Support Group (RCSG), is available to assist UTSA students, faculty and staff in their research pursuits at no additional cost.

New Tech Lab at UTSA Offers Students, Career Professionals Unique Learning Experience

November 28 | San Antonio, TX

New technology researchers say will change the way students learn and help solve problems in the workplace is now available to everyone in the community at a lab at the University of Texas at San Antonio’s main campus.

The new tech lab, which opened Wednesday, is called the DEx Lab, an abbreviation for digital experience. One of the main attractions are wireless virtual reality headsets that calibrate for each user.
UTSA Colleges Receive Grants to Foster Student Success

December 12 | San Antonio, TX

The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) has announced the recipients of its annual Academic Support Solutions Fund awards. This year, 15 proposals spanning five UTSA colleges were selected to receive grants ranging from $5,000 to $22,000.

In October, faculty and staff from across the university submitted a total of 16 proposals for student-centered projects that align with at least one of the university’s strategic destinations. The proposed projects are geared toward equipping UTSA students with invaluable skills needed to thrive at the university and in the workforce.

UTSA Engineering Students Utilize the VizLab to Showcase their Final Projects

December 19 | San Antonio, TX

Graduate engineering students enrolled in the Advanced Scientific Visualization course (EGR 5703) this semester had the opportunity to utilize the state-of-the-art technologies in the VizLab to showcase their final class projects to their peers and a group of UTSA faculty and staff on December 13th.

“It was intriguing to see the creative ideas these students came up with over the semester,” said Director of the Research Computing Support Group Brent League. “They showed how augmented reality and virtual reality can be used in both research and education. Even more impressive, was seeing the actual applications the students developed.”
Quarter ONE

January | February | March

Reflections of 2018
In fall 2017, the Enterprise Managed Customer Solutions (EMCS) team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) performed a study to help determine the UTSA community’s demand for Adobe Creative Cloud. Adobe Creative Cloud is a suite of Adobe System applications that provide access to a collection of software used for photography, graphic design, video editing, web development and more.

As of now, all UTSA colleges and departments have been supplying Adobe software individually. Some areas are currently using out-of-date software and need funding for the latest Adobe Software. Providing the UTSA community with the newest copy of Adobe Creative Cloud offers students the opportunity to have training on the tools they need to be successful in today’s workforce.

“OIT is trying to improve the student experience at UTSA by providing more resources for student success,” said Joe Tobares, director of Learning Technologies. “When students graduate from UTSA they should be trained on the most current technology tools available so that they can compete in today’s global economy.”

To perform this study, Information Security Specialist Pebby Garner created a survey that was distributed to all UTSA faculty, staff, and students. The survey was distributed mid-semester, in which, OIT received more than 1,300 responses collectively within the UTSA community in the first round. A second survey will be distributed in January to non-responders and new students. Results will be sent to UTSA’s executive leadership for regular funding options.

The Adobe Systems site license will be beneficial for the UTSA community as it will help ensure everyone on campus has access to the up-to-date tools needed to be successful. If granted the opportunity to obtain the funding for the site license, students will also receive discounts if they wish to purchase the software for individual use at home.
Students who are members of the Model United Nations (UN) Society at UTSA will be able to fully immerse themselves in the upcoming Model UN conferences hosted by the university.

Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Geography and Faculty Advisor of the Model UN Society Matthias Hofferberth, Ph.D., recently received a grant from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund. The grant was used to purchase new technology to enhance the conference experience for students and guests.

“I am very happy and grateful for the funding, and I'm excited to put the funds to good use,” said Dr. Hofferberth. “It was a good call for OIT to use these funds for student initiatives and it’s a really good idea that students are involved in the voting process.”

The Model UN society is open to all students and features bi-weekly meetings aimed at raising members’ awareness of world affairs. The simulated UN conference, the signature event of the Model UN Society, is a three-day event slated for early November. It unites UTSA students, as well as students from other tertiary institutions and local high schools for a thought-provoking debate centered on international relations and diplomacy.
During the Model UN conference, participants serve as delegates representing various UN member countries and express their views on critical world issues, which they thoroughly research beforehand.

Since its inception in 2013, however, the Model UN Society at UTSA has lacked the proper technology infrastructure to facilitate the conferences and to accommodate the growth of its participants, which doubles every year.

“In the past, we have run the conference with personal laptops and my office printer,” said Dr. Hofferberth. “We realized that with the new scale and level of professionalism, this is no longer feasible.”

This prompted Dr. Hofferberth to submit a proposal to OIT in fall 2017 for a project entitled “UTSA goes UN: Empowering Our Students to Become Global Citizens.” As one of 15 submissions selected to receive funding, his proposal outlined the need for technology such as a laptop, tablet, computer, and printer. This technology will help the department better facilitate future conferences hosted at the university.

The new technology will also enable participants to conveniently perform tasks needed to ensure the conference’s success which includes printing materials on the spot and displaying a timer for delegates. The department is currently finalizing the order for the infrastructure ahead of the next model UN.

“I bear the responsibility of making this conference possible for our students and raising the standards is of paramount importance because there’s more potential,” said Dr. Hofferberth. “Also, a global perspective is important for our students in alignment with the vision of our new president and the critical IT infrastructure will help us reach the next level of professionalism in the conference.”

Model UN conferences are held at numerous institutions across the U.S. and enable students to improve their critical thinking, research, and public speaking skills.
Ben Garcia, Director of Customer Service and Operations Support in the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT), was one of six guest speakers at the first Financial Area Representatives (FAR) meeting for the year. The meeting was held on January 24th from 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. in the Business Building (BB 2.06.04) at the UTSA Main Campus.

Garcia’s presentation, entitled “An Overview of InSight,” provided a look at the application, which enables UTSA faculty and staff to monitor their UTSA computer assets. InSight allows users to easily and conveniently access vital information regarding their UTSA assets including:

1. The health and status of their computer
2. The age of their device
3. The computer reporting of their device

To further acquaint attendees with InSight, Garcia also provided a brief demo of the application. His presentation culminated in a look at the OIT customer support channels, namely OITConnect, Academic Support and StudentConnect, which are designed to provide technical support to UTSA faculty, staff, and students.

FAR meetings provide representatives from UTSA’s financial area the ability to share critical financial-related information as well as best practices. The next meeting is scheduled for March.
Several Office of Information Technology (OIT) teams collaborated in the events for the Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Celebration at UTSA. Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., led several collaborations as she serves as a member of the UTSA MLK Committee and the African American Studies Program. Dr. Kenon’s service included assisting with the organization of UTSA’s participation in the MLK March and bringing a renowned speaker to campus to discuss the relation of civil rights to student success.

Professor and Chair of the University of Louisville’s Department of Pan-African Studies Ricky Jones, Ph.D., served as the speaker for the 2018 UTSA Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Lecture. The lecture was held on January 24 in the UTSA Student Union Retama Auditorium (2.02.02) on the UTSA Main Campus.

President Eighmy delivered the Presidential remarks noting that student success is at the center of our work at the university. He reflected that measuring an institution’s student success must be about who we include and not who we exclude. Opportunities to succeed must be available to all students.

Dr. Jones’ presentation titled, “MY BROTHER MARTIN: Democracy, Decency, and Developing Student Success in 21st Century America” explored student development as it relates to student success. During his speech he shared his perspective that, “Universities are not corporations. These are places where our young people come to grow, to meet one another, to partner with one another, and to meet scholars who will help them move along that life path of decency -- of humanity -- and toward democracy. That is what student success is all about.” Furthermore, student success in not about one person, one department, or one leader. It takes the entire institution.

At the end of the event, Dr. Kenon challenged attendees to take what they had learned at the lecture and share that information with someone else to continue the inspiration and conversation from the event.

The College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) African American Studies Program and OIT cosponsored the lecture. The OIT Video Production team filmed the event and the Customer Relations, Communications, and Training team provided support with marketing design.

Funding and support for the event was provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant which OIT manages on behalf of UTSA. The grant is a collaborative effort between the UTSA Office of the Provost, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and OIT.
Several OIT leaders participated in the North SA Chamber CIO Breakfast meeting. The meeting was held on January 25, 2018, at the Petroleum Club of San Antonio. The CIO Breakfast Series is a monthly meeting hosted by the North Chamber of Commerce specifically designed for senior IT staff and executives to discuss current technology issues and share ideas with their peers.

At the beginning of the January meeting, UTSA’s Interim Vice Provost and CIO Bryan Wilson was named the North SA Chamber 2018 CIO Breakfast Committee Chair. As the chair, Wilson will facilitate all 2018 CIO Breakfast Planning Committee meetings, which provide an opportunity for technology leaders throughout the city of San Antonio to share and strategize best practices. Wilson welcomed attendees, promoted future CIO Breakfast topics and sessions planned throughout the series, and introduced the moderator for the panel session.

UTSA’s Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia served as the moderator for a panel that focused on business continuity and disaster recovery emergency management. Garcia introduced panelists for the “Hurricane Harvey – Lessons Learned” session, which included:

- IT Manager at eESI Russell James
- Senior Vice President and CIO at Vantage Bank Shawn Main
- Assistant Vice Provost for IT at UTSA Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.

Each panelist represented a different business model – a consumer-serving corporation, a professional employer organization, and a public higher education institution. The information they shared provided the session attendees a valuable blueprint of “Dos & Don’ts” for their business continuity and disaster recovery planning efforts.
The panel provided a unique perspective on the lessons learned in response to Hurricane Harvey’s damage and the business impact to their organization – such as:

- Having a business continuity and disaster recovery organization plan
- How effective their plans were
- What key takeaways were identified for further improvement of their plans
- What surprises were experienced as they executed their action plans

Dr. Kenon shared UTSA’s experience responding to Hurricane Harvey. This included campus collaborations for preparations and decisions as the storm approached, the community responses to communication and the important role of social media to provide continuous engagement with the students, their families, and the community.

Overall, the panel highlighted the importance of not only preparation but also adaptability, collaboration, and the need to act quickly in making decisions.

“As the moderator of this panel session, I was grateful to lead the discussion as this topic is very important to me as I have implemented business continuity and disaster recovery plans in the past,” Garcia shared. “The key is to have a dynamic business continuity/disaster recovery plan of action and ensure all team members know the plan through training. Moreover, expect there will be situations that do not go according to the plan (lack of resources, etc.) and continue to sustain and improve the plan by consistently testing it.”
Which of the 2018 Top 10 IT Issues most resonate with you?

**Vanessa Kenon:** I think the ones that have to do with students. I do believe a lot of institutions have gotten away from the importance of why we're really there, and if you think about it, the students are the core of why institutions truly exist. There's a lot that goes on with research, there's a lot that goes on with publishing, but the students are the reason that we're really there.

**Kathy Lang:** I think what was very interesting, is that, most of them, with the exception of probably security, they're not technology specific issues. They're all higher ed issues, for which IT, and technology has answers maybe or can certainly support those issues to further the mission of the institution.

**Ahmed El-Haggan:** You are not in the basement anymore. We're not just about transaction and systems. We're about really the, affecting the whole culture and student's experience, and everybody's experience. We're way beyond effective and efficiency, we're about transformation.

**Steve diFilipo:** I was pleasantly surprised with the, attention to data and, sort of integration, platform integration, data migration, that was sort of novel, I think people are starting to recognize the value of data, and the importance of data on the campus, especially around business intelligence and analytics, and ultimately to AI.

**Kathy:** Actually two of the items were about the data analytics at Marquette, we're really focusing right now on becoming more of a data driven organization, so figuring out how do we analyze the data, how we pull the right data together, how do we get the campus on-board in using the data. That's probably the area that most resonates with me.

**Ahmed:** The issue of, student success, student experience and what surrounds it, in my opinion, is analytics, data, decisions made based on data, because it's data that's actually going to tell you if the decision you have made, are correct or not, based on the results. So you need to close that loop.

**Vanessa:** There's some things on that list about governance, that's really, really important on university campuses. Research is a big part of it, so you wind up having these silos all over, of people, actually having IT that's a little bit decentralized from centralized IT. And because of that you really, really need to have a good governance structure.

**Steve:** I think what's missing from the list is really high level thinking around what's on the list. So it's about governance, it's about policy setting, it's about real, it's about leadership. I think from a CIO perspective, that's what resonates with me the most. Sitting at the table, when decisions are being made around strategy, budget, you know having the ability to understand how leadership works, to understand how people interact with each other. To understand, sort of the high level thinking that goes into what makes, what ends up appearing on the list.
EDUCAUSE Releases Video Featuring Assistant Vice Provost of IT and Other Higher Education Technology Leaders

February 14 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.
Author: Nicole Duff, Communications Specialist

As a follow-up to the list of the 2018 Top 10 IT issues that it published last month, EDUCAUSE recently released a video featuring four of the panelists who provided insights for the list. Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., was one of four panelists featured in the brief video released on February 12, which captured their reactions to the issues.

The video enabled selected panelists to respond to a prompt regarding which issues resonates most with them. In the video, Dr. Kenon shares that the issues addressing student success and governance resonated most with her. In addition, the following IT leaders also share their views:

- Steve DiFilipo, Owner and Chief Strategy Officer at JRS, LLC
- Ahmed El-Haggan, VP for Information Technology and CIO at Coppin State University
- Kathy Lang, CIO at Marquette University
In spring 2018, the UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Video Production Group (VPG) and the Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team collaborated with the UTSA Academy of Distinguished Teaching Scholars (ADTS). ADTS was founded in 2012 by the UTSA Provost to honor outstanding faculty who symbolize teaching excellence. The Academy is made up of more than 30 UTSA faculty members who are also recipients of the UT Systems Regents Outstanding Teaching Award.

The Shared Experiences Forum is divided into two different parts. The first half is designed to let the panelists share their thoughts on pre-planned questions. Once the panelists share their insights on the topic, they then open the floor for the audience to ask questions.

Professor in Practice Thomas Cannon, Jd.D., with the UTSA College of Business, served as the moderator and the panel was made up of the following UTSA faculty:

1. Steven Levitt – Professor, Department of Communication
2. Donna Miller – Lecturer I, Department of Sociology
3. Oak DeBerg – Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy and Classics
4. Gregg Michel – Associate Professor, Department of History

ADTS hosted a live stream for the Shared Experiences Forum on February 14th featuring “Instructor Initiated Student Drop.” During the first half of the forum, the panelists elaborated on how research revealed the main reason students weren’t passing classes was due to low attendance and missing assignments. Therefore, UTSA approved the Instructor Initiated Student Drop policy to allow faculty to drop students that fail to attend a certain amount of classes or turn in assignments. The policy was piloted in 2017 and went live across campus as of spring 2018. Student drops create room for students in need of courses that are waitlisted.
During the event, Video Production Manager Gerard Bustos was the live stream producer, and Senior Producer James Borrego served as the technical director. Additionally, Video Producers Stephen Matthews and Jose Carrillo operated the cameras. The live stream is beneficial to a significant amount of faculty who are unable to attend in person and provides an opportunity for those viewers to watch the forum at their convenience on the UTSA Provost website.

The forum takes place each semester in the UTSA Faculty Center Assembly Room (JPL 4.04.22) and is open to all UTSA faculty. Light snacks and beverages are provided and faculty receive a certificate for attending the forum after completing a survey.
RCSG Hosts Site-Visit with the Texas Advanced Computing Center

February 16 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
Brent League

Link(s)
https://portal.tacc.utexas.edu/home

The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) hosted a UTSA site-visit with the Texas Advanced Computing Center (TACC) on Friday, February 16, 2018. The site-visit involved a special guest presentation from TACC Human Translational Genomics Coordinator Ari Kahn, Ph.D., and was facilitated by OIT’s Director of Research Computing Support Brent League. The event was held at the UTSA Main Campus in the Bexar Room (HEB UC 1.102) and was open to all UTSA faculty.

TACC is known to design and deploy the world’s most powerful advanced computing technologies and innovative software solutions to enable researchers to answer complex questions. Every day, TACC’s staff members work with hundreds of researchers, allowing them to discover and develop new products, renewable energy sources, among many other notable discoveries.

From 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. the crowd was given a presentation from Dr. Kahn. In the beginning, League introduced the guest speaker and provided information on the research resources available to the UTSA community at no additional cost. The resources include the UTSA Advanced Visualization Lab (VizLab), UTSA’s own High-Performance Compute Cluster (Shamu), and more. The presentation “TACC for Non-STEM and STEM Research” introduced the faculty to the benefits of having a TACC account and how their tools are beneficial for research in all areas.
“My goal is to get as many people as possible at UTSA to utilize TACC resources because the tools are free and available to all UTSA faculty and staff,” said Dr. Kahn. “The UT System subsidized TACC to make these systems available and beneficial to the UTSA community.”

During the presentation, Dr. Kahn provided an overview of what TACC is and presented “TACC at a Glance” as he described their infrastructure and the available services and resources. The available resources include:

- High-Performance Computing Clusters
- Visualization and General Purpose Computing on Graphics Processing Units (GPGPU)
- Data Intensive Computing
- High-Performance Storage and Data Management

At the end of the presentation, Dr. Kahn provided examples of a variety of research projects that are currently taking place with other TACC account users for both STEM and non-STEM research. The floor then opened up for Q & A followed by a one-on-one enrollment forum where faculty met individually with a TACC representative for questions and assistance with opening a TACC account.
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) held its final convening in conjunction with the DREAM Conference in Nashville, TN from February 19-23.

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Assistant Vice Provost and iPASS grant Principal Investigator (PI) Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Project Coordinator and iPASS Project Lead Rosalind Ong along with Executive Directors of Advising Barbara Smith and Angelica Barrera represented UTSA at the convening.

Following the event Barrera shared, “Being a part of the iPASS convening and DREAM conference just reaffirmed things for me—always build from an asset perspective. Academic Advising is teaching, and we will continue to guide and inspire our Roadrunners to accomplish their ultimate dream.”
The event opened with reflections from several higher education leaders including representatives from the Helmsley Foundation, the President of EDUCAUSE, representatives from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the President of the National Association of Student Personnel Associates (NASPA). They discussed the achievements of the iPASS group and the future direction to bring the work to scale.

Dr. Kenon served as a panelist along with Middle Tennessee Vice Provost for Student Success Rick Sluder, Ph.D., and EDUCAUSE Director of Professional Learning Ana Borray during the iPASS convening breakout session “Tracking Implementation Progress & Putting the Data to Use.” Dr. Kenon shared insights on how UTSA has used surveys as well as graduation and retention rates to provide tools to enhance student success. She also elaborated on the different marketing efforts that have led to successful adoption of the advising technology.

The UTSA iPASS team also had the opportunity to highlight projects that resulted from the UTSA iPASS grant during the reception “Celebrating our Success” poster session at the convening. Dr. Kenon and Ong engaged with attendees and answered questions. Attendees were able to view photos from student success images and materials from DegreeWorks, the Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Student Success Collaborative Campus (SSC-Campus), the UTSA Guide (EAB Guide), and the UTSA Mobile App marketing campaigns.

The convening provided an opportunity for participants to engage in table sessions on specific topics within the area of technology tools for advising and student success. Dr. Kenon was invited to facilitate the “Strengths and Gaps in Degree Planning Tools” session. As a facilitator, she guided the conversation and summarized and reported the group findings.

Dr. Kenon also served as a panelist for the DREAM conference presentation entitled “Transforming the Student Support Experience,” along with representatives from Zane State College and Trident Technical College. In this session, Dr. Kenon shared UTSA’s experience implementing transformative redesign efforts in advising along with the challenges and opportunities encountered.
In summary, the conference provided an opportunity for the team to share UTSA’s experience and to see the amazing work in student success and plan for the future.

“I am amazed to see how the work we’ve all done as recipients of the iPASS grant has enhanced opportunities for students as a result of the collaboration and willingness to openly discuss challenges, opportunities and lessons learned,” Smith stated. “Hearing the student DREAM scholars share their stories is inspiring and a good reminder that our work matters. It is critical to always consider how things are going to affect our students.”

The iPASS grant is managed by EDUCAUSE in partnership with Achieving the Dream. UTSA is one of 26 institutions nationwide to receive this grant to support student success. The UTSA iPASS project is a collaboration between the UTSA Office of the Provost, Academic Advising, and OIT. It focuses on transforming three key areas to help students complete their degrees:

- Education planning
- Counseling and coaching
- Risk targeting and intervention

From left to right: Rosalind Ong, Barbara Smith, Angelica Barrera, John O’Brien, Ph.D., Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Orlando Leon.
Enterprise Cloud Solutions Analyst Joseph Milne

“Just a quick thank you for your help and praise for Joe Milne. I appreciate being able to reach out to you when we were stressed with lots of last minute issues and your team being so responsive. Joe was great and attentive to our distribution needs.

I appreciate the OIT responsiveness in general. It was a little scary with so much Outlook and S drive sluggishness but everything went pretty smooth at the end of the day.

Again kudos to you and to Joe! Thanks so much!”

Submitted by: Anne C. Jett, CPLP
Director of Training and Development

Manager of Learning Technologies Dustin Barrows

“Twice now Dustin and his team have come to my rescue. Because I travel, the team comes up with outstanding solutions for my students and me. Over a year ago, Dustin set up the audio and visual of Skype for Business allowing me the opportunity to teach my class from Africa. They also helped me this semester when I was in Virginia.

The team has excellent people skills and exceptional customer service and they are so successful and have done very well. I will continue to use them next month.”

Submitted by: Bruce G. Davis
Lecturer I
UTSA Professor Creates Digital Humanities Lab with Grant from the OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund

March 1 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions:
Jose Carillo and James Borrego

UTSA students enrolled in two upper-division courses throughout the Spring 2018 semester have the remarkable opportunity of christening the department’s first innovative Digital Humanities lab. The creation of the lab originated from an idea by Kinitra Brooks, Ph.D., associate professor in the UTSA Department of English and the Ricardo Romo Endowed Chair of the Honors College who saw the need for a lab of its kind.

In 2017, Dr. Brooks submitted a proposal to the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund for a project entitled “Expansive Possibilities: Exploring the Digital Humanities through the Black Speculative Arts Digital Archive.”

As one of 15 proposals awarded funding, it emphasized the importance of developing students as scholars in the digital humanities. The award led Dr. Brooks to create a collaborative space designed to enable students to not only critically consume, but also successfully produce media.

“I think this grant is very helpful, because I have been looking for a way to fund this project for a while,” said Dr. Brooks. “That is why this grant is so opportune. Having a micro grant like this is helpful because it allows recipients to lay the groundwork for larger ideas and opportunities that we can have.”

The Digital Humanities lab, which is currently in its preliminary stages of development, is located in the Main Building (MB 2.480). It features technology such as a powerful desktop, audio recording equipment and space and video editing software.

Students taking “Supernatural in African American Literature” and the Honors seminar “Black and Brown Futures,” are using the lab, along with Dr. Brooks, to delve into critical topics of culture, race, and gender in thought-provoking and interesting ways. A major component of these courses is the creation of podcasts, which will constitute the final project and will further acquaint students with the digital humanities.

“I try to make things interesting and dynamic while still maintaining the critical rigor for my students,” said Dr. Brooks. “I want to show them that literature can be interesting and that these topics can be fun and exciting, as well as challenging and practical. Also, more and more I am trying to incorporate OIT from the beginning in all aspects of my work.”

To this end, Dr. Brooks recently invited Video Producers Jose Carillo and James Borrego from OIT’s Video Production Group (VPG) to serve as guest speakers for both courses. The duo shared insights with students regarding editing techniques to assist them with the final project.
With the techniques learned from Carillo and Borrego, students already have conducted interviews with scholars, visual artists, and creative writers including New York Times Best Selling author, Tomi Adeyemi. These interviews are helping students to explore an array of topics such as the intersections of gender and race in horror, science fiction, and fantasy.

The awarding of this grant, as well as the collaboration garnered OIT a shout out from Dr. Brooks in two interviews in which she was featured by the local news station, Kens5.

Thanks to the grant, Dr. Brooks’ students are able to use the Digital Humanities Lab to not only hone their critical thinking skills, but also to help them develop interviewing and audio editing skills. These are all marketable skills that can prove useful when they enter the workforce.

The OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund aims to assist various UTSA colleges in implementing projects geared toward enhancing student-life at the university. In 2017, OIT awarded approximately $150,000 in grants to seven UTSA colleges.
Department Spotlight: StudentConnect

March 14 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions:
Ben Garcia, James Lee, and Linda Dunn

StudentConnect -- the support channel for UTSA students’ technical needs! Officially launched in the summer of 2016, StudentConnect was introduced by the Office of Information Technology (OIT) in an effort to rebrand its student-centered technical services all under one name and to offer expanded services to students. StudentConnect is currently supported by Student Computing Services (SCS) staff.

Prior to the rebranding effort, initiatives aimed at providing students with access to technology resources fell under the SCS area, as well as other areas of OIT. However, after rebranding, these initiatives now fall under the umbrella of StudentConnect and include the following expanded services for students:

- Student PrintSpot (campus wide-printing for labs and personal devices including Mobile Print functions)
- Mobile device charging stations
- Student computer labs
- Lab Without Walls Computing Lab Software kiosks
- Software troubleshooting and technical support for personal devices
- Application support

One of the main benefits of the rebranding effort is that it includes an initiative for StudentConnect to increase OIT’s technical support offering to UTSA students. Previously, StudentConnect was only able to assist students with basic issues such as connecting to the AirRowdy Wi-Fi on their personal devices, and had to refer them off-campus for additional support. However, the StudentConnect team is now able to offer tiered support for students’ personal devices at no additional cost.
“Our StudentConnect team focuses on fixing any issue that may prevent students from completing their coursework or from studying on their personal device,” said Director of Student Computing Services Linda Dunn. “StudentConnect strives to be the first stop for any student experiencing technology issues.”

Along with receiving basic support, students in need of assistance with more complex issues such as virus and malware removal can rest assured that the StudentConnect team, comprised of both full-time staff and part-time student workers, will do its utmost to resolve the problem.

“StudentConnect is like a funnel,” said Computer Lab Systems and Information Services Manager James Lee. “We aim to solve the issue or direct students to the best possible resource to help address their specific need. The benefit is that our technical support part-time staff are students themselves, and that combination means we truly are the best place for their peers to go for help!”

When working with students on their personal devices, the StudentConnect team educates students about why they used a particular solution to fix the problem, to ensure that students are knowledgeable about the solution used and to build their trust in the StudentConnect team.

“Our support tickets are currently at about a 95% first contact resolution rate,” explained Dunn. “The remainder are often resolved on a follow-up visit, with about only 1% of all technical requests referred out or deemed unresolvable.”

Apart from providing technical support through walk-ups in its computer labs, StudentConnect student workers also provide support via a more contemporary means – social media. This means of support saves students time (and for some, gas!) in coming to campus for assistance.

StudentConnect plans to continue its collaborations with other UTSA departments to ensure that UTSA students have convenient access to offered technology. The team also plans to install additional mobile charging stations around campus in the coming weeks.

As one of three teams that make up the OIT Customer Service and Operations Support area, StudentConnect is committed to providing UTSA students with unparalleled customer support to assist in their academic pursuits. StudentConnect is passionate about connecting every UTSA student to technology resources needed to succeed.

“By realigning our processes to offer a better student experience in our service offerings, we are now able to provide greater resources to students,” said Director of Customer Operations and Support Services Ben Garcia. “Our focus with the StudentConnect brand is student success!”

*Students in the Business Building Student Computing Lab.*
A Guest Lecture from the RCSG Leads Students to Success on Shamu

March 26 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions: Zhiwei Wang

On March 26th, Enterprise Research Application Support Analyst Zhiwei Wang with the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Research Computing Support Group (RCSG) served as a guest speaker for Yusheng Feng, Ph.D., a professor in the UTSA Department of Mechanical Engineering. Dr. Feng’s High-Performance Computing (HPC) class was given a hands-on lecture in the Applied Engineering and Technology Building from 1:00 – 2:15 p.m.

During the lecture, students were provided an overview of UTSA’s HPC Cluster, Shamu, managed by the RCSG. Shamu is a centrally shared high-performance computing (HPC) cluster currently comprised of:

- 81 Physical servers
- 2792 total CPU cores
- 16.5TB of shared memory
- 96TB of shared disk storage
- 2 Nvidia Tesla K80 GPU nodes
- 1 node with 72 Xeon CPU Cores and 1.5TB of RAM

Zhiwei Wang giving an overview of the high-performance computing cluster, Shamu.
Wang explained how the ability to write a scientific program and input the program on the HPC cluster are two critical skills needed for working on the cluster. Therefore, the presentation included hands-on experience on the basic level skills for using Shamu.

The students were given a sample program and provided the proper steps for:

- Logging into the cluster
- Starting an application
- Creating a simple job description for the cluster
- Submitting a job request
- Understanding the results

“Hopefully after my guest lecture the students will be able to use Shamu right away,” said Wang. “We try to help students to not only learn the knowledge of writing a scientific program, but to apply the knowledge on the HPC Cluster we have available at UTSA.”

Wang is looking forward to future guest lectures in the fall semester along with his training series on HPC. The training is available in the fall and spring semesters and is open to faculty, staff, and students.
UTSA participated in the EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) annual Student Technology Survey for the first time as the Office of Information Technology (OIT) leads the participation effort.

The survey was sent out to all UTSA students on April 3, 2018 and remained open until April 20, 2018. This initiative has been organized by Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., who serves as the EDUCAUSE Core Data and survey administrator for UTSA. Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong and Communications Specialist Nicole Duff served as research assistants for the survey administration.

The survey was used to collect data on student views of:

- Device ownership, usage, and importance
- Technology and the college/university experience
- Privacy and security
- Learning environments
- Personal computing environments

According to EDUCAUSE, “The research can catalyze conversations among IT professionals about how to better serve their constituents, among institutional leaders about how to use technology strategically; and among students about how to articulate their technology needs and expectations.”

Last year 124 institutions across 10 countries participated in the ECAR survey collecting 43,559 responses. By participating in the ECAR survey via the EDUCAUSE Technology Research in Academic Community (ETRAC), OIT will have access to data that can provide insights to improve IT services for students, prioritize IT contributions to strategic plans, and help UTSA advance as technologically competitive among peer institutions.

In addition to gaining access to the survey data for further analysis and to benchmark student needs and expectations at UTSA, OIT will be part of aggregate level data for EDUCAUSE reports, infographics, and data almanacs.
UTSA Student Technology Resource - JPL Computing Area.

UTSA Student Technology Resource - Advanced Visualization Lab.
Quarter TWO

April | May | June

Reflections of 2018
Enterprise IT Business Analyst/Developer Edgar Madrigal

“Thank you for the quick response and fix to the notification that Xtender documents were not opening for me.

You all are so very dependable – much appreciated.”

Submitted by: Anne Jackson
Procard Specialist

Academic Support Specialist II David Espinoza

“This is a friendly note complimenting David Espinoza’s work; it is refreshing to have a competent and reliable person in OIT. While it may be an expectation and should be the norm, it has not often been the case, but David follows up, shows up when he says he will, and makes sure the customer is always informed. I do not give out accolades freely, you can trust if I do, it is sincere, David is an asset to UTSA and I for one appreciate his work ethic.”

Submitted by: Deborah Thomas
Assistant to the Dean
College of Liberal and Fine Arts
The 2018 Access College & Excel Program (ACE) Laptop award was presented to Maritza Caballero on April 5, 2018 at the ACE Fiesta y Despedida event held at the Downtown Campus. In a continued partnership, the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) along with the UTSA Tomas Rivera Center (TRC) for Student Success Access College & Excel Program (ACE) provide this award to an outstanding student who has completed the ACE Scholar program.

OIT and the TRC recognize outstanding graduates of the ACE Scholar Program who have obtained a GPA of at least 2.50 and exemplified strong community and campus involvement while at UTSA. The program is designed to assist a cohort of freshmen to smoothly transition into a four-year university in order to earn their bachelor’s degrees.

“The partnership/collaboration between ACE/HACU and OIT is very important because this partnership provides technology into the hands of an ACE/UTSA Alumni who will use the technology to further their education or use it for their future career,” states Tomas Rivera Center for Student Success Assistant Director Leticia Longoria-Fisher.
Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia and Chief Development & Marketing Officer for HACU Sandra Holt presented Caballero with a laptop, tablet, accessories and an award certificate. Throughout the ceremony, Executive Director of the Tomas Rivera Center Leticia Duncan-Brosman, Ph.D., and Longoria-Fisher reflected on the journey and growth of students through the ACE Scholars Program. Several students including Caballero shared their personal stories and experiences, as well as described the support they received through the program. “The event was wonderful. I was inspired listening to the success stories of each ACE Scholar”, stated Garcia.

Caballero graduated from UTSA with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health with a concentration in Epidemiology in the Fall 2017 semester. During her higher education journey, she was an ACE Scholar as well as a part of the Student Support Services TRiO program. Caballero will continue her education this May at the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio (UTHSCSA) where she has been accepted into the competitive 15 month Accelerated Nursing Program.

In addition, the ACE program received the Texas Mentoring Summit award for 2018. Longoria-Fisher shared, “The ACE Scholar Program is about preparing, equipping and giving them the skills/tools that are necessary to be successful in higher education. These skills/tools, such as time-management, study skills, and task management are essential for success. After the ACE Scholars graduate out of the program, we believe they will continue to practice the skills throughout the university to their career.”

UTSA’s partnership with HACU began in 2003, through a former collaboration between HACU and Gateway (former technology hardware company) for technology funds. This partnership enables OIT to provide laptop awards for selected ACE Scholar Program graduates annually to help expand technology access.
Students from UTSA will join the Office of Information Technology (OIT) in California this weekend to show off technology that is used at UTSA to help students succeed.

Assistant Vice Provost Vanessa Hammler Kenon will be presenting the technology along with students Edgar Guajardo from the College of Business and Nestor De Hoyos from the College of Engineering at the Ellucian Live 2018 Degree Works Forum. The forum is scheduled on Sunday, April 8 in San Diego, Calif.

UTSA received the opportunity to participate in the forum with the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant. UTSA's presentation titled, “If you build it, they will come…or will they?” will explore the importance of marketing student success tools for adoption.

During the session, attendees will learn best practices for communication in technology implementation. The UTSA team will share how the university utilized marketing, focus groups and strategies for student and advisor buy-in to help increase the awareness and usage of student success technology tools.
Student success is key to UTSA’s vision as San Antonio’s university of the future, and partnering with students to gain their perspectives is transforming the decision-making process. The iPASS grant has supported the implementation of several initiatives for technology tools directly aligned with UTSA President Taylor Eighmy’s Initiative on Student Success. These initiatives include Degree Works, the Education Advisory Board’s Student Success Collaborative Campus, UTSA Guide, the UTSA Mobile App, the recent Academic Advising website redesign, and the upcoming CIVITAS College Scheduler.

“Students collaborating on projects and giving our feedback is most important at the university because students get to share their thoughts on all tools that the university has to offer,” said De Hoyos. “The university will know what the students like and do not like, work from there and be able to provide a better service.”

UTSA’s Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation iPASS grant project, a student success initiative, built a marketing plan to help advisors relaunch Degree Works, the degree-auditing tool. As a result of the project, adoption rates increased by approximately 70 percent within 12 months of the relaunch.

Collaboration between students, faculty and staff has been a key component of the success at UTSA. Guajardo has served on the iPASS committee and been involved in providing feedback on core student technology tools before rollout.

“I believe student collaboration on projects is important because students can tell you what they want and need from a new project that will directly affect them,” Guajardo said. “They can give feedback immediately or before the new project launches so the university knows if it is heading in the right direction as the project develops.”

The Ellucian live event will also showcase videos produced by OIT to support the relaunch of Degree Works at UTSA.

“I hope that my personal experience shared at the Degree Works forum is helpful for people and that the information that they walk away with can be applied to their field of work,” De Hoyos said. “I am very happy, excited and thankful for this opportunity, and I hope to represent UTSA the best way I can.”

Edgar Guajardo (left) and Nestor De Hoyos (right).
More than ever, students seek mobile resources to get the answers they require, highlighting the need for well-crafted, technology-supported strategies and marketing campaigns. Providing information to students when and where they need it, as well as increasing student empowerment through awareness of these tools, has been the key component of the University of Texas at San Antonio’s Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant, which was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The iPASS grant is a collaboration between the Provost’s Office, Academic Advising, and the Office of Information Technology (OIT), as well as student, faculty, and staff stakeholders.

Moving to a centralized advising system laid the foundation for improving the culture of UTSA Academic Advising to ensure students receive accurate and consistent advising. With the change to the advising structure, the Academic Advising department was able to partner with OIT to introduce simplified advising tools including Ellucian DegreeWorks and the Education Advisory Board (EAB) Student Success Collaborative Campus.

After the integration and adoption of these advising tools, the iPASS grant team was able to identify other areas to support the advising experience for students at UTSA by enhancing the way information is delivered to students. From the increased use of campaigns that encourage students to see their advisors to expanding the mobile resources available for students, student success has been a major focus for UTSA. This led to the identification of the Academic Advising website as a key component to support student success.

The advising website is a resource that is accessed by not only current students but also future and returning students and parents. From the launch of the project, the objective of UTSA Academic Advising was to provide more than just a quick facelift to its website. A dynamic website would build on the collaborative work done for the iPASS grant and improve advising resources for students.

Members from Academic Advising collaborated with staff from University Communications and Marketing department and OIT’s Customer Relations, Communications, and Training team on the website redesign project over the course of the fall 2017 semester.

UTSA Assistant Vice Provost for IT and iPASS grant Principal Investigator Vanessa Hammler Kenon said, “This was an amazing adventure and journey to get the advising site built from the ground up as a part of our Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant. Working with multiple talents across campus, we were able to complete this project internally and save UTSA thousands of dollars in the process.”
This collaboration provided the project with diverse perspectives on website terminology, graphics, and information placement. The website was reviewed item by item to ensure information was relevant, accurate, and necessary.

After the website updates were completed, the advising team held focus groups with advising staff, administration, and UTSA students. This was extremely beneficial as it provided insights to better serve students. Initial feedback from the advising website focus groups indicated that students found the redesign more inviting and user friendly, and appreciated being able to see all the advisor pictures.

“Having our advising and technology staff come together with our student focus group was an incredible collaboration!” said Brandy Barksdale, senior academic program advisor. “The fresh perspectives provided by everyone were welcomed and highly valued. The vision of all those involved created an inviting and interactive website. We look forward to this new site assisting our students on their academic journey.”

When the spring 2017 semester began, visitors to the UTSA Academic Advising website were welcomed by a fresh new site, which had been soft-launched in December 2017. The modernized UTSA advising website provides a more dynamic experience for visitors as soon as they arrive on the landing page. Although the previous site contained much of the same content, it was not presented in a visually appealing way to engage visitors.

The new, interactive, and user-friendly design empowers students to easily find academic and nonacademic resources. Information on their advisor with a photo provides a more personalized experience, and the layout has continuity with the main UTSA website (redesigned in academic year 2016–17). Adding social media to the main page, having a responsive design, and using a vibrant layout have significantly transformed the advising website and, most importantly, the user experience.

Our website is another piece in the larger puzzle of student success that the iPASS team will collaborate to complete. Student success continues to be a key focus for the university with the launch of the UTSA President’s Initiative on Student Success and the Student Success taskforce.
Global Collaboration and Workplace Learning Opportunities Promoted at the AERA Annual Meeting

April 13 | New York, NY

Mentions:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., and Nicole Duff

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Office of Information Technology (OIT) Assistant Vice Provost Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., is spearheading an off-site visit focused on workplace learning at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2018 Annual meeting. The annual meeting took place in New York, NY from April 13-17.

The event is open to AERA meeting attendees, which include faculty, researchers, graduate students, and other distinguished professionals with expertise in education research.

Kenon shared that, “Scholars from across the globe participated in this site visit. These academic scholars from China, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and many more nations, add an international perspective on professional development.” The San Antonio Spurs organization staff assisted the OIT technical workplace learning staff team with coordinating the off-site visit with the New York Knicks organization.

As a public institution with a significant portion of the student body coming from public schools throughout Texas, OIT’s participation is important to support this year’s theme, “The Dreams, Possibilities, and Necessity of Public Education.” In line with President Taylor Eighmy’s strategic theme (An exemplary Urban-Serving University of the Future), the session will provide insight on the cultural, individualized, and specialized knowledge between education and workplace settings that support cradle to career education as well as help develop the leaders of the future.

Kenon, the leader for the off-site visit “The NBA Workplace: Dreams, Possibilities and the Workplace Beyond the Basketball Court” organized this event through the Workplace Learning Special Interest Group (SIG).
The session highlighted opportunities to support students that have aspirations of becoming professional athletes through guided exploration of the various other career prospects that relate to their passion. “The San Antonio Spurs staff were highly instrumental in assisting with the logistics and opportunity for academic scholars from across the globe to participate in this experience surrounding training and career choice,” stated Kenon.

Communications Specialist Nicole Duff served as a discussant for the session, which also explored career opportunities beyond the basketball court, and how the National Basketball Association (NBA) has supported public education. The off-site visit gave attendees a look into the New York Knicks organization as well as the Madison Square Garden arena.

In addition to the off-site visit, Kenon and Duff served as chairs for several other global sessions at the meeting. Kenon chaired “International Perspectives on Access,” “Promoting Professional Development in Diverse Settings,” and “Dreams and Possibilities for Black Youth in Education” sessions and served as a discussant for “Aspired Principal Practices to Improve Student Achievement.” Duff chaired “The Global Impact of Career and Vocational Education Training in the Workplace” session.

Over the past several years, OIT has expanded its participation in the Workplace Learning SIG to find opportunities to elevate the training and professional development it provides to faculty and staff at UTSA in line with the UTSA and OIT strategic plans. The increased representation resulted in Kenon’s election to serve as the 2018 AERA annual meeting program chair for the Workplace Learning SIG.

OIT’s work on workplace learning also led to the opportunity to produce a handbook on the topic of global workplace learning with Wiley Publishing, which includes several authors that are also members of AERA. The book is co-edited by Kenon and The Texas A&M University Assistant Vice Chancellor for Engineering Remote Education Sunay Palsole, Ph.D., and is expected to be released in the fall of 2019.
AERA Workplace Learning SIG Names Assistant Vice Provost, IT Chair for 2018-2019

April 16 | New York, NY
Mentions:
Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D.


The announcement was made on April 16th during the Workplace Learning SIG annual business meeting at the 2018 AERA conference held from April 13th – 17th in New York. Renate Wesselink, Ph.D., associate professor at Wageningen University and Research Centre in the Netherlands and the 2017 – 2018 SIG chair passed the gavel to Dr. Kenon at the end of the meeting, to signify the bestowing of the new title upon Dr. Kenon.

Dr. Kenon, who was nominated to serve as the 2017 – 2018 Program Chair prior to this new appointment, was responsible for organizing the SIG events for this year’s conference.

As a result, she helped orchestrate several sessions including roundtables and paper sessions, some for which she served as a discussant and chair. In addition, she served as the site leader for an off-site visit of the Madison Square Garden (MSG) on the first day of the conference.

The off-site visit entitled “The NBA Workplace: The Dreams, Possibilities, and the Workplace Beyond the Basketball Court,” enabled more than 50 educators, scholars and researchers from across the globe to tour the facility. The event, which was sponsored by the San Antonio Spurs, MSG and the New York Knicks, culminated in a presentation from Dan Shagwat, manager of Service and Retention at MSG about career opportunities in the NBA that exist for youth beyond the basketball court.

As the new chair, some of Dr. Kenon’s responsibilities, according to the AERA website, will include:

• General administration of the SIG
• Ensuring that the SIG Bylaws are followed
• Acting as liaison between the SIG and AERA and the SIG as well as the SIG Executive Committees

AERA is the largest national professional organization, comprised of members from across the United States and around the world.
Senior Administrative Associate Martha Bohrer

“Kudos to Martha Bohrer for facilitating a much needed replacement of the water fountain on the second floor of the Bosque Building. As you may have noticed the past couple of weeks, the old water fountain was dispensing warm water. Due to Martha’s persistence and professionalism, she was able to make a worthy justification to facilities for a replacement. The new water fountain was replaced this morning (6/29/18). Thank you Martha!!”

Submitted by: Sonia Hernandez
Senior Administrative Associate

Senior Administrative Associate Sonia Hernandez

“For doing a great job and going above and beyond regarding verifying a negligible risk Apple Developer click wrap agreement with the UTSA Business Contracts Office.”

Submitted by: Jayashree Iyengar
Director Of Application Development and Support
UTSA undergraduates Jeremy Berg and Brenda Perez, along with a cohort of students enrolled in the Applied Teaching – Grades 4 – 8 upper division course spent the spring 2018 semester researching and creating an instructional app. The duo from the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) recently showcased the app, which was developed with support from a grant from the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT).

Berg and Perez, both interdisciplinary studies majors, presented research on the innovative app entitled “Punching the Content” at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry Showcase held on April 19th in the UTSA Convocation Center.

“The app is a repository of tools for pre-service teachers,” said Berg. “It gives them the tools needed to elevate and transform their interactions in the classroom.”

The notion of ‘Punching the Content,’ refers to teachers’ use of digital tools to aid in reinforcing information shared in the classroom. Thus, the aptly titled app is designed to help facilitate better teaching and learning experiences in the classroom by delivering useful instructional tools in a central location with a user-friendly interface.
Some of the tools integrated in the app include classroom management resources, communication applications, gaming programs, interactive response platforms, and online quizzes.

“The app is a great way to expand the resources that are out there,” said Perez. “It makes it easy for teachers to grab the technology and use it for their students.”

During the showcase, the duo shared how engaging in the development of this app helped to not only equip them with technical skills, but also hone their problem-solving, innovation, and collaboration skills. Their research also explored how this resource will help impact the education community, and specifically benefit 4th-8th grade teachers.

The cohort built the app under the tutelage of Professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching Elizabeth Pate, Ph.D., and Instructional Technology Coordinator for COEHD Ilna Colemere. As a result, the students were able to experiment with app builders, as well as HTML coding in order to develop their app.

Colemere was one of 15 recipients awarded a grant from the OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund for the project entitled “Mobile Apps: Acquiring the Skills and Dispositions for 21st Century Learning and Teaching” in Fall 2017.

In her proposal, she outlined how this cohort of students is serving as a pilot group for a proposed initiative in COEHD. The initiative focuses on how COEHD students are expected to create a mobile app for use during their field experiences and clinical teaching.

“The OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund provided the opportunity to introduce students to the design and creation process of app development,” said Colemere. “The students were eager to identify useful websites based on their classroom observations and research. The ‘Punching the Content’ App experience and the feedback I received from the students will assist me in defining the path to improving the app development process.”

The Undergraduate Research and Creative Inquiry Showcase enables UTSA students from all fields to share their research and creative endeavors with the UTSA community.
Five years ago, the CIO at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) reviewed some sobering survey responses from students about their degree-completion experience. What was the top reason they claimed they weren’t graduating in four years? Gaps in the advising process.

Looking to improve the graduation rate, the CIO created a partnership with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) and Academic Advising to more thoroughly evaluate student advising and to find degree-planning tools that could help keep students engaged and on track for graduation.

“The feedback about incorrect advising was really eye-opening,” said Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Assistant Vice Provost for IT. “So, the CIO and I went out and met with every single advising team on campus. There are more than 100 advisors, with full-time advisors responsible for a minimum of 200 students—and we encountered the staggering amount of hard-copy-only processes that both students and advisors were tasked with keeping track of.”

To address some of the issues causing deficiencies in advising—from the high volume of paper and outdated information-sharing systems to differences in the advising process throughout the university—UTSA implemented Ellucian Degree Works™, an online degree-planning tool.
Once they implemented Degree Works, they had to campaign to prove how useful the tool could be for all students at UTSA, including transfer students who often encounter expensive roadblocks that traditional students don’t have to deal with.

Read the full case study to learn how UTSA:

- Raised the four-year graduation rate by 4%
- Simplified and improved the degree-completion experience for transfer students
- Transformed the advising process and empowered their students

Empowering students to succeed is our priority.
In spring 2018, the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) embarked on a multiphase project to upgrade its current Banner platform. Banner, which is in the process of being transitioned from version 8 to 9, is the university’s student information system (SIS) provided by the vendor Ellucian.

OIT’s Application Development and Support team (ADS) recently completed critical pre-requisite upgrades as part of phase one of the extensive upgrade. As a result, Banner users will soon have an enhanced experience within the Banner platform.

“One of the main benefits of this upgrade is that it allows us to move into web-based technology,” said Amparo Hubbard, OIT manager of ADS. “Banner 8 was built on older technology which Ellucian will no longer support at the end of the year. Therefore, this upgrade is necessary as we are going into a new era of Banner.”

Thanks to the upgrades, users will notice several enhancements within the Banner platform including:

- A modern look and feel
- Mobile device access
- The replacement of Oracle forms with webpages
- The ability to utilize UTSA log in credentials

The new Banner 9 platform is intuitive, uses standard web navigation and offers the same functionality as that of Banner 8. OIT will provide navigational training to UTSA departments, to ensure that users smoothly transition into the upgraded system.

“OIT plans to offer train-the-trainer training to various UTSA departments, in Fall 2018,” said Sylvia Dorgan senior enterprise systems programmer. “Departments will then be able to customize the training to suit their respective needs.”

Spearheaded by OIT’s ADS team, the Banner 9 upgrade project is a joint collaboration between several IT Departments and functional user areas.
The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team hosted a two-day UTSA Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) and Network Improvement Communities (NIC) Site-Visit with Achieving the Dream (ATD). The site-visit also featured special guests from the NASPA Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, Assistant Vice President for Strategy and Practice Omari Burnside, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Director of Innovation Tracey Armstrong.

UTSA is one of 24 higher education institutions nationwide selected for the iPASS grant. The visit, held at the UTSA Main Campus on May 10 and May 11, was an opportunity to discuss the progress UTSA has made throughout the duration of the iPASS grant and brought together students, faculty, staff and university leadership to discuss student success initiatives at UTSA. The grant is a collaboration of the Office of the Provost, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, and OIT at UTSA.
The staff represented various departments including:

- Academic Advising
- Institutional Research
- The Office of Information Technology (OIT)
- The Office of the Provost
- The Office of P-20 Initiatives
- First-Year Experience (FYE) Program
- The Graduate School
- The Office of Sponsored Project Administration (OSPA)
- The Office of Research Support (ORS)

Leon Hill, Strategic Data and Technology Coach from ATD, served as the facilitator for the event and led participants through exercises, which examined critical components to student success including clearly defined goals, a culture of evidence, communicating for sustained buy-in, and creating and sharing our vision.

**Project Successes and Challenges**

Hill and Assistant Vice Provost for IT and iPASS Project Principal Investigator Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., shared the achievements the iPASS grant project has contributed to since it began in 2015. These included directly supporting student success technology such as:
• Degree Works Reimplementation & Marketing Campaign
• UTSA Mobile App Student Success Tool Integration
• EAB SSC Campus Training Support
• EAB Guide App Marketing & Training Support
• UTSA Advising Website Collaboration & Development
• CIVITAS Schedule Builder Launch

In addition, Dr. Kenon reviewed the training, as well as publication and presentation opportunities that the grant project has provided. UTSA has leveraged these opportunities to share our experience nationwide to improve best practices in implementing advising and student success technology.

The event also provided a forum for the committee to discuss challenges they faced or were facing and how they could be overcome. This led to breakthroughs including one salient point which is, to continue to do this work well, we need to be open to approaching any department which is needed to partner in solutions.

**Student Success at UTSA: Culture of Evidence**

Director of Reporting Brian Cordeau guided attendees through interactive dashboards created by his team that visually displayed information on UTSA retention and graduation rates. Cordeau also showed how the information could be disaggregated to show specific populations by specific demographics such as gender, ethnicity, and enrollment status.

OIT Project Coordinator and iPASS lead Rosalind Ong reviewed information from the university’s student success taskforce to help provide a foundation for discussions on sustainability for initiatives. This included our definition of student success as well as our short and long-term goals.

Interim Associate Vice President for Student Advising and Support Angelica Barrera and Executive Director of Academic Advising Barbara Smith provided data on several advising goals including caseload review, academic warning/academic probation caseload review, outreach to non-registered students. Academic Advising achieved their goals with all measures reaching or almost reaching 100%. Additionally, they reviewed how satisfaction (as measured using an exit survey following advising sessions) has increased among students. In all factors measured, satisfaction is above 90%.

**Next Steps for Student Success at UTSA**

Beyond student success technology, the conversation over the two-day site visit explored the need to look at sub-populations of students and ensure that improvements are being seen by populations across the board and not necessarily one segment. There are several student success projects underway and in development including the complete launch of Civitas Schedule Builder. Projects such as these ensure that we are delivering tools to meet the needs of our students and empower them as they navigate their college path.
In support of the redesign of UTSA’s Academic Advising website, the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Video Production Group (VPG) is collaborating with UTSA’s Academic Advising department to produce new Degree Works tutorial videos.

Degree Works is a web-based degree auditing tool designed to help students and advisors monitor progress toward degree completion. The application is user-friendly and has many great features to help students stay motivated for on-time graduation. The features include:

- A Degree Auditing tool to support students and advisors with monitoring students’ progress toward degree completion
- A Student Planning tool to map out the classes students need to take for their selected degree plan
- A What-If Audit that illustrates the degree progress should the student decide to change their major
- A GPA Calculator which allows students to use their current credits and remaining credits to calculate their desired GPA

Screenshots of the UTSA advising website before and after the redesign.
Video Production Manager Gerard Bustos and Video Producer Stephen Matthews have been working with Academic Advising Program Coordinator Amanda Garcia to produce the four new videos. The videos elaborate the benefits of Degree Works and explain how to use the following features:

- Degree audit tool
- Student planning tool
- What-if audit tool

Garcia will provide the voiceover for each video while Bustos records and Matthews supplies new screenshots.

The UTSA Academic Advising website redesign and Degree Works were supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMFG) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success Grant (iPASS).
Over the past few months, the Office of Information Technology (OIT) has collaborated with UTSA’s Office of Emergency Management to review critical IT operations and recovery processes for the OIT Business Continuity Plan. The Business Continuity Plan is managed by the UTSA Office of Business Continuity & Emergency Management (BCEM) and is used to help establish methods to maintain business operations during or after a disruptive event.

OIT’s Communications Specialist Danicia Steele and Administrative Service Officer III Cindy Colston, who currently serve in the role of coordinating OIT’s Business Continuity Plan, collaborated with OIT management and BCEM to identify critical functions, policies, vulnerabilities, and recovery procedures within each OIT department.

The current OIT Business Continuity Plan includes the following information for each department within OIT:

- A list of primary IT services and functions
- Recovery strategies for the loss of workplace, IT applications, communication services, and infrastructure services
- An emergency department call tree
- Internal and external recovery resources

In support of OIT’s continuing efforts for emergency planning, Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia, and Director of Learning Technologies Joe Toabares participated in the North SA Chamber’s Annual Site Visit. The site visit took place on May 24, 2018 at the San Antonio Emergency Operations Center.
“This site visit gave us a unique opportunity to meet with city and county business continuity and disaster recovery leaders, as well as business and educational technology leaders from across the county to discuss best practices under numerous emergency circumstances,” said Kenon. “This was an amazing opportunity for OIT leadership to work with community leaders in this area to ensure we are continually moving in the right direction with emergency management and disaster recovery.”

The visit included briefings and in-depth educational tours of the Policy Room, Regional Medical Operations Center, Command Center and Data Center. The tour was facilitated by San Antonio IT Business Relationship Manager Hakeem Miles. OIT leaders collaborated with multiple regional companies to discuss best emergency management practices.

“I was impressed with the level of technology, resources, and examples of collaboration and participation between the city, county, and state agencies involved in running the Emergency Operations Center,” Garcia shared. “While one should never wish for the occurrence of a disaster or contingency event, it is comforting to know that San Antonio and Bexar County have an Emergency Operations Center suited for the handling of major disasters and contingency event emergencies. The site visit was a great validation of our efforts to enhance and further develop our business continuity and disaster recovery planning.”

OIT is committed to supporting emergency management to ensure the university has the proper resources and procedures to continue services in the case of a disruptive event.

Ben Garcia and Joe Tóbares view the latest VOIP technology.
The UTSA Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (ELPS) in the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD) recently named Assistant Vice Provost, IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., the 2018 Outstanding Alumni. Dr. Kenon was one of two alumni honored at the Outstanding Alumni and Scholarship event held on May 19th at Top Golf in San Antonio, Texas.

“This announcement was a pleasant surprise,” said Dr. Kenon. “It’s such an honor coming from educational scholars who I recognize for demanding the highest quality of work.”

The Outstanding Alumni Award acknowledges alumni of the ELPS program who demonstrate stellar educational leadership and have made a notable impact in the areas of educational leadership, opportunity, and service to both the UTSA and San Antonio communities.
A proud alumna, Dr. Kenon obtained her Master’s degree in Adult and Higher Education, and doctorate in ELPS. Along with her continued partnerships with COEHD, and other UTSA colleges, she holds a dual appointment at UTSA and serves as a faculty member in COEHD’s Consortium for Social Transformation (CST) department.

"Knowing the accomplishments of many graduates from the College of Education’s Educational Leadership and Policies Studies program throughout the community, nation and globally, I am so truly appreciative to receive this award," said Dr. Kenon.

Attendees of the event were able to engage in outdoor golfing challenges in an effort to raise proceeds to enable COEHD to fund four scholarships for current master’s students. The event also recognized current students of the ELPS program who were offered scholarship awards.
Building Student Awareness: Technology Resources Promoted by OIT at Incoming Student Orientation

June 5 | San Antonio, TX

Mentions:
The Office of Information Technology

The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team collaborated with UTSA’s Office of Orientation and Family Programs for the summer Orientation Resource Fairs. During each fair, OIT was able to outreach and engage with incoming UTSA students to promote technology resources that support student success including the UTSA Mobile App, UTSA Guide App, and Degree Works throughout the summer.

Orientation began June 5th and ran through August 7th, 2018. Each week hundreds of incoming UTSA students attended. They participated in sessions during which they were encouraged by their Orientation Leaders to download resources such as the UTSA Mobile App and the UTSA Guide App. The resource fair provided another opportunity to engage with students and build awareness of the available technical support and resources offered at UTSA.
As part of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMFG) Integrated Planning and Advising for Student Success (iPASS) grant, OIT has worked in partnership with the Office of the Provost, Academic Advising, and Institutional Research to implement advising technology tools to support student success at UTSA.

The Education Advisory Board’s (EAB) Guide App, rebranded as UTSA Guide for our campus, is a student success tool that helps students navigate through college. It contains information relevant to their current classification and provides notifications to help them stay on track, information to explore majors, resources to support them such as labs, department offices, class schedules, and much more.

The UTSA Mobile App is a tool that provides access to important UTSA information for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and guests. Features for students include the ability to check account balances, view class schedules and assignments, and set reminders for university events.

Students are also educated on Degree Works, a degree auditing tool which helps students work with their advisors to map out their courses and track their progress toward degree completion. The software also includes tools such as a “what-if” the feature that allows students to explore alternate degree program paths.

Participation in orientation was coordinated and led by the CRCT team with volunteer representatives from other OIT areas including Application Development and Support (ADS), StudentConnect, Business Operations, Telecom, the Research Computing Support Group (RCSG), and Customer Support. OIT managed two information tables. The first educated students and parents on the difference between the UTSA Guide App and the UTSA Mobile App. The second promoted awareness of OIT and the resources available to students. Students received t-shirts and complimentary OIT gear in exchange for engaging with staff and utilizing the resources.

Last summer, OIT partnered with several offices including Student Affairs, Enrollment Services, Institutional Research, the Student Center for Community Engagement and Inclusion, and the Office of the Provost through the UTSA Guide Marketing Committee to pilot the UTSA Guide App to incoming freshmen. During the freshman orientation pilot, 77% of students downloaded and installed the app, surpassing the average target goal of 50%. At the end of the summer, EAB reported that UTSA had the highest adoption rate of any institution to launch the app.
The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Faculty Advisory Committee held its second convening for the year on June 8th in the North Paseo Building (NPB 1.412). The meeting united committee members, invited guests, UTSA students, Online Learning and student success staff, for a first-hand look at the online tutoring platform, TutorMe. OIT is currently considering implementing this platform as part of its continued effort to leverage technology to empower students.

Designed to personalize students’ learning experiences, TutorMe provides students access to on-demand support including homework assistance and test preparation. Currently, the platform is utilized at more than 500 peer institutions across the U.S. such as the University of Southern California, Louisiana State University and New Mexico State University.

To help familiarize attendees with TutorMe, Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., assistant vice provost of IT who serves as the Committee Coordinator and Faculty Liaison, invited the platform’s co-founders Alex Convery and Myles Hunter to serve as guest speakers. During their presentation, Convery and Hunter, both University of Southern California alumni, shared insights about how TutorMe is distinguished from other online tutoring options.
Not only does TutorMe utilize machine learning and artificial intelligence to connect students with more than 10,000 experienced tutors in seconds, but also it easily integrates with Blackboard Learn and other learning management systems. This integration will enable students to conveniently access the platform with a single sign on experience from within the familiar Blackboard environment.

If it is implemented, students will be able to receive one-on-one assistance 24/7 on an array of courses virtually from any location using a modern and user-friendly interface. In addition, students will be able to use a variety of modernized features, such as audio and video calling, whiteboards, and screen sharing capability to help foster a collaborative learning experience.

“I think that TutorMe would be a great addition to the learning tools available for UTSA students,” said John Saldana, senior English major. “The higher education system is catering to students that have to go through non-traditional routes through the university system, such as distance learning, and I think that TutorMe would be a great asset especially to those students and to the university.”

If launched, TutorMe, which is meant to be integrated with existing tutoring services offered at UTSA, will serve as an additional tutoring option for students. The university currently provides tutoring services through various tutoring centers including the Tomas Rivera Center and the Writing Center.

“This student success resource could bring a well-rounded complement to the outstanding work provided to our students by the UTSA Tutoring Centers,” said Dr. Kenon.

The meeting culminated in a discussion about the standardization of the student response system iClicker as well as the survey response system Qualtrics, led by Director of Learning Technologies Joe Tobares and Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia, respectively.

The OIT Faculty Advisory Committee meets on a quarterly basis. It serves as a forum for members to collaboratively discuss and address the technology needs of students and faculty with OIT management. Department chairs nominate faculty members to serve as their department’s representatives on this committee.
The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Academic Support team serves as a critical liaison between OIT and the College of Science and the College of Liberal and Fine Arts. As one of three distinct teams within the Customer Service and Operations Support area, Academic Support is responsible for providing dedicated technical assistance to its respective colleges.

“We are basically champions for COS and COLFA,” said Louis Badillo, OIT Support Services manager. “Our team manages and fulfills service requests from these colleges. We also collaborate and communicate regularly with department chairs and deans from these colleges on different projects.”

Some of the projects the Academic Support team undertake include providing consultations to faculty, deans, chairs, and other staff regarding new technologies, as well as system and application upgrades. The team also performs upgrades to ensure that the computer labs in COS and COLFA are always running the latest software that students need to succeed.

In addition, the Academic Support team helps facilitate awareness and improvement of the Insight scores of the colleges’ UTSA-owned assets. InSight scores help determine the health of machines, based on various indicators.

The team was designed to help OIT build greater technology support relationships with the Information Technology Associates (ITAs) assigned to these two colleges in an effort to foster increased collaboration. The Academic Support team serves as technical support liaisons between OIT and UTSA colleges.

“The Academic Support team is physically embedded within each of these two colleges,” explained Ben Garcia, Director of Customer Service and Operations Support. “This enables our team to build lasting relationships with each department within those colleges and allows for greater visibility and transparency.”

The team’s strategic location also allows it to understand first-hand some of the technical challenges and needs that are being experienced within COLFA and COS. This unique positioning distinguishes it from the frontline support that OIT also offers, through OITConnect, which is the general technical support offered to the entire UTSA community.

“Our team takes a great deal of pride in the work we perform for these colleges and I am excited to see what our next step is,” said Badillo. “Having our customers from these colleges convey to the other colleges how beneficial a resource Academic Support is, can help us further expand our services to other UTSA colleges.”
Enterprise System Programmer Lydia Sanchez

“I just wanted to reach out and thank you for your quick action and hard work yesterday solving and doing the heavy lifting to fix the problem with the data loading into the system. I know you had to do a lot of manual work to get us through yesterday operating efficiently until regular system operations started up again today. I appreciate also that you were able to go in and put a message on our website in Sal’s absence. I know that’s not your comfort zone. I am thankful that you can always be counted on to do what’s needed when we reach out to you. You’re amazing!”

Submitted by: Anne C. Jett, CPLP
Director of Training and Development

IT Assistant Edgar Guajardo

“The Inventory Department would like to send a special shout out of “Thanks” to ICPs Antonio Alvarez (Biology), James Boyd (Chemistry), Edgar Guajardo (OIT) and Greg Granados (Neurosciences) for their collaborative team approach with a State of Texas Comptroller’s Office Asset Review on June 8. Given short notice (3 p.m.) to physically verify selected assets at 9 a.m. the next morning, we found ourselves in a “nail biting” mode. However, when we realized the assets selected were under the control of our Fantastic Four ICPs, that fretfulness shifted to a “we got this” mode. Thanks to all our ICPs for being great stewards over university assets!”

Submitted by: The UTSA Inventory Department
To advance the success of UTSA students, faculty, and staff while providing a cost savings measure to the university, the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) will launch Adobe Creative Cloud university-wide, beginning this fall.

With the launch, UTSA students, faculty and staff will have access to Adobe Pro, Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator and more. The Adobe software will be available in all UTSA classrooms and student laboratories and on UTSA computing assets used by faculty and staff.

“The implementation of the Adobe software creative suite of applications delivers the latest and most creative software tools to the university community,” said Ben Garcia, UTSA OIT Director of Customer Service and Support. “Leveraging the use of these software tools will foster greater knowledge creation and provide the opportunity for greater student success outcomes at UTSA.”
Joe Tobares, Director of Learning Technologies, added, “OIT wants students to succeed at UTSA and as they transition into the job market by delivering popular, industry-demanding technology tools such as Adobe, Microsoft and SAS. It’s important for us to provide these tools and resources to our students so they can compete in today’s global job market.”

To prepare and strategize for the fall launch of Adobe Create Cloud, Tobares, Garcia and Vanessa Kenon, Ed.D., Assistant Vice Provost for IT, attended the Adobe Creative Campus 2018 Collaboration Conference at the University of Utah earlier this month. The conference provided renewed awareness on the importance of collaborating with faculty to improve digital literacy on campus and to transform teaching and business operations that support the student success journey.

During the conference, several institutions including the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Clemson University, Boston University, Penn State and California State University, Fullerton shared their experiences with implementing Adobe Create Campus Cloud.

“Access to Adobe Creative Campus will be a game changer for the entire UTSA community, said Kenon. “An enterprise license will also bring a large cost savings for academic departments purchasing individual licenses.”
The UTSA Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (ECE) was recently awarded funding from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund, for a project entitled “Advancing Computing Resources for Deep Learning Education and Research in Brain-Computer Interface.” The funding was awarded to assist Associate Chair of Research and Professor in the UTSA Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Yufei Huang, Ph.D., with the purchase of a state-of-the-art graphical processing unit (GPU) machine optimized for deep learning research in March 2018. GPU machines use accelerated deep learning to enhance the ability for deep learning research.

Deep learning is the state-of-the-art machine learning model that expands the limits on research applications including artificial intelligence (AI), image and speech recognition, computer vision, and many other areas. Deep learning is the “brain” that powers the popular AI products including Apple’s Siri, the Amazon Echo, and autonomous cars.

Before the purchase of the workstation, students still were able to get results through UTSA’s centrally shared high-performance computing (HPC) cluster Shamu, although research storage was limited, and students were unable to train complex deep learning models that carried a massive amount of data in a satisfactory time frame. Now this new deep learning workstation saves time and money for Dr. Huang and his graduate students to train models conveying a vast amount of data.
“My students conduct a lot of artificial intelligence research for biological applications. The research requires training of deep learning models which consist of millions of parameters on a significant amount of data to capture the important information about the biological processes,” said Dr. Huang. “Without the deep learning machine, it took weeks to train the model. Now with the new machine it only takes 1-2 days or even a few hours.”

In addition to two NVIDIA Titan V GPUs with 12GB memory, the machine contains ample storage and supports researchers using software tools for deep learning or high-performance computing (HPC). The workstation is currently available in the UTSA research lab (BSE 2.208) and benefits the research abilities for any students working on deep learning.

“This is probably the fastest deep learning and AI research machine at the university,” said Dr. Huang. “It will benefit the research ability at UTSA as the machine provides another level of capability in artificial intelligence research.”
The North SA Chamber of Commerce held its monthly CIO Breakfast on Thursday, June 28, 2018. Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia delivered announcements and presented the program for the event. This included introducing John Dickson from the Denim Group.

The theme for this month’s breakfast included discussion on:

- Weak links, including sprawling networks, streaming vendor vulnerability updates, and unknown threats in application portfolios
- Issues, such as budget constraints that impact how these threats are addressed
- Actionable plans to protect organizations

The North SA Chamber of Commerce CIO Breakfast series provides an opportunity for senior IT and executive technology leaders throughout the city of San Antonio to share and strategize best practices. Following the event, Garcia reflected, “I’m honored to participate in the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce CIO Breakfast sessions. The presentation by John Dickson of the Denim Group, on ‘Identifying Attack Surface on Budget Constrained Organizations’ was excellent.”
Quarter THREE
July | August | September

Reflections of 2018
Department Spotlight: OITConnect

July 2 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions:
Ashlee Vasquez, Ben Garcia and David Miller

Looking for one place for your technical support needs? Look no further than OITConnect! As a branch of the Office of Information Technology’s Customer Service and Operations Support area, the OITConnect team prides itself on providing exceptional customer service to the UTSA community.

Every day, OITConnect handles a variety of technical requests from the university community, ranging from passphrase resets, application support and device troubleshooting to computer imaging and reimaging. The team, comprised of both part-time and full-time staff, works diligently in the field and remotely to ensure that the UTSA community has access to technology that is functioning optimally to aid in its academic, administrative, and research pursuits.

“Having OITConnect as one point of contact means that our customers do not have to understand OIT’s structure to determine which group to contact for their technical requests,” said Ashlee Vasquez, Technology Support Specialist III and team leader. “Our team successfully resolves a high number of requests at the first point of contact and is trained to determine where to escalate tickets to promptly resolve customers’ technical issues and requests.”
To provide the university community several options for requesting assistance based on their needs, OITConnect has expanded its multichannel support offerings over the years. Currently, customers can receive help through a live chat, email, phone, a self-service portal, or via a walk-up help desk.

“We are constantly looking into streamlining our processes to improve our OITConnect support,” said Ben Garcia, Director of Customer Service and Operations Support. “We have also improved our response times to customer reported issues in the support channels we offer.”

To date, the team maintains a customer satisfaction approval rating of 96% from ticket closures, with peaks of 98%. With regard to its telephone support handling specifically, OITConnect has an average speed of answer of 8 seconds in answering customer telephone support calls, according to Garcia.

Along with handling ticket requests, OITConnect is also responsible for providing operational and project related support for several OIT initiatives. Some of these initiatives include the recent CrashPlan server upgrade, the voicemail upgrade, as well as the upcoming Adobe Creative Cloud campus-wide implementation slated for fall 2018.

“We partner internally with other OIT groups as well,” said David Miller, manager of client support. “We strive to ensure that the customer experience is as seamless as possible.”

To better meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff not only at the Main Campus, but also at the Downtown and Institute of Texan Cultures campuses, the team plans to increase its support coverage in the future.

“OIT is evaluating how best we can support a successful expansion of the Downtown Campus, in keeping with one of the Presidential themes,” said Garcia. “We are also working to further improve our existing processes, streamline our existing portal, and provide more self-service options through chatbot capability and improved application and service catalog online information.”

Along with these support channels, OITConnect offers assistance via its walk-up help desk located on the second floor of the Bosque Street building.
In January of 2018 EDUCAUSE released the 2018 Top 10 Issues. This highly anticipated annual report uncovers the areas imperative to consider for IT organization strategic planning. The Office of Information Technology Assistant Vice Provost Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., was invited to serve as a speaker along with University of Arkansas CIO Chris McCoy, and EDUCAUSE Vice President for Communities and Research Susan Grajek, Ph.D., during the “2018 Top 10 IT Issues and Role of the CIO” webinar. Held on July 24, 2018, the webinar further explored the topics of the report as they can relate to corporate partners.

During the webinar Dr. Kenon was recognized as a program chair for the 2018 EDUCAUSE Annual Conference scheduled to take place in late October in Denver, CO and also a member of the 2018 Top 10 IT Issues committee that produced this year’s list.

For 2018 the top areas of focus were: institutional adaptiveness, IT adaptiveness, improved student outcomes, and improved decision-making.
Key outcomes for the session were to, according to the EDUCAUSE session description:

- Create awareness for how the top IT issues impact the role of technical leaders in higher education
- Gain clarity in how technology leaders partner with other campus leaders to leverage technology to solve critical institutional challenges
- Understand the complexity of campus stakeholders and their influence in how decisions are made to prioritize taking action on top IT issues

The webinar is the first in the EDUCAUSE Corporate Learning series and provided a platform for the presenters to share “how they support institutional priorities, how campus priorities influence IT organizations, and how these challenges inform the top IT issues.”

Dr. Kenon shared the importance of strategic planning and collaboration with partners across the institution and highlighted the fact that students are being invited to be a part of more committees at OIT stating that, “students are our number one customers” and to make impactful change we need to “talk and listen to them.”

\[
\text{Discussion: How does considering student outcomes impact your IT leadership role?}
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The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Office of Information Technology (OIT) has been awarded a 2-year, $500,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to boost its high-technology research Internet network. UTSA will use the funding for the project, “The Roadrunner High-Performance Science, Engineering and Business Demilitarized Zone (DMZ),” to install 10-gigabit-per-second network switches in several research buildings on the UTSA Main Campus.

The new switches will increase network bandwidth from one gigabit-per-second to 10 gigabits-per-second and improve the speed of data transfer rates five to 10 times for as many as 1,000 network ports in select research laboratories.

“The project will benefit UTSA researchers who frequently transfer large amounts of data, including those studying real-time remote surgery, smart buildings and grids, cybersecurity, cloud computing and other topics that require large datasets,” said Brett League, director of the Research Computing Support Group. “The improved infrastructure will also allow UTSA researchers to fully utilize internal resources such as the institutional High Performance Computing cluster and Advanced Visualization Lab.”

Four UTSA faculty and staff members are serving as principal investigators for the project:

- **Bryan Wilson**, Interim Vice Provost for Information Technology, Principal Investigator
- **Harry Millwater**, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Co-principal Investigator
- **Bernard Arulanandam**, Interim Vice President for Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise, Co-principal Investigator
- **Brent League**, Director of the Research Computing Support Group, Co-principal Investigator

Millwater and League collaborated with multiple OIT staff members including Daniel Byrd, director of Infrastructure Services and Keith Trevino, OIT manager for Communications Infrastructure Services, to help develop a strategic technology plan to foster innovative research and collaboration across a broad range of academic disciplines.

“The project is exciting for two major developments. First, a new research-dedicated network will be deployed across campus that will exclusively handle research network traffic, and second, the project will address the “last mile” bottleneck of networking - the research lab to the campus backbone,” said Millwater. “With these two improvements, research connectivity will be dramatically improved.”

UTSA is ranked among the nation’s top five young universities, according to Times Higher Education.
Tech Support I Isaac Garcia

“"I just wanted to relay our compliments on the customer service provided by Isaac. He's always been great to work with and he provides excellent customer service to our area.”

Many thanks,
RLD

Submitted by: Robert Lee Dickens, MA.
Director of Business Contract

Tech Support II Paul Spargur

“I wanted to say thank you for helping us with this matter, and please thank Paul Spargur for coming in and checking on us on Monday. He always does an excellent job in helping us here downtown with computer issues and being available when needed. Thank you Paul!”

Sincerely
Julia Poo

Submitted by: Julia Poo
Third Party Billing Coordinator, Office of Fiscal Services
The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) has received a 2018 Higher Education Project Excellence Award from the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communication (TASSCC). The honor recognizes the impact of OIT’s Academic Support Solutions Fund in contributing to stellar collaborative achievements within the university community.

UTSA was one of four recipients for this year’s Project Excellence Award, which honors higher education institutions and government entities that have demonstrated outstanding information technology accomplishments.

Established in 2016, the OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund provides support to UTSA departments in implementing student-centered projects to boost student success. Since its inception, OIT has awarded more than $200,000 to various UTSA colleges and departments. That funding has helped UTSA create a digital humanities laboratory, refresh its computer labs, upgrade its computing infrastructure and purchase state-of-the-art technology and software. These implementations are geared toward enhancing students’ academic and research pursuits at the university.
“This award is truly about the innovation and dedication of our UTSA faculty and OIT staff,” said UTSA Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D, who serves as the coordinator of the OIT Faculty Advisory Committee. “They listen closely to the needs of our students and develop projects that are unique and cutting-edge.”

Interim Vice Provost for IT/CIO Bryan Wilson added, “This award truly is an honor as it is from our peers in the state and confirms we are innovative and doing things right. It truly is a joy to work with such a great group of professionals here at UTSA. OIT staff work tirelessly to help UTSA achieve new heights.”

OIT extends a call for proposals to all nine UTSA colleges through its Faculty Advisory Committee at the start of the academic year. The call remains open through October of the given period; award recipients are announced in November.

TASSCC’s 2018 recognition is UTSA’s second in the last six years. In 2012, OIT received a Higher Education Project Excellence Award for its InSight application, an information resources reporting tool.

Wilson and Kenon accepted UTSA’s 2018 Project Excellence Award at the TASSCC annual conference awards luncheon on Aug. 7 in The Woodlands, Texas.
In support of expanding the resources available for a core curriculum Technical Writing course (ENG 2413), the UTSA College of Liberal and Fine Arts (COLFA) was recently awarded funding from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund. The funding was granted for the project entitled, “Developing a Digital Studio by Increasing the Availability of Interactive Technology (Smart Boards, Drawing Tablets, and Software) to Prioritize Student Marketability,” to assist Associate Professor in the Department of English Dr. Sue Hum with transforming the English Computer Lab into a digital studio with upgraded technology. In addition to the new resources, the lab has been renamed the PWR (Professional Writing and Rhetoric) Digital Studio.

The grant is used to expand the varieties of student digital projects in Technical Writing. The funding covers the purchase of two smartboards, a drawing tablet, Paint Tool SAI Pro software, media accessories, and extended warranties. Throughout the semester, students will also be using the Adobe Creative Cloud suite, which is now available in all OIT Computing labs and classrooms, for multimedia and multimodal projects. The course will now include video instructions, digital storytelling, website design, infographics, and electronic employment portfolios.
Technical Writing is consistently in high demand with an annual enrollment of 800 students, serving a range of majors from across the university, including biology, public policy, computer science, engineering, education, and more. In the course, students learn to create a wide range of documents that are writing intensive and multi-modal. These include proposals, research reports, and usability studies. Students also perform collaborative work with their group members, learning how to use contracts that contain plans for communication and conflict resolution.

This project aims to give students hands-on experience with interactive technology as they are educated on the new challenges of digital communication used in today’s global marketplace. At the end of the course, students leave with strong writing experiences and a portfolio, thus making them more competitive and successful when entering the workforce.

“The projects provide opportunities for quality learning for students who will enter a competitive global world,” said Dr. Hum. “I’m hoping that UTSA Alumni will consider the important skills and career preparation they received from this course and will be willing to give back to the university.”

Dr. Hum is currently working on her next proposal for a sound room for students to create podcasts and audios to accompany their videos.

The OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund aims to assist various UTSA colleges in implementing projects geared toward enhancing student-life at the university. In 2017, OIT awarded grants to seven UTSA colleges. OIT’s Academic Support Solutions Fund is also a 2018 recipient of the Texas Association of State Systems for Computing and Communication (TASSCC) Project Excellence Award.
Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia recently had the opportunity to serve as a keynote speaker at the Alertus Seminar Series held at the University of Colorado Boulder. The event occurred on August 17th and enabled attendees to exchange best practices and deployment strategies for emergency and critical alert messaging in an organization.

In his presentation, entitled “Every Message Counts: Emergency & Critical System Alert Messaging at The University of Texas at San Antonio,” Garcia shared key insights on the system’s launch and its use for emergency and critical IT alert messaging at the university. In addition, Garcia, who in 2013 spearheaded an initiative to implement the system at UTSA, discussed the importance of collaboration with IT to implement such a system.

“The Office of Information Technology (OIT) started the push for notifying the UTSA community of critical system alerts using Alertus,” said Garcia. “But we soon realized that Alertus is more valuable as a shared resource. This led to our partnerships with the UTSA Office of Emergency Management and the UTSA Police Department, who utilize the same system to send out mass notifications regarding health and safety situations.”

Through the Alertus system, UTSA students, faculty, and staff can receive emergency and critical system alerts via desktop notifications as well as through their preferred communication channels. Some of these channels include desktop notifications, as well as phone calls, emails, and text messages.
Garcia also explored the Alertus e-Panic button, a virtual button, which was implemented in 2016 by OIT in conjunction with the UTSA Office of Emergency Management and the UTSA Police Department in an effort to further enhance the university’s emergency preparedness. Through this service, the UTSA community can easily report an incident to the UTSA Police Department in times of distress.

In his presentation, Garcia also discussed the university’s system configuration as well as deployment approaches. He also examined how the Office of Emergency Management uses the Alertus system to meet its needs and the importance of ensuring consistency and specificity in alert messaging.

“It was an honor to be invited to present to numerous emergency management and information technology professionals,” said Garcia. “A special thank you to Dr. Lorenzo Sanchez and Jacqueline Silva in the UTSA Office of Emergency Management for their assistance in providing content for my presentation.”

The Alertus Seminar Series is a gathering of emergency preparedness and IT professionals to discuss best safety practices nationally and internationally. The series has been held in different states, such as Texas, Michigan, and Virginia and will be held in Quebec later this year.
In fall 2018, the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT’s) Video Production Group (VPG) collaborated with the UTSA Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and multiple faculty members to produce the “Wear The T-Shirt: UTSA First Gen Faculty T-Shirt” video. The video was created to support the UTSA First Gen campaign and encourage faculty that are first-generation to wear a UTSA First Gen Faculty t-shirt on the first day of class each semester.

UTSA’s First-Generation and Transfer Student Center supports former and current students who are the first generation in their families to complete or are in the process of completing a four-year degree. In support of the 45 percent of UTSA undergraduates that are first-generation college students, UTSA first-gen faculty help create a welcoming environment as they share their own experiences with students and wear the t-shirt to symbolize their connection to the students as First Gen faculty.
The video was produced by Director of Video Technology Ernest Hernandez III and Senior Producer James Borrego. Several UTSA faculty members from different colleges are featured in the video including:

- Pepe L Chang, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Management - College of Business
- Patricia Sanchez, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Department of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies - College of Education & Human Development
- Lucila Ek, Ph.D., Professor of Bicultural Bilingual Studies - College of Education & Human Development
- Bekisizwe Ndimande, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching - College of Education & Human Development
- Edwin Barea-Rodriguez, Ph.D., Professor of Biology - College of Science
- Tina Zawacki, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology - College of Liberal And Fine Arts

“This was a fun project and working with this group of faculty was a great experience,” said Hernandez. “The video illustrates the diverse group of first generation faculty members at UTSA encouraging the UTSA community to share their First Gen story.”
UTSA is expanding its utilization and research on virtual reality (VR) through a new partnership with industry leaders Labster, Google and Lenovo. Led by the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT), the university will provide VR simulations to allow its students to conduct university-level science laboratory work without ever visiting a traditional science laboratory.

UTSA’s program will provide students with cutting-edge VR headsets that contain pre-loaded STEM content, developed by Labster, to immerse them in a virtual learning environment as well as content designed specifically by UTSA to support student success. In addition to integration with certain courses via Blackboard, the program also will be available to all UTSA students through the OIT Digital Experience Lab (DEx Lab), which is slated to open in late fall 2018.

Labster, a global VR content provider, in partnership with Google and Lenovo, designed the program on an international scale to support student science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) success. Its biology laboratory is intended to provide exposure to emerging technology, and will help to engage students via defined learning goals, interactive experiments with simulated data and 360 animations.
The pre-loaded content currently available will support students enrolled in gateway biology courses as well as those with an interest in science and engineering. Labster has released initial simulation modules including cellular respiration and laboratory safety and plans to release more simulations in the coming year. UTSA also plans to develop university specific tools including a student success module to support increased graduation and retention rates.

“Providing resources and training to support faculty in serving students is essential as we begin to evolve the technology in classrooms to support our next generation learners,” said director of Learning Technology Joe Tobares. “With the creation of the new DEx Lab, we now have a place to promote innovative learning tools like never before.”

The DEx Lab will also serve as a VR lab where the UTSA community can access the VR headsets and have a hands-on experience. In addition, OIT and several faculty partners will collaborate to identify and develop appropriate content as well as promote participation in the program through their courses, biology labs, and use of the DEx Lab.

“UTSA has been an early adopter in scientific visualization technology since we obtained an NSF equipment grant in 2009. The grant enabled the establishment of the Advanced VizLab on campus in 2011,” said Yusheng Feng, professor of Mechanical and Biomedical Engineering, and director of Center for Simulation Visualization and Real Time Prediction (SiViRT). “The new VR technology will push visualization for research and education to the next level by bringing VR to the classroom. We expect more enthusiasm and creativity through VR learning of our students.”

“This is groundbreaking technology for UTSA students and faculty,” said assistant vice provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon. “OIT entered this collaborative project with funding from our Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation iPASS grant which introduced and supported numerous student success efforts on our campus in continued support of the UTSA Strategic Plan.”
UTSA is providing virtual reality tools to allow its students to conduct university-level science lab work without visiting a traditional science lab.

This fall, students will also see an operating room like never before.

“This will be our first semester using it in the classroom. We prototyped it with a few students, and it’s been spectacular,” Mark Appleford, associate professor of biomedical engineering at UTSA, said.

This partnership is between Labster, Google and Lenovo. The program will provide students with VR headsets that contain pre-loaded STEM content.

Professor Appleford demonstrated how the program works. “What you are seeing here is a live procedure that they miced up and had the VR headsets on multiple surgeons and support team,” Appleford said.

The UTSA Office of Information Technology is leading this effort. Appleford said there are several advantages to the program.

“We can increase the volume of the interaction we can see. I can take a bio medical engineering student and put them in a surgery with a kidney transplant, and five minutes, later they can have them see how its stent is deployed in radiology,” Appleford said. “Second advantage is, it takes a long time to train a bio medical engineer to actually get them in that environment. It’s a safety factor also for the patient. VR is (so) we can do that in a controlled environment and with them still see in observation.”

“Biology is a tough course for students. So as we start to look at student success tools, we’re always looking for the most innovative way to challenge our students,” said Vanessa Kenon, Assistant Vice Provost for Information Technology at UTSA.

Later this fall, students will also experience the new DEx Lab. It will have 20 headsets, and the community will also be able to access the lab.

UTSA established a similar lab called VizLab in 2011 that allows researchers from art, science and engineering to conduct simulation and visualization research to better understand what they are studying.
Director of Research Computing Support Brent League, with the Office of Information Technology (OIT), was recently selected to serve on the National Security Collaboration Center (NSCC) Programming Advisory Committee. The invitation was extended via an email from UTSA’s Interim Vice President for Research, Economic Development and Knowledge Enterprise Bernard Arulanandam, Ph.D., M.B.A.

The committee has been formed to assist with the new NSCC and a proposed School of Data Science near the UTSA Downtown Campus. The creation of the NSCC will provide a better collaboration center to expand UTSA’s research and to help develop new innovative solutions for national security issues.

The first meeting will take place on October 1st, and the committee will be comprised of well-recognized firms as well as UTSA faculty and staff. The members’ responsibilities will include program planning and interviewing faculty, staff, students, and leadership. The committee is aiming to have a formal design of the center in 2019 and the project completed in 2021.

In addition to serving on the committee, League is also serving as the Principal Investigator for the $500,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant UTSA received in August. The grant is for the project, “The Roadrunner High-Performance Science, Engineering and Business Demilitarized Zone (DMZ),” which involves installing 10-gigabit-per-second network switches in seven buildings on the main campus to boost the University’s high-technology research internet network.
Student Computing Services’ Business Building
Computer Lab Now Has a New Look

September 29 | San Antonio, TX
Mentions:
Ben Garcia and Linda Dunn

UTSA students who visit the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) student computer lab in the Business Building (2.01.20) will be greeted by a newly redesigned space. The lab, which was initially set up with rows of computer workstations, has now been transformed into a flexible collaboration space with a variety of configurations for student success.

“We noticed students were collaborating in ad hoc groups,” said Linda Dunn, Director of Student Computing Services (SCS). “Some groups used the front entrance lobby to meet, while others were spreading out along individual computer workstation rows. Except for our larger cubicle group stations, our previous lab furniture was not suited for collaboration.”

As a result, the SCS team, which provides StudentConnect services, decided to change the room layout to maximize use of space and include furniture designed to better facilitate collaboration amongst students. Thanks to the redesign, students now have several different options while working in the lab to best suit their needs.

Some of the collaborative furniture that students can now utilize include active learning clusters, which are comprised of conjoined tables equipped with computers. Each cluster can seat six students, two per workstation, for more intimate group work.

In addition, students can use newly added team tables. These tables can seat up to five students, and provide power and USB plugs for BYOD (bring your own device) support. Several 43” flat panel displays will also be installed in the lab in early October, along with inputs for students’ personal laptops as well as a computer workstation to be shared by group members.

Along with the new collaboration furniture, the lab still houses 73 individual workstations as well as eight large cubicles for larger groups.
The SCS Business Building computer lab is one of three public labs open to all UTSA students and operated by the UTSA Office of Information Technology. The other two labs are located in the:

- John Peace Library (2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors)
- Downtown Library (BV 2.314)

The computers in each lab are all equipped with the latest software for students including Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Cloud and more. Along with providing students access to computers, PrintSpot support and mobile charging stations, the SCS team also offers students technical support on their personal devices at no additional cost through its StudentConnect service.

In addition to the labs, there are several Lab without Walls kiosks around campus, which offer students access to computing lab applications.

“We are very excited to offer more collaboration workspaces with newer technology within the Student Computing Services labs, said Ben Garcia, Director of Customer Service and Operations Support. “While there will always be a need for individual computing workstations in the labs, this effort transitions our lab space to a more collaborative student work environment for our students to help facilitate their success.”
In the coming months, more than 200 desktop computers housed in the John Peace Library (JPL) student computer lab will be refreshed. This refresh will be one of several on-campus improvements that will be facilitated by the Library, Equipment, Repair and Rehabilitation (LERR) grant that the university recently received.

LERR funds are part of the Permanent University Fund bond proceeds, which are provided to institutions in the University of Texas as well as the Texas A&M systems. These funds assist with projects aimed at improving campuses such as lab upgrades, as well as the purchase of research equipment.

As part of the grant, the university will upgrade all of the computers maintained by the Office of Information Technology (OIT) that are more than five-years old, and that are housed in the JPL computing lab.

“The new computers with updated hardware will offer improved system response times and application performance,” said Linda Dunn, Director of Student Computing Services.
The Student Computing Services JPL Library computer lab is one of three public labs open to all UTSA students and operated by the UTSA Office of Information Technology. The remaining two labs are located in the:

- John Peace Library (2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors)
- Downtown Library (BV 2.314)
- Business Building Lab (2.01.20)

In addition to the labs, there are several Lab without Walls kiosks in the JPL and around campus.

The computers in each lab are all equipped with the latest software for students including Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Cloud and more. Along with providing students access to computers, PrintSpot support and Mobile Charging stations, the Student Computing Services team also offers students technical support on their personal devices at no additional cost through its StudentConnect service.

“We are grateful to be awarded the LERR grant as it enables OIT to further promote its partnership with the UTSA Libraries and upgrade a large percentage of JPL Computing Lab computers,” said Ben Garcia, director of Customer Service and Operations Support. “Doing so helps us ensure that students have access to the latest computing technology resources needed for their success.”

The planned refresh, according to Dunn, will be performed in a manner that will ensure minimal impact on students’ use of the labs.
The Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Enterprise Managed Customer Solutions team recently upgraded System Center Configuration Manager, commonly known as SCCM or Configuration Manager. SCCM is a Microsoft enterprise application that was upgraded from 2012 to 2016 earlier this month.

“This upgrade was prompted by end-of-life support for the previous SCCM application,” said Frank Maniscalco, OIT support services manager. “The newer version now offers enhanced support for Windows 10.”

One of the main benefits of SCCM 2016 is that it offers OIT a central location in which to efficiently manage and inventory UTSA’s Windows 10 computing assets.

In addition, the upgraded Configuration Manager enables OIT to easily deploy Windows 10 updates to ensure that UTSA faculty, staff, and students are always provided with the most up-to-date systems.

“As part of the upgrade, CMPivot was added to the console,” said David Leos, Systems Analyst III. “CMPivot provides SCCM better ways to visualize data that is collected from our clients in real-time across campus.”

Another benefit of the upgrade is that CMPivot assists OIT in identifying, and ultimately responding to potential issues and questions quickly in order to better serve the UTSA community.

“This upgrade positions OIT to better manage university computing assets on campus,” said Ben Garcia, Director of Customer Service and Operations Support. “The upgrade also allows for faster and more accurate software deployments and helps OIT ensure that these assets are updated appropriately.”
Quarter FOUR
October | November | December
Reflections of 2018
The Office of Information Technology (OIT) recently collaborated with the UTSA Business Affairs Division and the Office of Learning Technologies to offer special information sessions to numerous departments such as Human Resources and Financial Services. The sessions provided an overview of remote work resources and tips including utilizing the UTSA Virtual Private Network (VPN), DUO two-factor authentication, and Office 365 resources such as Microsoft Teams and Skype for Business.

Director of Customer Service & Operations Support Ben Garcia and Tech Support III Ashlee Vasquez (OIT Support Services) along with Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong (OIT Customer Relations, Communications and Training) and Learning Technologies Assistant Manager Robert Granado facilitated the session to demonstrate how UTSA staff can use these products to support team collaboration.

“It’s definitely an exciting time at UTSA as new ingenuities are sprouting out as a result of the numerous university initiatives,” stated Garcia. “We are excited to provide this tailored ‘work from home’ training sessions focused on our collaboration software tools like Microsoft Teams and Skype for Business.”
The session was a proactive way to connect with departments that will soon be telecommuting and share information on resources that can enhance their experience working remotely.

“It was a pleasure to demonstrate the collaborative functions of Skype for Business to my fellow UTSA staffers in the HR department. It was especially nice to see that some of them already utilized Skype for Business in some form or fashion when collaborating with their co-workers,” reflected Granado. “Being able to share personal tips and online resources by our department is a valuable training component.”

Additional presentations were also made to the Financial Affairs Department.

OIT offers several training courses to support collaboration including:

- Office 365 (includes a module on MS Teams)
- SharePoint Online (includes a module on MS Teams)
- Power BI
Congratulations to Director of Enterprise Services Dan Byrd and Director of Application Development and Support Jayashree Iyengar who were nominated to be a part of the Leadership UTSA 2018-2019 cohort.

“I’m very excited to have this opportunity and look forward to being part of this dynamic leadership program,” expressed Byrd.

Read the UTSA Today story below.

Leadership UTSA recently welcomed its 10th cohort Leadership UTSA (LUTSA) is a leadership development program comprised of faculty and staff from every division of the university. The 22 participants are nominated by their divisional vice president. UTSA executive leadership look for leadership potential within their staff and faculty and nominate those who display potential to be the university’s next generation of leaders.

Leadership UTSA has proven to be one of UTSA’s most dynamic programs in leadership development and supports the university’s destination of becoming an exemplar for strategic growth and innovation by cultivating the excellence of its people. LUTSA has been shared with other universities at conferences and research regarding the success of the program is in the 2017 SACRAO Journal.

The 2018-2019 cohort is listed below:

- Stan Renard (COLFA)
- Jenny De Los Santos (Provost Office)
- Analy Diego (CACP))
- Kristen Lindahl (COEHD)
- Eric Brey (COE)
- Christopher Packham (COS)
- Dan Byrd (OIT Enterprise Services)
- Jayashree Iyengar (OIT – Application Development and Support)
- Maria Alejandro (Center for Civic Engagement)
- Martha Gutierrez-Saul (Extended Education)
- Angelica Barrera (Advising and Support)
• Susan Colorado (LEAD Program)
• Ernest Haffner (Facilities Planning and Development)
• Sheri Hardison (Financial Affairs and Controller)
• Rene Paniagua (Senior FMS Application Services Manager)
• Melissa Hernandez (Counseling Services)
• Burt Reynolds (Campus Services)
• Yvette Martinez (Development)
• Jessica Fernandez (Contracts and Industry Agreements)
• Monique Long (SBDC Technology Commercialization Center)
• Joleen Gould (Testing)
• Darrell Balderrama (P-20 Programs)

The cohort meets once a month September through April. Each participant is paired with a senior level executive mentor during the spring to further explore leadership styles while attending meetings and discussing the experiences of their mentor. This involvement along with dedicated opportunities to interact with each division’s vice president office provides participants with a deeper understanding of the university in which they work. Following a peer selection process, participants have the opportunity to serve on the leadership team the following year for the next LUTSA cohort.

Alumni of the program have achieved success after LUTSA as ACE Fellows, Department Chairs, Deans, Directors, Associate Vice Presidents, Vice Provosts and Interim Vice Presidents. In addition to career advancement, participants leave with an increased awareness of their leadership potential and a better understanding of their university and their colleagues within it. It is an invitation to critically think about leadership and one’s relationship with leadership long after the 8 monthly sessions have ended.

The 2018-2019 LUTSA Leadership Team:
• Cié Gee (cohort 2)
• Barry McKinney (cohort 8)
• Denise Moore (cohort 8)
• Lindsay Ratcliffe (cohort 8)
• Andra Kiser (cohort 8)
• Abraham DeLeon (cohort 9)
• Beverly Woodson-Day (cohort 9)
• Heather Green (cohort 9)
• Tim Yuen (cohort 9)
• Christian Clark (cohort 9)
More than 100 UTSA undergraduate and graduate students joined the Office of Information Technology (OIT) on October 24th for Tech Talk. The event, which was hosted by the OIT Student Innovation Coalition, was held in the Denman Room (SU 2.01.28) from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Each fall and spring semester, OIT holds its Student Innovation Coalition, an open forum designed to enable students to share their feedback with members of the OIT leadership team on their technology experience. In addition, the event provides students the opportunity to learn about various technology products and services available to enhance their academic and social experiences at the university.

This year, the event was branded as Tech Talk and was moderated by Nicole Duff, Communications Specialist in the Customer Relations, Communications, and Training (CRCT) team. It featured mini presentations on the following topics:

- Schedule Planner - Barbara Smith, Executive Director, UTSA Academic Advising
- Repair Services - Mario Carvajal, Manager, Campus Technology Store
- Virtual Reality Headsets - Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Assistant Vice Provost, IT
- Adobe Creative Cloud - Pebby Garner, Systems Analyst II
- The UTSA Mobile App - Brad Christianson, OIT Manager, Application Development and Support
During the event, students engaged in discussion with staff on an array of topics ranging from OIT’s plans to align with President Eighmy’s vision for the Downtown Campus as well as possible additions for the UTSA Mobile App.

Students also had the opportunity to experiment with the innovative Lenovo Mirage Solo with Daydream virtual reality headsets, which were recently purchased by OIT. Touted as the world’s first stand-alone Daydream headset, these headsets are designed to immerse UTSA students in virtual reality, particularly in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.

The event included two prize drawings which were led by Rosalind Ong, Project Coordinator for the CRCT team. Some of the prizes awarded included an Amazon Fire Stick with Alexa, an Echo Dot as well as a Samsung Galaxy tablet.

Along with the presentations and the open forum segment, students were able to learn about StudentConnect, a technical support service for their personal devices offered by OIT as well as additional services offered by the Campus Technology Store via information tables.

“The Fall Tech Talk was outstanding and the best part was the open participation of UTSA students,” said Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Assistant Vice Provost for IT. “Not only did they have good questions, but also innovative ideas and suggestions.”

Student feedback:

“I thoroughly enjoyed this event. I hope to be able to attend another in the future.”

“Thanks, you rock!”

“This OITTechTalk is good!”

A student experimenting with a Lenovo Mirage Solo with Daydream virtual reality headset.
Several UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) staff will have the opportunity to contribute as presenters, panelists, or committee members at the EDUCAUSE 2018 Annual Conference, which takes place October 30 - November 2 in Denver, CO.

Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D., Information Technology Assistant Edgar Guajardo, Technology Support Specialist Sam Barrera, Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong and Learning Technologies Lab Assistant Christian Hernandez will engage EDUCAUSE participants at various sessions including:

- Expert Panel on IT/IR Collaboration
  *Kenon
- “Diversity – Equity – Inclusion” Luncheon Session
  *Kenon
- “Why I need IT to Survive in Higher Ed” Interactive Session
  *Kenon, Guajardo, Hernandez, & Barrera
- “Marketing Strategies to Engage Institutions in Cyber Security Awareness” Poster Session
  *Ong
• “Proactive Career Planning: Your Navigating Path to Professional Success”
  *Kenon & Guajardo

• “We are the Workforce of the Future” Featured Session
  *Hernandez & Guajardo

In addition to the in-person presentations, several sessions including “Proactive Career Planning: Your Navigating Path to Professional Success” and “We are the Workforce of the Future” will be available for online viewing through the EDUCAUSE Annual Conference Online Event Encore!

“The EDUCAUSE Annual Conference hosts professionals and technology providers from around the world to enable them to network, share ideas, and discover solutions to today’s challenges (EDUCAUSE.com).”

*OIT staff representing UTSA at EDUCAUSE.*
Optics Express, a renowned peer-reviewed, scientific journal, recently published an article in which Shamu, the university’s primary high performance computing cluster (HPC), was acknowledged.

A high performance computing cluster is comprised of several interconnected high speed servers that function similar to a super computer. Shamu, which is maintained by the Office of Information Technology’s Research Computing and Support Group (RCSG), is available to assist UTSA students, faculty and staff in their research pursuits at no additional cost.

“Shamu allows simulations, visualizations, trend monitoring, and data analysis to be completed in a shorter period of time than using a traditional desktop computer,” said Director of the RCSG Brent League. “Shamu has 3,000 compute cores compared to the typical desktop computer that usually has 4 compute cores.”
The article entitled *Surface Enhanced Resonant Raman Scattering in Hybrid MoSe2 @Au Nanostructures* was written by multiple authors including Assistant Professor in the UTSA College of Sciences Dr. Nicolas Large, Associate Chair of the department of materials science and NanoEngineering at Rice University Dr. Jun Lou, and Professor of physics at the University of Toulouse Dr. Adnen Mlayah.

In the article, the authors investigate the underlying mechanism responsible for the enhancement of Raman spectroscopy, which is a non-invasive and non-destructive spectroscopic technique, according to Large. This technique enables the identification of molecules by detecting the unique vibrational signature of their molecular bonds.

“The new enhancement mechanism opens up the path toward the design of more sensitive molecule detection,” explained Large. “This is useful in particular for pharmaceutical applications, biomedicine, and the detection of biological warfare agents.”

Therefore, to assist in their investigation, the authors utilized Shamu for computational support. Currently, Shamu is housed in the UTSA Research Data Center, which is also home to servers and storage equipment used by UTSA researchers.

“This acknowledgement is great exposure for UTSA,” said League. “It gets our name out there and shows that we have world-class technology in place for aiding the university’s research mission. Being cited in these scholarly articles lets potential faculty members know that the university is serious about research.”

*The UTSA Research Data Center where Shamu is housed.*
Current UTSA students Edgar Guajardo, Sam Barrera and Christian Hernandez attended the EDUCAUSE 2018 Annual Conference to present on technology in higher education. The conference took place October 30 - November 2 in Denver, CO.

The students presentations focused on their perspective on technology for student success. Guajardo and Hernandez served on the feature session panel with students from other institutions. Their insights were met with appreciation with the audience of higher education technology leaders and gave the students an inside look at what they could expect as they transition to the workforce.

“EDUCAUSE was a great experience thanks to all of the Higher ED professionals not only sharing their knowledge to help mold the future leaders of the industry,” shared Guajardo. “I also listening to students such as myself so that they know what they need to do to help us grow.”

Sessions in which UTSA presented included:

- Expert Panel on IT/IR Collaboration
- Assistant Vice Provost for IT Vanessa Hammler Kenon, Ed.D. “Diversity – Equity – Inclusion” Luncheon Session

*Kenon
• “Why I need IT to Survive in Higher Ed” Interactive Session
  *Kenon, Guajardo, Hernandez, & Barrera

• “Marketing Strategies to Engage Institutions in Cyber Security Awareness” Poster Session
  *OIT Project Coordinator Rosalind Ong”

• Proactive Career Planning: Your Navigating Path to Professional Success”
  *Kenon & Guajardo

• “We are the Workforce of the Future” Featured Session
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“The EDUCAUSE Annual Conference hosts professionals and technology providers from around the world to enable them to network, share ideas, and discover solutions to today’s challenges (EDUCAUSE.com).”

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Edgar Guajardo presents at EDUCAUSE.
New technology researchers say will change the way students learn and help solve problems in the workplace is now available to everyone in the community at a lab at the University of Texas at San Antonio’s main campus.

The new tech lab, which opened Wednesday, is called the DEx Lab, an abbreviation for digital experience. One of the main attractions are wireless virtual reality headsets that calibrate for each user.

When KSAT visited the lab, we met communications major Jacob Manear, a senior who was taking a virtual tour of a surgical operating room.

“This simulation right here is mostly based on lab safety, so it’s got things to do with like safety hazards. It kind of teaches you the general rules of being in a lab,” Manear said.

“We're looking at it for engineering. We have one professor who is looking at it for his students doing architectural digs,” said Dr. Vanessa Kenon, assistant vice provost for IT at UTSA.

Kenon said the technology isn't only beneficial for students.

“You can be out on an oil rig somewhere and there's some work that needs to be done somewhere, and through virtual reality, two people can work together to get that done.” Kenon said.

Smart phones can also connect to content at the DEx Lab. Anyone who wants to try it out for free can schedule an appointment.

The equipment in the DEx Lab costs about $80,000.

Kenon said that, within the next couple of years, the technology may be able to be utilized in many classrooms at UTSA.
Enterprise Communications Technician Michael Medrano

“Michael Medrano absolutely went ABOVE AND BEYOND! Once he contacted me to have a new PIN for the voicemail system generated for me, he checked on my coworker Lauren’s access as well. He then asked to see if she had received her SR ticket so he could have them both executed at the same time. Since Lauren did not have hers, he said he would check with me in the morning: AND HE DID! Within minutes of our 8:30 a.m. call (when he asked for Lauren’s SR Ticket), Lauren and I both had our new PINs and directions to set up voicemail in seconds. Wow! What awesome service! Thank you for your diligence and thoughtfulness, Michael!”

Submitted by: Happy Customer
Taken From an OIT Survey

Tech Support III Paul Cartney, Enterprise Network Engineer Steve Amren and Enterprise Network Analyst Alan Brzozowski

“I want to express a big appreciation for your staff assisting the library Systems department in replacing 10 network printers yesterday. We were caught by complete surprise when our new vendor brought all printers to us and was ready to install all of them yesterday (the plan was calling for later and partial installations). Paul Carney, Steven Amren and Alan Brzozowski worked with our staff yesterday morning to ensure smooth transition. Thanks to their help we were able to have all printers running within one day. It was not the first time that OIT helped us in difficult situation and I would like you to thank your staff for taking time and assisting us. Big kudos to Paul, Steve, and Alan.”

Submitted by: Barbara Jakubowski
Associate Dean for Information and Technical Management
The Enterprise Managed Customer Solutions (EMCS) team of the UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) is one of several teams that comprise OIT’s Customer Service and Operations Support group. This team works diligently behind-the-scenes to ensure that UTSA students, faculty, and staff have access to a reliable and robust desktop computing environment.

“Our purpose is to foster an improved end-user experience,” said Director of Customer Service and Operations Support Ben Garcia. “Our team strives to maintain a viable and sustainable computing health on all university assets.”

EMCS is responsible for performing a variety of tasks designed to support the academic, research, and administrative pursuits of the UTSA community. These tasks range from managing the operating systems and configurations of university computing assets to performing hardware and software as well as anti-virus/malware updates.
Additionally, the team is responsible for managing several third-party enterprise desktop applications that help OIT maintain vital technology resources. These resources include:

- PrintSpot, the university’s campus-wide printing solution for students
- Microsoft System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM)
- Absolute Manage (Apple configuration management)
- Alertus emergency notification system
- CrashPlan desktop data backup service
- Adobe Creative Cloud Suite Administration
- Software Asset Management

Hence, as part of OIT’s continued effort to provide the optimal technology environment for the university, EMCS regularly partners with Information Technology Associates (ITAs) in various departments as well as other OIT teams.

“EMCS collaborates with all university colleges and departments,” said Garcia. “We provide solutions, improve computing services and foster greater knowledge sharing and communications.”

In fact, earlier this fall, EMCS partnered with the Learning Technologies team to launch the Adobe Creative Cloud implementation on campus. Thanks to this implementation, the product is readily available to the UTSA community. Faculty and staff can access Adobe Creative Cloud on their UTSA computing assets, while students may access it within all OIT and some departmental computer labs.

Similarly, EMCS partnered with the Learning Technologies team last spring to upgrade the operating systems in all UTSA classroom podium computers to Windows 10.

Along with these and other implementations, EMCS is also responsible for introducing new technologies to the university. Currently, the team is involved in the rollout of a student-focused virtual desktop service for use on student personal devices.

This service will enable students to conveniently access applications that are available in the computer labs, on their personal computing devices on or off campus, 24/7. EMCS hopes to roll this out to the UTSA student community in spring 2019, according to OIT Support Services Manager Frank Maniscalco.
The UTSA Office of Information Technology (OIT) has announced the recipients of its annual Academic Support Solutions Fund awards. This year, 15 proposals spanning five UTSA colleges were selected to receive grants ranging from $5,000 to $22,000.

In October, faculty and staff from across the university submitted a total of 16 proposals for student-centered projects that align with at least one of the university’s strategic destinations. The proposed projects are geared toward equipping UTSA students with invaluable skills needed to thrive at the university and in the workforce.

“The proposals submitted this year were outstanding as always,” said Vanessa Hammler Kenon, UTSA assistant vice provost for IT. “The submissions show that our faculty are truly working with students on many of these ideas and are forward thinking and strategic.”

The selected proposals, which were awarded approximately $150,000 in total, requested support for projects aimed at immersing undergraduate and graduate students in technological innovations comparable to those found at peer institutions and in industry.

These innovations include the creation of a one-button sound room intended to familiarize students with aspects of video production, the purchase of a touchscreen mobile display device to encourage collaboration among graduate students, and robotics tools to facilitate hands-on learning in the classroom.
“All of the submissions will clearly have an impact on helping our students in their coursework and future careers,” said Kenon. “Having students on the selection committee truly gives us an idea of the impact these projects can make.”

The OIT Academic Support Solutions Fund has granted more than $250,000 to several UTSA colleges and departments since its founding in 2016. As part of its ongoing commitment to fostering student success, OIT intends to maintain this fund to support additional projects in the upcoming academic year.

“We plan to continue this effort in support of rewarding faculty innovation at UTSA,” said Kenon. “It has been so exciting to watch these projects take shape over the years.”

The colleges awarded funding and their respective projects include:

**College of Business**
- High Performance Workstation for Student Learning Enhancement
- Student Laptop Checkout Cart
- Interactive Mobile Student Collaboration Station

**College of Engineering**
- A Hands-on Motor Design Project for Engineering Education and Research
- Software Support for Education and Research in Industrial Control Systems and IoT Security

**College of Education and Human Development**
- Multiuse Technology Learning Labs

**College of Liberal and Fine Arts**
- MABLab: Building a new space for advancing education and research in Molecular Anthropology & Bioinformatics
- One-Button Sound Room and Updated Technology to Increase Gen Z’s Classroom to Career Success
- VR for Language and Culture

**College of Sciences**
- Advancing Computational Tools for Teaching and Research within the Kleberg Advanced Microscopy Center (KAMC)
- Facilitating Penetration Testing Research and Education
- Institute for Cyber Security (ICS) Management Cluster Upgrade
- Institute for Cyber Security (ICS) RAM Hardware Upgrade
- Purchase of MATLAB Grader
- Support for Education and Research in Embedded Systems and Deep Learning for Autonomous Driving
UTSA’s Environmental Science and Ecology (ESE) Department in the College of Science received funding from the Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Academic Support Solutions Fund at the beginning of this year. ESE matched the funds they received to completely replace the computers in the classroom and lab. The space is primarily used for research and classes such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), Environmental Statistics, and Environmental Assessment. Located in the Flawn Building (FLN) 3.02.10, it is used by about 300 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in ESE.

The aim of upgrading the classroom’s hardware was to allow the statistical and GIS software the department uses to run properly. The software is very resource intensive, and the original computers from 2006 did not allow the programs to adequately take advantage of all the features of the software. The Chair of the Department of Environmental Science and Ecology and Director of the TREE Program Dr. Janis Bush, Senior Lecturer Dr. Matthew Grunstra, and Lecturer II Jason Gagliardi discussed the benefits of the upgrade saying that previously, students would have to wait up to five minutes for the computers to finish buffering. Dr. Grunstra had to change assignments because the older computers were not capable of handling the level of detail needed, which also led to students losing engagement in their work.
Since the upgrade, both the professors and the students feel the immense change in performance. “It really made a difference in our ability to educate our students and prepare them for the real world,” stated Bush. “I think the great thing is, once they get their degree and leave here, they’ll be on similar systems at the same pace” she continued referring to using the GIS software in the job market.

Robert Turner, a junior in ESE, who experienced using the computers both before and after the upgrade stated, “I go out of my way to try use the computers in our lab because of just how powerful and fast they are. It has made studying exponentially easier, especially because I don’t have to wait 5 minutes for things to render or calculate. I speak for the ESE students when I say that this grant has made attaining our degrees much more accessible.”

Some current projects students are using the new computers and software for are research topics such as renewable and solar energy in Texas, emergency evacuation routes for coastal areas in Texas, how wind patterns affect the migration of monarch butterflies, and even a creative class project to discover where potential elf habitats could be in Iceland. Gagliardi explained how this funding was so helpful and “a giant leap forward” for their college. They are now able to add and expand because of the computers. The next step for the department is to upgrade all of its outdated computer monitors.

This upgrade project was selected to receive funding by the OIT Faculty Advisory Subcommittee. Every year, colleges are asked to submit proposals for projects that align with at least one of the themes from Blueprint UTSA. This project reflects the themes of being an “urban-serving university of the future” and “cultivating the excellence of our people.” Using the updated computers helps students to prepare for their future careers and increases their ability to do research that will help advance environmental sciences.

A photo by Jessica Bolser/USFWS.
Graduate engineering students enrolled in the Advanced Scientific Visualization course (EGR 5703) this semester had the opportunity to utilize the state-of-the-art technologies in the VizLab to showcase their final class projects to their peers and a group of UTSA faculty and staff on December 13th.

“It was intriguing to see the creative ideas these students came up with over the semester,” said Director of the Research Computing Support Group Brent League. “They showed how augmented reality and virtual reality can be used in both research and education. Even more impressive, was seeing the actual applications the students developed.”

This course, which was instructed by Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering Yusheng Feng, Ph.D., has met in the VizLab on a weekly basis since late October. As a result, students were able to utilize some of the technologies in the VizLab such as the Microsoft HoloLens, which features immersive virtual and augmented reality and the high performance workstations to aid in the completion of their final projects.

During the showcase, students briefly presented their work and answered questions posed by attendees. In their presentations, students explored an array of ways that virtual and augmented reality is utilized in research including for the conversion of drone footage of ancient ruins on a hilltop near the Nevado Sajama Mountain in Bolivia to virtual reality.

In addition, students examined how augmented reality could be utilized in education to help learners better engage, visualize, and interact with the material. For instance, one presentation focused on the use of augmented reality to overlay textbook images.

“The way that works is that as the student reads the text about the human brain, he or she is able to manipulate the 3D model,” explained League. “This enables the student to examine the different parts of the brain that the text is describing.”

Following the mini presentations, the event culminated with students providing brief demos of their creations to attendees.
The UTSA Office of Information Technology’s (OIT) Application Development and Support (ADS) team recently completed the initial phase of the multi-year Banner 9 upgrade project. Phase 1 of the project, which began in the spring of this year, entails transitioning Banner from version 8 to 9, and enhancing the admin-facing side of the platform.

Banner is the university’s current student information system which houses critical student data and is provided by the vendor Ellucian. Along with its administrative side that supports key functions such as registration, enrollment and records retention, Banner also features a student-facing side, comprised of the Automated Student Access Portal or ASAP.

Earlier this year, Ellucian announced that it would no longer provide support for certain technologies that worked with the previous version of Banner as of December 31st, 2018. This announcement, therefore, served as the catalyst behind the upgrade at UTSA and several of its peer institutions.

ADS, in conjunction with several OIT teams and administrative offices collaborated to upgrade the administrative side of the platform, which is primarily utilized by the Offices of Admissions, the Registrar and Financial Aid and Enrollment Services. Due to the upgrade which was soft launched earlier this month, staff from these areas will be now equipped with the most up-to-date version of the platform to aid in their duties.

Not only does the upgrade feature single sign on (SSO) thereby allowing users to log in to the Banner with their UTSA credentials, but more importantly, it offers users a modernized look and feel as it relates to its webpages.

“Banner 9 offers easier and better search functionality,” explained Amparo Hubbard, manager of ADS. “It also has a shorter learning curve for new users and is mobile ready.”

During this soft launch, users will be able to utilize both the upgraded and previous versions of Banner to help with the transition. The move to Banner 9 will enable ADS to easily deploy any necessary upgrades for the platform.

“By reducing the amount of modifications that ADS must maintain when upgrades are performed, Banner 9 will enable us to perform upgrades quicker” said Sylvia Dorgan, senior enterprise systems programmer for ADS. “This will ensure that staff users are always able to access the most current version of Banner.”

Currently, ADS is in the process of developing online resources to assist users with navigating Banner 9, according to Laurie Trevino, manager of ADS. These resources will supplement the train-the-trainer training which will also be provided to further help familiarize users with the upgraded platform.
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Collaborate. Innovate. Succeed…INSPIRE!

OIT CUSTOMER RELATIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND TRAINING

PRODUCE BY

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