Honorable Quest

THE MANY FACETS OF OUR NEWEST FACULTY
ON THE COVER: Kimberly Fonzo, assistant professor of English, is one of the newest additions to UTSA’s faculty. The former theater actress found her passion for medieval literature backstage.

Special thanks to Our Lady of the Atonement Catholic Church for the setting and Hunter Vick, a junior English and history major, for costuming.

ON THIS PAGE:

In the South Texas night air, a raw oil collection tank stands as a testament to the new 21st century black-gold rush along the Eagle Ford Shale. Hard-working Carrizo Springs is now facing extraordinary challenges from this unprecedented economic boom.

Photos by Patrick Ray Dunn

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Editor’s Note

What do you want?

If you could follow your dream, any dream, what would you do?

As I ate lunch in the Sombrilla one recent fall afternoon, I was forced to think about that question. It was stinging me in the face in vivid red marker on a presentation board that had to be at least eight feet tall and 16 feet wide. “If you could pursue your dream with no fear of failure, what would you do?”

A crowd was gathered around the board and occasionally a brave soul would step forward, pick up the marker and start jotting down an answer. I watched with curiosity and with just a little bit of age-weariness. It was harder to answer when I was a kid. Back then I had no fear of failure, no little voice in my head in my point outing what was impractical or unachievable. I couldn’t do a carthell, but I still believed I could somersault my way onto the most famous football field in the world. I was afraid of heights but dreamed of flying to the moon. I’m a shy introvert but I believed that someday I would perform for a packed audience at the Paris Opera House. And then I grew up.

That little voice in my head got louder and more persistent. I started thinking about what was the smartest path, the one that made sense. Words like “responsible,” “honorable” and “economical” started recurring in my head.

The dreams stopped coming. So on that same fall day, I walked up to the presentation board, a lot older, a little bit wiser and with just a silver remaining of the dreamer in me.

And I saw their dreams written in blue, green, red and orange. Some were scrawled across the board, pictures and forms punctuating their messages: “Make an amazing historical discovery that changed the world.” “Create the next greatest equation and become the Einstein (E=MC).” “Become the next greatest chef.”

“Answer people’s prayers.” “I would save all the endangered animals in the world.”

I could feel the dreamer in me stirring. Growing. “Emotionally the omission. The correct smartest path, the one that made sense. Words like "responsible," "honorable" and "economical" started recurring in my head.

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The Paseo
A STROLL AROUND CAMPUS

WALKING IN THEIR SHOES

ITC EXHIBIT NAVIGATES VISITORS THROUGH THE DIPS AND TURNS OF THE IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE

BY K.L. RODRIGUEZ

The stories are wrenching, inspiring, heartbreaking. A native of the Democratic Republic of Congo immigrated to the U.S. after his entire family was killed. A young Nigerian left everyone in his country—mother, siblings, friends—to attend a Minnesota community college on a scholarship. A Cambodian came after riding a bicycle 500 miles to Thailand, getting captured by the Khmer Rouge, escaping, falling into a booby trap and surviving a refugee camp.

Then there is the young woman from Mexico, whose husband swam across the Rio Grande River while she crossed in an inner tube, clinging to a handful of clothes.

Welcome to “Why We Came: The Immigration Experience,” a powerful and poignant exhibit at UTSA’s Institute of Texan Cultures.

The exhibit traces the experiences of 10 immigrants through a creative game board. Visitors select color-coded cards and immerse themselves in the journeys of actual immigrants, learning the motivations of becoming a U.S. citizen and understanding the challenges of the process. At the end, visitors take a citizenship test and pay—for that opportunity to be here.

“Part of the reason was we didn’t want them to have the same accent handicap we did,” said Adeeko Adeeko, the designer and curator of the exhibit.

Adeeko earned a bachelor’s in education from the University of Illinois, and an M.B.A. from Eastern Illinois University. Today, he serves as the director of endowment services and compliance at UTSA.

The exhibit notes the successes of other immigrants, such as Lan-Anh Ngo, a doctor, and Soan Ngo, a dentist. Lan-Anh Ngo came to the U.S. from Vietnam with her mother and attended high school in Texas. At 13, Soan Ngo escaped Vietnam by boat with his sister, nearly died at sea, and finally settled in Amarillo, Texas. The two met at Texas A&M University and got married.

“I came here with nothing and now I’m a physician,” said Soan Ngo.

The exhibit offers compelling trivia. Did you know the founders of Google, eBay and Yahoo are all immigrants? Saidi wound up in San Antonio—and here is his story.

“I feared for my life,” he said.

When I listen to or read about people that immigrated here as refugees, escaping war, famine or personal persecution, I feel humbled that there are others that have paid a greater price than I did.”

—Saidi Saidi
Donald Robin, who during the day is a neuroscientist and professor at UTSA, isn’t the type who walks around in a lab coat and tie. With attire consisting of a T-shirt, a pair of well-worn shorts and flip-flops, one gets the idea that there is more to this professor’s life than lecturing on the complexities of the human brain.

After dark, one gets a much clearer picture. Once the sun has set, Robin sheds what few Ph.D. trappings remain, powers down his computer and plugs in his guitar to play in a band with an unlikely name: Royal Punisher.

A Royal Punisher performance includes a mix of improvisation with such standards as Thelonious Monk’s “Epistrophy” and Frank Zappa’s “Blessed Relief.”

This summer, the quartet recorded and produced its first album of original compositions, due out this fall. “We could have done it before, but we weren’t ready,” Robin said of the recording sessions. “It took us three years playing together to get us ready.”

The laid-back musician/scientist is also assistant director in UTSA’s Honors College. He teaches a course that pairs neuroscience students and art students and explores how the brain guides art and how art affects the brain. Another course “evaluates the ideas that people believe in, whether the idea works or not. There are the ideas of ‘perpetual motion,’ or taking sea salt to improve your health. Basically, it is ‘voodoo,’ if someone believes in it, but we know it doesn’t work,” he said.

Robin also heads the Human Performance Division of the Research Imaging Institute at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, where he was named radiology professor of the year in 2011–12.

Penchants for both music and academia came early in Robin’s life. Born in Boston while his father was on the faculty at Harvard University medical school, he began playing the violin at age 4. First taught by his father’s best friend, who was in the string section of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Robin said the internal musical light didn’t ignite until the grand old age of 6. He picked up a guitar about the same time that his father put Miles Davis’ critically acclaimed, revolutionary classic, “Kind of Blue,” on the turntable. “That was it. I fell in love,” he said. He has been playing ever since.

The name of his group, Royal Punisher, is more befitting a heavy metal band than a jazz quartet with decades of rock and improvisation “chops.” It became the group’s formal handle after Robin visited a winery in Napa Valley that produces a zinfandel of the same name. His band mates loved the name.

The band is already inspiring some elementary and middle school students: Robin’s three children, ages 11, 9 and 6, are learning to play the piano, guitar and drums and they also sing. The next generation of “punisher” musicians may shortly be taking the stage with their scientist father.
Something to Smile About
NEW COSMETICS MODEL SMILES FOR A MISSION

BY RUDY ARISPE

Alexis Harris isn’t just another pretty face. She’s the new easy, breezy face of CoverGirl—and, she’s ready to share the limelight with superstars Sofia Vergara, Queen Latifah and Pink, whose long lashes and shimmering lips shine in magazine and TV ads all over the world.

Harris was handpicked from among 20,000 contestants who submitted essays and videos to The Ellen DeGeneres Show, explaining why they should be the new CoverGirl. The popular host announced a nationwide search in January. Now the best is yet to come.

Harris, a 19-year-old senior anthropology major, will be fussed over by stylists and hair and make-up artists as she and her idol, DeGeneres, work together in a CoverGirl photo shoot that will appear in an upcoming issue of People magazine.

“I still keep pinching myself to make sure this isn’t a dream,” Harris said.

Since being named a CoverGirl in March, Harris’ life has been a rollercoaster. In April, she traveled to Las Vegas to work the red carpet as a correspondent for The Ellen DeGeneres Show at the 48th Annual Academy of Country Music Awards. She interviewed some of country music’s hottest stars, including Shania Twain, Tim McGraw and Faith Hill.

Among the hottest stars, was Shania Twain, who submitted essays and videos to the Letters from the Earth project, an environmental initiative to which Harris’ nonprofit, the Students Making Impact In Lives Everywhere Club of Central Texas, said she is happy for her daughter’s recent success.

“I am extremely grateful and appreciative simply because Alexis allows me to share this moment with her,” she said. “She is the positive influence young people need.”

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Harris has already put much of that money to good use: She used it to support her nonprofit SMILE (Students Making Impact In Lives Everywhere), which she founded in June 2012 in her hometown of Kilgore, Texas. The organization collected food to distribute to people in soup kitchens and assisted area families with collection drives for clothes and school supplies.

“It’s about giving back to your community and doing good things in the world wherever you can, she said.

Harris, who expects to graduate in May 2014, plans to earn a master’s degree and then a Ph.D. in public policy.

“She has a special announcement to make,” Harris said. “She has finally selected the next CoverGirl, and that she was going to introduce the winner to the audience. She said, ‘But first I’m going to bring her family onstage.’ Then my mother, brother, grandmother and sister-in-law walked out,” Harris said. “I started crying my eyes out. She showed my submission tape to the audience, and then she called me down to the stage.”

During a mock press conference, Harris stood next to DeGeneres, herself a CoverGirl brand ambassador, and fielded a few playful questions from make-believe members of the press. Finally, DeGeneres presented the new CoverGirl with a $20,000 check.

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Harris, who expects to graduate in May 2014, plans to earn a master’s degree and then a Ph.D. in public policy. She credits her mother, Korsha, for her drive and ambition.

“She has been a big part of my support system,” Harris said. “She’s someone I’ve looked up to growing up. I admire the way she has balanced her life, work and family.”

Her mother, a program manager with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Texas, said she is happy for her daughter’s recent success.

“I am extremely grateful and appreciative simply because Alexis allows me to share this moment with her,” she said. “She is the positive influence young people need.”

So what was it like for Harris to finally meet her idol?

“It was a dream come true. I was just happy to be in the audience,” Harris said. “She has these big, blue eyes, and she’s so down-to-earth.”
G rant Carter is already recording his own album. “That’s the easy part for the 21-year-old. What comes next is why he’s sitting in Morgan King’s Introduction to the Music Industry class.

“I have a lot of questions because I’m recording my album and plan to do everything for it and to promote it,” said the music marketing major. “I also want to be a record label owner and help other up-and-coming artists with their careers.”

King’s class covers everything about careers in music, from composing and producing to becoming a jingle writer or music therapist. It is especially geared to those who have dreams of performing professionally or who plan to work in related fields.

The course analyzes publishing, record companies, copyrights and royalty payments, said King, a senior lecturer in the music department who has taught the introductory course for the past four years.

“Most of us don’t know about these things,” he said. “We also talk about the history of the business going back to the invention of the phonograph and how it changed the whole music business, to the idea of copyrights, and the development of technology to today’s digital downloads.”

King can speak from personal experience about the ups and downs of a music career and what it takes to make it in the industry. His first professional gig straight out of college was playing saxophone with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra and touring the country by bus with the group for nine months during the late ’70s. Later, King moved back to San Antonio and was a pit musician for a performance by the Four Tops and the Temptations at the Majestic Theater in San Antonio.

“Most musicians are not trained the way these students are. [The students] are set up to succeed from a business aspect,” he said. “What’s happening now is those traditional paradigms are going away, so it’s increasingly important that musicians today learn to take care of themselves.”

That’s why Alex Flores is taking the class. The music marketing major sees a future for herself in the cutthroat industry. She said, “I want to learn more about the industry and about copyright laws in case I want to pursue music later on in life.”

“Most musicians are not trained the way these students are ... traditional paradigms are going away, so it’s increasingly important that musicians today learn to take care of themselves.” —Morgan King

“Let’s assume that to some degree UTSA is the beneficiary of the fact that kids might not be able to get into the flagship [UT Austin]. It’s UTSA, not UT Arlington. It’s UTSA, not UTEP. It’s UTSA, not UT Tyler that has experienced this growth. What is the secret sauce? What is it about this campus, this institution, that has become such a magnet?” —Evan Smith, editor-in-chief of the Texas Tribune, in an Aug. 19 interview with San Antonio Express-News.

By THE NUMBERS

100 Student companies in the Roadrunner business incubator.

BY THE NUMBERS

85 Countries represented by UTSA students.
FOOTBALL
Senior quarterback Eric Soza was named to both the Manning Award (nation’s top QB) and the inaugural Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award (top offensive player in Division I) with ties to the state of Texas. Soza is one of two Roadrunners to accept a national award pre-season watch list. He was named to both the Manning Award and Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award in August.

Rice two days later. For her efforts, she was the first freshman to earn C-USA Defensive Player of the Week honors this fall.

CROSS COUNTRY
The women opened the 2013 season with a victory at the Texas Lutheran Invitational and three other runner-up performances. Senior Nina Herrera led the way for the Roadrunners. She was named Conference USA Athlete of the Week on Sept. 23 following her second-place effort at the UTSA Ricardo Romo Classic and also was victorious at the TJU Inmate, which helped the Roadrunners win the team titles for the third consecutive year.

The men won their third consecutive crown at the Texas Lutheran Invitational on Sept. 7 and the Roadrunners posted two other runner-up performances to open the 2013 campaign.

The Paseo director, in June of this year, was victorious at the conference USA athlete of the week on Sept. 23 following her second-place finish. She was named to both conference USA athlete of the week and the 2013 Senior Class award team. She also is a 2013 UTSA offensive Player of the Year award recipient and has been named to the All- Conference USA first team.

ON CONFERENCE USA:
“We are going to be finding out who we are. Our goal this year is to compete, give the other teams in the conference a run for their money and prove that we are able to play at this level.”

SPOTLIGHT Jeromie Hill
BY GUILLERMO GARCIA

Jeromie Hill, the UTSA basketball team’s award winner, has somewhat more than a season left to compete. Appropriately, he has what is probably the longest commute to school, 8,300 miles.

But despite playing ball halfway around the world from home, the 22-year-old native of Cairns, a beachside city of 150,000 in Queensland, Australia, plays “guese” that is Aussie slang for very good.

Hill had never been to Texas before arriving three years ago, but he was pleasantly surprised by the similarities warm weather, lots of wide-open spaces and engaging, friendly people. Only the koalas and the ’roos were replaced by coyotes and rattlesnakes.

It didn’t take the 6’8” senior power forward long to adjust: the water in his coastal home replaced by coyotes and rattlesnakes.

“Some people had never been to Texas before arriving three years ago, but he was pleasantly surprised by the similarities warm weather, lots of wide-open spaces and engaging, friendly people. Only the koalas and the ’roos were replaced by coyotes and rattlesnakes.”

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But first, he plans to pursue professional basketball opportunities after he graduates next year.

As a sophomore he led the team with 204 rebounds. He also earned the conference’s Student Athlete of the Year award for his 3.25 GPA in the College of Business, where he is a marketing major hoping to go into sports, entertainment and tourism management.

But first, he plans to pursue professional basketball opportunities after he graduates next year.

As a junior last season, he racked up impressive stats: 11.1 points and 6.5 rebounds per game while averaging 31 minutes of playing time on his way to All Conference second-team honors.

“I think it is realistic that I will play professionally,” he said. “It is more a matter of where, at what level and for how much. I could make the pros in Australia, but I hope to play in Europe, where salaries are higher, as is the level of play.”

Soza is the first Roadrunners football player ever to be nominated for an All-American recognition. He was named to both the Manning Award and Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award in August.

ENJOYING PLAYING: “Lots of golf,” shooting in the mid-80s.

HEALTHY TRADITION: “Just a crazy dog I love.”

FUN FACTS: Has two dogs, an English bulldog named Arnold and Sadie, whom he describes as “just a crazy dog I love.”

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SPORTS BRIEFS
The University of Texas at San Antonio is in its first season as a conference USA member, and the experience is a great reward and representation of that success.”

—Lynn Hickey, UTSA Athletics director to donor

FAVORITE FOOD: A delicious, BBQ Texas steak.

ENDS
There’s Alisoun, the wife of Bath, who proudly married and manipulated several men. Then there’s Judith, from the biblical story of a cunning yet saintly widow who slays a powerful man and saves her people. Procula, the wife of Pontius Pilate, and Joan of Arc are favorites.

But for Kimberly Fonzo, assistant professor of English, the magic and mystery of medieval literature isn’t so much about the characters, as scintillating as they may be. “The authors themselves are the characters that compel me,” she said.

Fonzo, who is teaching an undergraduate course on early literature through 1700 and a graduate course on medieval literature, is so intrigued by writers from that period, especially Christine de Pizan, that she decided to dedicate her career to learning more about them and the techniques they use to represent themselves in their own stories.

Medieval literature is any written work from Europe and the surrounding area created during the Middle Ages, which was from roughly 500 to the late 1400s. While it spans an array of subjects, much of the work is rooted in religion.

Fonzo did not always appreciate the literature. As a college student, she was a strong critic because she saw it as more historical than literary. Then came an “aha moment” in an Indiana bookstore. During a break, she wandered into a bookstore and picked up a book about de Pizan, an Italian-French author who lived from 1363 to 1430 and is perhaps best known for her work The Book of the City of Ladies. “I spent that summer backstage reading the entire book,” she said. “I started noticing the way in which she used these prophetic female figures in her work. These women could see what men in power couldn’t see, and they seemed to reflect her identity as an author I was fascinated.” Fonzo’s passion was born.

“Medieval literature taught me to look at art on its own terms and suspend my judgment,” she said. “It’s like a mystery novel class in a way because you’re trying to trace the origins and history of ideas and to explore an unfamiliar kind of literature on its own terms.”

Students are often familiar with such period works as Beowulf, Geoffrey Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales and Dante Alighieri’s The Divine Comedy. Yet there is much more to the genre than those familiar works, she stressed.

“If you are missing medieval literature, you’re missing nearly 1,000 years full of rich material,” she said. “There is something for everyone! There are Anglo-Saxon materials a lot of which deal with religious subjects and also nation-building and relationships to the past. There’s the Arthurian literature, which is very humorous, with romantic tales, but they are also tales of valor. There are adaptations of Classical texts, texts about subversive spirituality, texts criticizing governments, pastoral texts about our relationship to the land.

“That’s a lot of literature to miss.”
When young Nathern Okilwa wasn’t working on a farm near his western Kenyan town, he was toiling away in school. Although his mother left school after fourth grade, she believed education was critical for her children. Her son would go on to become the first in his family to earn a Ph.D.

“My mother believed education was a path to a better life,” he said. “This was practical advice because it was evident to me that an agrarian lifestyle did not hold much promise for the future.”

Okilwa, who received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin, is interested in helping disadvantaged children, including those from economically disadvantaged groups, racial, linguistic and cultural minorities, special education students, and recent immigrants, especially refugees. He wants to explore how refugee students navigate and learn in a foreign environment and to understand how they survive and sometimes thrive, even with so few resources.

His personal, professional and educational experiences shaped his career path and research interests. When he was a student in Kenya, many of his classmates struggled financially. They couldn’t afford basic school supplies, uniforms or healthy meals.

He feels a sense of obligation to disadvantaged children. Through his work, he wants to have a positive influence on their lives.

“I feel refugee students are the epitome of real struggle, and their stories have limited representation in public discourse or literature here in the U.S.,” he said, adding that the United States is the single-largest host country to refugees from around the world. Similarly, Kenya is a host country for many refugees facing political instability in neighboring countries.

“Some of the students in refugee camps in Kenya end up here in the U.S.,” he said. “I look forward to interacting with them and eventually telling their stories through my scholarly work. I hope I can trace their stories back to the refugee camps and, if possible, to their homeland. I believe connecting these dots will provide unique policy intersectionality between the U.S. and international contexts.”

Matthew McCarter

Assistant Professor of Management

It was a jigsaw puzzle that pieced Matthew McCarter’s life together. Or at least introduced what would become his field of study, his unique teaching style and a different approach to everyday negotiations.

Ironically, that puzzle was never completed. When McCarter was an undergraduate at Brigham Young University, his class was given a simple task break into groups and complete a jigsaw puzzle. Each group was given a different puzzle. Whichever team finished first ran to the winner’s circle, which included an overhead projector that would win a bag of snacks.

“Quickly we discovered we were all missing pieces and had incorrect pieces. We had to figure out how to cooperate with each other while at the same time compete against each other,” he said.

The class exercise failed.

The overhead projector light was stolen. Puzzle pieces were snatched from tables and nearly completed puzzles were deliberately knocked over. More than 20 minutes after the class was to end, the instructor stopped the game with no winners.

I was shocked at what happened,” McCarter said.

“Suddenly, McCarter saw examples everywhere. Like the students who walked across de­lic­ate landscape, each thinking they were the only ones to do so but ultimately killing the grass from their shear numbers. Or the group projects where one person inevitably does most of the work to get the job done while other group members sit on the sidelines.

McCarter went on to write 15 journal articles on the subject of cooperation versus competition. He received his Ph.D. in business administration from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and held the Wang-Fradkin Assistant Professorship in the Ang­ros School of Business and Economics at Chapman University prior to joining UTSA.

He continues to study conflict management with a focus on inter­de­pen­dent de­cision­mak­ing and collective action.

“I’m still fascinated by it,” he said. “I see it as a problem that we always have to fix.”

And the problem is everywhere, prevalent in churches, businesses and communities, and within families, he said.

“When people don’t have a monetary incentive to cooperate, we have to find some other way,” he said.

“So I’m trying to find some other ways.”

This fall, McCarter is using approaches similar to the puzzle exercise to teach the same concepts in his own class.

“I believe the best way to learn management theory is to experience it or to witness someone else experiencing it,” he said. “Don’t just take my word for it. You just watch it happen. The students will never forget it.”
A LE X I S G O D E T  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

H ow does a researcher study ocean sediments and coral reefs in land-locked Switzerland? The answer is simple for Alexis Godet, assistant professor of geological sciences. “One hundred and twenty five million years ago, what is now the Alps was at the bottom of the ocean. I can now study ocean sediments on a mountain... from a blue world to a green world,” he said.

Back then, the Alps mountain range was nothing but the sandy floor of a watery world. Then the Eurasian and African tectonic plates at the ocean bottom started shifting and pushing against each other. The plates rose and the ocean floor started sinking until the ocean was nothing but the sandy floor of a watery world. Then the ocean floor started rising and the Alps mountain range was formed. “I can now study ocean sediments,” he said.

Godet’s interest in the ocean began with a coral reef, which he observed on a scuba diving trip when he was 20. Then a professor taught him about sedimentology and inspired him to pursue graduate studies. That’s when he learned about the fragile nature of ecosystems. Coral reefs are underwater structures formed from calcium carbonate secreted by corals, which are tiny animals that thrive in clear, shallow, sunny water. Although most of them are less than 10,000 years old, coral reefs are considered crucial to maintaining ecosphere balance, since they are hosts to the most diverse ecosystems on Earth. They are also fragile. “Corals live on carbon dioxide in the air and water,” Godet said. “If you create crisis in the atmosphere with too much carbon dioxide, the coral won’t be able to keep up. They are also vulnerable to temperature change, which can destroy them if it is too drastic.”

Godet will teach about the importance of maintaining ecosphere balance. “I want my students to understand that we don’t want coral reefs and associated ecosystems to go away,” he said, adding that through Earth’s history, there has been a lack of balance between ocean and atmosphere, yet ecosystems continue to adapt. “We need to figure out how fast changes are occurring and determine how long it will take to recover.”

A L E X I S G O D E T  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GEOLOGICAL SCIENCES

L ucinda Nevarez still thinks about a young man she once helped at a Houston hospital. The man was diabetic, dependent on medication he couldn’t afford. So he’d purposely go without until his body could no longer function. Blood transfusions were necessary. He’d go to the emergency room, get treated and released, then neglect his health until he became so sick that once again he’d return to the same emergency room for crisis care.

Then one day that hospital turned him away. It was a new policy, they said, and people who repeatedly used the emergency room for crisis care of treatable conditions would now be denied care. That’s how he ended up at the hospital where Nevarez worked as a medical social worker. She arranged for him to be temporarily supported with medication, and he went on his way. Later news came from her hospital administrators: the same policy would be enacted at her facility, and repeat patients would no longer be treated. “After my interaction with him, I felt like if it was an issue that was so large that they had to start making a policy around it, there must be multiple people that are experiencing the same thing,” she said. “I just happened to come across one of them. It made me wonder what was happening to all the others.”

So she set about finding out. She began researching health disparities and the impact of discrimination in health care. “Some people think of discrimination in terms of culture or race, but there is also discrimination based on economic status and gender among others,” she said. That’s a phenomenon that’s all too familiar to Nevarez. As a child, her sister was turned away from emergency care from the only hospital in the region because her family had an outstanding balance. The family had to drive more than an hour to another city to get treatment.

“I think that instilled a great interest in me in making sure all individuals can receive health care,” she said. It also showed her what a difference community involvement could make. After being turned away for treatment, her parents returned to their South Texas small town, and launched a successful campaign to bring a clinic to the county that would serve all patients, regardless of their ability to pay.

Neither of her parents were social workers, but Nevarez believes it is through their influence that she now focuses on the needs of individuals within their social environment. “I really hope to make a difference in the community in some aspect and hope to encourage as many students as possible to continue with their education,” she said. “I think sometimes when we’re researching we can get so removed from the populations that we’re researching. But what I’ve already seen is that here at UTSA, this is not just a population we’re studying. This is a population we’re serving.”
Reducing the impact of construction on environmental burden of buildings and in interaction with the environment, and at principles of traditional, old architecture achieve self-reliance by incorporating more cooler basement. Weather, occupants could also migrate to the opened to aid air circulation. During warmer people’s heads, and transoms over the doors ceilings in hotter climates kept heat above winter and cooler in the summer. Higher climates to keep buildings warmer in the place. Thick adobe walls were used in some to fit to their surrounding climate and the world adapted architectural techniques the importance of net-zero energy buildings, the buildings that produce as much energy as they consume. These buildings have lower environmental impacts than regular buildings. Sustainability shouldn’t be viewed as optional or a luxury, Azari said. A responsibility for architecture students is seeing environmental design as an essential goal of their design process.

Throughout history, cultures from around the world adapted architectural techniques to fit to their surrounding climate and place. Thick adobe walls were used in some climates to keep buildings warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. Higher ceilings in hotter climates kept heat above people’s heads, and transoms over the doors opened to aid air circulation. During warmer weather occupants could also migrate to the cooler basement.

“In contemporary architecture, we can achieve self-reliance by incorporating more principles of traditional, old architecture in interaction with the environment, and at the same time, use modern technology,” he said. “Today, better insulation helps, but it’s not enough. Too often today, building equals energy consumption.”

Buildings are responsible for 75 percent of electricity consumption, and 40 percent of fossil-fuel energy consumption. It doesn’t have to be that way, he said.

People are sometimes aware of sustainability issues, but many are discouraged by the higher construction costs, he said. That green buildings will save their owners money in the long run with reduced utility rates, he stressed, adding that it’s a small price to help the planet.

“You must include energy-saving features like you would include windows,” he said. “Designers and architects should see it as their professional and ethical responsibility to leave a smaller footprint on the world.”

When aquifer levels are broadcast daily on the radio, you know that water is an integral part of people’s lives in that broadcast area, said Marcio Giacomoni, assistant professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

“There is a huge demand for water in South Texas,” said, with San Antonio experiencing so much growth, that demand is only going to increase in the future,” he said.

This is why understanding the region’s hydrology and the need to promote conservation efforts are so critical. Giacomoni’s research will focus on analyzing water resources systems, water resource management and planning, and the application of Geographic Information Systems and remote sensing to water resources and environmental engineering. As an undergraduate, Giacomoni thought about the practicality of becoming an engineer when considering what the job situation might be like a decade after graduation. He was also motivated by his sense of environmental consciousness.

He wanted to develop the skills to address the needs and problems associated with good water management techniques to help stretch the precious resource, he said.

I appreciate nature a lot, and managing water resources has huge implications that have a direct impact on all aspects of life,” he added.

Giacomoni earned his undergraduate degree in Brasilia, Brazil, and his M.S. in Porto Alegre, Brazil, at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul. After receiving his Ph.D. at Texas A&M University, he secured his post at UTSA anxious to continue his water-related research at the height of the ongoing, years-long drought.

“I believe there are a great number of real success stories here in how San Antonio Water System has so efficiently promoted methods for conserving water,” he said. The city’s water utility uses a storage and recovery system that includes pumping water out of the Edwards Aquifer into the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer during non-drought years. That aquifer is used as an underground reservoir to significantly cut down on the amount of water lost to evaporation. When there is need, the reserved water is used to meet the demands from San Antonio.

Despite San Antonio’s heavy growth over the past decade, the total amount of water being pumped from the Edwards Aquifer, the metropolitan area’s main water source, remains about the same, he said.

The city’s water utility has also heavily promoted water conservation methods such as the installation of high-efficiency, low-flow toilets. But the drought, now in its third year, is having a huge economic impact, and not just with the downstream rice farmers in Southeast Texas, who require huge amounts of water to grow their product, he said. “It is critical that more and better conservation methods are developed if growth is to continue.”

Web Extra: To view more profiles of UTSA’s new fall faculty, go to utsa.edu/sombrella/newfaculty.
Boomtown, Texas
Carrizo Springs busting at the seams

By Guillermo Garcia

The once-sleepy Carrizo Springs is now awakening with extraordinary and sudden economic growth. UTSA is lending its hand to aid this community unprepared for economic surge.

The result of microscopic plants and animals that lived in a huge, shallow ocean that covered Texas some 92 million years ago is now clearly visible from the dark reaches of outer space. From miles above the earth, the picture of a crescent-shaped 400-mile-long, 50-mile-wide scab of light extending across a swath of South Texas just south of San Antonio rivals the lights emanating from the state’s major metropolitan centers.

The source of that light, more than 220 derricks drilling for oil across 20 counties 24 hours a day, is more than just startlingly eye-catching. That picture may be the ultimate snapshot of the state’s energy future and represents what is being referred to as the single biggest economic development in Texas history—and UTSA is involved in helping the area, known as the Eagle Ford Shale, assess the changes and capitalize on the boom. 

Photos by Patricia May Jones
It took a long time for this overnight bonanza. Over millions of years, the microscopic life that absorbed energy from the sun and stored it as carbon molecules accumulated in layers of sediment at the bottom of the shallow sea that once covered the region. The biomass was created when the plants and animals died and sank to the sea bottom.

The radioactivity remained, trapped for eons under incredible pressure and heat surrounded by what until very recently had been impermeable rock formations. But this year alone, about $30 billion will be spent pulling black gold from this formerly resistant land.

It is not only the drilling, pipeline and trucking firms that stand to gain from what was once a lightly populated, mostly economically depressed part of rural Texas. Business owners anywhere near the huge play have seen their companies change almost overnight, with the level of activity redefining what an oil industry looked like. Last year, oil exploration and extraction accounted for a regional economic impact that surpassed $61 billion, according to a UTSA economic analysis.

But the institute’s findings, along with an earlier study tracking the activity’s impact in specific counties where drilling is active, also point to potential problems for exploration firms and the host of related businesses that support them, as well as for landowners, local governments and residents.

The huge amounts of water needed for exploitation and extraction of the oil and gas, the traffic generated as a result of that activity by fleets of 18-wheel tractor-trailers, and the skyrocketing housing prices have little existing infrastructure support, he noted.

“Now our community, and many others like it, stand to benefit from the huge increase in drilling activity,” and the accompanying increase in the tax base, said Adrian DeLeon, mayor of Carrizo Springs, a community that now is called home by more than 40,000 people. Just last year, the population was around 5,400.

“We have a great opportunity to get some capital improvements projects that we would not otherwise even dream of being able to fund,” said the first-time mayor, who along with his mother runs two restaurants that rely heavily on the daily traffic generated by the oil firms.

“Meanwhile, some of those issues will increase in complexity for local governments unequipped to address them, despite the huge amounts of “new” revenue coming to cities and counties in the region, Tunstall said. The university’s effort focuses on measuring the economic and social impact the massive exploration effort is having on 14 rural South Texas counties most significantly affected by the drilling but which have little existing infrastructure support, he noted.

“The modern-day black gold rush has resulted to holding billions of barrels of crude oil, untold billions of cubic feet of natural gas and other petroleum products trapped under huge layers of rock. Experts believe the volume is so huge and the find so significant that they predict that by 2020 the United States will have surpassed Saudi Arabia in the world’s premier energy exporter, due partly to the drilling now ongoing in South Texas.

The more than 860 oil derricks operating all over Texas this summer represented nearly half of all U.S. rigs and nearly 25 percent of rigs drilling around the world.

In the Eagle Ford, the twinkling lights seen from satellites represent the contemporary equivalent of the boom of the 1800s Gold Rush. Except bigger, much bigger.

Based on capital expenditures alone, the activity at Eagle Ford Shale ranks as the largest single oil and gas development in the world.

Last year, oil exploration and extraction was responsible for more than 100,000 jobs, said Thomas Tunstall, who heads the UTSA Institute for Economic Development’s Center for Community and Business Research.

The influx of traffic in the area.

Local restaurants, such as Red Dog’s, are benefitting from the influx of traffic in the area.

"Our community, and many others like it, stand to benefit from the huge increase in drilling activity. But at the same time, many of our communities don’t have a planning department or even a city engineer, so coordinating the growth and trying to plan for smart growth is a real challenge for us."

—Adrian DeLeon, mayor, Carrizo Springs
percent, from $731 million to $1.2 billion. In 2012, the last year for which full data is available, construction activity accounted for nearly $40 million in direct and indirect economic impact, generating 279 new jobs with a payroll of $11.4 million.

But while the economic impact on rural, impoverished counties is important, "to me it is about government structure being in place to be able to formulate good policy and good decisions. It is about helping people build up the capacity of their local government to a level that they need to take maximum advantage of the boom they are experiencing," said Romero.

In addition to meeting "livability issues," communities also face critical housing concerns. DeLeon said many residents in Carrizo Springs are being forced out as the demand created by the oil field crews causes local rental rates to rise sharply.

"Some [fast-food restaurant] workers are pulling down $15 an hour and getting a $500 signing bonus for staying on the job six months," Tunstall said, illustrating how desperate some business owners are to hold onto their workers.

"But at the same time, a house that was renting for $500 to $600 is now going for $2,500, if you can even find one vacant. That kind of rent in South Texas was just unthinkable three years ago, so there are two quite contrasting sides to the boom," he said.

Increased tax bases will give local governments the opportunity to build more parks and green spaces to improve quality of life. The money may also lead to improved medical facilities, improved roadways and more adequate power and water supplies. The increased population also has the potential to help local school districts boost the quality of K-12 education as well as vocational education programs, Tunstall pointed out.

But he noted that these communities must also look to the future. "There is another side to the boom, not what the communities are going through right now, but what they will look like 20 years from now, what sort of growth there will be and how best we can assist the cities and the region to best manage now what their community will look like then," he noted.

"The opportunity looms. There is a huge opportunity for all concerned," Tunstall said. "Right now we have the chance to leverage the academic side and provide the expertise available here to be able to provide real advice to policy makers, elected officials and business leaders for the future benefit for all."
Chris Rosas knows his strengths. They’re listed on the back of his work ID badge for Rackspace Hosting, Inc.

There’s Arranger, the trait that means organization, despite his currently cluttered cubicle desk. Then there’s Restorative, which marks him as someone who likes to fix things. Responsible predictably pegs him as someone who takes personal responsibility for his work. Relator means he identifies with people. Finally, there’s Developer. That’s the one he really connects with.

“I like to teach people,” he said. “I like to mentor them. I like to see them grow.”

As the global tax director for Rackspace, he oversees a team of 13 people who all make sure tax authorities are happy and that the cloud-computing and Web-hosting company is compliant and protected.

“So if you want to manufacture something or you want to provide a service that you sell from the U.S., and you have a data center in the U.K., and you’re selling to a customer in India, how do you tax that? Does it get taxed once or three times? That’s what we figure out,” he said.

When Rosas signed on with Rackspace three years ago, he went through a required assessment that ranked his top five skills. Like all employees, they are listed on his employee badge.

Shortly after he was hired, Rosas started an internship program in his department. Soon, other groups within Rackspace were following his lead and implementing their own internship programs. Incidentally, everyone who has been hired as an intern under Rosas has been a Roadrunner. And there are now so many alumni working for Rackspace, Rosas and the rest are referred to as Roadrunner Rackers.

“I love bringing in new people and teaching them and giving them a real-life perspective of what they are going to be working on so they can make an informed decision about what they want for their career,” he said.

“People can show up here and really hate tax. They could love Rackspace, but at the end of the day they’re still doing taxes. So I want to at least give students some real-life exposure.”

And it takes a special breed of people, he admitted, to love working on the intricacies of international tax.

“You start when Europe wakes up and your day is done when Asia finishes,” he said. “When you wake up, your email box is already full from Europe. They come online at 2 or 3 a.m. our time. If you wake up at 7 a.m., they’re already had a full productive morning. Then Asia comes on at 6 p.m., when you’re at the end of the day and you’re trying to wind down. And the emails start coming again from the other side of the world.”

His goal after graduating from UTSA was to find a job, any job, and pay off his student loans. But along the way, he met employers who encouraged him to continue in the field and urged him to work hard, and lined up jobs that would give him the experience he needed to be competitive.

“Today it’s his turn to pay it forward, he said.

“If you’re a parent and one of these interns was your kid, wouldn’t you want somebody out there looking out for them? If no one had done that for me, I wouldn’t be here. I am,” he said. “Who knows? Some of these interns may be my boss someday. They’ll be nice to me.”

“I just think I have a perspective that can help them, and if I don’t take the opportunity to do it, what good am I?”

After all, he is a Developer. It’s right there on his badge.

Taxing Work for a Rowdy Racker

By Lety Laurel
A Formula for Success

THE ADVANTAGES OF A MATH DEGREE REALLY ADD UP

BY ASHLEY DUMULONG

Quick... What do the 15 highest-paying jobs have in common?

Time’s up.

The answer: Math.

Here’s another: What do the top three jobs with the high-
est satisfaction ratings have in common?

Figured that one out, didn’t you?

Every one of these careers has a common denomina-
tor—they all are math-based professions.

Once thought of as a degree that produced mostly teach-
ers and professors, mathematics majors are cropping up ev-
everywhere, and they are using those degrees in nearly every
industry in today’s competitive environment.

Research, engineering, computer programming, com-
munications, biotechnology, statistics, finance, and
operations are just a few of the fields where mathematics
majors are finding success.

“People with quantitative skills are valu-
ed in virtually every aspect of the working environment,
whether for engineers or mechanics, scientists or in-
vestment advisers. A mathematician can take a complex
collection of data and recognize relationships that other
groups may not see, or in many cases find connections that
are invisible,” said Sandy Norman, mathematics
department chair.

It’s a relatively low-stress field and yet at the same
time incredibly challenging.

For him, to be successful was at first a degree
from UTSA prepared me for my career. For example, there
was a programming class that I really didn’t want to take
but was a core course. I’ve used those programming
principles that class has helped me more than almost any other,” he said.

“I have a terrific future ahead of me and a job out there. It’s a relatively low-stress field and yet at the same
time, it’s incredibly challenging.”

However, Cowan cautions mathematics majors not to ignore
the other disciplines as well.

“It’s also important to communicate with your
professors and advisers “who helped me make the
transition to life in academia,” he said.

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BY THE NUMBERS

65 percent of new freshmen in the top quarter of their high school graduating class

30 Web extra: To view a video about the advantages of a math degree, go to utsa.edu/studentlife/math

CLASS NOTES

1980

BART CHARLES, B.A. in history, M.A. in history, 15, a retired high school teacher and social studies teacher, is an adjunct professor of US history at Alamo Colleges.

1983

DANNY PADRON, M.A. in education, is head football coach at Texas Lutheran University. In September he received the Pillar of Honor award from San Antonio’s Northside Independent School District.

1984

JANE GALERAITE, B.S. in education, is a retired teacher and now works as a private math tutor in Las Vegas, Nevada.

1990

BRIAN K. MEDINA, B.B.A. in marketing, with a concentration in marketing, was named the 2013 Business Woman of the Year in Fort Worth Hispanic Business of Commerce. She is principal of SKM Communication Strategies LLC.

1998

KATHY CALDERON-LOQUO, B.A. in communications, is an anchor and reporter for KVATV in San Antonio. She received the Local News/Enemy of the Day award from San Antonio’s Northside Independent School District in September.

2002

KELSEY BLACK, M.S. in business administration, is a municipal auditor in San Antonio. She is also the business program coordinator.

2004

CEREN ARAMO, B.S. in business economics, is an associate with Simmons Wartell LP in Houston. He was featured in Great原文的MAGAZINE in an article on Houston’s young Latino leaders (February/March 2013 issue).

2013

WILLIAM O. DAWSON III, B.M.P.A. ’13

STILL SERVING

William O. Dawson III ’10, M.P.A. ’13

“Toward an understanding of the importance of accountability in the performance of public service. As we move forward in an era of constrained budgets, we must take seriously the need to maximize the impact of our investments in the well-being of the communities we serve.”

—GUILLERMO GARCIA
UNREAL WORLD

Anwei Chen ’08

Anwei Chen has traveled around the actual world and creates virtual worlds—on film. Instead of being in front of the cameras, though, Chen works behind the lens in animation and visual effects. Her film credits include Fruitvale Station, which won the Grand Jury Prize and Audience Award at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, and Beasts of the Southern Wild, for which Chen headed a team that produced simplified virtual visuals. The movie was nominated for best picture and three other Academy Awards. On both Fruitvale and Beasts, Chen was responsible for post-production, which means coordinating and managing artists and their shots and schedules. Chen oversees a team of 33 people responsible for 81 of the 120 visual effects shots on Beasts. She also communicated directly with the directors on both films.

“When you’re a kid you want to be an actress or a ballerina,” Chen said. “Even in college I really wanted to do that.”

After working as an extra on a couple of films, she realized that wasn’t what she wanted to do. Instead, with the help of mentors and some key opportunities, she found that her talents lay in managing the complex shots that make films visually interesting.

“My job involves a lot of planning,” Chen said. “After editing, we are in sync with sound and music. We’re at the very end of the land change. Chen also has worked in animation. She has been involved in the animated shorts SisKek and Take Me Home, and the intro to Karmas. Chen also is an artist who paints in acrylic on canvas and works in charcoal—the relationship between dark and light even as an underdog. Chen possessed some of the most important qualities for success, said Ryan McPherson, a lecturer in the Department of Communication. “She demonstrated a genuine and deep curiosity in her ability to ask the right questions, a great will to work and the best attitude,” he explained. Receiving advice from Scott Kang, assistant professor in the Department of Communication, was a turning point for Chen.

“Visual effects production was one of my suggestions during our conversations,” Kang said. “She had the clear goal and pursued it without hesitation. It made today’s Anwei, today.”

After graduating from UTSA, Chen went to the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. That’s where she learned how to become an animator, and her path was set.

Chen got her big break working as the visual effects producer on Beasts of the Southern Wild as part of a school assignment. “I worked with professional artists as well as students on the picture and remember putting in long hours.”

“I didn’t have a life,” she recalled. Batting hard work paid off when the film received a slew of accolades, including the Oscar nominations.

On Fruitvale Station, Chen worked on the pre-production, and post-production phases of the film and again managed a team working on the visual effects shots.

Two days after the film premiered in January at Sundance, The Weinstein Company acquired it for $2.5 million. It was released in July 2013. When Chen went to Fruitvale’s screening, she watched closely for flaws.

“The whole time I was looking for the mistakes,” she said. The average person likely wouldn’t notice them, but “I know every shot,” Chen explained. So what’s next for Chen?

“In the foreseeable future, I do want to stay in visual effects,” she said. As a freelancer, she can work on a variety of projects. It may look glamorous to outsiders, but film can be a difficult industry, she added. “People don’t tell you that. Freelancers are scared in this industry,” she said. “You have to work really hard every day. But it can feel like it and you’re very good at it, people will help you get where you want to go.”

—KATHRYN JONES
Mauricio Sanchez, a first-generation college student from San Antonio, was recruited by other universities in Texas, but he knew that being part of the first UTSA Football team, in his hometown could, in his words, “be something special.”

“This community has given me big–time support,” he says. “I get to play a sport I love and focus on getting a good education. Being at UTSA has changed my life and I am blessed to have this support.”

Through the We Are UTSA—A Top-Tier Campaign, the university was able to build facilities that athletes like Mauricio need to ensure their success on the field. UTSA’s new athletic complex provides competition and practice venues for track and field, soccer, baseball, softball, tennis and football.

Make an investment in UTSA today. Visit WeAreUTSA.com today to learn more.