

What is La Despedida?

La Despedida is a registered student organization that was established at UTSA in 1995 by a group of Latino students who wanted a graduation ceremony to reflect who they are and be able to include the three major influences in their lives: La Familia (their family), La Raza (their race) and La Comunidad (their community).

The members of La Despedida plan, implement and fundraise to host the La Despedida graduation ceremony each spring semester. La Despedida is a bicultural and bilingual graduation ceremony that is followed by a Mexican dinner and live entertainment. Originally held at the 1604 Campus, for the past eight years La Despedida has been held at the Downtown Campus.

La Despedida complements the mission of UTSA as an Hispanic-serving institution of higher education because it provides an opportunity for members of the organization to enrich not only themselves, but also the campus and the community at-large through this unique program. According to the UTSA mission statement, "The University of Texas at San Antonio, a comprehensive, public, metropolitan university, is committed to freedom of inquiry and the creation of an environment in which people can teach, discover, learn, and **enrich themselves and their community.**"

As a Registered Student Organization for the past 13 years, the small group of student leaders who comprise La Despedida have been able to establish this as a UTSA tradition for Latino and other students. This program has had a positive effect on the quality of campus life particularly for Latino students because it shows that UTSA values their cultural heritage and allows them to freely express and celebrate it.

This is the only ceremony of its kind, which is presented in both English and Spanish, that allows graduates to invite more of their family members to share in a culturally based celebration of their educational accomplishments. This has a positive effect on recruitment because it allows all the children and younger relatives of the graduates to participate in a program that celebrates their culture and it leaves a lasting positive image of UTSA with the entire family.

13th Annual La Despedida

Saturday, May 10, 2008

8:30pm—11:30pm

UTSA Downtown Campus

Buena Vista Building

Theatre BV 1.326