The Language of Hope

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A student in a Venda, South Africa reads from a new book provided by the Ithuba Writing Project. Photo by Ricardo Romo.

### On this page
Students cool off in the lazy river at the Recreation and Wellness Center on the 1604 Campus. The center opened in 2003; the outdoor pool area is part of a $46 million expansion that was completed in 2007. Photo by Patrick Ray Dunn.
EDITOR’S NOTE

I find that a lot of things that happen in life there’s a corresponding sitcom episode. So for this story, let’s reference “Business School” from season three of The Office. Rumbling boss Michael is giving a talk to a business school class, and he is asked how Dunder Mifflin—a paper company—is poised to adapt itself in an increasingly paperless society.

“We can’t overestimate the value of computers,” he replies. “Yes, they are great for playing games and forwarding funny e-mails. But real business is done on paper. OK! Write that down.”

The students furiously record Michael’s words of wisdom… on their laptops.

Like Michael, we love paper. We love its intimacy, its inherent interactivity. We love the smell, we love being able to doodle in the margins, we love that we can read it lying down, we love that we never have to remember to plug it in to recharge.

So several years ago when we were asked to develop a Web site for an online version of Sombrilla, we did it, but mostly to placate our bosses because we couldn’t fathom why anyone would go online to read a magazine that comes out three times a year. The Web is where you go to get the latest news or to search for information, we reasoned. So Sombrilla Web site was set up and almost immediately became an afterthought.

The magazine went to the printer, we slapped the stories up on the Web site and called it a day.

But ever so gradually, we’ve come to understand how the Web offers us as storytellers additional tools that enhance our paper product. We started developing Web-only content such as slideshows and videos that complemented—but didn’t compete with—the stories in the printed magazine. And as we began to make Sombrilla Online a priority rather than an afterthought, we realized very quickly that our little Web site wasn’t especially user-friendly. Even more important, it wasn’t cool enough for all the cool content we were putting on it.

So we’re excited to debut with this issue a redesigned Sombrilla Online that’s way more fun to surf, way better looking and, yes, way cooler than the previous incarnation.

So please go to the new URL, www.sombrilla.utsa.edu, check it out and let us know what you think. In addition to a brand-new look, you’ll also find more Web-only content than we’ve ever had before:

• Clueless to know what songs students are listening to in History and Styles of Rock?
• Curious to know what songs students are listening to in History and Styles of Rock?
• Want to know what songs students are listening to in History and Styles of Rock?
• Reading the story on page 14, then go to Sombrilla Online to take a peek at the podcast for the class.
• Want to know more about how the Busha project is benefiting the students of South Africa?
• Read the story on page 16, then go to Sombrilla Online to see video interviews with some of the South African teachers participating in the project.
• Want to know what paranormal investigators found when they searched UTSA’s Institute of Texan Cultures?
• Read the story on page 22, then go to Sombrilla Online to hear the spooky electronic voice phenomena they collected during their investigation.
• Been thinking about coming back to UTSA to get your class ring? Learn more about this growing tradition at UTSA on page 26, then go to Sombrilla Online to watch footage from this spring’s ring ceremony.
• We’re very excited about the new Web site, but, like Michael, we also still love our paper.
• But if you’re farther along than we are in your transition to a paperless society and would prefer to receive only Sombrilla Online instead of the printed magazine, drop us a note at sombrilla@utsa.edu. We’ll take your name off the magazine mailing list and add it to the Sombrilla Online e-mail distribution list. . . and save a little paper for the next generation.

—Rebecca Luther
Lyric Theatre stages magical opera

UTSA’s Lyric Theatre, a student-driven musical ensemble directed by William McCrary, performed Mozart’s The Magic Flute in April. The presentation sold out the Downtown Campus’ Buena Vista Theater on its opening night.

The Magic Flute, or Die Zauberflöte, is a whimsical tale of Prince Tamino’s quest to rescue Princess Pamina from the sorcerer Sarastro. The lovers’ journey is one of many challenges and tests of faith. The script lists the setting as merely “once upon a time,” emphasizing the timeless-ness of classical opera and a wealth of musical talent across the centuries.

The Briefcase Brigade, composed of business faculty, staff and students, performed a dance routine to the song “Shake Ya Tail Feather” in tribute to the UTSA Roadrunners. The group was led by Jemina Brown, an undergraduate Roadrunner.

“When we first did our float, we had no idea what we were doing,” said Mr. and Ms. UTSA, Daniel Bernal and Camelia Davis, who have trained with some of the industry's major players, including Prince Tamino. The group was a 20-year-old, award-winning tenor who has trained with some of the industry’s major players, including American soprano Sharon Sweet. William Cox played Pamina’s mother, the Queen of the Night, notably one of Mozart’s most dif-ficult roles. Among the most famous arias is the Queen of the Night’s “Der Hölle Rache kocht in meinem Herzen” (“The vengeance of hell boils in my heart”), recognized for its high-pitch range.

—Amanda Jackson

UTSA LAUNCHES YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Seeking to combine the traditional college experience with this generation’s Web 2.0 lifestyle, UTSA recently launched its own YouTube channel, Get Rowdy TV. UTSA joins a growing number of universities that have partnered with the popular video-sharing site, including UCLA, Ohio State, Carnegie Mellon, UC Berkeley, MIT and Stanford.

The site is available at www.youtube.com/utsagetrowdytv. “We expect UTSA Get Rowdy TV to capture the energy of our student life and promote school spirit here at UTSA,” said Marianne Lewis, director of the Office of Public Affairs. “More and more universities are looking at social media as another means to engage their students and alumni, although we believe we are the first school in the UT System to establish an official presence on YouTube.”

Get Rowdy TV features videos about student life at UTSA, with particular focus on longstanding university traditions such as the BestFest carnival every fall, the springtime Fiesta UTSA celebration, and Roadrunner Days, which kick off the new school year.

Most of the videos are being filmed and produced by UTSA student Christopher Davis. Davis, a junior majoring in marketing, already had been posting his own personal videos on YouTube for two years before being hired in June by the Office of Public Affairs to help launch Get Rowdy TV. His videos have amassed more than 260,000 hits on YouTube; his dance instructional video on how to glide has been viewed more than 108,000 times alone.

Davis was excited to be discovered on YouTube and given the opportunity to create videos for the university. “I’m doing exactly what I love,” he said. “I’m getting paid to do what I really want to do.”

Student Christopher Davis interviews a student for UTSA Get Rowdy TV.

ROADRUNNERS LOVE A PARADE

UTSA won two prizes in this year’s Battle of Flowers parade—the first time the university has had entries in the venerable parade, the signature event of the annual Fiesta San Antonio celebration. The UTSA College of Business Briefcase Brigade won first place in the Amusements category, and the UTSA float won third place in the Patriotic and Educational category.

The Briefcase Brigade, composed of business faculty, staff and students, performed a dance routine to the song “Shake Ya Tail Feather” in tribute to the UTSA Roadrunners. The group was led by Jemina Brown, an undergraduate adviser in the College of Business and a Spurs Silver Dancer.

“We are excited that we could represent UTSA in this historic parade,” said Lynda de la Viña, adviser in the College of Business.

“I’ve wanted the college to have a presence on campus to participate in the parade, and I definitely want to do it next year,” said Barry McElhiney, UTSA director of student activities. “Barely five minutes after the parade began, a little girl asked to have her picture taken with Mr. UTSA. She said it was fun to have her picture taken with a princess. That moment made it worth it.”

To view video clips of the Briefcase Brigade and UTSA float from the 2008 Battle of Flowers parade, go to www.utsa.edu/today/2008/05/video/news.cfm.

REAL-WORLD SCIENCE

The College of Sciences welcomed 25 of the state’s brightest high school students to campus to participate in the first Governor’s Science and Technology Champions Academy July 27–Aug. 1. The five-day residential summer camp brought together the first- and second-place finishers in the ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair (EMTSEF), which took place in April at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio.

Designed for participants to experience real-world science applications across the state, the academy featured daily field trips to various destinations in San Antonio as well as visits to Natural Bridge Caverns in New Braunfels, Aquarena Springs in San Marcos and ExxonMobil in Houston. To arrive at their destinations, the students used global positioning systems to map their routes.

The theme of this year’s academy focused on fluids in the Earth’s crust and emphasized oil and gas and water resources. The students also had the opportunity to witness how geoscientists work.
in the loop

When it began, President’s Dinner was a fun event, a way for UTSA President Ricardo Romo to say thank you to the university’s supporters. But then a simple question was asked: Why not charge admission to the event and make it a fundraiser?

The UTSA President’s Scholarship and Awards Dinner has now evolved into the university’s largest fundraising event for scholarships and academic programs, raising more than $11.3 million to date. In 2004, former AT&T vice president of aT&T, who first came to UTSA 15 years ago as a telecom professor, donated $2 million to UTSA. Kenneth H. Sperling, former director of AT&T’s microelectronics research division in Irving, Texas, made the gift to support the university’s engineering programs. He said it helped UTSA attract more bright students from around the world. Since then, the Sperling Gift has become a model for philanthropic support at UTSA. UTSA President Ricardo Romo is now a national leader in fundraising for research universities.

In 2008, AT&T Chairman and CEO Benigno C. Berada, Jr. announced a $3 million gift to the university. AT&T, a leader in digital transformation, is increasing its support of UTSA’s mission to prepare students for the next generation of technology and innovation.

But AT&T wasn’t the only donor to support UTSA’s research programs. In 2006, AT&T on Oct. 2 announced a $2 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2007, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

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In 2011, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

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In 2013, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2014, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2015, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2016, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2017, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2018, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2019, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2020, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2021, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2022, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2023, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2024, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2025, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2026, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2027, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.

In 2028, AT&T announced a $5 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Technology and Engineering Center, a $1 million gift for the construction of the new AT&T Executive Center, and a $1 million gift for the establishment of the AT&T Presidential Chair in Computer Science.
The Energy Equation

University launches institute to explore alternative energy sources

Worldwide energy consumption is projected to increase by more than 50 percent in the next 25 years, propelling the world into an energy crisis, said President Ricardo Romo at the North American Energy Summit, held at UTSA’s Downtown Campus May 1-2.

The summit brought together 128 professionals and leaders in the field to discuss fossil fuels, renewable energy, nuclear energy and green business practices. Speakers from throughout the nation, Canada and Mexico led panels on a range of topics, including environmental concerns, the economics of energy and transportation, public policy, regulations that influence industry practices and energy education.

“The university is not solving the energy crisis; government isn’t going to solve it,” Romo told summit participants. “It’s going to take collaboration.”

To jumpstart this process, the university has created the Institute for Conventional Alternative and Renewable Energy, ICARE, to bring together representatives from industry, government and academia to explore alternative energy sources. It will also look into new policies and best practices for the energy industry at the state, regional and global levels.

The center will involve every college at UTSA, which is a first for the university, UTSA, and is a prime player in helping the country and the world with energy issues, Agrawal said. “We’re trying to create a niche for ourselves, which is a holistic look at the energy equation.”

Industry leaders, politicians and educators must not lose the momentum created through a wide alliance of government, academia and industry to address energy research and policy.

“Industry leaders, politicians and educators must not lose the momentum created through the summit, the researchers said. UTSA is already taking the lead in forming a county-wide alliance of government, academia and industry to address energy research and policy. “We will not let this be one of those things that’s going to go away; we’ll come at it in a different way, maybe sooner, than there was a problem. We’ll figure this out; we’ll come at it in a different way, maybe something we haven’t even thought about. But it’s not going to go away anytime soon.”

Strong Women Making Healthy Choices

D ependent on your point of view, Pancho Villa was either a villain or a hero. And after Sept. 11, the actions of the U.S. government either infringed on civil liberties or effectively protected the nation against terrorism.

When Mexican police fired on protesters in Tlatelolco in 1968, they either killed 31 violent terrorists in an attempt to defend themselves or slew up to 2,000 innocent people in an act of brutal authoritarianism.

“How all these events are understood depends on memory and emotion, and who’s telling the story. That’s the message three graduate students from the College of Liberal and Fine Arts conveyed during the college’s Spring Research Conference on April 11.


Norma Canta, professor of English, said that even though the papers tackled seemingly disparate topics, they all shared one common link—terrorism. While Beebe and Dilley specifically targeted Mexican history, Cox’s work was a contemporary look at the U.S. response to terrorism.

“Each student approached the topic differently, and the papers reflected mostly a historical take,” she said.

There were 111 participants in the conference, which is now in its eighth year. Awards were given to undergraduates and graduate students in the categories of music, art, research posters, creative writing and research papers. Any student in the college can participate in the event, said Christopher Wickham, associate dean of the college. The conference gives the students a forum to present their research and requires them to be knowledgeable enough about their work to answer questions.

“We do role plays and practice communi- cation skills on how you would convince a partner to wear a condom, tell a partner you didn’t want to engage in sexual intercourse or tell a partner that you did.”

“In Texas, which has the highest number of teen births in the nation, sexuality education is not mandatory in public schools. Federal dollars fund abstinence-only programs, so most public schools follow that curriculum, Wyatt said. Abstinence-only education discourages contraceptives, but stresses their failure rates. Since many UTSA students attended public schools in Texas, they have not had comprehensive sex education, Wyatt said.

“It was so apparent from interactions with students, including juniors and seniors, that many of them had not been exposed to accurate and usable information,” she said. “So there is a need for giving women information to help them make healthy sexual choices and be comfortable with their sexuality.”

—Lety Laurel
**Enjoying success on the diamond**

By Brian Hernandez

I n the last four years, UTSA baseball team has reached heights never before seen in its 17-year history. This success has been due in large part to Sherman Corbett, who just wrapped up his eighth season as head coach of the Roadrunners.

The list of his recent accomplishments is extensive.

UTSA has won the last two Southland Conference Regular Season Championships—first in the school history—and won the 2005 SLC Tournament title to advance to NCAA regional play. The Roadrunners, who have posted a total of 250 victories in the last eight years (an average of 32 per season), set a school record with 38 regular season victories this past spring and tied the program mark with 39 overall to begin the season.

UTSA has 30 games in Corbett’s first season, and after three middle-of-the-pack finishes in conference play, the Roadrunners rebounded from a 0–11 start in 2005 to win the league’s automatic berth to the NCAA tournament for the first time in 11 years and second ever.

All told, Corbett has coached a pair of All-Americans and 38 conference players during his tenure, including eight first-teamers. He also has mentored 2001 SLC Pitcher of the Year Jared Howton, 2002 All-American and SLC Player of the Year Mark Schramek, 2003 SLC Freshman of the Year Ryan Creve, 2007 SLC Newcomer of the Year Trent Luckwood, 2007 SLC Freshman of the Year Tim Pinkston, 2008 All-American and SLC Player of the Year Michael Ruepke, in addition to three First Team All-Americans—Crew (2003), Ruepke (2006) and Palincsar (2007).

Another factor in the team’s recent success has been stability within the program. Associate Head Coach Jason Marshall has been with Corbett’s staff since he took over eight years ago, and the past two second-level assistant coaches, Tim Blais (2002–2006) and Mike Clement (2006–present), each served at least three years.

“The stability we’ve had in our coaching staff is one of the strongest things we’ve got going for us,” Corbett says. “It is such an advantage when you don’t have to repeatly teach someone what your team philosophy is year after year. It definitely has been a major reason for our success.”

In a sport where player turnover is some what higher than others because NCAA rules don’t require players to sit out a year after transferring, the Roadrunners have been fortunate in that few players leave campus once they arrive. Corbett attributes that to the open and honest relationship he has with his players, as well as the dynamic and rapid growth of the university in the last decade.

“When you build a relationship of respect and fairness, that goes a long way in developing stability,” he says. “San Antonio is a great place to be and it’s been exciting to be part of the growth of this university. Dr. [Ricardo] Romo has a great vision and athletics obviously has been a part of that.”

It also helps that Corbett, who played professionally from 1984 to 1993, brings four years of Major League Baseball experience to the job. His stint with the California Angels from 1988 to 1991 makes him one of just 13 NCAA Division I-A head coaches who are MLB alumni.

“It’s not only is Coach Corbett a great coach, but he is an even better person,” Marshall says. “The relationships he builds with his players go much further than when their [college] careers end. What he has been able to accomplish is in a relatively short amount of time is just amazing and I’m fortunate to have been a part of it.”

With seven positional starters and six pitchers returning and a strong recruiting class coming in this fall, the Roadrunners could be in line to earn another title. That’s just the way Sherman Corbett has planned it.

**SPORTS BRIEFS**

**UTSA captures SLC Cup, Men’s All-Sports Trophy**

UTSA in May captured its first-ever Southland Conference Commissioners’ Cup and second Men’s All-Sports Trophy in the past three years. The Roadrunners, who were second in the Commissioner’s Cup race each of the past two seasons, scored 138 points to edge Lamar (138.5) and snapped a three-year winning streak by Sam Houston State, which finished fifth (123.5). Texas State was third in the standings with 115 points, just three points separated the top three finishers.

“We are very proud and excited about winning the Commissioner’s Cup,” UTSA Athletics Director Lynn Hickey said. “It is such an honor for UTSA athletics obviously has been a part of that.”

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**Roadrunners earn All-America accolades**

Junior Michael Ruepke (baseball) and sophomore Teddy Williams (men’s track and field) earned All-America honors this past spring. Ruepke, the SLC Player of the Year, was a second-team selection by the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association and a third-team pick by Collegiate Baseball. Meanwhile, Williams collected his honor by virtue of his seventh-place finish in 100 meters at the NCAA Outdoor Championships.

**Roadrunners named to SLC Honor Roll**

Sixty-one UTSA student-athletes were named to the Spring 2008 SLC Commissioners’ Honor Roll for recording a 3.0 or higher grade point average.

**Baseball—**

Senior Bradley Chovanic and Mark Ruffin; juniors Andy Bennett, J.T. Mackey, Aaron Powell, Michael Ruepke and Kris Ruepke; sophomores Zach Calhoun, Kevin Clarke, Tim Palincsar, Ryan Provost and Ryan Rummel; and freshman Jason Walls.

**Basketball—**

Junior Joey Shank; and freshmen Cody Dotson-Lara and Devin Gibson.

**Women’s Basketball—**

Senior Tia Bogan; juniors Andrew Garcia, Kara McKey and Roba Pavlacky; sophomores Regan Burks and Courtney Laing; and freshman Whitney Balch.

**Men’s Golf—**

Seniors Sean Burch, Thomas Karray and Philip Krohn; and junior Kyle Collins.

**Women’s Golf—**

Senior Michaela Kowalcik, junior Laeni Bendzik and Michelle Dotson-Lara; and freshmen Bobmanuel and Aimee Jonas.

What’s the latest?

Go to www.utsa.edu for the latest Roadrunners sports
“I love listening to Carlos Santana recordings. You know why?” Eugene Dowdy, the classically trained chairman of the music department and conductor of the UTSA orchestra, asks his students during one of the first History and Styles of Rock classes this summer.

Silence. None of the approximately 100 students in the class utters a word. So Dowdy provides his own answer:

“I can hear him turn it up. You can hear that on the recordings. He plays two notes and you hear the volume jump up because he reached out and turned up the guitar.”

The students look on in amusement as Dowdy turns up the volume on the air guitar he has made with his arms and hands. Most hadn’t been born—in fact, many of their parents were still in high school—when Santana became a Latin rock and roll phenomenon during the 1970s with his renditions of “Black Magic Woman” and “Evil Ways.”

The rock and roll class is a core curriculum course that students may take to fulfill fine arts requirements for their majors. The music department offers similar courses on more esoteric genres such as jazz, the classical traditions and Latin American music, but because rock and roll is more widely familiar, Dowdy’s class is popular with students who have never taken music classes and don’t play musical instruments.

The lesson this day is a review of many of the basic elements of music—beat, meter, rhythm, timbre, pitch and melody. “Pitches in succession, how they’re organized, that’s your melody; Dowdy says. “In fact, it’s one of the most important elemental components, because the melody is pretty much what we need to hear. It might have the lyrics. It might have the lead guitar solo.”

Never mind that at this point in the course, these basic musical terms may seem as foreign as Ancient Mesopotamia. Never mind that the students don’t know who King Crimson, Big Mama Thornton or Crosby Stills & Nash are. They will come to know these people and this vocabulary.

“I reassure them that the terminology that they’re hearing me use, I’m setting an expectation that by the end of the semester, they’re going to be able to use this terminology,” Dowdy says. “And I say, ‘Be patient, it’s going to take time. You didn’t learn algebra before you learned multiplication and addition.’”

The comparison with algebra is appropriate, because sometimes, when he’s explaining syncopation, rhythm and meter, it may seem like he’s talking about math.

“How many subdivisions in each beat? 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4; Dowdy asks the class, when discussing compound meter and Led Zeppelin’s “Whole Lotta Love.” “And sometimes it might be hard to count that, but if you actually just let the beat wash over you a little bit, it will start to become clear to you.”

A little by little, the students learn, as they learn to let the concepts wash over them, they begin to think more deeply and carefully about music.

“Before this class, I would listen for the melody unconsciously and the lyrics consciously and see if they were well thought out,” says Nathan Babacalva, a 19-year-old junior biology major who plans to apply to medical school. His favorite band is the Arctic Monkeys. “I really could not hear the different, unique sounds of the piece, even if it was just the rhythm guitar or the bass guitar. Now, I find it easier to hear those instruments and more in the short time I’ve been attending Dowdy’s class.”

The students are required to maintain a journal in which they describe their personal responses to the music, using the terminology, analytical methods, and other ideas from the course. An annotated research assignment (which includes the option of attending and analyzing a rock concert) also helps students solidify what they’re learning. The main source of reading material for the course is a textbook written by former UTSA music professors Joe Stuessy and Scott D. Lipscomb, Rock and Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development.

Stuessy, the former chairman of the music department, had taught the rock and roll class for many years before he asked Dowdy to help with teaching the popular course 10 years ago. He and Lipscomb developed the foundation for the playlist that Dowdy modifies and uses.

Human resources major LezAnn Jones says that when she does her homework for the class, she feels the urge to listen to the musicians she’s learning about, and to listen for meter, rhythm and pitch. So, she hops online.

“It’s a little bit challenging,” says Jones, a 21-year-old junior. “[The class] has parts where I’m going, ‘OK, what?’ because I’m not musically inclined and was never into music other than to just listen to it. All I ever noticed were the words, and now he’s telling me to break it down and try to listen to the different instruments… So it’s been interesting. But I’ve learned to listen to music differently.”

By the end of the semester, the students will have grasped the basic musical components, learned how the 12-bar blues and the peacetime prosperity of the 1950s contributed to the birth of rock and roll, and studied the way rock and roll splintered into various subgenres in the 1970s, Dowdy says.

“There are people who know so much more about rock music than I do… What I am really interested in doing is teaching about music through rock and roll,” says Dowdy, who will step down as chairman of the department this fall to make more time for teaching. “It’s not just a class about all the great rock music we can listen to and here’s how much money they made. We talk about all those things. But we talk a lot about music and musical forms. That to me is what makes my course interesting to my students.”

When Dowdy reaches over to the computer to play snippets of music, or uses the electric keyboard in his classroom to explain major and minor chords, the students perk up.

“It sounds kind of cheesy, but if it sounds kind of happy it’s a major chord,” Dowdy tells them, illustrating his point on the piano’s white keys. “And if it sounds kind of unhappy it’s minor.” he says, including one of the black keys in the mix. He repeats the sounds. “The students seem to be getting it.”

WEB EXTRA: Take a peek at the playlist Eugene Dowdy uses in History and Styles of Rock to see if your favorite tune made the list. www.utsa.edu/sombrilla
This is a story about a fifth-grade teacher in Soweto, South Africa. One day the teacher gave a lesson about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. One of her students, a young girl who had recently lost both parents to this merciless disease, listened intently. Then the girl wrote a note to the teacher about her family—how she had become the sole caretaker of two younger sisters and how they struggled for food. She slipped the note into the classroom message box, but did not sign her name. Instead, she signed the note with the number 1.

The teacher was sad to read about her student's struggle. She understood the situation clearly because HIV/AIDS had also affected her own family. The teacher knew that there was help available, but she first needed to gain the student's trust. So, she picked up a pen and wrote her reply: It began, "Dear 1..."

"Dear 1 is not only a true story, it's also one of more than a hundred story-based supplemental reading books created through a unique international literacy partnership based at UTSA. The project is called Ithuba, an acronym for "Innovative Texts in Home Languages Uniquely Based in Africa." The word iThuba also means opportunity in isiZulu, one of South Africa's nine indigenous or home languages. And opportunity abounds in this cross-continental project, which leverages the resources of UTSA, two South African universities, two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and national and provincial government offices to create books in home languages and strengthen teacher training. By next year, 2 million copies of these books and accompanying teachers' guides will be printed and distributed to rural and impoverished South African classrooms.

Directed by UTSA education associate professor Misty Sailors, the Ithuba Writing Project is funded by a $5 million United States Agency for International Development (USAID) cooperative agreement that began in 2005 and runs through next spring. It is part of the Textbooks and Learning Materials component of the $600 million Africa Education Initiative initiated by President George W. Bush to increase access to education in more than 40 sub-Saharan African nations.

In addition to creating, printing and distributing books for children in home languages, Ithuba is also building the kind of institutional capacity that will sustain future literacy projects. To accomplish all these goals, Sailors has created a dynamic partnership of major players in South Africa's educational reform movement. These partners include the University of Pretoria, a century-old university with Afrikaner roots; the University of Limpopo, a historically black African college located in one of the country's poorest and most populous provinces; the READ Educational Trust, an NGO born out of the crisis of the 1976 Soweto uprising, which also creates books and conducts teacher training across South Africa; the Molteno Foundation, an NGO which specializes in second-language or home language instruction; and the South African Department of Education, the policy home of the country's educational reform movement. The DoE is the publisher for all the Ithuba books.

Supported by a small and dedicated staff at UTSA, Sailors oversees a project that she herself might describe, employing a favorite descriptor, as "amazingly complex.

In addition, she has the support of fellow College of Education and Human Development faculty members Miriam Martinez, Runyanne Henkin, Jennifer Thornton and Elza Ruiz, as well as Jim Hoffman and Deborah Horan of UT Austin. Also working on the project are other faculty associated with Johns Hopkins University, UC Berkeley, and the University of Boulder. Additionally, more than dozen classroom teachers in the San Antonio area also participate. "It's a challenge for us to organize and coordinate all the human resources that are involved in this project," says Sailors, who has made many a phone call at 2 a.m. in order to reach her South African colleagues at the beginning of their business day, not to mention logging well over a dozen overseas trips to date.

60 kids and one big book

A former elementary school teacher and newly tenured professor, Sailors brings the organizational talents of a classroom teacher and the intellectual rigor of an academician to Ithuba. When she speaks about her work in South Africa, Sailors exudes a heartfelt gratitude for the teachers who are educating a new generation of students free from apartheid.

"They are a country of absolute hope," she says.

She also brings a great deal of practical experience to the project, having worked early in her career with Jim Hoffman on a large-scale literacy project funded by the Business Trust, a South African corporate and government partnership. Sailors' eyes were opened to both the struggles and the determination of post-apartheid South Africa to meet the needs of its young learners.

"When you found yourself in classrooms where there were books," she recalls, "(a), it didn't happen very often, or (b), it was one big book. There were 60 kids with a big book, and the kids never had a book in their hands. And when you did find books in classrooms, there were maybe 10 for the whole class to share."

Books of all kinds are rare in South Africa's schools, Sailors says. On one of her first trips to that country, she witnessed a ritual that dramatized both the value and the vulnerability of this scarce resource. A young boy was carrying a stack of books. As he was walking, "there were about 10 kids around him, who kind of looked like bodyguards," says Sailors. When she asked what the children were doing, she was told that those were the only books the school owned, and that they had to be locked up at night or they likely would be stolen and burned for cooking fires.

Sailors later learned that this situation was not unusual in many poor areas of South Africa. That was confirmed through her ongoing work in South Africa and by one of her own staff members, a UTSA student from South Africa named Teko nHalpho. While a student at San Antonio College, nHalpho had read about the Ithuba project in the newspaper. He sent an e-mail to Sailors commending her on her work and giving a personal testimony as to the project's importance.

"I attended a school built by the U.N. with no educational resources to use," he wrote. "A school with a [a] dirt floor and a dim classroom without electricity, no pencils nor pens, no paper nor textbooks and a chalkboard with no chalk. I learned my lessons as lectures from a teacher with one book during my primary education. It wasn't till 1999 that I owned my first textbook."
The e-mail continued, “I’m a witness and agree with the article that books are a luxury or a talisman to South African children. In my school they were locked at the principal’s house every last Friday of the month and also during every school holiday.”

In a part of the world where too many resources are scarce—food, medicine, money—Sailors was overwhelmed that schoolchildren and teachers went to such lengths to protect books, a symbol of opportunity. When the request for proposals to participate in the textbook component of the Africa Education Initiative came through UTSA’s Office of Sponsored Programs in 2004, Sailors jumped at the chance to get back to South Africa and put her experience to work.

“I thought that I’m not a writer”

What’s unique about the Ithuba books is that they are being developed from the ground up by teachers who mine their personal histories, their students’ daily experiences and local oral traditions. The stories depict children’s culture. For example, the kind of idioms that we have in English, they don’t necessarily translate to the home language, and vice versa,” she says.

“So children are able to be more successful at reading and recognize themselves in home language–authored texts.”

The books themselves are simply but attractively constructed. Each compact (approximately 5 by 7 inches) text has full-color ink-and-watercolor illustrations. The stories lead to lessons in math, natural sciences and life skills appropriate for grades 4, 5 and 6. Accompanying teachers’ guides provide ideas, objectives and goals for book-based lessons.

Magdelin Modise, the author of Doar 1, was among the first teachers to go through the extensive workshop process that Ithuba requires for story development. She has 15 years of experience as an English teacher at Boskusile Primary School in the Mpuamalanga Province.

Says Modise, “I wasn’t sure that I’d be able to write [the book] because I thought that I’m not a writer. Then they teach us the steps to follow.”

“To create the books, all 140 educators working with Ithuba have completed a series of intensive writing and teacher training workshops in their home provinces. For example, in the rural provinces of Mpuamalanga and Limpopo where the teachers live so far away, training takes place at the guesthouses where Sailors and her colleagues stay. In the Gauteng Province, the third area served by Ithuba, the trainers and teachers work out of READ offices.

“Two weekends in a row the teachers will come and we’ll write the whole entire weekend,” says Sailors. “It’s nice. It’s relaxing for them, and you get to know everyone on a personal level.”

An added bonus for the Ithuba teachers is that they receive 10 hours of continuing professional development credits from the University of Pretoria, which they may use as credit toward degree programs. That’s a first, Sailors says, for teachers working on a USAID-sponsored project in South Africa.

“Ithuba has brought in teachers where they can talk about beliefs and issues that are locally inspiring and relevant,” says Leketi Makalela, chair of the Department of English at the University of Limpopo, and an Ithuba partner. “To have the teachers producing that kind of material—that, for me I think, is the magic of Ithuba,” he says.

A future for Ithuba

Since the ratification of the South African constitution in 1996, the government has promoted parity of indigenous languages with English and Afrikaans, the only two languages with official recognition during the apartheid era (1948–1994). The current policy promotes “mother tongue-based bilingual education,” says Carole Bloch, an Ithuba collaborator and coordinator of the Early Literacy Unit of the Project for the Study of Alternative Education at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

“The idea is that you teach children through their mother tongue for as long as possible—up to grades 6 or 7 in primary school—and you teach English well so they can start using it gradually in primary school and when they get to high school. But you do not expect them to drop their mother tongue. The best of both worlds is for children to learn both their mother tongue and English,” Bloch explains.

“There’s quite a dire need at the moment for materials development,” says Makalela, a linguist educated at Michigan State University who will complete an extensive internal evaluation of Ithuba once all the books are in the classrooms. Makalela is also working on a proposal for smaller, locally based Ithuba Writing Centers around the country where training and production of books for both primary and secondary (high school) students can continue to take place.

“While millions of books are being produced, it would be a sad state of affairs if this exercise cannot be retained and repeated several years beyond the current funding cycle,” he says. “It is only through availability of materials that parents can have choices to have their children taught through the medium of an African language and have the literacy challenges reversed in the increasingly complex world,” he adds.

Sailors sees a bright future for the highly inclusive Ithuba model. “Jim Hoffman and I just went to Ethiopia for a USAID conference, and we showed our books and made a presentation of the project with our South African colleague, Ms. Jenny Kinnear. Namibia wants our books. Liberia wants our books. Uganda is interested in working with us. We’ve talked to some people in ETHIOPIA who do book-based learning. And in Tanzania,” Sailors says.

UTSA President Ricardo Romo has been following the project closely, traveling to Ghana for the official launch last year and planning another trip to South Africa this August. He sees Ithuba as building UTSA’s capacity for global outreach. “For us, it’s just another example of positioning ourselves globally, and making connections in our flat world,” he says. “In the spirit of preparing our students better, we have to be ever more prepared.”

WEB EXTRA: Go to www.utsa.edu/sombrilla to hear from some of the South African teachers participating in the Ithuba Writing Project.
As a children’s music teacher at St. Thomas Episcopal School in San Antonio, Teresa Gray relies heavily on her voice. So it was a great challenge when last year she began to suffer from hoarseness and voice fatigue. As the problem worsened, she could sing for only 10 minutes before having to stop.

"A good therapist can help a person find an appropriate pitch to speak at, or help a person who is overly aggressive with words that start with vowels to use words like ‘happy Halloween’ or ‘hello’ to get them to learn to start speaking out more easily,” said Gray, who has suffered from a voice box injury.

Voice problems arise because teachers must speak frequently and often loudly, which puts them at risk, says Nix. Like Gray, some may begin to overuse one vocal cord to compensate for weaknesses in the other. Others develop pathologies on the vocal cords, such as cysts or polyps, which are like fluid-filled blisters. The result is fatigue, hoarseness and loss of one’s voice. Those who shout or scream can even develop vocal cord hemorrhages. Worst-case scenarios may require surgery.

"In the case of a cyst or a vocal cord polyp, there’s usually a period of being on anti-inflammatory drugs," Nix says. "You would be on complete vocal rest for 10 days with absolutely no talking. After the rest period, you would begin regular voice therapy sessions and begin slowly building your voice back up by only adding 5 to 10 minutes of voicing per day.

"It’s not career ending, but it can be devastating to someone whose occupation requires the expressive, healthy function of his or her voice.”

While someone with polyps might require surgery, a nodule, which is like a callous on the vocal cords, can usually be resolved by changing a person’s habits, Nix says.

Actors, singers, lawyers, broadcasters, telemarketers, counselors, ministers and politicians also are at risk of voice injury, Nix says. For those who require treatment, vocal therapy is recommended.

"Many types of vocal therapy used today involve making sounds with your mouth partially or totally closed, like humming, or vocalizing into a straw,” he says. “Therapy can reduce compensatory tensions and can also modify the way your vocal cords function, creating a more efficient production.

Bad habits need to be identified, Nix adds, to prevent voice injury in the first place or, if injury has already occurred, to prevent further harm.

"Speaking too loudly or too low is also a risk factor," he says. "A good therapist can help a person find an appropriate pitch to speak at, or help a person who is overly aggressive with words that start with vowels to use words like ‘happy Halloween’ or ‘hello’ to get them to learn to start speaking out more easily.”

Nix explains that forcefully pronouncing words that begin with vowels is the result of taking a breath of air and holding it back in your mouth partially or totally closed, like humming, or vocalizing into a straw.

Her disorder was a result of a partial paralysis of one of her vocal cords, so she unknowingly compensated by overusing the other. The condition eventually required surgery. "I couldn’t speak for three weeks," Gray says. "I wore a sign around my neck that said, ‘Recent vocal cord surgery: I can’t talk,’ so that people wouldn’t think I was rude.”

Gray is not alone in suffering a voice box injury. According to a 1997 study by the National Center for Voice and Speech, teachers in the United States make up 4.2 percent of the workforce, but account for 19.6 percent of patients seeking medical help for voice problems.

These statistics are one reason why John Nix, UTSA’s associate professor of voice, voice pedagogy and research, organized an international conference at UTSA on occupational voice injuries in 2007. It brought together about 30 of the world’s leading vocal researchers to discuss their findings.

Funding for the conference was provided by the National Institutes of Health.

UTSA will again provide a forum for this issue when voice researchers, including doctors, voice scientists, music teachers, choral directors and speech pathologists, convene in January 2009 to share their latest information at the 4th International Conference on the Physiology and Acoustics of Singing.

The economic impact of voice injuries in teachers is significant. Because voice-related difficulties result in lost workdays, payments to substitute teachers, voice therapy/rehabilitation fees, early retirements and job retraining expenses, the estimated cost is $2.5 billion annually, according to the study “How Much Do Teachers Talk? Do They Ever Get a Break?”

"Choral directors are voice experts for the vast majority of the population. They are on the front lines, so they need to have accurate information," he says. "We discuss what healthy voice production is, and what a voice teacher can do to help versus knowing when there is a problem beyond their expertise and to refer them to a specialist.”

To read more stories about ongoing research at UTSA, go to www.utsa.edu/discovery.

To view abstracts or videos from the 2007 Occupational Voice Conference, go to http://projects.die.utsa.edu/ov2/index.html.

Researchers study ways to prevent occupational voice injuries

By Rudy Arise

Voice problems arise because teachers must speak frequently and often loudly, which puts them at risk, says Nix. Like Gray, some may begin to overuse one vocal cord to compensate for weaknesses in the other. Others develop pathologies on the vocal cords, such as cysts or polyps, which are like fluid-filled blisters. The result is fatigue, hoarseness and loss of one’s voice. Those who shout or scream can even develop vocal cord hemorrhages. Worst-case scenarios may require surgery.

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Now, ITC has a few spooky tales of its own to share. Earlier this year, paranormal investigators say they found evidence of paranormal activity around two popular ITC exhibits: the Castroville hearse and the Caddo Indian cave. The group presented its findings to the public at the Texas Folklife Festival in June.

“What do ghosts have to do with folklore? Well, just about everything,” says Everyday Paranormal co-founder Brad Klinge.

ITC researcher Rhett Rushing agrees, and says that while ITC isn’t interested in trying to confirm or deny the existence of ghosts, he is interested in the fact that many people do believe in ghosts and also in the ways that different cultures use ghost stories. “As a folklorist, I deal with human beings and their stories,” he says. “Every culture that’s ever come to Texas has a place in their folklore for ghosts.”

The most widely known ITC ghost story is the Castroville hearse, which has been a center of speculation for years. Security guards have reported hearing voices, and an investigation using thermal imaging cameras, infrared thermometers, electromagnetic field detectors and digital recorders. Their techniques, Rushing and Brad Klinge both say, are similar to those employed by the stars of the popular Sci-Fi Channel show Ghosthunters.

“They don’t tell you your place is haunted; they try to disprove it. They come in with a skeptic’s mentality,” Rushing says. “But rather than disproving theories about ghosts in the ITC, Everyday Paranormal’s investigations in February and March turned up some unusual activity. While they didn’t obtain any video or photographic evidence, the Klinge brothers and their team of volunteer investigators did collect a number of audio recordings, which they refer to as electronic voice phenomena or EVP. Klinge likens the EVP to dog whistles; they don’t usually hear them because they’re on site but pick them up later on the recordings.

A digital recorder placed inside the hearse revealed a whisper, heard over the voices of the investigators talking in the background, that seems to say “not dead.” On another recording, an investigator trying to speak to ghosts in French (the Alsatians who settled Castroville spoke French as a mixture of French and German) is answered by a voice that she believed said, “J’ai appris frère est ici,” a crude translation of “I understand your brother is here.” The Klinge brothers think that might be a reference to them, but admit that they’re not certain about what they’re hearing.

“A lot of times, you have to guess what it might be saying,” Brad Klinge says. “The fact that it’s a disembodied voice—yeah, that’s 100 percent. What it’s trying to say I think, that’s not always so simple.”

The team was especially challenged in their attempt to translate one EVP that was recorded in the ITC’s Caddo Indian exhibit, which opened in 2003 and contains pottery and other relics from the east Texas tribe. In one recording from the exhibit, known as the shaman’s cave, a voice says what sounds like “koo-aah-aaht.” The team entered the phonetic spellings into Web search engines and eventually found a site that listed it as a Caddo greeting meaning “welcome.”

Also in the shaman’s cave, recordings turned up sounds of flute music, chanting and another voice that seems to say “buffalo.” But it is the “koo-aah-aaht” that Brad Klinge finds the most compelling evidence of paranormal activity at ITC. “It’s the clearest, loudest EVP I’ve ever heard in my life,” he says.

Rushing thinks the EVP collected from the hearse and the shaman’s cave are compelling, but he isn’t quite ready to proclaim the ITC haunted. “Do I believe in ghosts? Absolutely not—yet,” he jokes. “Nobody’s ever walked up to me and said, ‘I’m a ghost.’ But I’ve had some really weird stuff happen to me, and I have interviewed literally probably a thousand people who absolutely swear to it.”

Many people have heard about the Castroville hearse at the Institute of Texan Cultures and how the horse-drawn carriage’s doors mysteriously have been found open after being closed. Not as well known but every bit as peculiar is the story of Henderson Shuffler and his cherry-flavored pipe tobacco.

Shuffler, the institute’s first director, lived in an apartment on the top floor of the museum and was known for using cherry tobacco in his pipe. A number of people have reported smelling the scent in and around the conference room where his apartment used to be. ITC researcher and fullodium Rhett Rushing says he’s smelled the pipe tobacco himself several occasions. Two years ago, he brought his sons, 8 and 12, to the office one weekend, and, because they had never heard about Henderson Shuffler and his cherry pipe tobacco, Rushing was stunned when his sons alerted their dad that they smelled “burning fruit” in the building.

Members of Everyday Paranormal also smelled cherry pipe tobacco during a couple of their trips to ITC. Founder Brad Klinge says he doubts that Henderson Shuffler’s ghost is roaming the halls of ITC. Instead, he believes the recurring smell of pipe tobacco is a residual haunting—a playback recording of a past event.

“Our second director also occupied that apartment for awhile, and he also smoked a pipe,” Rushing says. “If the smoke smell is a residual haunting, we may never know which of the first two directors is responsible.”

By Rebecca Luther

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GHOSTHUNTERS

For 40 years, UTSA’s Institute of Texan Cultures has been telling the stories of the people of Texas. Not surprisingly, some of them happen to be ghost stories.
Tony Vilano ’90 leads historic San Antonio cathedral

BY REBECCA LUTHER

hen he was a student at UTSA, Tony Vilano’s job at a local law firm meant he spent a lot of time downtown. In between running errands and filing papers at the courthouse, he would stop in at the nearby San Fernando Cathedral to attend mass or “sometimes just to sit and be quiet,” he says.

“After the day was over at Groce, Locke & Hebdon, I would go over there and just sit down, just sit in the pew and pray before I went home. It was a place that brought me peace when I was working.”

Twenty years later, Vilano now is leading that church. Earlier this year, Archbishop Jose Gomez appointed Vilano, 42, as rector at San Fernando. Vilano began his new assignment in June, replacing Father David Garcia, who had served there for 14 years.

The oldest of four children, Vilano was born in Germany and lived in New Jersey, Florida and Mexico before his father retired from the Air Force and the family settled in San Antonio when he was about 10 years old. Even then, Vilano told whoever asked him that he wanted to become a priest.

But the path to priesthood, and even his conviction, weren’t always solid. After graduating from Judson High School, Vilano worked at a Diamond Shamrock store to earn money for college. He enrolled at San Antonio College, then transferred to UTSA, where he majored in political science. He hadn’t forgotten his childhood dream. But he also was inspired by the lawyers at Groce, Locke & Hebdon, which was one of the city’s largest civil law practices and where he sometimes attended the firm’s Bible study group. “They were using their gifts as lawyers as a ministry,” Vilano says.

After graduating in 1990, Vilano was torn between law school and seminary. His pastor put him in touch with David Garcia, who was then the diocese’s vocational director. In Vilano, Garcia says, “I saw a very positive-type guy. I saw a great personality. I saw a person who seemed like he wanted to help others. I think he was [interested in] entering the legal profession not to make millions off lawsuits but to really try to be of service.”

Fully undecided, Vilano joined Garcia’s vocational support group. With the LSAT test date approaching, he forced himself to choose. “God’s call was just a little bit stronger,” he says. “Before I knew it, I was in seminary, filling out papers and taking my psychological tests. [Father David] was a big influence on me coming into the seminary.”

Vilano says his undergraduate studies—particularly courses with Thomas Bellows and Richard Gambetta, who required a lot of reading and writing—well prepared him for the seminary. Yet he retained his interest in the law, at one point even taking a leave of absence to work in another law firm for six months. His time away from his religious studies allowed him to “put a lot of things back into perspective” and he re-entered the seminary refreshed and, this time, fully committed.

Since then, Vilano says, he has indulged his interest in the law by reading John Grisham novels and watching crime shows. Vilano completed his studies at Assumption Seminary and Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio. Since his ordination in 1996, he has served parishes in the Texas cities of Kerrville, Charlotte, Tilden, Fredericksburg, and La Vernia.

“The Fredericksburg one was the one that really impressed me the most because he was a Hispanic priest going into a principally old-style German town,” Garcia says. “Tony was able to handle it very well and be a great leader, and everybody loved him.”

The archbishop must also have been impressed, because Vilano was soon tapped to serve as director of clergy, working directly for the archbishop at the chancery (a position he continues to hold). When the time came to find a new rector, Garcia recognized his former protégé’s accomplishments and included Vilano’s name in a short list of candidates. But even with his and the archbishop’s votes of confidence, Garcia says, Vilano will find challenges at San Antonio—whi

“We can get tied up, as priests, with all the administration. We can get tied up with a lot of meetings … And sometimes we can forget what my vocation is all about. It’s about being there for the people and caring for them and reaching out.”

But even with his and the archbishop’s votes of confidence, Garcia says, Vilano will find challenges at San Antonio—the archdiocese claims as the oldest cathedral sanctuary in the U.S.—if only anywhere else he has served.

“The cathedral is very, very complicated. It’s multidimensional,” says Garcia, citing its activities with the downtown civic and business community, including blessings for community leaders, and its outreach efforts that include health clinics for the uninsured. The cathedral hosts more than 900 baptisms, 100 weddings and 100 funerals each year. San Fernando also produces a televised mass that’s broadcast throughout the U.S. and Latin America, every weekend, Garcia says, he met tourists who said they came to San Antonio to meet the priest they’d seen on TV. Finally, because of the cathedral’s prominence, Garcia was regularly called on by local media to speak, not just about church issues, but also about hot-button topics in the city.

“[San Fernando] is not a normal type of place,” Garcia concludes. “It requires a priest that can do multidimensional ministry and leadership. Tony’s going to grow into that. He’s got all the raw characteristics for it.”

Vilano says he’s excited by these new challenges. And while he’s committed to growing in his new role as a community leader, he believes that the main attribute he brings to the position is his genuine love of serving people.

“We can get tied up, as priests, with all the administration. We can get tied up with a lot of meetings … And sometimes we can forget what my vocation is all about,” he says. “It’s about being there for the people and caring for them and reaching out. Being with them when they loved one dies or going to the hospital immediately when there’s a sick person. Celebrating the funerals and weddings and baptisms.”

For example, he says, when he was pastor at St. Mary’s in Fredericksburg, he tried to attend every athletic event at the parish school. “Just seeing the kids and hearing them yell, ‘Hey, Father Tony!’ That kind of thing gives me a lot of strength and reminds me this is why I’m doing this.”

ANSWERING A HIGHER CALL

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A long with growth and new ideas, tradition and spirit have a strong presence on the UTSA campus. The university is building an identity and legacy that students are increasingly proud to display through the uni fying symbol of the UTSA ring.

“Being such a young school, we have a great deal of pride and spirit,” said George De Leon, a history major who will graduate in 2009. “The UTSA ring can tie us all together.”

De Leon was one of nearly 300 students receiving their rings in a May 1 ceremony at the Convocation Center on the 1604 Campus. Rising seniors, graduating seniors and nontraditional students participated in the ceremony, bringing their own meaning to the symbol of the ring and the act of receiving it.

After missing her ring ceremony in 1999 due to illness, Sandy Jimenez Husain returned to campus this year to formally receive her ring. She chose to participate not only for her own emotional reasons, but also, as a first-generation col lege graduate, to set an example for her three young daughters.

“In first-generation graduates, the ring tradition has tapped into pride and the ring as a symbol of that pride,” said Curt Langford, national director of the official ring program at Balfour and a company representative to UTSA. “The nontraditional graduate has more to overcome to get the ring. It means more and becomes that symbol of achievement.”

Vice President for Student Affairs Gage Paine took part in the ceremony as she describes as one of his favorites. Like commencement exercises, the ring ceremony is held at the end of every fall and spring semester.

“I hand rings to a wide variety of students and the smiles I get in return are amazing,” she said. “The students who choose to buy and wear a ring want to share their accomplishments with the world and they are proud of having a degree from UTSA. What could be more fun than to be part of that?”

In her remarks at the ceremony, Paine also touched on the meaning of pride. “I think pride in your accomplishments at UTSA, as symbolized by your ring, falls under the definition of reasonable and justifiable self-respect,” she said. “So be proud.”

In addition to the symbolic value, recipients place on their rings, the imagery on the ring itself represents the university, the city and the state. Ms. UTSA 2008 Jessica Beemer pointed out the Sombrilla on the ring’s left Shank, describing it as a center piece and gathering place critical to the university. The Alamo on its right Shank, she said, shows pride in the landmark and the city. To Beemer, the book and shield on the ring’s crown symbolize dedication to studies.

“The institution has restored the academic integrity of the ring,” said Ballenger’s Langford, citing the standards created only in the last 12 years of the university’s 30-year history. The ring is reserved for alumni and seniors and juniors who have completed 60 credit hours.

“UTSA clearly stands out among its peers in ring traditions,” said Langford. “There are more historic ring traditions, but in a new generation of schools creating a ring tradition, UTSA is clearly ahead of the pack.”

Students and alumni who proudly wear their UTSA rings have made remarkable achievements and made sacrifices to get where they are today. Indeed they are the ones that have advanced the tradition and spirit that helps make UTSA the institution that it is now and will be tomorrow.

The UTSA ring program is administered by the UTSA alumni office and facilitated through the UTSA bookstore. For information, call (210) 458-4133 or visit www.utsa.edu/alumni and click on “Official UTSA Ring.”

—James Benavides

WEB EXTRA:
To view a video of the May 2008 ring ceremony, go to www.utsa.edu/sombrilla.

81Rex Hensley
M.D., environmental science, was named Senior Level Civilian of the Year for 2006 in the U.S. Air Force. Rex is employed in the 59th Laboratory Squadron at Wilford Hall Medical Center. He is an administrator and technical supervisor at the Center of Excellence for Environmental Health. “Being named Civilian of the Year for Lackland ABP is a personal achievement for me. I was nominated and recommended as a leader of a core of highly educated and technical personnel. They were the backbone of this achievement,” he says. Rex supervises nine technologists, five of whom are UTSA graduates. Rex is an active gardener who also loves to participate in community fund-raising events, especially when the activities include running, rafting or biking.

85Patricia Escoto, B.A. in Spanish, has been named the new director for elementary curricula for Southwest Independent School District. Wayne Terry, B.A. in political science, has been selected for recognition in the awards edition of Who’s Who in Black San Antonio. Wayne is on the board of directors for the UTSA Alumni Association, and previously served as vice president, president and immediate past president. He is currently the recruiting manager for college relations for H-E-B.

89James Glenn Card, M.D., B.S. in biology, received his M.B.A. from Adams University on May 10. He graduated summa cum laude and is a member of Delta Epsilon Iota, an academic honor society E-mail James at jcard@apsamos.com.

90Lawrence F. Caron, D.B.A. in management, has joined UTSA in San Antonio. E-mail Lawrence at spert@utsa.edu.

WEB EXTRA:
The UTSA Alumni Association celebrated its 30th anniversary at the UTSA Alumni Gala on Aug. 16. To see a video of 2008 gala honorees: San Antonio Mayor Arturopert, city manager A.J. Rodriguez, W.B. Alamitos of the Year, and teacher and Olympic marathoner Lisa Hunter-Galvan ’93, recipient of the Distinguished Service Award.

Joe Escoto ’84, ’93
Back to the beach

T he first time Joe Escoto saw the ocean was as a young boy visiting the beaches at Padre Island National Seashore. Now, he gets to see it every day as superintendent of the national park.

Escoto, who received his degree in accounting in 1984 and an M.B.A. in 1993, is responsible for all park operations, including planning and development, public relations and seashore preservation. The happily married father of two credits UTSA with his success.

“Ultimately, I couldn’t have done this without the education I received at UTSA, and the opportunity to work for the federal government initially as a co-op student,” Escoto says. That opportunity arose in 1983, when Escoto received word from the career services office about a position at Brooks Air Force Base. “I worked full time then want to school full time, alternating semesters until I graduated,” he explains. “Completing the program afforded me a permanent job. That was one of the benefits, that once you finish the program you could noncompetitively be appointed to a job with the federal government. Without UTSA, I wouldn’t have been able to get my foot in the door initially.”

Escoto has worked for the government for more than 25 years. He was in the financial management sector of the Air Force for 22 years before taking a job with the National Park Service in 2005 as the regional compatriot for the intermountain region in Denver, Colo. “I was there for about two-and-a-half years, and this position for Superintendent of Padre Island National Seashore became vacant and was announced. I applied for it, and it was very, very lucky and fortunate to get this job.” Working for the federal government, Escoto says, has been a wonderful experience. “I encourage all students at UTSA to get out and visit national parks, and to consider a career with the federal government or public service. The jobs and careers can be very challenging and rewarding,” he says. “For example, when I worked for the Air Force, I had the opportunity to work on acquisition programs that I could see save lives or help save lives. As the park service goes, they have such a dedicated mission to restore these great resources at our national parks for people to come and enjoy. It’s rewarding to be able to do that.”

But nothing can compare to turning something you loved to do as a child into a career as an adult. Working at Padre Island National Seashore, Escoto says, has been a dream come true. “Whenever I go through the park, whether it’s just walking down the beach to the Visitor’s Center, I enjoy watching all kids having fun at the beach simply because that’s how it started for me—as a kid having fun at the beach.”

—Anita Stafford
Gregory Scott Ramirez, B.B.A. in communication, is a training, education and customer coordinator at CU Boulder Dining in Boulder, Colo., where he provides foodservice for Oklahoma State's athletic department and associated outlets. E-mail Scott at ScottRamirez@oucu- cowboydining.com.

Jennifer Games White, B.A. in psychology, received a degree in interior design from Saddam College in Mission Viejo, Calif. She recently accepted a design position at Halsch Design Group, recognized as one of the top 30 interior design firms in the country specializing in the design of restaurants and nightclubs. She lives near (outside Laguna Beach, Calif., with her husband of eight years. “As a young child, I remember drawing buildings and trying to sketch people, cartoons—anything I could,” she says. “I felt I was born to do interior design. I was the only one at home who was designing.”

Elvira Cervantes, B.A. in communications, is serving in an administrative support role for the microbiological sciences divisions of the Texas Department of State Health Services in Austin. The division provides training to prevent public health crises. Alex was a finalist for state Rep. Tommy Merritt, continues his ties with politics as the membership director of the Austin chapter of the Young Republicans. Alex says his future plans include pursing a political career as an eventual elected official.

Sarah Rodriguez, B.S. in business administration, is a customer service advisor at Hatch Design Corporation in Dallas. E-mail Jennifer at jroden@sas.umn.edu.

A.J. Rodriguez, B.B.A. in management and M.B.A. with a concentration in international business, ’06, was recently appointed deputy city manager for the City of San Antonio. The responsibility includes oversight of economic development, parks and recreation, tourism and intergovernmental affairs. A.J. generally serves as president and CEO of the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Cynthia Schwarzen, B.B.A. in accounting, is a senior accountant at UTSA and has worked for the university for seven and a half years. In 2007, she received the Celebrate Excellence award presented by the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration in recognition of her work in helping to create and implement new accounting, human resource, and financial management systems.

David Brown, B.A. in history, is the owner of World Karate located in Leon Springs, Texas. Since 2001, he has trained students ages 3.5 to 73 in the martial arts, but David is particularly proud of the students ages 3.5 to 73 in the martial arts, but David is particularly proud of the students ages 3.5 to 73 in the martial arts.

E-mail Jennifer at jroden@sas.umn.edu.

Scott at ScottRamirez@oucu-cowboydining.com.
“Having 10 people give $100 is just as important to us as one person giving $1,000. It sets an example for other alumni who want to help out UTSA and creates momentum for the future.”

As a student, Jerry Anderson knows why it’s important to support UTSA and he wants you to know why, too.

Anderson, a sophomore prebusiness major from San Antonio, is one of 30 student fundraisers who work for the Annual Giving Rowdython, a student calling program that contacts alumni around the state and country to ask them to support their alma mater by making a gift to the UTSA Fund.

A proud Roadrunner, Anderson shares his enthusiasm with alumni by telling them about UTSA’s growth and the many exciting things happening around campus. “When I tell them enrollment is about to break 30,000, they’re stunned at how much it’s grown in such a short amount of time,” he says.

But, Anderson adds, it’s important for alumni to know that tuition and state funding only cover roughly two-thirds of the university’s budget and can’t keep up with UTSA’s projected growth. “It’s outside funding—including private support from alumni—that will cover the rest and continue to take UTSA from being a good school to an exceptional one.”

“Our alumni are really inspired by growth and the initiatives to make UTSA a premier research institution. They’re really impressed with that, and they want to give to that effort to make UTSA a better school, stronger and more competitive.”

The largest gift that Anderson has brought in was $5,000. And while he’s proud of that, he emphasizes that the Rowdython is about getting alumni involved, not just the size of the gift. “It’s about alumni taking pride in their alma mater and increasing the value of their degree in turn.”

Anderson encourages all Roadrunner alumni to make a gift to the UTSA Fund. “When alumni make a gift to UTSA, they support students just like me,” he says.

To learn more about supporting the UTSA Fund with a gift of $1,000, $100 or even $10, contact Annual Giving at (210) 458-5135. ON THE WEB: www.utsa.edu/development
Most folks know that UTSA began as a graduate school, offering only master’s-level courses at the Koger Executive Center when the university started classes in 1973. It wasn’t until 1975—the same year the 1604 Campus opened—that the university began admitting upper-level undergraduates. And the first freshmen were admitted a year after that.

To mark the “historic” occasion of the first undergraduate students arriving on campus, photographer Gil Barrera shot this series of promotional photographs featuring Carol Wernette and Bill Reger in April 1975. The caption for these two photos? “He Said She’s Historic.” (You were expecting another tennis pun, right? Well, frankly, so were we.)

Gil Barrera Collection of UTSA Photographs, Archives and Special Collections, UTSA Library