UTSA THE FIRST 40 YEARS
FEATURES

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As the university looks back on its past during this anniversary year, it also takes a peek into the future with a new campus master plan. So what does the future hold? A bell tower, lots of green space and pedestrian-friendly passages, and an extra 7.5 million square feet of building space for teaching, research, housing and recreation.

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Some things never change. Just like today, UTSA’s first commencement ceremony, in 1974, was a time for hugs and congratulations.

On the cover
An early concept of the UTSA campus by architect O’Neil Ford. From the Alexander Architectural Archive, The University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin. Special thanks to the Ford family for granting permission for publication.

On this page
UTSA Boulevard in 1976. From the Gil Barrera Collection of UTSA Photographs, Archives and Special Collections, UTSA Library.
EDITOR'S NOTE
UTSA's first student teaches me how to count

 Peggy Jo Tholen has been an elementary school teacher for close to 30 years; the woman has simple addition and subtraction down pat. So, while she was gracious and willing to talk to me when I called to get her recollections of the university’s beginnings as part of our 40th anniversary coverage, she was pretty sure I had my years wrong.

“According to me, though, it’s not 40 years yet,” she said. “That’s a couple of years away!”

Because while folks here on campus are counting from when the Texas Legislature established the university in 1969, Tholen counts from 1973, the year UTSA offered its first classes. In fact, on June 5, 1974, Tholen was in Austin blowing out the candles on UTSA’s first birthday cake with Delph and Janey Briscoe. Why did she get the honor of sharing the cake with the governor and first lady? Because Peggy Jo Tholen was UTSA’s first student.

A 1971 graduate of Southwest Texas State University, Tholen was teaching second grade at Harmony Hills Elementary when UTSA opened for business in 1973. At the time, her husband, Mark, was in dental school at the UT Health Science Center; Tholen reasoned that, since he was going to be working hard, and starting a family would be several years off, she may as well go back to school for her master’s degree. She knew about the UT branch that was opening in town and called for an application, then mailed it in. Apparently, she was the first to do so; in ceremonies on March 30, 1973, as representatives from the university and the UT System looked on, President Peter Flawn presented Tholen with her letter of acceptance.

“A first grade is my love. The kids are just so excited to be in school. The growth you see in the first grade year is much greater than in any of the other grades,” she said. “The main emphasis in first grade is literacy, and I love teaching that. Everything we do goes back to reading and writing.”

And it never hurts to learn to count, either.

—Rebecca Luther

VIRTUAL POSSIBILITIES

UTSA is joining a $250,000 UT System initiative that just might transform undergraduate education. Read about faculty and staff members who are teaching students in the virtual world of Second Life.

A FAMILY’S LEGACY, A SAN ANTONIO STORY

Congratulations on such a wonderful story of one family’s treasures now being shared with all who are interested! Rita LaVoie did a great job on the text, and the pictures and slide presentations narrated by Paul Carter are so rich and intriguing. Makes me wish I had a family with this kind of attic.

Yolanda Richardson
San Antonio

Wish, this blew me away. I love old things. I would give anything to be able to go inside this house and see the collections found there. Lots of people don’t think about saving things like this to long to see pictures of my great-grandparents, but they don’t mind. I remember when I was really young my grandfather had a deal with old things I had never seen before, tools and stuff like that. I was always fascinated with that. I didn’t know why. But now that I’m older and those things are gone, who knows where, I wish I had paid attention to those things and asked my grandmother if I could have them.

Lynn Hickey
San Antonio

THANKS TO THE CARTERS FOR DONATING THEIR COLLECTION FOR ALL WHO VALUE HISTORY.

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WELCOME BACK!

WRITE BACK! We welcome your letters pertaining to Sombrilla content. Contact us at sombrilla@utsa.edu or mail your letters to Sombrilla editor, Office of University Publications, UTSA, One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, Texas 78249. Letters may be edited for length or clarity.

THINK SMALL

I value philanthrophy, president Helen Klueben Grow's vision in going to UTSA the new aberration-correction electronic microscope, the second of its kind in the world. This new microscope joins the three other powerful microscopes on the Main Campus, also funded by the Klueben Foundation, which does more to benefit mankind. 

Audrey Smith Carter
San Antonio

THESE CHAIRS FOR RESIDENCE ARE THE SECOND OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD. THIS NEW COLLECTION FOR ALL WHO VALUE HISTORY.

VIRTUAL POSSIBILITIES

UTSA is joining a $250,000 UT System initiative that just might transform undergraduate education. Read about faculty and staff members who are teaching students in the virtual world of Second Life.

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Biblioteca Beautification

A $3.1 million renovation of the John Peace Library on the Main Campus is bringing one of the university’s oldest buildings straight into the 21st century. The project includes an Information Commons for computing and research, 725 new computer stations, new furniture and group study rooms, and the expansion of Special Collections. A new Digital Media Lab will provide technology for creating and editing multimedia works. Finally, the integration of the Teaching and Learning Center, the Writing Center and some units of the Tomás Rivera Center for Student Success will give students a one-stop shop for learning assistance.

Meeting of the Minds

Chemistry Ph.D. student Magaly Salinas meets Robert Ernst at the 59th Meeting of Nobel Laureates and Students in Lindau, Germany. Ernst, a Swiss researcher, received the 1991 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his work on the development of high-resolution nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. Salinas made Roadrunner history as the first UTSA student to attend the annual meeting. Approximately 600 students from 66 countries attended the event.

To Africa with books

For the second time in five years, the College of Education and Human Development has been selected to provide educational materials and teacher training to improve literacy rates of children in Africa. The three-year, $13 million cooperative agreement between COEHD and the Republic of Malawi was announced in September. It will be funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, which provides economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide in support of U.S. foreign policy. The project, Read Malawi, will involve more than a dozen faculty and graduate students across five disciplines working together over the next three years to provide 5 million books for children in grades 1-3. Additionally, COEHD faculty members will train teachers, principals and Malawian communities to support the educational improvement efforts. The initiative will provide 120 titles in both English and Chichewa, the native language of Malawi, to 1,000 of the country’s 5,000 public schools. The Malawian government began free primary education 10 years ago and has seen an increase in the number of children attending schools. Average classrooms range in size from 120 to 150 students per teacher. “This collegewide initiative is a systemic approach to improving literacy rates in Malawi and involves our collaborating with local educators and community partners in that country,” said Betty Merchant, dean of the College of Education and Human Development.

“Once written and developed, the textbooks will be designed and printed by businesses in Malawi, thereby strengthening and expanding the country’s infrastructure and keeping the majority of the funding in country.” Misty Sailor, associate professor of interdisciplinary learning and teaching, will lead UTSA’s efforts in Malawi. Sailor was the principal investigator of UTSA’s first agreement with USAID in Africa in 2005. With a population of 14 million, Malawi, a landlocked country in southeast Africa, is among the world’s least developed and most densely populated countries. The average life expectancy is 43 years, and nearly one million suffer from HIV/AIDS.

—Kris Rodriguez

Campus wedding celebration for diehard Roadrunners

When Ashley Starkweather ’09 and Tim Mazzanti ’05 were dancing the night away at their wedding reception in June, the setting couldn’t have been more fitting for these two die-hard Roadrunners. The couple, who met and fell in love on campus, were the first to hold a wedding reception in the University Center ballroom.

“Pretty much everyone commented on how we had the reception on campus,” Ashley said. “This is so a thing that you two would do, since you guys are so into UTSA.”

Ashley was in her first semester at UTSA in Fall 2005 when she met Tim; he was in his last semester. They met at a basketball game—Ashley was a member of UTSA’s dance team, and Tim is a founding member of the popular Blue Crew, supporters who paint themselves blue and show their UTSA spirit at games.

“We received approval from President Romo to host weddings in the University Center last fall,” said Joe Michael Feist and Omar Hernandez, University Center officials.

For more information on special events at the UTSA ballroom, contact (210) 458-4155, or visit www.utsa.edu/events/weddings/

Telling the story of Texas

Timothy J. Gette was named executive director of the Institute of Texan Cultures earlier this year. Gette came to UTSA from the Virginia Museum of Natural History, where he had served as executive director since March 2004. At the institute, he succeeded John L. Davis, executive director since 2001.

Gette’s museum background includes positions as chief operating officer of the Dallas Museum of Natural History (1999-2003) and director of operations of the Sixth Floor Museum (1997-1999) at Dealey Plaza in Dallas. Gette received a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Angelo State University in San Angelo and a master’s in management from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Established as the Texas State Exhibits Building for HemisFair in 1968 and later designated a campus of UTSA, the Institute of Texan Cultures tells the stories of Texas’ multicultural heritage.

—James M. Benavides
Integrating computer simulation research

A collaborative group of UTSA researchers won a $5 million grant in August from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to establish the Simulation, Visualization and Real-time Prediction (SiViRT) Center for interdisciplinary computer-based research, education and training. The five-year grant, funded by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, is the largest stimulus award UTSA has received to date.

“The SiViRT Center will offer a platform for engineering, science, statistics, biology and medicine experts from across the university and South Texas to conduct fundamental and collaborative research with real-world applications,” said Efstathios (Stathis) Michaelides, the grant’s principal investigator and professor and chair of the UTSA Department of Mechanical Engineering.

The UTSA SiViRT Center aims to integrate the computer simulation research currently conducted in the College of Engineering and College of Sciences; provide infrastructure for interdisciplinary research programs in computational mechanics; develop collaborative relations within UTSA, with the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and with other regional, national and international institutions; attract minority and graduate students to engineering and science careers; and prepare the next generation of engineers and scientists to solve scientific and engineering challenges using computer-based methods, systems and simulations.

President’s Dinner

UTSA celebrated its 40th anniversary and honored Texas House Speaker Joe Straus at this year’s scholarship dinner. The seventh annual UTSA President’s Scholarship and Awards Dinner was Oct. 15 at the Marriott Rivercenter hotel in downtown San Antonio. Straus, who represents District 121, which includes the communities of Alamo Heights, Terrell Hills, Windcrest and Northeast San Antonio, was the 2009 recipient of the Tom C. Frost Award. The dinner is a fundraiser for student scholarships and an opportunity to honor individuals for their contributions to higher education.

Valero Energy officials announced in September a $2.5 million gift to support graduate students in engineering and business, helping to strengthen the pipeline for leadership in these fields. The gift from Valero Energy Foundation, the charitable arm of Valero Energy Corp., will be submitted for matching funds made available by the Texas Legislature through the recently approved Texas Research Incentive Program (TRIP). The gift was Valero’s largest to UTSA.

“It is our hope that these scholarships will help people get a quality education and enable them to work at companies like Valero in the future,” said Valero chairman and CEO Bill Klesse.

UTSA will establish graduate fellowship funds—each with $1.25 million—in both the College of Engineering and the College of Business.

In the loop

For many disadvantaged San Antonio elementary students, meeting college athletes up close and taking part in extracurricular activities on a university campus are just a dream. Enter the UTSA Dream Runners.

The UTSA Office of President’s Initiatives and the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics created Dream Runners in 2005. The program targets students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in grades 5–8 and focuses on improving their academic achievement and attendance.

A recent visit to Villarreal Elementary School for a pep rally is typical of the work done by Dream Runners. UTSA athletes, cheerleaders and Rowdy were on hand to energize the students and share their thoughts on academic preparation for college.

“Growing up in this city, I didn’t get a chance to see the UTSA athletics come out and talk to my school,” said track and field athlete Gaston Griffin, a graduate of San Antonio’s Clark High School. “I really enjoy this opportunity to give back to the community I grew up in. Every chance I get, I want to come.”

At the pep rally, Manuel Maldonado III, Dream Runners program manager, applauded the students’ hard work.

“As an educator and a coach, there is no greater satisfaction than watching these kids succeed after all of the dedication they have shown all year,” Maldonado said. “I am a first-generation college graduate, and a lot of these kids will be the first in their families to go on and get a higher education. For me to be able to give back to these children and stress the importance of getting that degree, well, let’s just say I love my job.”

The program also offers “College Student for a Day,” where the students are brought to campus to attend mock classes taught by volunteers from several UTSA academic departments. Students also are invited to attend athletic events such as volleyball matches, men’s and women’s basketball games, and baseball and softball games. The goal is to introduce them to the many different aspects of college life, both academic and social.

From two pilot schools in 2005, the Dream Runners program has expanded to nearly 30 schools in six San Antonio school districts. The program has reached more than 5,000 area youth to date.

“It’s important for us to create that vision for the children and show them that it is attainable,” Villarreal Elementary School principal Brenda Gallardo said. “A lot of times there are other factors that affect their ability to go to college. We control what they do here at school and this is something that we can offer to our students.”

—Greg Ruder

Making dreams for San Antonio kids

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—Greg Ruder
Everyone has memory lapses. We make a mental note on the way to work to pick up the dry cleaning on the way home, but when 5 p.m. rolls around, we zip past the cleaners with nary a thought about the suit and dresses that wait patiently for us to claim them.

Scientists call it prospective memory—the act of remembering something that we need to do. Studies show, too, that the older people get, the harder it is for them to remember to complete an intended action.

Rebekah Smith, an assistant professor of psychology at UTSA, now has a $1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to learn how this function of the human mind works and to understand the differences between younger and older adults when it comes to event-based prospective memory. She plans to use the research to develop and test tools that may help older adults remember the tasks they need to accomplish.

“The real question is, how do we remember to do something later, and how do I do that at the right time,” said Drew Johnson, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering. Six student researchers will also participate.

Smith has developed a mathematical model to investigate the tasks differently?—Cindy Tumiel

Smith, director of the Cognitive Aging Lab.

Plastic surgery for plants?
The university has received a three-year, $354,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to improve soil reinforcement by injecting living plant roots with plastic polymers to develop synthetic root systems. The synthetic root systems have widespread applications in dams, levees, embankments, landfills and other soil-based structures.

“The root structures of plants and trees are often used to reinforce soil. But when those plants and trees die or they are damaged by animals or bad weather, we get holes in the soil where the roots should be. The result is a weakened soil system, prone to erosion,” said Smith, associate professor of civil engineering and the study’s principal investigator.

To develop a solution for soil erosion, UTSA researchers will create liquid polymers and test them by injecting them into the roots of plants. Once injected, those polymers will solidify in the shape of the plant’s roots, and as the live roots decompose over time, the plastic root structure will remain, keeping the soil in place and protecting it from erosion.

Johnson will conduct the research in collaboration with Mark Appleford, assistant professor of biomedical engineering, Paul Jureen, associate professor of geological sciences; Valerie Sponsel, associate professor of plant physiology; and Szazad Bin-Shafique, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering. Six student researchers will also participate.

In response to the proposal, one NSF reviewer noted, “This research is ... in its infancy, high risk, highly innovative, but with tremendous future potential.”

Cindy Tumiel

WEB EXTRA
Go to www.utsa.edu/sombrilla to see a video interview with Rebekah Smith, director of the Cognitive Aging Lab.

STUDY EXPLORES HOW WE REMEMBER ALL THE THINGS WE NEED TO DO

“UTSA aspires to become a top research university, and our membership in GUIRR demonstrates this commitment,” said Walter Downing, M.B.A. ’86, executive vice president of research and chief research officer. “UTSA’s partnership with Southwest Research Institute to join GUIRR will not only strengthen the relationship between our respective institutions, it will allow our institutions to contribute to the development of national policies that will facilitate science and technology research collaborations in the future.”

—Stories by Christi Fish

Fighting valley fever
Medical mycologists from the South Texas Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases and the UTSA Department of Biology have significantly advanced the fight against San Joaquin Valley Fever, commonly called valley fever, a respiratory infection of humans caused by the Coccidioides fungus. For the first time, the researchers have genetically engineered a live, attenuated vaccine that protects mice against the illness, known in scientific circles as coccidioidomycosis. A live, attenuated vaccine is a mutated form of the pathogen no longer capable of causing disease, so it can be used as a preventative.

Coccidioides, a soil-dwelling fungus, is responsible for the significantly increased numbers of respiratory infections among outdoor workers when compared to the general population. Additionally, people with compromised T-cell immunity, the elderly, and certain ethnic groups, such as African Americans and Filipinos who live in the southwestern U.S., have an increased incidence of the infection’s symptoms, caused by the inhalation of Coccidioides spores. Although less than 1 percent of infected individuals experience severe symptoms, such as chronic-progressive pneumonitis or meningitis, the incidence of reported primary pulmonary infection cases in Arizona and California has significantly increased in the last decade.

“Respiratory infections caused by Coccidioides tend to escape the radar of most large pharmaceutical companies, because only about 100,000 cases are reported each year,” said Garrey Cole, who holds the Margaret Batts Tobin Distinguished Chair in Biotechnology and is the study’s principal investigator. “But, when I look at 100,000 cases, I see 100,100 faces looking back at me.”

UTSA, SwRI partner in national research group
UTSA and Southwest Research Institute (SwRI) have joined the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR), an elite sub-unit of the National Academies, the nation’s advisers in science, engineering and medicine.

GUIRR provides a platform for interactions in science and technology from academia, government and business to discuss and take action on national and international scientific matters. Often documented in advisory reports, this counsel is distributed to key national leaders, including the president’s staff and cabinet.

“UTSA aspires to become a top research university, and our membership in GUIRR demonstrates this commitment,” said Robert Gracy, UTSA vice president for research. “UTSA’s partnership with Southwest Research Institute to join GUIRR will not only strengthen the relationship between our respective institutions, it will allow our institutions to contribute to the development of national policies that will facilitate science and technology research collaborations in the future.”

“Training with UTSA as GUIRR university-

industry partners gives us a unique opportunity to participate in, learn from and contribute to the leading research collaborations in the nation,” said Walter Downing, M.B.A. ’86, executive vice president of Southwest Research Institute. GUIRR’s member roster reads like a who’s who of research, offering both UTSA and SwRI access to top research universities, industry leaders and federal officials. UTSA and SwRI are GUIRR’s 17th university-industry pair. They join the University of Texas at Austin, previously GUIRR’s only member from Texas. Other GUIRR partners include companies such as Boeing, General Electric, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon, as well as universities such as Ohio State, Penn State, UCLA, Stanford, UC Berkeley and MIT.
Engineered to Run

Keeping Pace in Class and on the Field

by Rudy Arispe

Along with her schoolbooks, Dana Mecke crams granola bars, apples and either a peanut-butter-and-jelly or a turkey-and-spinach sandwich into her backpack. “I’m hungry all the time. I eat twice every hour,” Mecke says with a laugh. “My friends make fun of me because I have snacks in my bag all the time. I eat in class but make sure the snacks aren’t too crunchy so I won’t make noise.”

The UTSA senior requires a steady supply of calories and carbohydrates to fuel herself as she racks up about eight miles a day and 12 miles on Sundays to stay in tip form as a decorated cross country champion.

In 2008, Mecke captured UTSA’s first Southland Conference individual conference crown in cross country since 1996 with a 4,000-meter time of 21:39, her seventh victory of the season. She also collected SLC Athlete of the Week accolades five times during the season.

On top of her athletic achievements, Mecke maintains a 3.89 GPA in mechanical engineering, a feat that led to her earning SLC Student-Athlete of the Year for women’s cross country and for indoor track and field last year. She also was named to the 2008–2009 Southland Conference Women’s Cross Country/Track and Field All-Academic Team, her third SLC All-Academic honor.

When you ask the student-athlete about her accomplishments, Mecke merely shrugs her shoulders and smiles. “It’s an honor to get these awards,” she says. “But I guess it just shows hard work pays off. If I’m doing the best I can, everything else follows.”

Her discipline involves getting up at 5:30 a.m., which gives her just enough time to eat a bowl of oatmeal before heading out the door to meet her teammates for a run at 6:30. Later, they complete a 20-minute afternoon jog around campus to wind down for the day.

“You feel good when you run,” says Mecke. “You get that runner’s high afterward. It’s fun to compete, too.”

Cross country coach Scott Slade has worked with the program since 2006 Smithson Valley graduate since last year. He says he has never known Mecke to settle for mediocrity. “She’s always been good in math and science,” says Mark, a petroleum engineer for a local oil company. “We’re proud of her. We try to slow her down every now and then, but she has a fire burning under her feet. Ever since she was born, she’s been a driven and dynamic person. She could always outrun the boys and do more chin-ups than them. I think she did it on purpose just to beat them.”

That drive propels Mecke on the occasions when she isn’t in the mood to run because she’s tired or needs to study for an upcoming exam. Like the champion that she is, she temperately puts those concerns aside and laces up her Asics.

“A lot of things go through my mind,” she says. “On easy runs, I’m able to plan my day out and think through things. On harder runs, I’m just focusing on finishing and getting through the pain.”

“I always enjoyed math, but I have to study a lot and make sure I don’t get behind. It’s definitely hard juggling track and studies. Whenever I’m not in class or running, I’m studying.”

“I want to design prosthetics and work with people who [have] lost limbs,” Mecke says. “Mechanical engineering is so broad. I can also go into designing knee braces or a new type of hip replacement. Now I’m thinking about getting my master’s degree in biomedical engineering.”

In her career path, Mecke is following family tradition. Mecke’s brother, Mark Jr., with whom she lives, also is a mechanical engineering major. His grandfather and father was a petroleum engineer for a local oil company. “We’re proud of her. We try to slow her down every now and then, but she has a fire burning under her feet. Ever since she was born, she’s been a driven and dynamic person. She could always outrun the boys and do more chin-ups than them. I think she did it on purpose just to beat them.”

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“Keep your mind on running.”

Dana Mecke earned an SLC Student-Athlete of the Year title for her accomplishments in athletics and academics.

Sports Briefs

UTSA to host 2011 men’s regional
San Antonio will host the 2011 NCAA Men’s Basketball Southwest Regional at the Alamodome, with dates tentatively set for Friday, March 25, and Sunday, March 27. With the selection, UTSA will serve as the host institution for its 11th NCAA basketball event since 1997, including its fifth men’s regional. Additionally, the Alamodome will serve as an NCAA basketball venue for the 10th time in a 15-year span. San Antonio collegiate basketball teams have been hosted by the San Antonio Local Organizing Committee (SALOC), which is composed of the City of San Antonio, San Antonio Sports Foundation and UTSA. Upcoming NCAA championship events for the SALOC also include the 2010 Women’s Final Four on April 4 and 6 and the 2011 Women’s Volleyball Championship, both at the Alamodome.

Twelve named All-Southland Conference Cross Country Sophomore Kayla Pratt and seniors Dana Mecke and Pernilla Sastrestrand all finished in the top seven at the Southland Conference Women’s Championship on Oct. 31 to earn all-conference accolades. Additionally, Savestrand, a transfer from South Florida, was selected Southland Newcomer of the Year by the league’s head coaches. In the men’s race, sophomore Layne Nissen garnered his first all-conference certificate with a seventh-place finish. The men placed third, their highest showing since 1998, while the women finished fourth, the best showing since 2004. Soccer - Senior Estine Dikos was named first-team All-Southland Conference for the second time in her career, while juniors Allison Dillon and Chelsa Zimmerman picked up second-team honors, and sophomore Taylor Padia and freshman Dacia Webb received honorable mentions. The Roadrunners qualified for their fourth straight Southland Conference Tournament, where they lost to Sam Houston State in double overtime to finish the season with a 9-10-2 record. Volleyball - Freshman outside hitter Kristen Walls was named to the six-member All-Southland Conference second team, while Junior outside hitter Kendra Rowland and sophomore libero Kelsey Jewasko earned honorable mentions. The Roadrunners advanced to their seventh consecutive Southland Conference Tournament, where they lost to eventual runner-up Stephen Austin in four sets, ending the season with a 12-19 record.

UTSA selects architect for athletics complex The University of Texas System awarded HKS Inc., and Overland Partners Architects a contract to design and engineer the UTSA to host 2011 men’s regional $22 million Phase I portion of the UTSA Park West Athletics Complex. HKS Inc., is a Dallas-based architectural firm whose credits include the new Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Arlington. Overland Partners Architects is a San Antonio firm with extensive experience with UT System building projects, in particular for UT Austin, UT Health Science Center at San Antonio and UT Pan American.

The work calls for the contractor to design and develop the building plans for a soccer stadium, a track and field stadium and the initial utilities, roads and parking infrastructure needed for the 60-acre complex. The facility will be built on UTSA Park West, a 125-acre site located at Kyle Seale Parkway and North Loop 1604, a part of the Main Campus.

What’s the latest? Go to www.goutsa.com for the latest in Roadrunner sports.
More students, more academic programs, more research projects, more students living on campus.

UTSA’s unprecedented growth in the past decade and its emergence as a research-driven institution gave rise to the need for a new campus master plan. Unveiled in June 2009, the plan offers a blueprint for development of the Main and Downtown academic campuses over the next several decades. And, with the coming of football to UTSA, the plan expands that vision to an athletics and recreational facility at UTSA Park West.

A primary theme in the master plan is the linking of new academic centers with open, pedestrian-friendly spaces and a logical system of pathways, or paseos, a nod to architect O’Neil Ford’s original vision for the Main Campus. Existing surface parking lots will be replaced with garages, enhanced signage and campus entryways are planned, and lush native landscaping will be added. An iconic bell tower will be the focal point of a new central quadrangle on the Main Campus, which will serve as a gateway to the campus at Edward Ximenes Avenue and a central gathering place for the university.

The framework for growth established by the master plan provides an organizational structure for open space, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, buildings, landscape and utility infrastructure, which creates a traditional urban block pattern defined by a grid of paseos and streets that will greatly enhance the learning environment of UTSA.

— J. Douglas Lipscomb
University architect and director of facility planning and development

The complete plan can be found at www.utsa.edu/masterplan/.
Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first humans to walk on the surface of the moon. The "miracle" New York Mets rallied from an 18-23 season start to win the World Series in five games against the Baltimore Orioles.

Category 5 storm Hurricane Camille slammed into the Mississippi Gulf Coast, killing some 250 people and causing close to $1.5 billion in damage.

Approximately 400,000 people descended on a dairy farm near Bethel, N.Y., for the Woodstock Music and Art Fair.

The U.S. Selective Service held a draft lottery—the first since World War II—to determine order of induction into the Army for men born between 1944 and 1950 to serve in Vietnam.

The Beatles gave their last public performance, an unannounced concert on the roof of Apple Records in central London that was shut down by police.

And, down in Texas, the Legislature established The University of Texas at San Antonio with the passage and signing of House Bill 42. On the occasion of the university’s anniversary, Sombrilla shares some favorite photos chronicling the past 40 years.

WEB EXTRA
Go to www.utsa.edu/sombrilla to see more photos and a timeline of significant events in UTSA history.
Dewey D. Davis (left), the first faculty member hired, teaches the first class at UTSA, a graduate level course on junior college curriculum, on June 5, 1973. Classes were held at the Koger Center while the permanent campus at I-10 and Loop 1604 was under construction.

Librarian Maureen Harris shows students how to use a microfilm reader on UTSA’s first day of classes, June 5, 1973.

Fred Wick and Rosie Villarreal inspect a newly delivered card catalog in the library, 1974.

Jana Peterson works on the mailing of the first undergraduate catalog in 1974.

Students register in the Convocation Center for the fall semester, 1976.

Sarah Garrahan sells buttons for the Alumni Association during the first Fiesta UTSA, a part of Fiesta San Antonio, in 1978.
Bluebonnets—and not much else—surround the track, circa 1983.

Performers gather for the first Madrigal Christmas Dinner in 1976. The event benefits a music scholarship fund.

Students frolic in the snow after an unusual (for San Antonio) winter storm in January 1982.

Students get some hands-on experience in engineering class. UTSA’s undergraduate programs in civil, mechanical and electrical engineering began in 1992.

Commuters no more! Students move into Chisholm Hall, the university’s first on-campus residence hall, in late summer 1986. Approximately 3,700 students now live in UTSA’s four on-campus residences.

Students ham it up at the first Roadrunner Camp, in 1993 at Heart O’the Hills in Hunt, Texas. Roadrunner Camp traditionally ends with a reading from Oh, the Places You’ll Go by Dr. Seuss.
San Antonio native Ricardo Romo was named the university’s fifth president in 1999.

Design students in the College of Architecture display their fabric- and-wood structures in Bill Miller Plaza at the Downtown Campus. The School of Architecture moved to the Downtown Campus in 2003 and became the College of Architecture in 2005.

Sombrilla Plaza on Aug. 26, 2009, the first day of classes for the 2009–2010 academic year. UTSA became the second-largest school in the University of Texas System, surpassing UT Arlington, in 2006. Nearly 29,000 students were enrolled for the fall 2009 semester.

Blue Crew members paint themselves in a University Center men’s restroom before a home basketball game. It takes about three tubes of blue paint to cover one fan from the waist up.

Fiesta Plaza in downtown San Antonio was demolished in 1993 to make way for UTSA’s Downtown Campus. Bill Miller Bar-B-Q Enterprises purchased the property and donated it to UTSA.

The sculpture “Border Crossing” by Luis Jiménez is installed in the Sombrilla Plaza on Aug. 16, 1996.
Gutierrez, an amateur artist who has spent years working in the information technology field, is a senior in UTSA’s College of Business. Last spring, he started GRAFFITI Foundation, a social enterprise committed to supporting artists and the community. The company, whose name stands for Gathering Responsible Artists For the Fight In Transcending Irresponsibility, aims to support graffiti artists by connecting them with other venues for creating and displaying their art and even providing the supplies they need. But Gutierrez also wants his company to support public arts programs and serve as a collective that helps artists—not just graffiti artists—earn a living doing what they love.

“We’re not trying to say everyone is irresponsible who does graffiti,” Gutierrez says. “We’re just trying to say that there’s a better way to do things … Some do it for a purpose; some do it for their name, to get recognition. I don’t know what the root of that is, but we’re trying to get them to be more responsible and help them build on a skill that they have. These guys and girls have great talent, and we want to use that instead of having them pay fines or go to jail or any of that.”

On its Web site, www.graffitifound.com, the company sells original art as well as T-shirts, calendars and other items featuring participating artists’ work. Plans include offering local businesses plagued by unwanted graffiti the option of having a mural created on their property, Gutierrez says.

What gave Gutierrez the push to start his company was a class he took last spring as part of his Small Business Entrepreneurship concentration. His instructor, senior lecturer Anita Leffel, requires her students to start a business. Leffel teaches students what goes into creating a business and encourages them to get out there and try it for themselves.

“Social entrepreneurship is taking all of the tools that a business person learns—accounting, budget, spreadsheet, business plan, hiring and firing, profit, sustainability—all of that, but you are geared not toward making a profit for your shareholder, but toward solving a social issue. So, yes, it’s a not-for-profit, but it’s one that has to be sustainable,” Leffel says. “Davin starts a business so that he can help others,” she says. “That’s what social entrepreneurship is. He’s an artist, but he has a business mind.”

Gutierrez graduated in December. He and classmate and business partner Castulo Jimenez worked on the business this fall as their practicum project, including setting up a nonprofit and holding a graffiti “slam” and auction event.

“It’s more of a whole new approach,” Gutierrez says of their business model. “Instead of trying to be a gallery where I have to pay for the space, I have to pay for lighting and all of that, we don’t have those costs. We’re also like a street team—we try to promote artists at the events they go to. If they have pieces they want to sell, they can direct people to our Web site.”

One GRAFFITI Foundation artist, 16-year-old Noe De Dios, had gotten in trouble for tagging school property. Since that experience, the high school student has focused on refining his graffiti—now using an airbrush instead of spray cans to create his work on canvases provided by GRAFFITI Foundation.

“I wanted to prove to my dad it wasn’t a bad thing to do,” he says of his reasons for getting involved with Gutierrez’s company.
De Dios is trying to recruit other graffiti artists to join GRAFFITI Foundation, which also offered him his first chance to create art “live” during the graffiti slim and artist expo supported by the College of Business and UTSA Center for Innovation and Technology. Entrepreneurship that was held at Centro Cultural Aztlán in October. Pieces created during the event were to be auctioned at the slim.

De Dios loves experimenting with vivid colors and the “wild” style he has developed as his signature, but he plans to avoid illegal graffiti. He hopes to do his own murals. “I haven’t got into trouble for a while now,” he says. “I like this.”

Learning by doing

GRAFFITI Foundation is one of a number of businesses—some social enterprises, some not—created by students in Leffel’s classes over the past several years. Students have published a magazine, created an eco-friendly cleaning service that gives employees the chance to go into business for themselves, found and marketed Guatemalan products while ensuring fair prices, and found social enterprises, some not—created by students in Leffel’s classes—while ensuring fair prices and sold them.

“Try it. We’re in a protected environment, why not?”

Then you tell me why it would or wouldn’t work,” changing from a theory-directed approach to an experiential approach is challenging. “It’s very different,” he says. “I see the learning taking place every single time.”

Cory Hallam, director of the university’s Center for Innovation and Technology Entrepreneurship (CITE), says the university is trying to give students the tools they need to tap into their inner entrepreneur, “I would have been able to [start my business] in my dorm room,” says of CITE’s Hallam. “My hat goes off to Cory. What he’s doing is great.”

One of the judges at the spring competition was Vin Montes ’04, CEO of Nerd Energy. While a pre-med senior at UTSA, Montes created Nerd, a focus and energy beverage intended to increase students’ study stamina. He researched ingredients and made batches in his kitchen that left others in his study group clamoring for more. But without any business background, it made him realize they would prefer the stability of an 8-to-5 job to the challenges of being an entrepreneur, he adds.

New this year is a mentoring partnership with the local Heartland Business Foundation, going through the process of setting up a business and give the experience to … they are going to be the ones who self-identify, [and say], ‘Wow, this was tough, but I really liked it.’”

Leffel and Hallam say they tell students that the experience can be as enlightening for students who realize they would prefer the stability of an 8-to-5 job to the challenges of being an entrepreneur, he adds.

And that’s fine. But for those that we’re able to really touch and give the experience to … they are going to be the ones spinning off a new company.”

CITE is a joint venture of the colleges of Business and Engineering. In addition to the Technology Startup Competition, CITE also runs a daylong tech startup boot camp twice a year that is open to students, faculty and local entrepreneurs. Faculty involved with the center also perform research in the field of entrepreneurship to better inform the center’s work and focus. The center also strives to give students real experiences rather than classroom projects hatched from hypothetical scenarios, and to that end, pairs faculty or outside companies with graduate students to work on projects. One such endeavor is a startup guidebook that faculty wrote with two management of technology graduate students that awaits publication.

Also in the works is a certificate in technology entrepreneurship and management that would initially be available to biomedical Ph.D. students and then to others.

The long-term vision for UTSA’s entrepreneurship offerings includes an entrepreneur residence hall, where students can live and work with office and meeting space conveniently nearby. Hallam. He also envisions an entrepreneurs hub on campus, where area businesses, students, and faculty can readily share ideas and innovate in a dynamic setting.

Eyes on the prize

Begun in 2007, the twice-yearly Technology Startup Competition pairs senior engineering students with senior business students and now offers $100,000 in prizes. The engineering students spend a semester developing a product and then partner with business students to come up with a plan for commercializing the product in the second semester.

Past competitions have yielded products including a baby monitor intended to alert parents to potential signs of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, as well as motorcycle helmets with built-in signal equipment, a computer glove that wirelessly interfaces with the computer, and a hydraulic system for splitting tractor for repairs.

By the end of the competition, which is not graded, the student teams are able to show that their ideas work and are ready to be funded to create a version for sale. Hallam says this is a valuable lesson.

This year’s competition was won by a local Graffiti Foundation, which also offered him his first chance to create art “live” during the graffiti slim and artist expo supported by the College of Business and UTSA Center for Innovation and Technology Entrepreneurship that was held at Centro Cultural Aztlán in October. Pieces created during the event were to be auctioned at the slim.

De Dios loves experimenting with vivid colors and the “wild” style he has developed as his signature, but he plans to avoid illegal graffiti. He hopes to do his own murals. “I haven’t got into trouble for a while now,” he says. “I like this.”

Leffel quotes in her e-mail signature: “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand. “
GET READY FOR HOMECOMING!

HOMECOMING 2010 is scheduled for the weekend of Feb. 18-20. The festivities begin Thursday with "Where’s the Rowdy?" a campuswide search for the UTSA mascot. On Friday, featured events are the nighttime Golf Cart Parade and Rowdy Rampage, which will culminate in a firework show. A full day of activities is planned for Saturday. An afternoon tailgate party will precede the 7 p.m. tipoff for Saturday. An after-party/dance in the ballroom will follow the basketball game.

Barbara Lightfoot Cordis, who B.A. in business, is an independant sales director with Kay Cosmetics and now is driving her eighth Mary Kay car. Before that, Kay, Barbie was national account manager American Airlines. She and husband Ken, live in Dallas. “You're a Barbie married to a Ken,” she says. “90 mm and real in Germany in 1987.”

Van N. Durr, in criminal justice, was the district counsel for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Miami from 1990 to 1993. He was also chief counsel for Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Orlando, Fla., from 2003 to 2006. He is the highest ranking federal immigration attorney in Florida, from 2003 to 2006. As the chief counsel for Immigration and Naturalization Service in Miami from 1990 to 1993, he handled major federal immigration enforcement matters involving counterterrorism and counternarcotics dangers. He is now in private practice in Miami and West Palm Beach, Florida.

Barry Danner, in criminal justice, was named the district counsel for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Miami from 1990 to 1993. He was also chief counsel for Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Orlando, Fla., from 2003 to 2006. He is the highest ranking federal immigration attorney in Florida, from 2003 to 2006. As the chief counsel for Immigration and Naturalization Service in Miami from 1990 to 1993, he handled major federal immigration enforcement matters involving counterterrorism and counternarcotics dangers. He is now in private practice in Miami and West Palm Beach, Florida.

Nancy Brandle Drews, B.A. in psychology, was named the director of the Musical Arts Center at Mansfield High School. She served major civic and educational organizations. She is an accomplished violinist and is a principal in the South Carolina Symphony.

Madelena Douglas-Tollin, M.A. in social work, was named the director of Arkansas State University's Department of Social Work. She is a former school administrator and was a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.

Mary Kathleen “Kandy” Walker, B.A. in journalism, was named the director of the School of Human Resources and Development at South Texas College. She is a former school administrator and was a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.

Kevin Bamburg, B.A. in computer science, is the director of the Information Technology Center at the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. He is a former school administrator and was a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.

Erica Castro, B.A. in English, is the director of the Writing Center at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is a former school administrator and was a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.

Lisa Gardner, B.A. in business, is a board member of the Southern State University Foundation. She is a former school administrator and was a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.

Gary L. Bitzkie, B.F.A. in art, is a bilingual teacher at Goldy Elementary School in San Antonio. He has served as a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.

Gerri Williams, B.A. in elementary education, is a kindergarten teacher in adult and higher education. She received her doctorate degree in adult and higher education. She was a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.

Erica Castro, B.A. in English, is the director of the Writing Center at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She is a former school administrator and was a classroom teacher in the first grade before entering the teaching profession.
Focus on recovery

M

Melanie Lane, M.S.W. ’09

Melanie Lane has two words for people struggling with issues of substance abuse: “Treatment works.” Lane, already an experienced substance abuse counselor when she entered the master’s in social work program in 2004, is the unit coordinator at the Restoration Center, a program of the Center for Health Care Services that is located on the new Haven for Hope campus in downtown San Antonio. In addition to a detox and intensive outpatient treatment unit, the Restoration Center includes a public sobering center, a relatively new idea in substance abuse treatment. Instead of booking public intoxicants into jail, police and sheriff’s deputies drop them off at the Restoration Center, which remains open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

“Many of these people are in the criminal justice system, but when they are released, they are not prepared to get help,” Lane says. “We provide a real service here. All the classes were on nights and weekends, and I fit my schedule – and it was affordable for me.”

Lane’s work with chronic alcoholics and other addicts, many of whom are homeless, who come in to the Restoration Center on their own or are brought in by law enforcement.

“We’ve had some really hard days,” Lane says. “We use motivational interviewing. It’s based on the philosophy that recovery is a process. The goal is to keep them engaged and coming back until they are ready to buy into a long-term treatment program.”

“Our goal is for them to become engaged and coming back until they are ready,” says Bobbi Keener, director of the Restoration Center, which has opened a sobering center at the new Haven for Hope campus.

2000, says, “I have to say that was probably one of the best experiences of my life working on that job.”

Humberto “Humbie” Cervora, B.S. in communications, in a role as public relations analyst at UTSA, worked on the Coors Field project, which is on hold until next year. “It was an incredible three-year learning experience working on the Alamodome,” he says. “I was in for a very, very rude awakening.”

Lane Welter ’85

Balbary’s are a grand slam for architect

“I quickly realized that baseball and domed football stadiums are two completely different animals,” he says. “I have to say that was probably one of the best experiences of my life working on that job.”

4. There’s a connection to the past that baseball has that football just doesn’t,” Welter says. “And the reason baseball has that, I think, is because of the facilities it’s played in. It’s Fenway, it’s a Wrigley Field, it’s even the old Yankee Stadium.”

Whereas football stadiums are fairly regular in their geometry and require immense space to accommodate the facility and parking, baseball fields were historically built with whatever land was available, Welter says. “The fields can be different in dimensions and size and shape,” he says, “but baseball became the sport of the common man and resultant of the environment it’s put in.”

After earning his B.A. in architecture in 1985, Welter worked on “some really good projects in San Antonio,” including the main entrance to SeaWorld San Antonio, Palo Alto College and the Biosciences Building at UTSA. He got involved in college architecture in 1989, when local firm Mammoliti hired him to work on the AlamoDome.

“The frustrating part of having a love of architecture, I couldn’t imagine anything better than being able to design sports facilities. I thought, ‘Hey, cool! That’s something that somebody can actually make a living designing sports stadiums. I though, ‘how difficult can this be?’ I was in for a very, very rude awakening. It was an incredible three-year learning experience working on the Alamodome.”

The project also gave him plenty of networking opportunities, and in 1993, he hired for the Kansas City-based HOK Sport (now Populous), which specializes in sports facilities and convention centers. He immediately started working on the Coors Field project, which held special interest for him because he was born in Denver.

“I quickly realized that baseball and domed football stadiums are two completely different animals,” he says. “I have to say that was probably one of the best experiences of my life working on that job.”

His other big projects hold special places in his heart as well. Minute Maid Park was appealing because Welter and his brother used to listen to the Astros on the radio (in the days before cable television). And RKF is one of the home of the Washington Redskins for 36 seasons; his grandfather lived in Fairfax, Va., and was a “huge Redskins fan.”

In his career, Welter has worked for several firms; he’s now with Turner Construction in Phoenix, and his latest big project is the $890 million expansion of the Las Vegas Convention Center (the project is on hold until next year due to the recession). But Balbary remains his favorite architectural challenge, and in addi-

“I love the intensity and the competitiveness of football. But I love going to a baseball game because it’s about people watching, it’s about seeing the first pitch, it’s about the seventh-inning stretch.”

—Rebecca Luther
When Joe Kustelski ’78 learned his mother’s degree in biology from UTSA in 1978, he planned to stay right where he was, because he earned a degree and eventually entered academia. But the day before he was to register for classes, Kustelski had a small mishap in a San Antonio rainstorm.

“I drove through a low-water crossing a little bit too fast on Callaghan Road, and when I came out the other side of it, my tailpipe and muffler had been left behind,” he recalls.

Suddenly Kustelski, who had financed his own undergraduate education and was about to incur the expenses of graduate school, found himself with no vehicle and no funds to secure a new one. A trip to the career services office—where he hoped to find a job to help finance his car repair—changed his life when a counselor suggested he consider pharmaceutical sales.

“I still believe there’s a reason for everything that happens to you,” Kustelski says, “so I wasn’t really listening.” Then, the counselor dropped two little words: company car.

“I heard that, and said, ‘I’m there,’” he says. “I needed a car and I thought, ‘I’ll go do something for a few years, just enough to stop being broke. Then, I’ll come back (to academia).”

Now, more than 30 years later, Kustelski is the field sales director for the Northeast Area Women’s Health Care Division of Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals, leading a team of 75 marketing the company’s family planning products. “I’m here because it named,” he says.

Kustelski, born in New Jersey, worked his way up with Bayer, starting as a sales rep and moving through various management positions during his current title in 2004. “I’ve always felt challenged, and I feel like my education never stopped,” he says. “The consequences to what we do are about quality of life for people and their future.”

Looking ahead to retirement, Kustelski hopes to move back to Texas and pursue his avocations: hunting, cricket (notably those supporting 1965 Shelby Cobra automobiles) and continuing his involvement with UTSA, where he now is a sustaining member of the President’s Associates and a lifetime member of the Alumni Association.

“UTSA played a great role in my life today, not only because of the inspiration provided to me by my professors, but because of that career counselor,” Kustelski says. “Now, I can’t see why anyone would go anywhere else.”

—Jennifer Roel Lazer

KEEP IN TOUCH

Send us updates on work, relocations, marriages, family, degrees, accomplishments—and a photo, too. Let Roadrunners know what you’ve been up to by completing this form and sending it to us. Class Notes are printed in each issue of Sombrilla and posted on the Alumni Association Web site.

Name (include maiden name)   Degree/Class Year

Sponsors Name (include maiden name)   Degrees/Class Year (if UTSA grad)

Home Address

City, State and Zip Code   Home Phone

Place of Employment

Title

May we include your title and employer in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

Work Address

City, State and Zip Code   Work Phone

Preferred E-mail Address (home or work)

Fax Number

For marriage announcements, include your spouse’s full name, career and degree (if UTSA graduate), and wedding date. For birth and adoption announcements, include your child’s first name and the date of birth or adoption.

May we include your e-mail address in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

For birth and adoption announcements, include your child’s full name and the date of birth or adoption.

May we include your child’s birth date? ___Yes ___No

May we include your wedding date? ___Yes ___No

May we include your spouse’s name? ___Yes ___No

May we include your birth date? ___Yes ___No

May we include your mother’s maiden name? ___Yes ___No

May we include your father’s name? ___Yes ___No

May we include your mother’s maiden name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your father’s maiden name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your first name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your middle name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your last name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your e-mail address in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your home address in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your work address in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your home phone number in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your work phone number in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

Name (include maiden name)   Degree/Class Year

May we include your name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your e-mail address in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your home address in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your work address in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your home phone number in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your work phone number in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your birth date in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your marriage date in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your children’s names in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your parents’ names in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your siblings’ names in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your maternal grandparents’ names in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

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May we include your paternal grandmother in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your paternal grandfather in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your spouse’s name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No

May we include your spouse’s maiden name in Class Notes? ___Yes ___No
hen was the last time you walked through the Sombrilla at dusk? Have you ever traversed the Downtown Campus in the cool of the morning before anyone else was there? Being on campus by myself, or nearly so, is one of my favorite ways to experience UTSA.

Sounds a little odd, doesn’t it? Especially when you know that my favorite time to leave the office is when classes are changing. The hundreds of people moving from place to place impart an energy that is infectious and revitalizing in the middle of a full workday. Being out and participating in the life of the campus is also a wonderful way to quite literally see why UTSA exists and to get a feel for the great work being done here by everyone connected to this university.

And yet, I still love to walk across campus when it is nearly deserted. It is one of the ways I develop a sense of place that connects me to our university. The phrase “sense of place” has different connotations to suit a variety of uses—architectural, environmental and psychological. The definition that most captures the way I’m using this phrase (offered by Yan Xu on the East St. Louis Action Research Project page for the University of Illinois) is this one: “A sense of place is a sense of the beauty and the wealth of phenomena that comprise a particular place.”

I first experienced this sense of place on my undergraduate campus. On a dismal, drizzling Sunday afternoon I was tired—tired of studying, tired of the weather, tired of sharing a small residence hall room. In spite of the miserable weather, I pulled on a sweatshirt and went for a walk. I ignored my usual routes and went to an unfamiliar part of the campus. Before too long, I quit looking at my feet and started noticing the wonderful trees around me. Soon I realized that the architecture on this older part of campus was more ornate and much more interesting than most of the buildings I frequented. Thanks to the time of day and the messy weather, I was the only one there. By the time my hair was dripping and my shoes were soaked through, I was in a completely different frame of mind and, though I didn’t realize it then, I had an entirely new sense of that place.

A solitary walk across campus became an irregular but important part of my undergraduate experience. Walking the campus at “off” times, I saw different parts of it—noticed nooks I wouldn’t have seen on a busy day, stopped to read plaques on the walls. Thinking about it now, 30 years later, I still experience a sense of my place there.

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One of the best things about being involved with a university is that every campus is a unique physical space with an incredible variety of ways to engage in a vibrant campus life that is always new and interesting. If you haven’t been to UTSA in a while, I encourage you to take time for a visit. If you are an alumna, look for your favorite spot on campus and see if it looks as you remembered it or if there is a new building there. Get a feel for UTSA as it is today. Come to a basketball game, a play, or a meeting or lecture. Fund time to walk across campus when students are changing classes. Even if you are not an alumna, or maybe especially if you are not, a campus visit is worthwhile. And, for everyone, if you really want to get a sense of the place and feel a connection to the UTSA of today, experience the campus at twilight or in the cool of the morning.

I promise you it will be worth the walk. Enjoy.

A SENSE OF PLACE
By Gage Paine

Gage E. Paine is vice president for student affairs. She writes a regular column for the student affairs newsletter, www.utsa.edu/students/sanews.

New Traditions
Start Now

Led by championship coach Larry Coker, UTSA Football is on a winning drive toward the start of our inaugural 2011 season. Roadrunners will soon have new traditions to celebrate every fall.

Now is your time to step up and be a part of one of the greatest moments in UTSA history by joining the Roadrunner Athletic Fund. Your support directly benefits our student-athletes and sports programs. And, membership will help guarantee you the best seats for the kickoff season for UTSA Football.

For information on UTSA Football and supporting the Roadrunner Athletic Fund, visit utsa.edu/stepup
On Aug. 18, 1974, 82 UTSA students made history by walking the stage at the university’s first commencement ceremony, held in the auditorium of the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.

And, just as in 1969 when Texas Gov. Preston Smith used the back of state Rep. Frank Lombardino to sign the bill creating UTSA, President Peter Flawn again used Lombardino’s back in a symbolic gesture to sign the university’s first diploma. The recipient? Susan Bolado, a 1973 graduate of what was then Southwest Texas State University and mom of two sons, age 8 and 6, who earned her spot in the history books and on the front page of the newspaper when she received an M.B.A. and became UTSA’s first graduate.

Bolado, who now lives in New Braunfels, says she still has the newspaper clippings from that day. “I got clippings from as far away as Tennessee,” she says. But what she doesn’t have is the diploma that Flawn signed onstage. “They didn’t give me that one,” she says. “They kept that one that was signed and sent me another one.”

At left, Jesse Kent Jr., who also earned an M.B.A., gets a congratulatory kiss from his wife.

Now, UTSA holds five ceremonies each fall and spring semester to accommodate students and their families in the Convocation Center on the Main Campus. More than 1,700 students earned diplomas in fall 2008 alone.

See more photos from the university’s 40-year history beginning on page 16.

Looking Back

By all accounts, it was a beautiful day—sunny and breezy.