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“I think God is trying to tell us something. #OrangeOut”
— @JustJacy86

“So happy to see new traditions forming at the Rowdiest university in Texas! #MidnightLight”
— @UTSAGOP

“Hey look! A ‘bird’s eye’ view of the busy Sombrilla this cloudy Monday morning.”
— @UTSA

“Coming in hot to our Houston tailgate.”
— @RowdyTalk
Drone On!

UTSA RESEARCHERS ARE LEADING THE WAY IN TECHNOLOGY BEHIND UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES, INCLUDING USES THAT COULD SAVE LIVES

BY KATHRYN JONES

Amazon.com wants them to deliver books and other goods. Google is testing them to deliver emergency supplies to disaster areas. News organizations plan them taking film-making to new heights—literally.

They are drones, the popular name for unmanned aerial vehicles. Already flying military missions, drones are waiting to be cleared for takeoff for commercial use. The Federal Aviation Administration is devising rules for private UAVs in U.S. airspace, and once drones begin operating commercially, the industry could contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. economy and create thousands of jobs over the next decade.

With so much potential, universities, government agencies and companies are busy researching new ways to use UAVs and better ways to operate them. Daniel Pack, Ph.D., the Mary L. Clark Endowed Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and his team at UTSA stand on the forefront of such research into how these machines will fly in the future—even by using human thought to control them.

“These are many, many applications for our work,” Pack says. Commercial applications often emerge from military technology—the Internet being a prime example. So studying the interaction with the brain and machines could not only help soldiers by freeing them from carrying more equipment on the battlefield but also perhaps one day help people unable to walk control their wheelchairs with thought, for example.

If that sounds like something out of a science-fiction movie, consider that Pack, who is also manager of the UTSA Unmanned Systems Laboratory, has been working on the cutting edge of drone research. At his previous employer, the U.S. Air Force Academy, Pack was a founding director of its Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Research and chair of its Sensor-Based Intelligent Robotics Laboratory. But the opportunity to chair a department and, he says, “being able to play a significant role in the growth of the university” lured him to UTSA.

Since the laboratory’s founding in 2012, Pack and his students have focused on three main areas of drone research: man-machine interfaces, cooperative UAVs and systems of systems (or how smaller components can work together in larger systems). Their work drew the attention of the U.S. Department of Defense, which in August awarded to UTSA a $300,000 contract to study how humans can interact with UAVs. Pack says the ultimate goal is to figure out how to use a soldier’s brain signals to navigate small drones for military missions, such as gathering intelligence, performing surveillance and conducting reconnaissance.

Student researchers in the laboratory see their work potentially saving lives and making a difference in society. Undergraduate Jonathan Loeski has developed a navigation simulator for multiple quadrotor helicopters and a system to detect and avoid obstacles for unmanned ground vehicles. He says such vehicles could take the place of manned helicopters in forest fires, or they could patrol the border rather than having Border Patrol agents risk their lives. Another team member, Rajdeep Dutta, who is pursuing his doctorate, has researched cooperative control, in which “multiple UAVs in a group can be assigned with different sub-tasks in order to accomplish a mission.”

The FAA currently allows unmanned aircraft to fly in national airspace under very controlled conditions. UAVs perform border and port surveillance for the Department of Homeland Security, assist with scientific research and environmental monitoring for NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, support public safety, help universities conduct research and perform other missions for government agencies. UTSA is part of a consortium of 16 research institutions called the Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft Systems Center of Excellence & Innovation, which won FAA approval to serve as test sites for unmanned aircraft.

Once the FAA allows drones to fly commercially, the Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International estimates the UAV industry’s economic impact will be $82 billion by 2025, with more than 100,000 jobs created nationwide. Texas ranks third in the nation for unmanned systems development, behind California and Washington. The industry association projects direct employment related to unmanned systems to grow from 558 in 2015 to 4,247 in 2025 and total economic impact soaring from $181 million in 2015 to more than $800 million in 2025.

Pack says UAVs are well-suited to the “three Ds”: work that is dirty, dangerous or dull to people, such as monitoring pipelines in the oil industry, performing search-and-rescue operations or offering disaster relief. Could we eventually have our own personal drones? “Who knows?” he says. “Maybe UAVs some day can check on your kid next door or your baby and be able to send an image to you directly whenever you may be.”

The UAV industry’s economic impact could reach $82 billion by 2025, with more than 100,000 jobs created nationwide.

With the Main Building as a backdrop, the UTSA team works on one of its drones in flight.

Photo: HENRY R. NAVARRO
Rescue Mission

Library Archivists Are Saving Potentially Valuable Academic Research from Being Lost to Relic Data Devices

By Tony Cantú

The dazzling array of available technology today for data storage makes it almost inconceivable that people once relied on formats like floppy disks or CD-Roms or Zip disks. Even noted professors were among those who once used the near-obsolete technology, and when some of their work is acquired by the UTSA Libraries’ Special Collections department for its archives, there is often the odd 3.5-inch disk and the like in the mix. But such essentially unusable material is now fueling a project to retrieve potentially important data—correspondence with colleagues or famous people in the field, research they were working on, drafted papers, photographs. We’re looking for that unique research material.

Particularly thrilling for UTSA archivist Juliana Barrera-Gomez is not just the glimpse into the academic work of professors that the project provides but also the window into the era marking the professors’ coming-of-age. Their early years are harnessed forever within the outdated formats, waiting to be coaxed out with the times’ attendant current events, political climate and societal undertakings, which color the work.

“We’re trying to capture the history of UTSA but also those undercurrents,” Barrera-Gomez says. To illustrate, she notes Clark’s work in the bicultural-bilingual studies department. That program was one of the first after UTSA was founded in 1969—a year also marked by watershed legislation that made it no longer a misdemeanor to use a language other than English in Texas classrooms. Among Cantú’s material is insight into the early experiences that helped shape her storied career, also in a time of societal transformation.

The work to extract the material and preserve it is painstaking, a process somewhat akin to a CSI scene but with an archival twist. Using digital forensics and archives software on a dedicated computer called a quarantine station isolates and runs virus checks on the newly transferred files so that they don’t contaminate existing files. Securing compatible technology to read and scan the material requires hours of scouring through eBay and other Internet sites. Despite the degree of difficulty, the work is equal parts hands-on exploration and labor of love, according to Barrera-Gomez. “That’s what I really love about getting these collections,” she says. “We’re being proactive and identifying faculty whose papers we would like to acquire for the archives so that we can collaborate with them now to identify any born-digital work that could be on this fragile media and plan how we will acquire and preserve it.”

Eyeing Ocular Injuries

Blasting pig eyes with shock waves to simulate the kind of force a soldier might experience from an improvised explosive device has helped UTSA researchers learn more about protecting soldiers from eye injuries.

The experiments on the posterior pig eyes have been held for the past two years in a basement laboratory at Fort Sam Houston. The research reveals that an IED shock wave alone—even in the absence of shrapnel or other particles—could cause significant damage to the optic nerve, in turn causing partial or total blindness.

Prior to the discovery, visual impairment resulting from IED blast had been associated with traumatic brain injuries and not damage to the optic nerve.

UTSA biomedical engineering assistant professor Matthew Reilly, distinguished senior lecturer in geological sciences Walter Gray and biomedical engineering adjunct professor William E. Sp某种, M.D., in collaboration with researchers at the U.S. Army Institute of Surgical Research at Joint Base San Antonio–Fort Sam Houston and the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio are conducting the studies.

Reilly has several family members and friends who were injured when serving in the military.

“I wasn’t in the military, but I would like those who served our country to be better protected in the field so that they can have better diagnostics when they are injured,” he says. “I want to make sure that people’s quality of life is as high as possible after they have been deployed. I am just trying to give back.”

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— Matthew Reilly
Initiative Will Expand Research Faculty and Graduate Program

As part of a four-year, $40 million program, UTSA will recruit 50 new top-tier researchers to advance the university’s research capabilities and strengthen San Antonio’s standing in the competitive global economy. News of the plan came during President Ricardo Romo’s State of the University address in September.

The program, known as the GoldStar Initiative, will build on areas critical to Tier One designation for UTSA. In its first year it will recruit experts in strategic research areas such as advanced materials, open-cloud computing and cybersecurity, big data, biomimicry and social and educational transformation as well as sustainable communities.

“I consider these hires to be some of the most crucial in our history,” Romo says. “If San Antonio is to remain a leader in a global economy, it must have the high caliber of research that we conduct at UTSA.”

Initially, the university will rely on institutional resources to support the hiring of the additional researchers, 15 each year over four years. It will also pursue funding from the UT System Science and Engineering Board as part of the tier one process. It will then soon after to $100 million—a Tier One threshold for research spending.

As new researchers come to UTSA, the university will recruit additional graduate students to assist them. The university will expand both its master’s and doctoral degree programs over the next three years, with a goal of increasing the number of master’s students to 4,500 from 3,300 and the number of Ph.D. students to 500 from the current 750. UTSA also will develop at least six new doctoral programs over the same period.

Additionally, with community support, the university will create a significant number of new endowed fellowships to support graduate students. It also will increase the number of faculty endowments to 80 from its current 61.

The recruitment of GoldStar Initiative researchers will be in addition to the hiring of top-tier faculty that takes place on a regular basis at UTSA to support academic excellence. “We will recruit even more of the best and brightest researchers to UTSA to drive innovation and development,” Romo says. “We will have a combination of well-established researchers and young researchers with great promise. They will light a passion for discovery and innovation in our students and help us build for the future.”

First Lady’s First Visit to UTSA

To kick off her Reach Higher initiative, First lady Michelle Obama spoke to more than 2,000 college-bound students who gathered in UTSA’s Convocation Center as part of Destination College: Fourth Annual College Signing Day.

Donning a T-shirt from her Princeton University alma mater, Obama entered the gymnasium to a roar of cheers. She encouraged the students to commit to not only starting college but also finishing.

“Because just getting into college isn’t the ultimate goal,” she told the crowd. “You have got to stay focused once you get there, and you’ve got to get that degree or that certificate. And you’ve got to be having every step of the way, what comes next?

Rowdy’s Final Roost

The six-foot tall, 1,000-pound iron roadrunner statue—brought to campus following a $250,000 fundraising campaign—has found its permanent home. Rowdy is now standing outside the Multidisciplinary Studies building.

Artist R.C. Box spent 1,000 hours working on UTSA’s giant roadrunner. He crafted the 11-foot-long piece in his 2,700-degree forge, including its 1,000 hand-sculpted feathers.

Library Restoration Complete

A five-year renovation of the John Peace Library, one of UTSA’s first buildings, has brought a new gleam to many parts of the aging structure.

The process began in 2009 with the goal of updating the library to reflect the digital age, including GroupSpot, a state-of-the-art digital classroom and study space.

There’s also an a new facility center, a 125 percent increase in the number of study seats throughout the library and a total of 347 additional computers.

Erlinda’s Wish

The Extra Mile Award at the UTSA University Excellence Awards ceremony for her work on the program.

Erlinda’s Wish

Program Provides Computer Classes to Housekeeping Staff

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Michelle Obama addresses an audience of high schoolers at UTSA as part of Destination College: Fourth Annual College Signing Day.

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World Beat

AS UTSA’S DIRECTOR OF BANDS, RON ELLIS HAS EXPERIENCE THAT IS HELPING TO ELEVATE THE PROFILE OF THE MARCHING BAND ON A GLOBAL SCALE

BY JIM BEAL JR.

“All of me was a bundle of nerves, half of me was very excited,” says director of bands Ron Ellis, with a laugh, recalling his and the UTSA marching band’s trip to Normandy, France, earlier this year to perform during ceremonies commemorating the 70th anniversary of D-Day. “It was a great honor to be chosen and a privilege having students who were so committed.”

Making music in a large venue in front of thousands of people is no stretch for the band, called the Spirit of San Antonio. At 250 strong this year, its fourth, SOSA regularly works Roadrunner football games in the Alamodome, a massive space that’s been the performance home for the Rolling Stones, Carlos Santana, Paul McCartney, and KISS as well as the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Ellis is no stranger himself to working on a grand scale. Now in his fifth year as UTSA’s director of bands, he has led music-making aggregations from Florida to France. In addition to his UTSA role, he has been a music director at Disney World in Orlando, Fla., since 1996, and has also plied his trade at Disneyland Paris. But when SOSA was tapped to perform in June to mark the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Allied invasion of Germany-occupied France and the start of the liberation of Europe from the Nazis, he knew it was one of the band’s most important gigs. “We were honored,” he says, “to represent the United States, the university, the state of Texas and San Antonio on the world stage.”

How did the appointment come about? “There’s a committee of America-based military veterans who was to choose bands to perform for ceremonies at Pearl Harbor and Normandy,” Ellis says. “They usually have military bands augmented by high school bands. Because of the sequester [with the federal budget, though], this year they had to have a good reputation. There’s always work for the students to the next level.”

For SOSA head drum major and baritone saxophonist John Wynkoop IV, a 23-year-old senior kinesiology major, the opportunity to perform during the D-Day ceremonies was special. “It was a shock to be chosen,” he says. “We’ve such a young program, and we were the only university band chosen.” But there were more personal revelations also. “My paternal grandmother is French. My grandfather was in the Air Force. He and my grand mother met in Paris. My father was born in France. So I have French blood in me. And we were performing for D-Day veterans and their families—and they know all the songs When we played on Omaha Beach, you could feel the emotion.”

Although some of the students admit to being a bit nervous, they knew they couldn’t let their emotions hamper their performances. “It was definitely overwhelming,” says Esmeralda Valdez, a 21-year-old senior biology major who plays piccolo in the band. “It was definitely overwhelming,” says Esmeralda Valdez, a 21-year-old senior biology major who plays piccolo in the band. “We were face-to-face with the audiences the whole time, including a lot of veterans and their family members, so we got to see [the impact of] what we were doing. It was emotional, and it was touching. We got so many compliments from so many veterans.”

Wynkoop adds, “We had a 50-man band, and we sounded like 300! The band sounded amazing. We practiced for three or four days straight, 12 hours a day. We represented the USA in a very professional manner.”

Although Ellis has his Disneyland Paris experience, he didn’t take this trip to France lightly. “I have never been more proud of a group of students,” he says. “This is an exciting time for us. Everybody wants the band to perform. The band is a rock star. The demand is outpacing supply out here with academics and athletics.”

Ellis sees the burgeoning reputations of UTSA and SOSA, coupled with his experience, as a big plus. “People talk about six degrees of separation,” he says. “In the music business, there’s one degree of separation. You have to have a good reputation. There’s always work for good people. The students out here are really open to doing good work. There’s a high level of desire, work ethic and talent at UTSA. A high percentage of the members of the marching band play in other UTSA music ensembles. There’s a place for all of them to thrive. Our goal is to lead the students to the next level.”

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SPORTS BRIEFS

UTSA ATHLETICS SAW A RECORD YEAR FOR FUNDRAISING DURING THE 2013–2014 FISCAL YEAR WITH DONATIONS FROM MORE THAN 2,100 DONORS TOPPING $4 MILLION.

THE PREVIOUS RECORD WAS $2.8 MILLION.

MEN’S CROSS-COUNTRY

Mike Medrano captured the third individual title of his career at the Alamo City Opener on Aug. 29. The senior from Mission, Texas, covered the Live Oak City Park 6,000-meter loop in 19:04.8 to easily outdistance runner-up James Leonard of Texas State by nearly eight seconds.

FOOTBALL

UTSA opened its fourth season of play and first as a full-fledged member of the Football Bowl Subdivision with a dominating 27–7 victory at Houston on Aug. 29. Paving in front of a national TV audience on ESPN+, the Roadrunners spoiled the debut of the Cougars’ new stadium by scoring the first 27 points of the contest while the defense forced eight three-and-outs in UT’s first nine possessions.

MEN’S TENNIS

Tomas Stilman captured the Rice Fall Invitational singles crown in September in Houston. The senior from Harlingen, Texas, swept through the 64-man bracket with six victories, including a 3–6, 7–6 (6), 11–9 upset of number 2 seed Tony Lupiser of Baylor in the semifinals. The 2014 Conference USA Newcomer of the Year claimed the title with a 6–4, 6–3 decision against Rice’s David Warren.

WOMEN’S TENNIS

Miriam Rosell Canudas won the singles title, Jacobea Junger captured the consolation crown and the pair advanced to the doubles championship match to lead UTSA at the season-opening Marco & Co. Catering Islanders Fall/Winter Invitational in September.

VOLLEYBALL

The Roadrunners registered victories against Texas A&M and Baylor during the nonconference portion of the season. UTSA downed the Aggies in five games (28–26, 25–16, 16–25, 23–25, 15–12) on Aug. 30 in College Station to mark the program’s first-ever win against A&M. On Sept. 20 the defending Conference USA champions dropped Baylor in four (25–22, 25–18, 18–25, 25–9) for their first triumph against the Bears since 1990.

SPOTLIGHT

Emma Makela

Sophomore goalkeeper Emma “Bubba” Makela, a Mukilteo, Wash., native, has been guarding the net since she was 5 years old.

ON TEAM LOYALTIES...

Growing up in a town about 25 miles north of Seattle, Makela has been a long-time Seahawks fan. And now in San Antonio, she has adopted the Spurs to her fan cooler as well. Too bad that when each won its big game, Makela missed the celebrations. “I was so upset when the Seahawks won the Super Bowl and I missed all that back home. And then when the Spurs won the Championship I was in Washington. I was like, ‘Oh, man, I’m always in the wrong place at the wrong time.’”

ON GOALKEEPING...

“I’ve been playing since I was so young, it’s just what I know. Goalkeeping has become second nature. I don’t have to overthink things in goal.”

ON ALAMO CITY VERSUS SEATTLE...

Makela lists living by a large body of water, clouds and rain plus the cooler weather as a few of the things she misses from back home. “It’s kind of a struggle coming in [to the season] because summers in Washington are, like, 75 degrees, and then I come here and die in the heat. Last year I came just in time for preseason, but this time I came on Aug. 1 to try and get acclimated.” But, she adds, Tex-Mex food and Fiesta are highlights of living in S.A.

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By Michelle Mondo

Ramon Coronado ’11 stood in the exam room doorway at the Animal Hospital of San Antonio waiting for word that the patient—a purebred Belgian Malinois named Vader—would soon be ready. Only Coronado’s quick glances across the hall, his eyes landing on a closed door that shielded another exam room, betrayed his relaxed demeanor. “Timing is very important,” he says about the upcoming procedure.

His business partner and fellow UTSA Ph.D. biomedical engineering student, Tony Yuan, was close by, checking to make sure the centrifuge and sterilization hood on the exam table were ready. The two were at the clinic not as students but as owners of their new business, Mobile Stem Care, which provides stem-cell therapy services to veterinary clinics. And on that afternoon, all they needed to go to work was for Vader to go to sleep.

Applying expertise with entrepreneurship is just one way UTSA strives to enhance programs, stay competitive, and recruit faculty and students who will help the university reach Tier One status, says Vice President for Research Mauli Agrawal. “What differentiates us from anyone else is that we are an unlikely inventor, UTSA is home to student and faculty research that’s making a world of change. From leading the charge in cybersecurity advancements to shaping the success of an unlikely inventor, UTSA is home to student and faculty research that’s making a world of change.”

Cybersecurity Priorities

Bexar County Commissioner Kevin Wolff leaned back in his office chair and put his hands behind his head. “It’s interesting now that I think about it,” he says, “I can’t remember a meeting—either AACOG or county—when anyone asked about cybersecurity, not even just a presentation to say ‘Here’s what we’re doing.’”

Wolff, who is also chairman of the Alamo Area Council of Governments, which facilitates training among the 13-county membership, says that doesn’t mean government leaders haven’t thought or talked about it. Even so, more resources would be welcome. “That is a void the UTSA Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security hopes to fill,” according to Gregory B. White, director of CIAS. “How do you organize a cybersecurity program? “How do you respond to cyber incidents? How do they relate to normal first responders?”

This past spring the CIAS was awarded $800,000 from the federal government to create the National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium, which will help communities prepare to detect and respond to cyber attacks in a consistent manner. Like first responders, get training on natural disaster preparedness and response from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the consortium would provide cyber disaster preparedness and response. “There are a lot of communities that do not have the funds to hire a full-time person,” White says. “These communities really need an entity they can turn to in order to get some help.”
UTSA is also poised to provide cybersecurity training for the future workforce—starting as young as elementary school. By the end of this year for students in grades K-12 could be learning about cybersecurity via a curriculum the CIAS created in conjunction with CyberPatriot, an Air Force Association program that created to get students interested in cybersecurity or other STEM disciplines. The CIAS produced software is the first for elementary schools. It teaches children about online safety and awareness as well as cyber etiquette.

Students also express a greater interest in STEM fields—science, technology, engineering and math—because of the program, says Tina Cook, volunteer liaison for San Antonio’s CyberPatriot programs. “Some of the best salaries in the country are in cybersecurity,” she says. “We’ve got the number two best cybersecurity workforce in San Antonio. So that’s what we are building on.”

Programs at UTSA also continue to build to meet educational demand. The university has named the number one school for cybersecurity education, as one of 44 universities nationwide, a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance and Cyber Defense.

Deep Space Collaboration: George Clark ’14 has always had a love for travel. Now, he is a space explorer without ever leaving the Earth. As part of UTSA Ph.D. program in physics in collaboration with Southwest Research Institute, or Swift, Clark worked on the Cassini and Juno projects, which included data collection from Saturn and Jupiter, respectively.

“Looking at data, I feel I have a relationship with planets in this system no one else knows about, except maybe a couple hundred people in the world,” says Clark, who now works at the NASA flight center in Washington, D.C. “The data we get back is telling us something about a system we haven’t previously explored.”

One of the largest, independent nonprofit applied research institutes in the country, Swift has been collaborating with UTSA since the university’s inception. That relationship made the move an obvious process for the physics Ph.D. program quicker than usual, says David McComas, assistant vice president of the Space Science and Engineering Division at Swift. Meetings started in 2003 and students were admitted in 2005, he says. Since then, the program has trained students who have secured some of the highest postdoctorate positions available anywhere.

While building graduate programs may not be as easy as the partnership between Swift and UTSA, university leaders want to grow the numbers of faculty researchers and Ph.D. students. More than 40 new faculty members were hired for the current fiscal year. In this year’s UTSA budget, the U.S. Army was able to practically double its Ph.D. prepared him for his job at NASA more than he realized. “I would say that the stuff we do is pretty innovative. We’re building new instruments, going to new places, going into parts unknown. We don’t know what we may learn.”

Wrangling a Killer: It has been called consumption, the king of diseases and white plague. Throughout history, tuberculosis is one of the world’s most deadly diseases, even though it is curable. It is second only to HIV as the greatest killer worldwide due to a single infectious agent, according to the World Health Organization.

South African medical microbiology Ph.D. student Nontuthuko Maningi has seen the devastation in her home country, where multidrug-resistant strains of TB appear to be growing despite scientific and medical gains globally in treating the disease. “I was interested in doing my Ph.D. research on tuberculosis because it is really a problem in Africa, especially in our country,” she said during a phone interview from the University of Pretoria, located about an hour’s drive from Johannesburg. “It’s personal.”

In South Africa, 80 percent of the country’s young adults are already infected with TB. While the disease has been a problem in the U.S. for years, exposures like the one this past summer at an El Paso hospital underscore that it hasn’t disappeared.

Maningi’s Ph.D. focuses on comparing TB strains from today to samples taken throughout South Africa from a drug survey 20 years ago to see what changes, if any, have occurred. She says she never thought a grant would enable her to spend nearly four months at UTSA learning cutting-edge technologies to identify strains of tuberculosis. She worked with biology professor James Chambers and Luke Daum ’07 to learn new coding methods that identify the genes of drug-resistant strains. This helps them diagnose earlier, which means quicker treatment.

Talk of the grant to bring a student from the University of Pretoria to UTSA began with Daum and Gerald W. Fisher, a physician and renowned expert in infectious diseases. Daum is now chief scientific officer for Longhorn Vaccines and Diagnostics, a biotech company Fisher started in San Antonio.

Chambers says there could be further cooperation and collaboration with the team at the University of Pretoria.

“I’m not assisting other postgraduate students with the sequencing that I did for this,” Maningi says. “I presented some of the work I did at UTSA at the Fourth South Africa University Pathogen Conference, and there was a very good response because no one had done what I did at UTSA.”

Maningi laughs when asked if she’s equivalent of a research rock star but says she’s been getting requests for meetings since her return. She hopes she can come back to San Antonio and UTSA, maybe to do a talk with Chambers. Until then, she’s continuing on the path that has surprised even her.

Growing up in a poor, rural village in the KwaZulu Natal province, more than 40 miles away from Pretoria, Maningi says she was an unlikely scholar. There was no running tap water or electricity, she says. “You rely on candles to study. You go with a 2-litre bucket to the river to fetch water, no one thinks about education.”

The Veteran Inventor: U.S. Army Sgt. Gary Walters ’13 was in the gunner’s seat in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle when an IED blast left him with a 40-ton transport into the air. He was one of four critically wounded; two of his fellow soldiers died.

Two years after the Louisiana native survived the Jan. 10, 2005, bomb blast in Iraq, Walters was at San Antonio Military Medical Center trying to fix his new prosthesis. It was perfectly fitted to his lower right leg. After 30 minutes of wear he thought he had a problem. The area where his skin met the lining of the cup was hot. Actually, it was very hot. He asked the doctor about a cooling system and learned there wasn’t one. He would have to take it off, dump out the sweat and put it back on. If he left it on, his skin could deteriorate, resulting in blisters, rash, skin ulcers and infections.

“I said, ‘Well, that sucks,’” he recalls. “That’s not a good solution.”

Walters would have a chance to change that when he enrolled at UTSA in 2008. During his senior year, Walters became part of a team of UTSA engineering and business students who decided to come up with a solution—a temperature- sensitive, self-adhesive patch that fits on the socket of the below-the-knee limb to dissipate heat.

“Walters joined some of his fellow undergraduates—now Ph.D. engineering student Jake Morris ’15, Austin >>

“So some of the best salaries in the country are in IT in San Antonio, and the best of those are in cybersecurity.”

—CHRIS COOK
Darius ’13 and Justin Stultz ’13—as well as Texas A&M alumnus Sean Baker and team mentor Becky Ariana—to create Leto Solutions as a way to market their senior research project. Everyone in the group says they are grateful to have a product they truly believe in and the opportunity to build a company from the ground up.

“Gary was really the inspiration for this project because he was actually experiencing the problem himself,” Montez says.

Although UTSA’s senior engineering project is designed to match engineering students and business students for the purpose of coming up with a product that can be marketed, the path wasn’t an easy one. “Our mathematics had shown that we should be achieving the temperatures that we were looking for, but, of course, theory and implementation almost never align in the engineering world,” Montez says. “So it’s at that point we got our hands dirty and really started digging seriously into the problem.”

Leto Solutions won the biannual $100,000 Student Technology Venture Competition organized by the UTSA Center for Innovation and Technology Entrepreneurship and was awarded cash and services to help develop the product. They credited the program with bringing the company to fruition. “When I was leaving A&M, they were just getting to the point of collaborating on something like that,” Baker says. “And to come here and see that it actually works—where you can go from a college group to having a product and company in a short time—is very impressive.”

Llewellin Setter that had trouble walking because of arthritis. A week after the stem-cell treatment she was running and had stopped limping. She’s now medication-free.

Fast friends when they met in 2011, Coronado and Yuan came to UTSA from different backgrounds. Coronado is from Venezuela and got his master’s degree at UTSA, while Yuan, born in China but raised in Dallas, chose UTSA after getting a master’s at Northwestern University and working as a researcher for the military. Both men cite UTSA’s military partnerships and biomedical engineering curriculum as the reason they applied to the Ph.D. program.

Leveraging partnerships has helped raise the profile of UTSA and the city as a whole, says Kibbey Distinguished Chair in biology John McCarrey. McCarrey will speak at the 10th annual World Stem Cell Summit in December, held for the first time in San Antonio. [Learn more about the summit and stem cells in Sombrilla online.]

Healing Entrepreneurs

Back at the Animal Hospital of San Antonio, the buzz of a trimmer behind the closed door signaled Vader was finally sedated. “They’re shaving his tummy because that’s where we can go in to get the fat,” Mobile Stem Care’s Coronado says. And the fat is where Coronado and Yuan get the stem cells they believe will treat Vader’s asthma.

I think the stem-cell summit coming here is a way to help highlight the activity that’s happening in San Antonio in terms of stem-cell research, tissue engineering and regenerative medicine.”

Coronado and Yuan are now earning a name for themselves. They transport their own equipment, do the procedure on site, and use only adult stem cells from an animal’s own fat. In a two-hour process the fat tissue will be broken down, the stem cells extracted and then they’re reintroduced into the animal’s body. For Vader, they used a saline drip.

The doctoral students are hoping for the kind of improvement seen in their first patient, Reese, an 8-year-old Llewellin Setter that had trouble walking because of arthritis. A week after the stem-cell treatment she was running and had stopped limping. She’s now medication-free.

With continued good results, the two researchers expect their business to grow. But they both stress that the business isn’t about the money. “We’re scientists at heart,” Yuan says. “But we wanted to take what we know and apply it to the real world. We love the science. We love researching. And we love animals.”
The University and the Performing Arts Connection

The opening of the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts will not only showcase a state-of-the-art facility but also the local talent pulled from UTSA. Here are just some of the faculty and alumni who are involved with this iconic and elegant San Antonio theater.

The ties between UTSA’s music and performance programs and San Antonio’s arts scene are in the spotlight—and will be made even stronger—with the opening of the city’s premier performing arts venue

BY MICHELLE MONDO
n opening night, there were exclamations, nods of approval and a lot of wide eyes as people filtered through the lobby and made their way to their seats for the gala at the Tobin Center for the Performing Arts.

The Sept. 4 event showcased the new $203 million state-of-the-art center as well as three resident companies—San Antonio Symphony, Ballet San Antonio and Opera San Antonio.

UTSA alumna Courtney Barker ’05, the ballet’s conductor and executive director, got there early, as is her custom when the company has a performance. “I hold the principal dancers to have fun and own it; this is their city and their moment too,” she says. Then, she went out to the lobby to mingle with the patrons, take a deep breath and wait for their approval.

Meanwhile, the members of the San Antonio Symphony prepared for a marathon 90-minute set that at times accompanied the ballet and opera but also included a moving rendition of ‘American in Paris.’

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Veteran strings lecturer Althyn Dawkins, the symphony’s principal violist, says that first performance was “an exciting adventure.” Dawkins started the first year the symphony began and has been teaching at UTSA since 1981. She’s just one example of the university’s shared connections with the Tobin Center.

UTSA faculty, staff and students have long been woven into the city’s performing and creative arts scene. Like Dawkins, professors in the music department are veteran symphony players. About 10 years ago the Tobin Foundation donated stage costumes, backdrops and music scores to UTSA from the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. Many of those costumes remain in use today.

With partnerships already formed, faculty and alumni working for the resident companies, and the goal of the College of Liberal and Fine Arts to grow its own performing arts programs, those established relationships will strengthen as new opportunities present themselves. “The long-term ambition is to have a school of performing arts or something similar so that music, opera and dance are all more developed,” says Dan Geis, who heads the Strambuc Distinguished University Chair for the Dean of Liberal and Fine Arts. “One of our focuses is to be a cultural resource for the community.”

Dawkins has seen the music program explode since she started teaching and says that, along with the strong orchestra, the music department has a “really fantastic success rate” of training music educators.

Recently, the university created a dance minor that is hoped to become a bachelor of fine arts in dance. And UTSA’s Lyric Theater continues to work musicals and operas throughout the year.

A growing opera presence would be beneficial for both the university and Opera San Antonio, according to leaders of the groups. Opera San Antonio’s chairman, Mel Weingart, and UTSA professor and Lyric Theater director William McCrary have known each other for years. The two helped form Opera to Go, an educational program that takes opera to public schools and is supported by the Lyric Theater and Opera Guild. McCrary says Lyric Theater helps students who want to perform and sing as well as those who want to be teachers. “A lot of our students are getting degrees in music education,” he says, “and they’re going to go on to their jobs and be asked to produce musicals as a music director, or the principal might ask them to actually be in the musical.”

As part of increasing the exposure and education for students, the music department, Lyric Theater, Opera Guild and Opera San Antonio are in early talks to form a young artist program. “It would be a program to enable young talent to participate with this opera company,” Weingart says.

That is a long-term goal, everyone recognizes, but the educational opportunities have already started. On Sept. 25, eight members of the opera company’s Ponto de Fato production, including the resident conductor, Andres Cladera, visited UTSA’s recital hall. Without costumes or props, they performed short pieces to the accompaniment of pianist Cheryl Cellon-Lindquist. The students then got to ask them questions, the subjects ranging from quelling nerves at an audition to advice for the future. “Get out of there,” Dawkins says.

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Music lovers begin to fill the Tobin Center for an acoustical test-run performance.

Not everyone needs to be on the stage. There’s also the lure of the city’s low cost of living and a creative industry that is already present and provides jobs for those interested in working with arts without being an artist. In 2011, San Antonio’s creative industry generated $4.6 billion in economic activity, employing 29,852 workers who earned wages totaling $1.1 billion, according to a 2011 report from the SABER Institute at St. Mary’s University. Public relations specialists are included on that list.

Barker, the director of the ballet, came back to San Antonio after dancing in New York. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in communication and credited the public relations savvy she learned at UTSA along with her personal knowledge of ballet as a combination that makes for her dream job.

UTSA professor John Silantien, the conductor of the San Antonio Mastersingers says just the presence of a new center—especially one with such a variety of entertainment—is a benefit. Like Dawkins, he’s been with the university for more than 30 years and the Mastersingers nearly that long as well. “He points to other cities that had increased enthusiasm in the arts after a new center opened. “I think any artistic or cultural growth for the city is good for us. When there’s a new concert hall, there’s just a big improvement for visibility in the arts. I think it’s an inevitable and gradual progression for the city.”
Joe McKinney M.A. '04 describes one of his most recent novels as a mirror of his own 1983 summer. "Well, everything but the werewolf," he says. "And the scene with the alligator," he quickly adds. OK, so there was no werewolf on a murderous rampage, and McKinney didn’t shoot an alligator in the head over and over again after a dare from his friend. "Definitely not," he laughs.

It was the summer that Hurricane Alicia tore through the Gulf Coast, leaving a trail of devastation, including in Clear Lake, where McKinney grew up. The storm was so severe that the National Weather Service retired the name.

Against this backdrop, McKinney's *Dog Days* follows a 15-year-old boy as he navigates a rocky summer filled with peer pressure, some bad decisions and the aforementioned alligator and werewolf. The book earned the author and San Antonio police sergeant his second Bram Stoker Award from the Horror Writers Association.

But sadly, for McKinney’s die-hard fans, *Dog Days* has none of the trademark zombies that his writing is known for.

The book is just one example of how McKinney has continued to expand his repertoire of horror subjects since the 2006 publication of his first novel, *Dead City,* which was released two years after he graduated with a master’s in English literature.

McKinney actually started working on the zombie tale as a UTSA graduate student. He credits the English literature program with giving him the confidence and knowledge to really take charge of his writing. The passion for the written word from professors like Jeanne Reesman was contagious, he says.

Reesman, the university’s Jack and Laura Richmond Endowed Fellow in American Literature, wasn’t surprised when she saw her former student’s name on a book cover. "I remember Joe being one of the most talented writers I have ever taught in 30 years," she says. "I wasn’t a bit surprised later on to see his success in writing novels."

McKinney, however, was surprised and still marvels that he has published more than 30 works since the release of *Dead City.* "I still didn’t think of myself as a writer," he says. "I figured it would just be that book, and that would be it."

But his publishing company asked for more and the Dead World Series was born. The five-book compilation became McKinney’s most well-known work. A book in that series, *Plague of the Dead,* earned McKinney his first Bram Stoker Award.

Throughout the years, McKinney has often collaborated with other writers and editors, so he was a perfect fit for JournalStone’s Double Down series, which pairs an acclaimed writer to mentor a novel-writing newcomer. The two separate works are published in one bound book. McKinney worked with Sanford Allen ’12, another UTSA graduate, to complete the third installment of the Double Down series. From this project, *Dog Days* and Allen’s *Deadly Passage* were born. The December 2013 release marked Allen’s first published novel.

"I was thrilled to be paired with Joe McKinney," says Allen, who earned his master’s in communication. “Joe has been a great friend and mentor to me over the past few years and offered sage guidance as I completed final edits. Writing a first novel is a daunting process, especially given the short turnaround time provided by our publisher, but Joe was beyond generous with his time and gave me plenty of encouragement along the way. It thrills me to see someone achieve his level of success and still find time to share his wisdom with emerging authors."

Both authors are featured in a short story compilation released this fall; McKinney also published *Dead World: Resurrection: The Collected Zombie Short Stories of Joe McKinney* and *Plague of the Dead,* the first in his newest zombie series.

Zombies, McKinney says, are a way for us to work through our fears and anxieties. They are also an excellent source of stress to test his characters: “Joe McKinney says, ‘It’s all about horror. When I’m writing, I’m working through my own fears and anxieties. When I’m writing about zombies, I’m working through my own fears and anxieties.’”
The Unlikely Editor

BRIAN SWEANY M.A. ’02

Texas Monthly’s new editor in chief, Brian Sweany, never planned on becoming a journalist. He saw himself as an English professor teaching Milton: “It seemed to me, Milton was overlooked.” And if not for the advice of UTSA professor Linda Woodson, he may have missed out on the job that changed the course of his career. During his first year at the university, Woodson encouraged Sweany to apply for an internship at Texas Monthly. A full-time job offer as a copy editor followed. Now, 20 years later, as he manages his new role at the magazine’s helm, Sweany is also finishing up his first book, *The Kingdom of the Saddle*, a biography of famed Texas cattle rancher Charles Goodnight. The book is scheduled to be published by Penguin in the spring.

How did UTSA’s English literature program affect you? I learned to take my writing seriously at UTSA. That is where I learned to write well and in my own style. Later in the program, my professors became a source of inspiration and a path to my future career. A style that was more enjoyable to read. That was well-received by my professors.

How did you decide on UTSA? The university was very good about responding to my application right away, and I won a scholarship. Funding graduate school was going to be very tricky. I’d borrowed most of what I needed for undergraduate school [at the University of North Texas], and I didn’t want to take on too much more debt. It was an unexpected choice—and one that worked out very well.

Weren’t you already in a career or did you go straight to earning your master’s after undergraduate school? [laughs] I was on the 100-year plan. I enrolled in 1995 and finally graduated in spring 2012. We’re talking about a master’s degree! It was very important for me to get the degree. It took me a long time to finish (because of taking the role at Texas Monthly) and pass the comprehensive, but did it. I was always incredibly proud of that. I really struggled with it, though—whether I should take the internship. I went back to Dr. Woodson to discuss if the position at Texas Monthly was a good career move. She encouraged me to go for it, even if it meant putting my studies on hold. I worked full-time and finished my degree with night classes. I started my master’s program as an intern (with the magazine) and by the time I got the degree I was an editor. Everyone at the magazine was incredibly supportive of it.

What advice do you have for student journalists? It’s almost so simple as to not be true. It’s very simple. Write well and in your own style. That was well-received by my professors.

Do you have a favorite interview? It’s tough to say without sounding like I’m hedging my bets. One of my favorite days, I reported a story on [San Antonio Spurs legend] David Robinson and I came down to Trinity University, where he was practicing. The idea for the story was that I was driving around with him. He invited me to get in his car. He drove an Avalanche; I wasn’t expecting that. And when he turned on the car, I realized because he had NPR on. But then I seriously did an interview with Rick Perry, and I had never been in the governor’s private office before. I’ve had the chance to talk to athletes and writers and businessmen and politicians and average Texans.

Last question. Best journalism movie? "I didn’t want to stick with the boring Example.com or whatever it usually is," he says. "I decided to create something completely random, and that was WidgetsandBurritos.com." Ultimately, he registered the domain name because he liked the way it sounded. A few years later when Stinemetze saw there was a gap in the San Antonio online market that needed to be filled, he decided to break out on his own. And he realized he already had a name for his business. Launched in 2011, Widgets and Burritos offers programming and development efforts to agencies to make their Web products more robust. He doesn’t help to design a website, he says, or to create Web advertising.

"I’m strictly a programmer. I love code; I understand code," he says. "And I have a lot of partnerships with design companies, PR firms and ad agencies if they need to outsource programming." His love of all things code started when he was in middle school and continued into high school. When it was time to focus on a career Stinemetze turned to his hobby and applied to the UTSA computer science program as an undergraduate. Although his business is mostly a one-man show and he keeps busy, he recently hired a UTSA graduate to work for him as an intern.

Stinemetze’s advice to those thinking of opening a business is to go for it. “It might be scary,” he says, “but get some advice from a friend and it pushed me over that cliff, and I’m grateful. Don’t let the fear of failure keep you from trying.”
UTSA’s Top Gun

ANTHONY ROCK ’82

When U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Anthony Rock finishes his assignment as the senior military leader in Islamabad, Pakistan, he wouldn’t mind returning to Texas to flip the coin at a football game. “It would be great to be invited back and represent the military,” Rock said during a Skype interview from the U.S. embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, because they were on television in Islamabad. “The Roadrunners need to know they are now famous.”

Rock has spent more than three decades in the military, beginning his pilot training at Laughlin Air Force Base in 1982. He finished his assignment as the senior military leader in Islamabad, Pakistan, in May that drew about 100 friends and family, including his longtime wife, Kim, a UTSA alumna.

He was even knothead in a reality show called American Fighter Pilot. His latest assignment, in Pakistan, began after he received his third star during a hometown promotion ceremony at Randolph Air Force Base in May that drew about 200 friends and family, including his longtime wife, Kim, a UTSA alumna. Of his 18 previous assignments throughout his career, the promotion was the San Antonio native’s first in his hometown.

Building on the years he has been working at an embassy in Pakistan, Rock says the goal of his 18-month assignment is to continue working to make the diplomatic relationship stable for a long period of time. He and his staff also are charged with making sure lines of communication and support are open for bases in Afghanistan and Iraq.

“Over the 47 years of Pakistan independence, the U.S. and Pakistan relations have been high crests and low troughs,” he explains. “Our primary job is to try and dampen out these huge changes in the relationship—the incredibly high crests and very deep troughs.”

The time away from his wife and three children, the oldest of whom is now 18, has been tough, but technological advances have helped. During his first deployment in 1990–91, he used to write letters home every day, and the family could count on a phone call about every week or 30 days. “My wife would mail me children’s books, and I would mail a recording of me reading the book. My kids would read the book and listen to the tape. Now we have Skype. I can talk to Kim 24/7.”

Rock says he fell into his military career much the way he did his history major. His father, who was in the military, settled the family in a northeast San Antonio neighborhood in 1955 and soon kept moving further into the outskirts of the city than they lived in Hollywood Park.

He lived in a studio apartment at the only complex nearby and thought the fledgling UTSA would be a good way to get started. He started in business but realized that wasn’t for him, so he opted for history because “I was always told you should study what you love.” In the end, he says, the education he received helped him become a better critical thinker. The professors that made the biggest impact on him were “the ones who challenged you not just to read and regurgitate but to think, deeply about what you read, to form opinions and be able to defend those opinions.”

—Michelle Mondi
Providing an Escape

OLIVIA JAMANDRE ’07

As a Fulbright scholar in Finland, Olivia Jamandre was not only studying the works of the country’s most famous classical composer but also using her time to help at-risk youths in Helsinki. Jamandre, a pianist, taught private half-hour lessons at a center called Tytjöns Talo, which provides services for girls in need. “They come to find friendship, counseling for pregnancy, rape, abuse or domestic violence issues,” she says. “Or even if they have relocated—from abroad or from other parts of Finland—and are looking to connect with other girls in their area.”

The lessons were just one aspect of a busy and educational academic year for Jamandre, who was a Fulbright-CIMO grantee for 2013–2014. The grant was funded in cooperation with the Center for International Mobility of the Finnish Ministry of Education. She was awarded the grant to study folk music’s influence on composer Jean Sibelius’ piano works. Jamandre recognizes that many Americans may know little about Finnish music, history or culture, and says she would put herself in that same category.

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As a dual citizen of Switzerland and the United States, Jamandre has been doing research at the Sibelius Academy, part of the University of the Arts Helsinki, that led her to question her own ideas about nationalism. “Being a dual citizen, I will always feel like my heart is on two continents,” she says in a video about the Fulbright program. Jamandre returned to the U.S. this past summer and is now pursuing a doctorate at the University of Kansas. She credits award-winning piano professor Kasandra Keeling as her main reason for attending UTSA for her bachelor’s degree in music with a concentration in piano. “Dr. Keeling was an excellent musical guide to me and a wonderful teacher,” she says. “Her dedication and investment in her students is inspiring.”

Jamandre took that same dedication to the girls she taught in Helsinki, adding that the one-on-one lessons provided somewhat of an escape. “It seemed,” she says, “they were able to forget whatever was on their minds at the time—and for that half-hour just focus on something creative and intellectually stimulating.”

Watch a video of Jamandre talking about her time as a Fulbright scholar by visiting Sombrilla online.

WEB EXTRA

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25 foot wide. Kuehnle is one of two alumni chosen to be in the exhibit, which features more than 200 works by 102 artists from across the nation. CHRISTY SAUTER, M.F.A. ’96 was also chosen for the exhibit. Kuehnle, who is an assistant professor at the Cleveland Institute of Art, will also have an exhibit at the Red Arrow Contemporary Art, will also have an exhibit at the Red Arrow Contemporary Gallery in Dallas that will run from Dec. 13 to Jan. 24.

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While studying as a Fulbright scholar in Finland, UTSA alumna Olivia Jamandre ‘07 gave lessons to at-risk young girls.

2008

KURT CORBETT, M.A. in education, has been named Fort Bend Independent School District’s director of elementary curriculum. Also, Corbett was recognized in 2013 as one of 20 members of the LEAD (Leadership, Excellence, Accountability and Development) Principals’ Academy IV graduating class. The graduates hold positions as associate principals, assistant principals or deans of instruction at various FBISD campuses and are eligible for future principal positions in the district.

2014

PEDRO LUIS MOLINA, B.S. in mechanical engineering, interned this summer for the International Motor Sports Association. It is the fourth consecutive summer he has been invited to work at NASCAR.

2007

MARY ELISE FERRER, M.A. in history, has been named the service coordinator for student life and civic engagement at San Antonio College. She’s tasked with helping students get involved in volunteering opportunities.

2014

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UTSA is changing the world with every graduate, and we’ve done it 100,000 times. Our alumni are business and civic leaders, scientists, teachers and artists who are shaping the future. Our faculty researchers are making discoveries that address complex global challenges. Our outreach programs are strengthening the community and society. UTSA is San Antonio’s top-tier university—just ask any of our 100,000 graduates.