

# SOMBRILLA

SPRING 2014 THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

i  
did  
it!

Under the Mortarboard

CELEBRATING 100,000 GRADUATES



**ON THE COVER:** One of the thousands of recent UTSA graduates displays her excitement on her mortarboard at the fall 2013 ceremony.  
COVER PHOTO: MARK MCCLENDON

**ON THIS PAGE:** Students celebrate at the fall 2013 commencement.  
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# INSIDE

## 12

### Kicking It

A simulator designed by UTSA students boils down the science of football's perfect kick.

## 16

### Under the Mortarboard

*Decorating mortarboards has become an unofficial highlight of commencement. As UTSA celebrates 100,000 graduates, meet the individuals behind some of the ceremony's unique mortarboard stories.*

## 24

### Saving the Past

In Iraq, two UTSA professors have joined the effort to preserve ancient sites.

#### THE PASEO

##### 4 TEACHING OUR FUTURE

The teachers and faculty at Forester Elementary exemplify the education pipeline.

##### 6 UNLOCKING THE CLOUD

Cutting-edge technologies come to UTSA.

##### 7 ROWDY CENTS

Students can learn money management techniques with this free program.

##### 8 LET THE WORD GO FORTH

Professor Ethan Wickman turns a president's words into music.

##### 10 LET'S CIRCLE IT

One San Antonio middle school is working with UTSA and UT Austin to change how students are disciplined.

##### 14 ROADRUNNER SPORTS

Sports briefs; plus a profile on Megan Low, the softball team's not-so-secret weapon.

#### COMMUNITY

##### 28 BIG UNIVERSITY'S SMALL START

Get to know a few of the first to graduate in 1974.

##### 30 TRUCKIN' TOMATO

UTSA alum Shaun Lee brings the farmers market to you.

##### 31 CLASS NOTES

Profile of communication studies trailblazer Dariela Rodriguez '00, M.A. '08; and Generations Federal Credit Union CEO Steve Schipull B.B.A. '89; plus other campus and alumni news.

# LETTERS



Ms. Lora Tomkins and Loki

## Beyond Expectations Sombrilla Spring 2013

I have to applaud Ms. Tomkins on her achievements. Many would have expected her and been perfectly fine with her giving up on life. The fact that she did not and in fact strives for excellence is very commendable. It is also commendable that her companion and pet Loki will complete his service animal training. This is a rather rare feat because most pets are not trainable in that capacity. It truly does

take "a special animal" to be a service animal. Congratulations Ms. Tomkins and best wishes for the future.  
**CHRISTOPHER FLEES**  
*Charlotte, N.C.*

## Sombrilla Fall 2013

It looks like an impressive group of young and youthful academics. Do UTSA and San Antonio proud!  
**ENRIQUE H. TREJO M.P.A.**  
*'06 Austin, Texas*



Congratulations on the amazing and appropriate cover of the Fall 2013 Sombrilla! I like the shot so much I've made it the screensaver on my computer. Thank you for the additional "Web exclusive" article explaining how and where this picture was taken. It really is one of the best Sombrilla covers I have seen--and I have seen a lot of beautiful Sombrilla covers over the years. What an impressive new group of scholars have joined our UTSA community! Nice job of introducing them to us.  
**G. D. BALL, PHD, Retired Lecturer, Department of Management Science & Statistics**

Best cover photo... EVER.  
**GEORGE BRISCOE '89**  
*San Antonio, Texas*

This was a spectacular issue. You are to be congratulated for putting the University in such an exciting spotlight.  
**KAY ROBBINS, Professor, Department of Computer Science, UTSA**

I really enjoy receiving the Sombrilla publication. The University of Texas at San Antonio was a great school when I attended from 1991 to 1995 and it has become an even better university over the years.  
**VALERIE A. CARRILLO '95**  
*Fort Worth, Texas*

## Boomtown, Texas

I think the long time residents should look at the impact this will have on the water supply. Look what fracking has done to other communities.

**GUSTAVO RODRIGUEZ**  
*Flower Mound, Texas*

## Still Serving

I was very glad to read about William O. Dawson III '10 efforts to help out our veterans. As an alum and active duty Air Force officer, I am full of pride that UTSA is supporting a student organization that supports our vets. After I retire and if I move back to San Antonio, I will be asking how I can help out the Student Veterans Association and UTSA's Veterans Service Advisory Committee. UTSA, thank you for supporting our vets.

**LT. COL. MARK CONNELL, USAF, '95 M.B.A.**

# SOMBRILLA

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AT SAN ANTONIO

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## Write Back!

We'd love to hear from you! How do you think we're doing? Have any comments about the stories you've seen here? Contact us at [sombrilla@utsa.edu](mailto:sombrilla@utsa.edu). Or mail your letters to Sombrilla Editor, Office of University Communications and Marketing, UTSA, One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, Texas 78249. Letters may be edited for length or clarity.



# PRESIDENT'S NOTE

## 100,000 Strong

This year's spring commencement is a wonderful occasion for the UTSA community to pause and celebrate yet another milestone in our university's history—the graduation of 100,000 students since UTSA was established.

Forty years ago, the first graduating class of 82 students fit comfortably in the frame of a single photograph. Today, we couldn't fit them onto a single stage! That first class may have been small in number, but the hopes and dreams of its graduates were just as large as the aspirations of those who received their diplomas this May.

To mark the occasion of 100,000 graduates, this issue of Sombrilla takes us to the past and looks to the future. It allows us to relive that first graduation, on Aug. 18, 1974, and tells the stories of some who were there. With the knowledge and skills they acquired at UTSA, these graduates went on to achieve great things in their professional and personal lives. In the process, they have changed the world.



President Ricardo Romo stands in front of the iconic and now refurbished Sombrilla fountain.

Of course, the story would not be complete without an introduction to some of our most recent graduates. We get to know about their families, their triumphs and challenges, and their future as educators, entrepreneurs and engineers.

Throughout its history, that's what UTSA has been all about—cultivating the future. Just imagine how that future is being changed by 100,000 Roadrunner alumni! Our students come from around the world, and then they go out and remake it.

While 100,000 graduates is a great milestone on the road to Tier One designation, it is much more than just a single achievement for UTSA. It represents

a multitude of achievements for every graduate who dared to build a better life and every parent who sacrificed in that pursuit.

So on this historic occasion, congratulations are in order for all UTSA grads and their families—every class from then to now.

Together, we have accomplished more than awarding 100,000 academic degrees. We have fulfilled hundreds of thousands of dreams.

And of course, there's more to come.

Saludos

A stylized orange ink signature of Ricardo Romo.

Ricardo Romo

THE SOMBRILLA REFLECTED IN THE FOUNTAIN.

The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

# THE PASEO

A STROLL AROUND CAMPUS





# A Passion for Teaching

## EDUCATORS IN THE PIPELINE

BY MICHELLE MONDO

SINCE OPENING THE DOORS NEARLY 45 YEARS AGO, UTSA HAS PRODUCED LEADERS, WORKERS, ACTIVISTS AND EDUCATORS WHO CONTINUE TO IMPACT THEIR COMMUNITIES. THE FACULTY AND STAFF AT FORESTER ELEMENTARY PROVIDE JUST ONE EXAMPLE.

Inside room C104 at Forester Elementary School, the Dragon Drummers accompany the children's choir as they rehearse a song that will be performed at the school's annual fine arts night.

Veteran teacher Eddie Cavazos sits in a chair surrounded by the young musicians. Fellow teacher Kathryn Stoltz keeps the beat with a handbell.

"Okay, get ready," Cavazos tells the children. "Just the boys now."

The boys pick up their part while the girls patiently await their turn. Stoltz occasionally sings along as she keeps time.

Cavazos '82, M.M. '92, has been teaching elementary school in San Antonio for 30 years and still has passion for the job.

"I want to be planting the seeds and seeing where it will take them in life," he said recently, just before the rehearsal.

This spring, the number of UTSA graduates will surpass the 100,000 mark—and many of these grads, including Cavazos and Stoltz '06, are continuing the education pipeline that began when the university first opened, and that will continue long into the future.

Stoltz hopes to get her master's degree at some point, following the path not just of Cavazos but also of Forester Vice Principal Nicole Guzman M.A., '05.

"We have to provide opportunities for [the students] to experience music in many different ways," Stoltz said. "Then they want to be a musician forever. It doesn't matter what career field they go into. They'll always be a lifelong musician."

The goal of everyone working at the school, is to make sure the kids stay excited about education, whether the subject is music or math or anything else.

UTSA is a prominent feature in the halls of Forester, including on Wednesdays, the designated alumni day, when staff and faculty can wear university items, Guzman said.

**(FACING PAGE)** Eddie Cavazos '82, M.M. '92, leads students in a rehearsal of the song "Get It Together, Harambee!" in preparation for the Forester Elementary School fine arts night.

PHOTOS: PATRICK RAY DUNN

"That shows the impact of what it means to be sending out 500 to 600 teachers a year over all these years," said Betty Merchant, dean of the College of Education and Human Development (COEHD). "You get a critical mass of teachers who are exposed to similar ways of thinking and learning and best practices. They form a very supportive network with one another and that helps them stay in the profession."

Teachers who graduate from the UTSA COEHD have the highest retention rate after the first five years of their employment in public schools, according to statistics provided by the Texas Education Agency.

Merchant said the type of educator community formed at Forester is an example of a new commitment of supporting graduates throughout their careers.


"We are increasing our focus on working with teachers in the first five years of their career through initiatives such as those provided by the Academy for Teaching Excellence," Merchant said. "We're really seriously trying to follow through with our teachers when they leave. The superintendents, the teachers, have a lot to say and have provided advice on subjects like teacher preparation and educational psychology."

As those in the field provide feedback, the college has added programs and expanded to meet the changing needs of educators. Merchant pointed to the UTSA autism center, kinesiology and dietetics programs, and a broadened curriculum on educational psychology as examples.

"We prepare a significant number of educators," she said. "Their commitment to their community is unparalleled. To work with people who have that level of commitment is a privilege."

Cavazos said he always gets the same surprised reaction when he tells people he's been teaching for three decades.

The fact that his enthusiasm hasn't waned after all these years is clear at the Thursday morning rehearsal.

And at the end of the session, when they are asked who among them wants to go to college, all the young musicians raise their hands. 

“We prepare a significant number of educators. Their commitment to their community is unparalleled. To work with people who have that level of commitment is a privilege.”

—BETTY MERCHANT, DEAN, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



**(L-R)** Forester Elementary School Vice Principal Nicole Guzman M.A. '05, stands with music teacher Kathryn Stoltz '06 and Cavazos.



# Unlocking the Cloud

UTSA STUDENTS WORK WITH CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES

BY MICHELLE MONDO

PHOTOS: PATRICK RAY DUNN

Outside the technology world, what's considered an exciting development in the field can often go unnoticed. Talk of clouds, servers, stacks and racks may titillate those attending the Open Compute Summit, like the inaugural one held in fall 2013 at UTSA; but, let's be honest, as party conversation it may draw blank looks among the less tech-savvy.

Even so, technology revolutionizes the way we live, and the faculty, staff and students of the university's computer science department are joining—and even leading—that revolution.

"We are partnering with industry leaders to expand our academic and research focus to include the cutting-edge technologies and the problems that are significant to industry," said Raj Boppana, interim chair of the department.

Plus, with Google Fiber naming San Antonio as one of nine cities poised for expansion of its ultra-fast, fiber-optic Internet service, even more tech businesses could be lured to the region, city leaders have said.

Through its Cloud and Big Data Laboratory and with a focus on open technologies, UTSA has positioned itself to be in the center of the cloud computing evolution, said Paul Rad, director of the Open Compute lab and vice president of research at local company Rackspace.

Definitions of "open" can vary, but Google describes open technologies as those that are more transparent, adhere to standards already set by the computing community or help create those standards if they do not exist.

"We are in an interesting time," Rad said. "Everyone is moving toward the cloud [and] we're leveraging this."

For the uninitiated, cloud computing allows information to be saved online instead of on a personal storage device such as a computer's hard drive. The type of system needed to run cloud computing as well as the required speed and capacity to handle growth differs from that used for more traditional storage, Rad said.


The push for a certification lab in North America came from the Open Compute Project. The initiative was founded by Facebook to encourage industry giants to be more transparent and collaborate on hardware designs used for cloud computing.

The goal is to improve efficiency and cost while diminishing the amount of energy needed to power the goliath data centers the companies require. Facebook, for example, came under fire from Greenpeace for its use of non-renewable energy. The company and environmental group released a joint statement in 2011 that supported the Open Compute Project to help find energy solutions needed to run such large operations.

Rad said the certification lab works like a quality assurance unit to make sure the standards agreed upon by the project members are met. UTSA sets itself apart by giving students the opportunity to work on the certifications and customizations, he added.

"The hardware ships to us from all over the world for certification and cloud solutions, and as a result we have access to leading-edge technologies before anyone else has the opportunity to buy [them]," Rad said. "We are funneling this skill set to the market as well. We are learning it, enhancing it."

Computer science graduate student Mark Appleby, who returned to UTSA after getting his bachelor's degree in 2012, believes the work he's done with the certification lab and in cloud computing will help with job prospects.

"We are just getting our hands dirty and seeing how it works out," Appleby said. "I'm really looking forward to what we will be doing in the future." 

## UTSA tech gets noticed

For UTSA tech programs, 2014 was off to a strong start.

First, in January, the university landed the only Open Compute Certification and Solution Laboratory—designed to test new technologies—outside of Taiwan.

In February, industry leaders surveyed by Computerworld magazine ranked UTSA as the top school in the nation for cybersecurity and degree programs.

The next month, tech giant Raytheon Company announced a three-year title sponsorship of the National Collegiate Cyber Defense Competition, an event the UTSA Center for Infrastructure Assurance and Security launched in 2005.

And in April, the university announced a three-year agreement with Microsoft for sustainable technology research. Microsoft also made a \$1 million gift to support research and technology programs.



BY THE NUMBERS

15,953

number of "likes" on the  
UTSA Facebook page on  
April 10



# Rowdy Cents

MONEY MANAGEMENT MADE SIMPLE

BY MICHELLE MONDO

**F**or freshman Sarah Allen every cent counts. The 18-year-old nursing student holds down part-time jobs at Sea World and Gold's Gym to pay for her school expenses as well as her other financial responsibilities, like her car and insurance.

"I did take out a student loan and I'll have to pay that back all on my own too," Allen said.

So when she heard about Rowdy Cents—a program that teaches students money management techniques and financial literacy—she knew she had to check it out.

Research shows that money and the need to work are the top two reasons people can't finish their higher education.

Erika Cox, director of student enrollment services, said the program covers an assortment of topics including paying back student loans, finding free activities on campus for entertainment, creating a budget and the implications of credit.

"What we're trying to do is educate students more about, 'You need to think about the money you're taking out now and the fact you are going to be paying it back one day,'" Cox said. "The ultimate goal is to teach students how to manage their finances."

The Rowdy Cents website began as part of the UTSA Graduation Initiative, and Cox said she and her team have built on that foundation since taking over the program in fall 2012. They are experimenting with social media to help get the word out to students about the various services offered.

"We're in the infancy stage of the program," Cox said. "[We] started really small with doing different classes, some on credit basics, others on how to do a spending plan; writing a good scholarship essay is another one. Slowly but surely we're trying to do more with it."

A challenge is getting students "to be excited about money," she said, adding that program organizers have gone to freshman seminars, set up a Facebook page and touted the free classes and workshops online.

The program received a financial boost from the


"What we're trying to do is educate students more about, 'You need to think about the money you're taking out now and the fact you are going to be paying it back one day.'"

—ERIKA COX, DIRECTOR OF STUDENT ENROLLMENT SERVICES

UTSA Student Affairs Transformation Fund and the Family Association's Family Fund, with the money used to create Rowdy Cents brochures and expand the visibility of the service, Cox said.

For Allen, the advice has been invaluable. She said most of her friends don't pay for their own school expenses, so it was eye-opening for some to realize that managing money is important for all students.

The program has already helped, she said.

"I don't think I would have been able to save as much money as I have if I didn't go to that meeting," she said. "I would definitely recommend it to everybody." 

**Web Extra:** For more information about this service for UTSA students, go to [www.utsa.edu/moneymatters](http://www.utsa.edu/moneymatters).



Erica Cox

## BY THE NUMBERS

10,500

Twitter followers of @UTSA



*"Our project is meant to create a sense of serenity in viewers, like that of rolling waves against a shoreline. The light and shadow produced by the work create a natural phenomena effect. The light is used as a way to associate with a larger natural environment; the movement creates a feeling of natural waves."*

—Taeg Nishimoto,  
UTSA professor of  
architecture about a  
project he completed with  
Britta Moe, a Master of  
Architecture student, for the  
X Marks the Art program.  
The goal of the program  
was to transform vacant  
downtown storefronts into  
galleries for public art.

## BY THE NUMBERS

12

number of hours  
participants dance during  
the For the Kids Dance  
Marathon

# Let the Word Go Forth

TURNING THE WORDS OF JFK INTO SONG

BY K.L. RODRIGUEZ

The assignment for Ethan Wickman, then 37, was rather daunting.

Compose a musical tribute to honor the spirit and legacy of a president who was slain 10 years before Wickman was born. Arrange the score for an orchestra and 330-member choir to perform at the National Presidents Day Choral Festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Make it strong.

Wickman, assistant professor of music composition and theory at UTSA, received the commission in May 2011.

He completed the project in less than two years.

On Feb. 3, 2013, during the debut performance, the Kennedy Center audience erupted in applause after the first of five movements.

"It was an electric experience," Wickman said.

It was a humbling and gratifying experience, as well. Two celebrated composers had been offered the project before Wickman. One declined. The second backed out after a creative disagreement. The commission came to Wickman when he was teaching at the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire.

And this spring, a little more than a year after its rousing reception at the Kennedy Center, "Let The Word Go Forth" was performed at the UTSA Recital Hall.

"I'm excited that I get to bring it back here," Wickman said.

It took Wickman about a year to compose the five movements of "Let The Word Go Forth." The entire process took longer, however, and enlightened him in ways he had not expected.

The research, the composing, the revising and arranging, all of it brought him close to a president he knew only from books and photographs.

Before he put down the first note, Wickman spent months poring over Kennedy's speeches. He studied his inaugural address. He discovered oratorical gems on civil rights and space travel. He read the historic "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech, an address to Congress, an inspirational message on peace. Wickman dug even deeper, studying the works that had influenced JFK—from the Bible to Shakespeare.

As Kennedy's speeches came to life, Wickman tried to imagine the spirit in which they were delivered. He isolated oratorical flourishes. He studied rhythm and cadence. As he did so, melodies formed in his head. He set one line—We

observe today a celebration of freedom—against chords. Then he did the same with another line.

"You think, 'I know where this is going melodically and harmonically,'" he said. "And it tells you kind of how the melody needs to bend around the next few sentences."

Wickman did not simply set lines to music. He wrapped music around entire paragraphs, notes rising and falling, bending and twisting through words that resonate in history: Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country.

He composed the second movement first, selecting passages from speeches on space exploration—We choose to go to the moon in this decade for knowledge and peace. On this adventure we embark—and setting them to music.

Wickman followed the second movement with the first. He proceeded to the third and composed the final two in order. The music, from opening note to double bar, covers 23 minutes. The words span three years of a truncated presidency.

The piece soars and dips through touchstones of history: the call to abolish poverty, the challenge to advance civil rights. Haunting notes lurk in the background, foreshadowing the Soviet threat and nuclear war.

"Let The Word Go Forth" covers the assassination delicately. Wickman composed an elegy as a prelude to the fifth movement. No words, only music.

The longer he spent on the project, the closer he drew to President Kennedy. Wickman felt his vision, touched his dreams. He came to know the remarkable gifts and profound weaknesses of a unique world leader.


"He was a very conflicted man," Wickman said.

Composing each movement carried him deep into history.

"It didn't feel like a documentary," he said. "It felt like flesh and blood. I understood what it felt like to be alive in that moment. It was very emotional."

When unveiled at the Kennedy Center, the piece played to a full house. From his box seat Wickman watched the unfolding of a spectacular performance.

Video of JFK appeared on an overhead screen. Audio of the president's voice accented the production. The orchestra lifted Wickman's spirit. The choir carried him away. As the sound of music and applause swept over him, the composer became one with the audience, fully engaged.

"It was powerful," he said. 





Ethan Wickman's **(inset)** composition is performed at the National Presidents Day Choral Festival at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

## Web Extra:

To view a presentation of "Let the Word Go Forth," go to [youtube.com/watch?v=abSl6qAQB-w](https://youtube.com/watch?v=abSl6qAQB-w)

# Let's Circle It

HOW ONE SCHOOL COULD CHANGE THE STATE'S DISCIPLINE LANDSCAPE

BY MICHELLE MONDO



Students and educators from Ed White Middle School demonstrate a restorative circle.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTH EAST ISD, WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN TEXAS SCHOOL BUSINESS

Over the past 18 months, the saying “circle it” has become part of the vernacular for students at Edward H. White Middle School.

Born from a social experiment to change how the school metes out punishment, “circling it” refers to how the students and educators sit in a circle and talk to each other as a way of tackling conflict or disciplinary issues instead of immediately opting for an out-of-school suspension or expulsion.

The term illustrates the progress made at the

North East Independent School District campus since the start of a unique collaboration with The University of Texas at San Antonio and The University of Texas at Austin.

What’s happening is actually a form of restorative discipline—something that hasn’t been tried at this level anywhere in Texas.



"We've gotten an unbelievably positive response from students," Ed White Principal Philip Carney said. "It's given them a voice. They were coming to us and saying, 'we have conflict over here and if we don't work it out, it's not going to be good.'"

The proactive approach addresses conflict or disruptive behavior by bringing together those involved, talking about the issue and finding a solution. The hope is that by engaging students, they will be more responsive and responsible for their own actions. And in turn, off-task behavior will subside.

Outsiders are watching the process closely at Ed White, and Carney said he has fielded interest from other administrators. The changes there could end up providing a roadmap of sorts for other schools in the state or even nationwide.

"What I saw was we needed to do something differently," Carney said. "What we were doing wasn't working to get us to being a successful campus."

Carney decided to look into restorative methods after his wife, who was then a UTSA criminal justice student, told him about the restorative justice class taught by Robert Rico, a retired police officer and lecturer. Carney reached out to Rico, who in turn sought out Marilyn Armour, a UT Austin professor and head of the Institute for Restorative Justice and Restorative Dialogue, or IRJRD.

In fall 2012, the middle school embarked on a three-year implementation process to move from a traditional punitive approach to something more flexible.

Rico, who helped monitor the implementation's first year, said that traditional, zero-tolerance policies that result in high expulsion and suspension rates help feed at-risk students into what has been dubbed the school-to-prison pipeline.

A disproportionate number of those affected by these disciplinary policies are minority and low-income students.

"There is a correlation to when [students] get expelled they are more likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system," Rico said. "So that's the cycle we're trying to break."

The IRJRD is compiling information from each of the three years of the new program, and has released a report on the initial implementation.

When the process began at Ed White, approximately 82 percent of the 985 students were economically disadvantaged, according to the IRJRD's year-end report. Fifty-three percent of students of that class were Hispanic and 30 percent African-American. Student performance was well below the state average in passing state standardized tests, the report said.

In the first year of implementation, more students who may have been subject to suspensions were kept in class and off-campus suspensions decreased by 84 percent. There were fewer physical altercations between the students involved as well, Rico said.

"The kids were turning to circles rather than ending up in a situation where all they can do is fight," Armour said. "For the kids it really became another option."

The students were the ones who created the "circle it" form, which is filled out and taken to a teacher or administrator to request a circle.

Circles can involve a whole class, or just a student and teacher or administrators, to name a few examples. The students are encouraged to be truthful about why they might be acting out, falling asleep in class, stealing food, bullying or threatening classmates, or just being disruptive.

The first year began with just the sixth-graders, and over the course of the three years, another grade level will be added until all teachers are trained to use the methods.

The results showed the opening year was "pretty messy," Armour said. Restorative discipline is more time-consuming and requires serious commitment from teachers and administrators.

For teachers the results were mixed. Some took to the idea more than others. There were concerns about a lack of support from administrators in terms of guidance on implemen-

tation processes, not enough training and the possibility that students were initially using circles as a way to escape a more serious punishment.

"It's a philosophy," Rico said. "There's not a manual that says how you do it."

Several teachers described a less stressful atmosphere after using the circles to talk to students about concerns. One teacher documented how the circle helped her level with her class about standardized testing.

"She really pulled them in, in a partnered way, and used the relationship to say 'we're really in trouble, and we need to think of some way collectively to move this forward,'" Armour said. "And it's not necessarily that everyone did great, but she didn't come away from it frustrated and despairing."

The evaluations and teacher feedback will be used to make changes or address concerns.

Even if there are bumps in the road, Carney, himself a UTSA graduate in 1999, said the collaboration with the two universities has given his school an opportunity rarely afforded to other schools: to take on an ambitious examination of discipline school-wide in the hope of better serving the staff and students.

"We can say all day long that all the students should just show up, sit down, and learn but that's not reality, it's not that simple," Carney added. "We need to work in reality and live in reality and teach in reality."

"The kids were turning to circles, rather than ending up in a situation where all they can do is fight."

—MARILYN ARMOUR, UT AUSTIN PROFESSOR

**Web Extra:**  
To view the report, go to  
[utexas.edu/research/cswr/rji](http://utexas.edu/research/cswr/rji)



**MEET THE TALKING STICK**  
The talking stick is used to get students to open up and communicate about their feelings, frustrations, etc. The talking stick for Ed White Middle School is the campus mascot, the bald eagle.

COURTESY OF DANIEL SEGURA, NEISD

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Exhibit



PHOTOS: PATRICK RAY DUNN

# The Science and the Art of Kicking It

THE FOOTBALL  
KICKING SIMULATION  
AND HUMAN  
PERFORMANCE  
ASSESSMENT  
BY CINDY TUMIEL



**I**t is the ultimate clutch play—the last-second kick, with the game on the line. With his team down a point or two, the solitary kicker trots purposefully onto the field, the sweetness of victory or the bitterness of defeat resting on his ability to make the ball go through the uprights for a field goal.

The center snaps the ball, the holder grabs it, the kicker plants one leg and swings the other, and the fans hold their collective breath as the football tumbles for what seems like an eternity through space and time toward the goal posts.

Sometimes, when the stars align, the ball sails through the uprights, the referee raises his arms, the fans go wild, and the kicker is carried off the field as a conquering hero. But other times, well, the opposite happens. The kick gets blocked or falls short, or the wind interferes, or the kicker's mechanics send the ball sailing off course. The game is lost and the lonely kicker slinks off to the locker room.

Yusheng Feng, Ph.D., a professor of mechanical engineering at UTSA, has witnessed the scene any number of times, both as a fan in the stands and as a television viewer in his living room. He remembers a few heartbreaking missed kicks that cost his favorite teams a victory.

Feng, however, is not a typical football fan. As a scientist and inventor and the holder of two converted and eleven provisional patents, instead of wailing in frustration over the loss, he saw the issue as an engineering problem.

"I thought, 'We have to do something to help these kickers train,'" Feng said. "How do we quantify the components of a kick?"

Those questions have led to a prototype football kicking simulator that Feng and his students hope will someday become part of the arsenal of training equipment used by high school, college and even professional teams to hone their kickers' body mechanics, consistency and accuracy. More research funding and more work is needed, Feng said, but the basic components are coming together and have earned praise from a kicker and coach who have tested it.

"Coaching can be very subjective at times," Feng said. "I thought maybe we could come up with a simulator to give immediate feedback to the kicker to help him improve his training."

In 2012, Feng presented some of his preliminary ideas to UTSA mechanical engineering student Alyssa Schaeffbauer, who was looking for a research project to tackle during her undergraduate training. The idea caught her interest, and she worked with a multi-disciplinary team—undergraduate engineering students Cole Meyers, Jacob Kantor and Michael Lasch; kinesiology undergraduate student Ekow Acquah; electrical and computer engineering graduate student Aaron Stout and computer science graduate student Ehren Biglari. Health and Kinesiology Professor Sakiko Oyama also later joined the team.

Like Feng, Schaeffbauer is also a football fan. She admits, though, that she had never thought much about what makes a kicker succeed or fail.

"But now, this was my first engineering project, and I wanted to go all out," she said.

With a grant from the National Science Foundation, the team analyzed the basic elements of a football kick, and put their engineering minds to work, figuring out

ways to measure each variable.

In one embodiment of the simulator, they fitted the ball with accelerometers to measure its speed as it flies through the air. Rather than goalposts, they projected a computer-generated image onto a screen that contained an array of sensors to collect data on height, distance and trajectory and input those variables into a software program.

The goal is to supply kickers and coaches with instant feedback that will tell them what is happening with a kicker's posture and technique during each kick and help the kicker achieve consistency in practice.

"The fundamentals of kicking are body mechanics and consistency," said Perry Eliano, special teams coach for the UTSA Roadrunners football team. "What felt good and what worked? Then do it over and over again."

"Then, as a kicker, when I get to a game situation, I know what the perfect kick feels like because I have done it over and over in training," Eliano said.

Eliano and Roadrunners' kicker Sean Ianno tested components of the simulator prototype as the student engineering team developed it. They also offered input on other variables that could be measured as the simulator is refined.

While the "perfect kick" is different for every kicker, Eliano and Ianno explained, all kickers need consistency in placing their planted foot at the correct angle and distance from the ball.

"At least for me, it is hard to concentrate on more than one thing at a time," Ianno said. "If I am focusing on placing my plant foot correctly, something else might be off. The simulator can give immediate feedback so I know what I am doing and can correct it. You can look at every perspective of every element and figure out what you want to achieve."

Then there is the role of Mother Nature. The next refinement of the simulator will need to incorporate methods of calculating the effect of wind speed, Schaeffbauer said. The young inventors also plan to add high-speed cameras and infrared sensors that can help athletes measure finer elements of their own posture and movement.

The students and professor are looking for additional funding to take their idea further. They have a provisional patent on their device.

"I would love to see this get off the ground," Schaeffbauer said. "This is the first project I have worked on that has gone from a thought to a patent, which is really amazing." 🐉

## 2 Review

In one embodiment of the simulator, they fitted the ball with accelerometers to measure its speed as it flies through the air. Rather than goalposts, they projected a computer-generated image onto a screen that contained an array of sensors to collect data on height, distance and trajectory and input those variables into a software program.

### Web Extra:

To view the simulator, visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=usWRg1-Mtqs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usWRg1-Mtqs)

## 3 Analyze





*"We're extremely competitive. We play the game hard, and, regardless of who's in the other dugout, we typically show up and give them a good ballgame."*

**-UTSA baseball coach Jason Marshall**

*on the team's spirit. Marshall spoke about the team with San Antonio Express-News sports writer Jerry Briggs for a March blog post at mysa.com.*

## SPORTS BRIEFS



JEFF HUEHN, UTSA ATHLETICS

Joel Rubio at a match this season.

### MEN'S TENNIS

Joel Rubio and Tomas Stillman debuted at No. 16 in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association National Doubles Rankings released Feb. 11, the highest ranking in program history. The duo opened the spring campaign with an 8-0 record as of Feb. 23, including a 6-4 upset of Texas A&M's No. 20-ranked tandem of Jeremy Efferding and Jordan Szabo on Jan. 25.

matches (five singles/ four doubles) at a pair of tournaments.

### VOLLEYBALL

Head coach Laura Neugebauer-Groff led UTSA to both the Conference USA regular season and tournament titles and to the program's third-ever NCAA Tournament appearance. Senior outside hitter McKenzie Adams was named an AVCA third-team All-American and Conference USA Player of the Year.

### MEN'S GOLF

UTSA captured its second-straight Rice Intercollegiate team title on Feb. 17-18 in Houston. It marked the Roadrunners' third victory at the event and 23rd tournament championship in program history.

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

UTSA opened its inaugural run in Conference USA with wins against Marshall and Charlotte, the latter of which was the Roadrunners' best RPI win since the 2011-12 season. In addition, UTSA topped last season's conference win total as a member of the Western Athletic Conference.

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

In Lubomyr Lichonczak's first season as head coach, UTSA won its final seven non-conference games. It is the longest non-conference winning streak for UTSA since a nine-game streak spanned over two seasons from 2006-07 to 2007-08.

### FOOTBALL

Scott Inskeep and Triston Wade both earned second-team All-Conference USA honors and Codie Brooks was named to the league's All-Freshman Team following a 2013 season that saw UTSA post a 7-5 overall record and 4-2 mark in league games.

Eric Soza was selected as one of 16 National Football Foundation Scholar-Athletes in addition to being named to the American Football Association's Good Works Team in 2013. The senior quarterback also earned first-team Capital One Academic All-District VII, C-USA All-Academic Team and honorable mention all-conference honors and he was the league's Spirit of Service Award winner.

Additionally, Nate Leonard became the first UTSA football student-athlete to earn Capital One Academic All-America accolades when he was named to the second team in December.

### SOFTBALL

Under the direction of first-year head coach Michelle Cheatham, UTSA tied the best start in school history, 4-0, which included a win at No. 15 Texas. The victory was the first over a ranked team since 2011 and the highest-ranked team the Roadrunners have defeated. Megan Low hit

four home runs during the stretch, including a go-ahead two-run shot against Texas and earned Conference USA Player of the Week honors for her performance.

### WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Led by Nina Herrera's fourth-place finish, UTSA captured Conference USA championship in November, the program's first league crown since 1996 and sixth overall in school history. It didn't come without drama, as the Roadrun-



JEFF HUEHN, UTSA ATHLETICS

Nina Herrera runs at the 2013 Ricardo Romo Classic.

ners tied Tulsa with 67 points but won the head-to-head tiebreaker, 3-2.

Emily Perez posted the best individual finish by a UTSA athlete in 17 years and her performance helped lead the Roadrunners to fifth place at November's NCAA South Central Regional. The sophomore from Mission placed 10th and missed a berth for the NCAA Championships by just two spots. It's a UTSA best individual showing at a regional meet since Stacey Poole finished third in 1996.



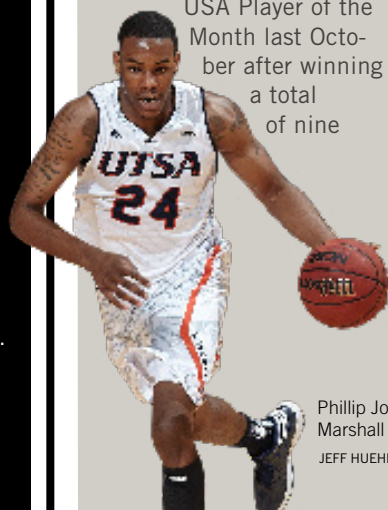
### //IN BRIEF//

#### Football games rescheduled

The scheduling of three UTSA football games has been changed to accommodate national television.

The season opener in Houston will now be held Friday, Aug. 29. The home opener against Arizona recently was moved to Thursday, Sept. 4, and the home game against Southern Mississippi also has moved to a Thursday and will be held Nov. 13 instead of Nov. 15.

Network television information will be announced at a later date.



Phillip Jones drives to score against Marshall University.

JEFF HUEHN, UTSA ATHLETICS





#### FAVORITE QUOTE:

*"The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will."*

— Vince Lombardi



#### FAVORITE ICON:

Ellen Degeneres



#### FAVORITE ACTIVITY OTHER THAN SOFTBALL

Actually, I love to play all kinds of sports, especially football and basketball.



#### FAVORITE FOOD:

All of my Mamaw's home cooking!



## SPOTLIGHT Megan Low

BY MICHELLE MONDO

PHOTO: PATRICK RAY DUNN

Junior Roadrunner catcher Megan Low had no plans to attend UTSA after graduating high school three years ago.

But that all changed when she was spotted by Amanda Lehotak, the former head coach for UTSA softball.

"She saw me play during a tournament in Houston," Low said. "She recruited me on the spot. I was originally going to San Jacinto College."

It was just three weeks before classes would start in San Antonio. Low, a Spring native, quickly packed her bags and moved to the Alamo City.

The decision is one the kinesiology student has never regretted.

"I love it here," she said. "Just the atmosphere of the school. The people are friendly. Athletics is one big family."

Her time as a Roadrunner has garnered high praise, including recently being named a

Conference USA Co-Player of the Week after this season's opener.

The team's 4-0 streak tied as the best start in school history. It included a 4-2 win against the 15th-ranked Texas Longhorns. The Roadrunners also swept Lamar in three games. The start was one the team hasn't seen since 2006, according to Conference USA.

In the second game of the season, Low tied the UTSA single-game RBI record with seven. She hit a grand slam and a three-run homer in one inning against Lamar.

Her grand slam—followed by one from teammate Randee Crawford—helped UTSA tie an NCAA record of two grand slams in one inning.

Low also was named a Western Athletic Conference All-Academic Honoree in 2013. The previous year she was named the Southland Conference Freshman of the Year and included in the Southland Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll.


She hopes to continue on to graduate school and possibly study sports management, but she hasn't firmed up any plans yet. Ultimately, she wants to coach.

Low could end up using her own path to inspire future players.

As a student at Spring High School, Low also was a member of the National Honor Society, served as student vice president her senior year and graduated in the top 8 percent of her class.

She won accolades on Spring's softball team as well. Still, she said when recruiting time came along she was overlooked.

Just like UTSA did for her, she too would like to help students who may not have risen to the top of the heap.

"My dream would be to work in a college environment," she said. "I'd love to start off at a junior college and take the kids that need (improvement) and turn them into that whole athlete." 







# UNDER THE MORTARBOARD

STUDENT  
STORIES

BY MICHELLE MONDO AND LETY LAUREL

It's a tradition with roots in the 15th century, when pearls and crystals decorated the caps of scholars who had reached certain heights in academia.

Today, degree programs are represented in a rainbow of tassels. And whether edged in lights, wrapped in fabric or topped with glitter, the flat, square surface of the mortarboard provides an empty canvas for students to share the triumphs, struggles and fun that make up the college experience.

Decorating mortarboards has become an unofficial highlight of commencement. As UTSA celebrates 100,000 graduates, meet the individuals behind some of the ceremony's unique mortarboard stories. >>>

PHOTO: PATRICK RAY DUNN



At the December commencement, thousands of students walked across the stage to get their diplomas. They are an example of those who have come before and the students who will follow. Get to know just a few of them.







PHOTOS: MARK MCCLENDON, PORTRAITS COURTESY OF LETY LAUREL

## ANTHONY IDI

B.S., ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Graduation day was no small event for Anthony Idi and his family.

His grandmother flew in from Nigeria and was joined by more than 20 other family members and friends from various cities, including Chicago and New Mexico.

"I was the first in my family to graduate from a four-year college," Idi said. "It was a big deal."

He and a friend worked on his mortarboard before commencement. The elaborate design honors his African roots with red, green, yellow, white and black stripes.

The gears symbolize his love of engineering, and he gave a gold glitter shout-out to his fraternity, Alpha Phi Alpha. And of course, he needed a roadrunner.

After walking the stage and getting his diploma, tears

welled up in his eyes.

"It was the feeling of finally being done and accomplishing something that was very difficult and challenging," Idi said. "That was one of the greatest feelings ever."

Idi said that high school didn't prepare him for the rigors of university work, so he had to learn good study habits and time management, which could be difficult when working to pay for living expenses and school. At one point Idi had an overnight job, so even finding time to sleep became an issue.

The oldest of five, Idi also wanted to be there for his siblings in Houston, whether to show support at a sporting event or to help care for a sister with a rare condition that required a lot of hospitalization.

"My parents, they work so much," Idi said about his mom and dad, who are both licensed vocational nurses.

Idi felt he couldn't fail them or the rest of his family.

In July, he will begin his new job at Microsoft in Washington, D.C. >>>

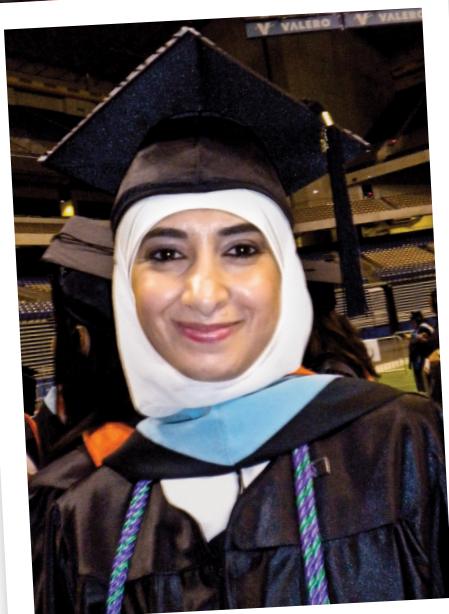






## SAJEDA ATARI

M.A., EDUCATION



**A** thirst for knowledge brought Sajeda Atari to the United States to continue her graduate studies.

"Education in the U.S. is really advanced," Atari said at the ceremony. "Although I got my master's in Jordan, it's not enough. I felt I needed to expand my experience."

A friend who already was a graduate student at UTSA encouraged her to apply, especially because Atari wanted to study early childhood education.

Sadly, that friend left San Antonio before Atari arrived.

"I came all by myself," Atari said. "It was very challenging at the beginning. However, I was blessed to spend an amazing time discovering San Antonio with some great friends that I have met at UTSA."

Atari earned her second master's degree in 15 months

and as graduation day approached she decided she wanted to honor her ancestry. She attached two small Palestinian flags to the top of her mortarboard.

"I love Jordan and I was born and raised there. I have my friends and family there," Atari said. "But knowing I can't go to my country of origin, it's really hard. It feels like it should be my choice. I carry my country in my heart. I felt I should carry it with me this day."

Keeping heritage alive became the basis for Atari's graduate project. She studied how Arab immigrant mothers can help their children maintain their language.

For Atari, studying outside of Jordan has opened up a whole new world.

"I'm a completely different person," she said. "Now I have so much that I'm taking back with me. I hope to share with my colleagues."

In March, Atari said via email from Jordan that after returning with her degree she became the director of the Social Development Training Center at ZENID, a nonprofit that promotes learning for development.

She's also creating up-to-date training materials, she said.

The English immersion at UTSA also came in handy when she returned to work and gave two separate high-profile presentations—one was for Germany's first lady and the other for the UNESCO director general.





## FORREST MCCORD

B.S., KINESIOLOGY

By the time Forrest McCord graduated from high school, he already wanted a break from the hobby that had become a profession.

The world champion pistol shooter had just helped the United States junior team win a gold medal in Bali at the 2008 International Practical Shooting Confederation World Shoot XV.

He was even offered a spot on the elite U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning in Georgia.

Still, McCord realized he wanted to do something different.

"I turned them down so I could get my degree," he said.

He didn't have a lot of time to focus on marksmanship while also earning his bachelor's. But during his junior year he did have a stint on the History Channel competition show "Top Shot."

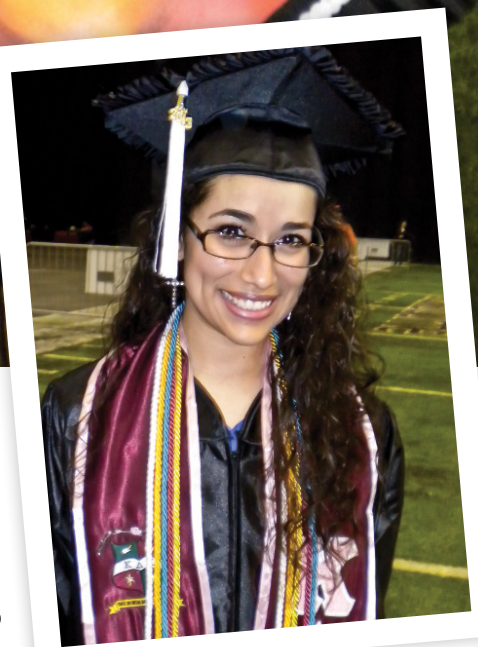
"I missed it so much," McCord said. "It was a huge part of my life."

The Houston native began shooting at age 13 when his mother took him to a gun range for the first time. Calling it his "niche," McCord said he had a fascination with shooting and pistols that quickly became his strength.

Walking across the stage to receive his diploma signified the end of his shooting hiatus. So, McCord spent a few hours the day before carefully crafting the pistol motif that covered his mortarboard.

He had temporarily given up shooting to earn his degree; graduating meant that he could get back to the career he said he was meant to have.

In March, McCord was waiting for his military paperwork to be completed. He said he hopes to become an Army ranger.



## DAISY RIOS

B.A., SOCIOLOGY

Growing up, Daisy Rios often looked up to the social workers who helped her through trying times.

She was in a mentorship program at her Houston high school and thought that when she got older she too wanted to be a mentor. Now that she has graduated, she's working at Child Protective Services in San Antonio. She plans to stay here to get her master's degree in social work.

Rios was the first in her family to graduate from college, so the December ceremony was met with jubilation by her family.

"They were extremely proud, especially my grandmother," Rios said. "And they were excited when they saw my mortarboard. They thought it was very cute."

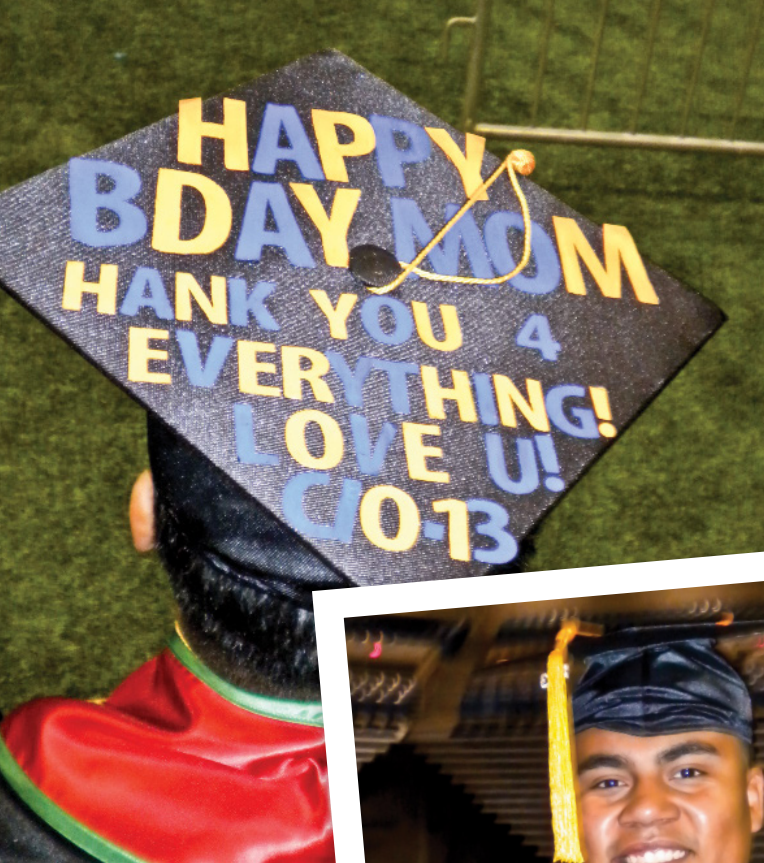
When Rios found a photo of a Latina woman that was a play on the traditional Rosie the Riveter icon, she knew it was perfect.

"I'm really in touch with my culture," Rios said. "It's a message to Latinos. You can do it, because I did it. It's possible."

She said she wants to help people the way she was helped in the past, and especially hopes to focus on minorities who lack resources.

"Education is a way out of poverty," Rios said. >>>





## BRYAN ALEXIS BARAHONA

B.A., PSYCHOLOGY

During his years at UTSA, Bryan Barahona would go over finances every month with his mother during a phone call to their Houston home.

They would add her disability check—her only income—to what he made working on campus. Anything else that came from other family members, like Barahona's uncle or grandmother, was also included.

"We tried to figure out my rent, plus car and bills and all the stuff she needed on her end," Barahona said. "I don't know how we did it. A lot of my family helped, too."

The group effort definitely made a difference for Barahona—an only child raised by a single mother from Honduras who worked at a retirement home until she had to go on disability.

Like other graduates, Barahona used his mortarboard as a blank canvas to honor the family and friends who supported him.

Since her birthday was two days before the fall ceremony, Barahona marked the occasion on his mortarboard and thanked her for all of her help. Although, he said, the "T" did fall off the message at some point.

With or without that letter, however, for the woman who was always there for him, the meaning was clear.



## GINA SOLORZANO

B.A., MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Like many of her fellow graduates, Gina Solorzano wanted to show her mother how much she appreciated all of her support.

"My mom always told me, 'You go, girl' when I was growing up," Solorzano said.

She decided that the phrase used to encourage her through major tests, sporting events or stressful days would be the way to thank her mom. With bright pink glitter, white crystals and leopard print fabric, Solorzano made sure her mother could pick her out in the crowd.

"It took about three hours and many blisters," Solorzano said. "And fighting with that glue gun."

She still had glue stuck to her nails when she made her way to her seat at the Alamodome.

"My mom was not only my support system through college but my best friend," Solorzano said, adding that her mom often made the trip from Marble Falls to pamper her when she felt down or stressed out.

"She was my backbone and my financial support. We talked every day, and she always made sure I was staying on the right path to success."

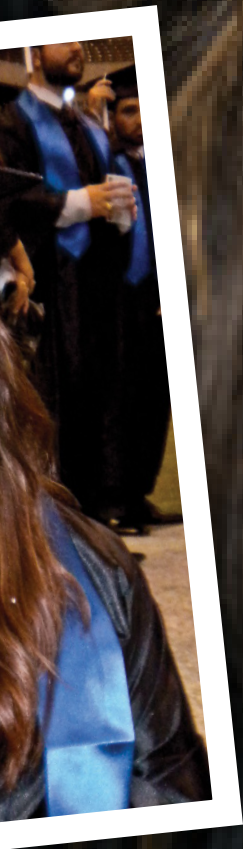
Solorzano, who focused on Spanish, business and communication for her multidisciplinary degree, is definitely on that path. She has moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth area for a new job. 🦋



### Web Extra:

To view more profiles of UTSA graduates, go to

[utsa.edu/commencement/spotlight](https://utsa.edu/commencement/spotlight)





# Saving the Past from a Modern World

THE CHALLENGE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

BY MICHELLE MONDO AND LETY LAUREL



Amid armed conflict, bombardment, theft, and damage from military occupations, conservationists struggle to protect Iraq's more than 10,000 heritage sites. They must also contend with the natural corrosion to both the physical and ancestral that comes with the passage of time. Now, UTSA has joined the effort to help preserve these historic areas.

A statue of Mubarak Ben Ahmed Sharaf-Aldin marks the main entrance to the citadel.





Away from the ongoing violence that usually dominates headlines about Iraq sits Erbil, the nation's fourth-largest city and the Kurdistan capital. The autonomous region has become known not just for its current political stability but also as an up-and-coming tourist destination.

And at the heart of Erbil is the ancient citadel, believed to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlements in the world, tracing its origins back to at least 6000 B.C.

But growing prosperity in the northern Iraq region has led to increased demand for the accouterments of modern society.

An influx of oil money and young professionals has helped change the landscape, with urban sprawl fanning

out around Erbil. There's even a burgeoning luxury housing market. The Arab Council of Tourism also named the city as the Arab Tourism Capital for 2014.

How to embrace the future without forgetting, or destroying, the past is a challenge faced by conservationists worldwide, and attention has already turned to Erbil.

So when UTSA College of Architecture professors William Dupont and Angela Lombardi were invited to take part in a program of training seminars in Erbil focusing on heritage preservation, they were eager to participate.

"The historic cities are very complex, because we have these very ancient sites and at the same time we have the new developments, and there is no integration between [them]," Lombardi said. >>>



(LEFT) Visitors often pose for photos at the statue of poet and historian Mubarak Ben Ahmed Sharaf-Aldin, who was born in the citadel and became Erbil's minister.

PHOTO BY YASH SENTURK, CYPNET.CO.UK

(RIGHT) Arches were used throughout the Erbil citadel's historic architecture.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY



Dupont, the director of the UTSA Center for Cultural Sustainability, is also the university's San Antonio Conservation Society Endowed Professor. Lombardi, who hails from Rome, Italy, and received her doctorate from the University of Rome, specializes in the preservation of masonry facades and traditional construction techniques.

With the program now in its second year, Lombardi will make her fifth visit to Erbil this summer; Dupont has visited twice.

The professors joined an international group organized by World Monuments Fund (WMF) to train Iraqi heritage professionals to conserve and manage their heritage sites. Both Erbil's citadel and Babylon—one of the most important archaeological sites in the world—are under consideration for nomination to UNESCO's World Heritage Site list, according to WMF.

Lisa Ackerman, executive vice president and chief operating officer of WMF, said

the agency brought experts from around the world including the United States, the U.K., Lebanon, Italy and Germany. Ackerman spoke in March at UTSA about WMF projects worldwide, including the work Dupont and Lombardi did in Iraq.

"I think that what's happening in the Kurdish region is that there's a tremendous awareness of the value of heritage," she said. "If you leave the city and drive out into the surrounding countryside, there are pristine landscapes and thousands of archaeological sites."

Under Saddam Hussein the population was mostly cut off from the outside world, and now the local conservationists are playing catch-up. Ackerman said the goal was to share information with Kurdish and Iraqi conservationists about international standards and procedures, as well as ways that other countries and cities approach preservation.

"I think that they understand that they were isolated from the international heritage conversation community and are eager to connect with colleagues," Ackerman said. "Our training courses are windows into what everyone else is doing in conservation. We really emphasized the experiences of people who worked extensively in the region."

Dupont and Lombardi spent most of their first visit in 2013 in the classroom. They had 10 students—archaeologists, historians and engineers. Four were Kurdish and six were Iraqi, so the professors needed two interpreters to simultaneously translate their lectures into both Kurdish and Arabic.

Dupont was able to relate the situation in Erbil to that of the local quest to get San Antonio's Spanish missions named as a World Heritage Site.

"The students were very eager to learn international standards and understand them," Dupont said. "We learned a lot about what their top concerns were. At Babylon, one of the biggest concerns was with local farmers who were constantly seeding, plowing and working the fields where there are archaeological resources."

One of the challenges, Lombardi said, was figuring out a way to address the interests of all of the students, since the younger Kurds were "a lot less focused on technical issues [than on] cultural issues, tourism, management. On the other side, the people from Babylon were very interested in all the technical issues; the communication, assessment and conservation."

The professors did get to visit some sites, including the citadel. Called a "tell," which means an occupied mound, the citadel has been built upon over multiple centuries, Dupont said.

The mound rises to about 30 meters, or nearly 99 feet, according to the High Commission for Erbil Citadel Revitalization.

"It's walled, so right in the center of the city there is this giant fortress that just rises up with very high walls around it," he explained. "It is very impressive."



(ABOVE) Restoration work was in progress at one of Erbil's historic sites.  
(BELOW) The minaret of a mosque that is at the base of the citadel.



The work at the citadel is extensive. Thousands of people who lived in what had become an impoverished area were evicted. Restoration will include adding basic services such as sewer and water lines, and the citadel will likely become more upscale.

"It was a fabulous opportunity to get involved in a place we would not otherwise get an opportunity to go," Dupont said. "Travel there is very difficult. Even for Iraqis traveling in their own country, it's not safe."

Whether Lombardi and Dupont could stay safe became the key to participating in the program at all. University insurance doesn't cover travel to Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran. The university's Office of International Programs and Department of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management hustled to get all the necessary permission and paperwork.

John DeLaHunt, risk and life safety manager in the environmental health, safety and risk management department said that he and his colleagues at UT System had about three weeks to convince the insurance company that going to Erbil wasn't a bad decision.

"This trip is about training architects and archaeologists all across the Middle East how to preserve their heritage," DeLaHunt said. "Really, it's our heritage too. It's Mesopotamia. And the bonds they are making are healing the damage of war."

Dupont, too, saw the training as a way to give back.

"Some of their sites have been exposed and unprotected and specifically damaged by activities that have happened in the war on terrorism, and not just by American forces but by coalition forces," he said. "I think people wanted to do their part to help make the situation better in Iraq."

In her return visits, Lombardi has seen the students in the first class graduate from the program. She reviewed the work they had created, and participated in the graduation ceremony.

"I think, and I don't want to be immodest, but we did a good job," Lombardi said. "The second time that I went there in June, everybody was more relaxed. The students really showed they were very interested, very involved and very eager to learn and be updated. So, from a professor's point of view, it was a great experience."

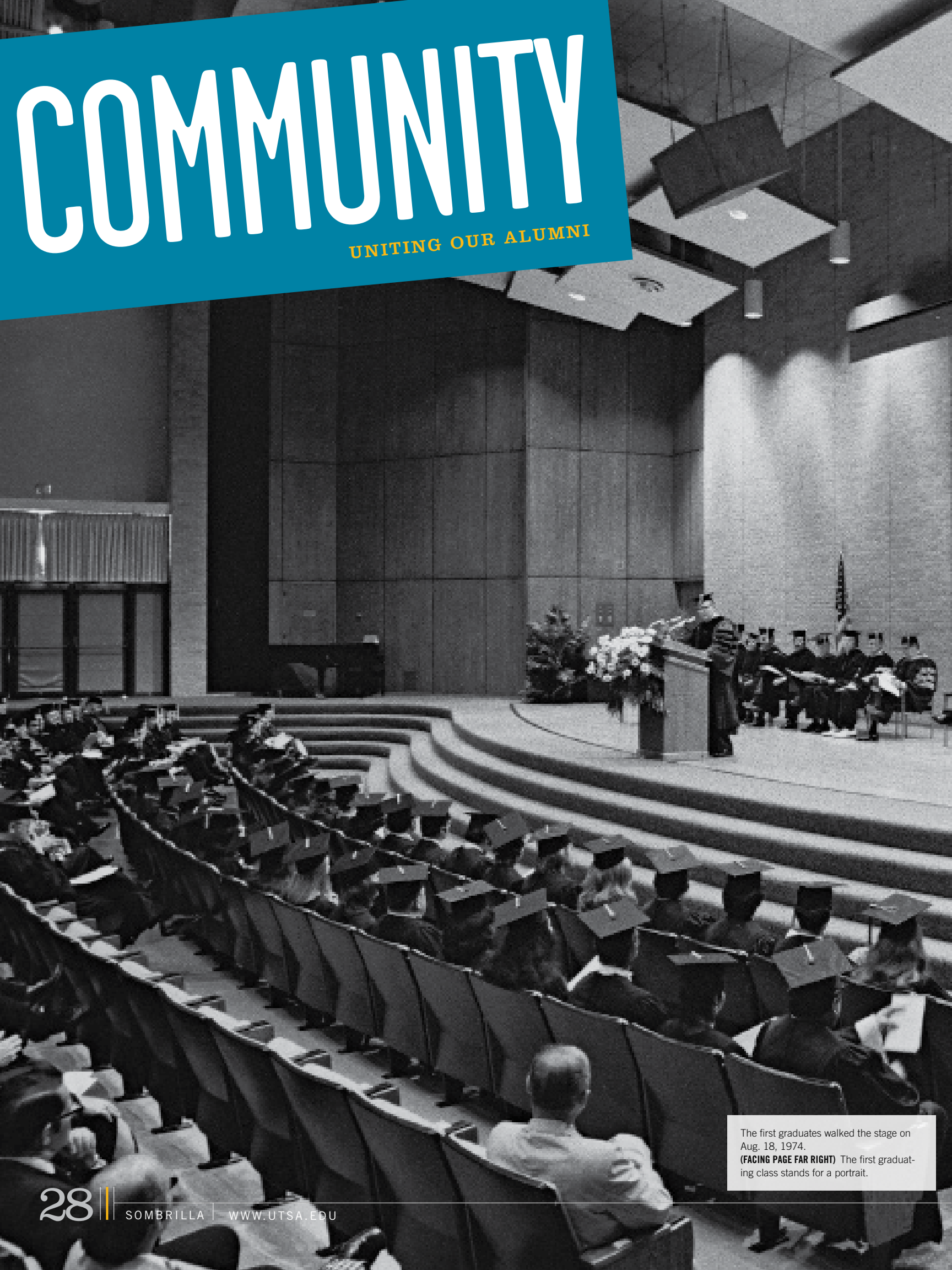


Professors Angela Lombardi (far left) and William Dupont have now visited Erbil multiple times.

“This trip is about training architects and archaeologists all across the Middle East how to preserve their heritage. Really, it's our heritage too. It's Mesopotamia. And the bonds they are making are healing the damage of war.”

—JOHN DELAHUNT, UTSA RISK AND LIFE SAFETY MANAGER





# COMMUNITY

UNITING OUR ALUMNI

The first graduates walked the stage on Aug. 18, 1974.

**(FACING PAGE FAR RIGHT)** The first graduating class stands for a portrait.

# Small Start for a Big University

As the university reaches 100,000 graduates, we take a look at the first class to earn their UTSA diplomas at the inaugural commencement ceremony Aug. 18, 1974

BY MICHELLE MONDO

After Gaston Kent received his diploma, his wife gave him a congratulatory kiss. The graduation signaled a new start for the couple.

"It felt really good because I was just getting out of the Air Force and headed to California for a new job," Kent said in a phone interview from his home in Los Angeles. "It was a very exciting time."

It was Aug. 18, 1974. And the Kents' excitement was shared not only by the other graduates and their families, but also by all who had worked to bring a state-funded university to San Antonio.

On that afternoon, Kent was one of 82 students to become the first graduates of UTSA. That commencement, which took place nearly 40 years ago, stands in stark contrast to recent ceremonies that pack the Alamodome over the course of a weekend.

Even though the campus hadn't been completed and classes were held at the Koger Center, a business park off Loop 410, that first graduation had a celebratory feeling above and beyond the usual pomp and circumstance.

The university's president, Peter T. Flawn, signed the first diploma as it rested on the back of Texas State Representative Frank Lombardino, a nod to the signing of the bill that created the school, according to UTSA archives.

The diploma was then awarded to Susan Bolado, who was receiving her M.B.A. after graduating in 1973 from Texas State University, then Southwest Texas State University.

An hour later, the ceremony ended. A light breeze kept the August sun from being too hot as everyone mingled and mariachis performed at the reception.

Yvonne Katz, M.A. in education administration, recalls fondly nearly all of her time at the university, including first registering with her lead professor, Wayne Laughery.

"He had two chairs in the room," she said. "And a telephone sat on one and he sat in the other. I thought, 'Oh my goodness, what have I gotten myself into?'"

What she got was a professor who stood behind her goal of one day becoming a school principal, something that in the 1970s was not that common for a woman.

"He said, 'We'll work up a plan, and you'll become one,'" Katz added.

Katz did just that, and eventually worked her way to becoming a superintendent, as well. As a UTSA graduate who was there from the beginning, she knew that the school would need a strong alumni association to grow into what everyone hoped it would. So she and several students launched the association that is now housed in an office named in her honor.

In 2012, Katz committed \$1 million to create an endowed alumni fund.

Not all of the first UTSA graduates attended the ceremony. Mia Enquist was one of those who opted out of the event. Having a master's degree in bilingual education was enough to move her forward on her road to teaching languages, she said. After UTSA, she went on to the University of Texas at Austin to earn her doctorate in languages.

As a student, Enquist didn't get to mingle much, given her harried schedule as a wife, mom and teacher.

"I was tired all the time," Enquist said, chuckling. "We had three children, and I was commuting from Seguin to San Antonio, so my plate was full."

The family eventually moved to Washington, D.C., where Enquist, then in her 50s, took a detour from languages to finance, starting her own business. That business closed in fall

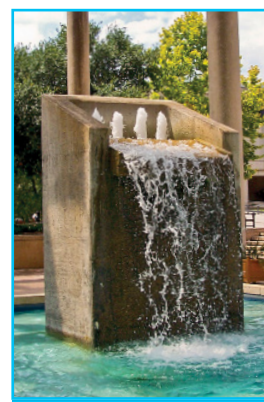
2012, about two years after the death of her husband, Rev. Canon Dr. Roy J. Enquist. The two were married for 57 years.

Now 85, Enquist is back to languages—Latin, Greek, French, German and Spanish. She currently is teaching English as a second language classes at the Washington National Cathedral, which is within walking distance of her home and where her husband was installed as canon in 2000.

Gaston Kent's new start at the Northrup Grumman Corp. in 1974 turned into a nearly 40-year career. He is now president and chief executive officer of the John Tracy Clinic, a nonprofit agency that helps families of infants and toddlers who have hearing loss. The agency serves about 25,000 families each year, according to its website.

He may not have put down roots in San Antonio, but Kent still feels a connection to his alma mater.

"Being at the forefront, it felt pretty good," Kent said. "There weren't that many in the M.B.A. class. We learned to work together as a fairly small group, and I remember thinking, I'm really lucky, because if I had gone to a really big school it would not have felt quite the same."



## //IN BRIEF//

### Flowing Fountain

The 35-year-old fountain in Sombrilla Plaza is flowing once again following extensive renovations.

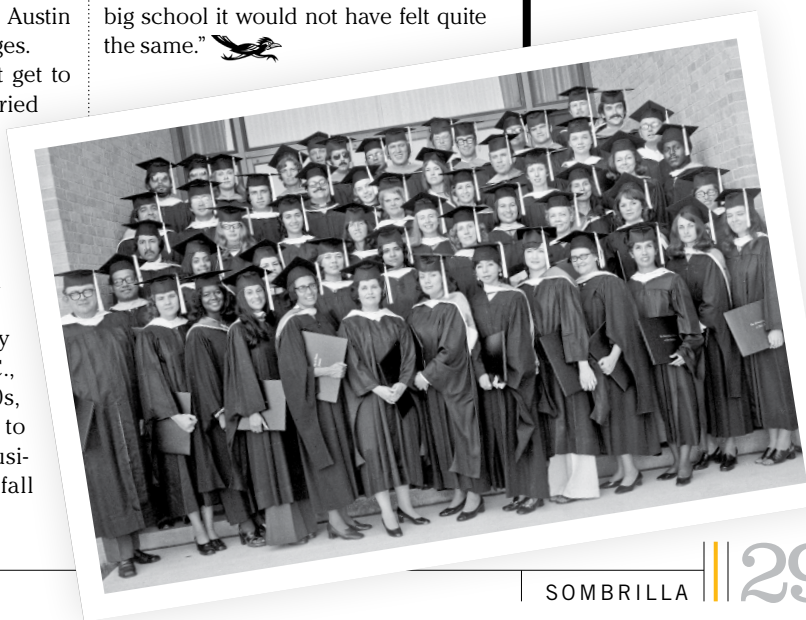
The fountain was turned on Jan. 10, and a re-dedication ceremony was held March 4 at the Main Campus.

The fountain is now fully sustainable and uses only reclaimed water from the air conditioning systems in the neighboring buildings. Students proposed the idea and now the fountain will not strain the water supply.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 1,400

books bought at the UTSA Bookstore for the first classes held in 1973 (Aug. 1973 Texas Times)





//IN BRIEF//

**Economic Impact**

The UTSA Institute for Economic Development generated \$1.6 billion in business growth for its clients during the 2013 fiscal year, the group reported.

The growth includes \$1.26 billion in increased sales, contracts and exports as well as \$350 million in new capital.

The institute provides professional business advising, training, research and strategic planning services to entrepreneurs, business owners and community leaders.

It is the second consecutive year the institute and its clients have exceeded the \$1 billion threshold.



# Truckin' Tomato

## ALUM PUTS FARMERS MARKET ON WHEELS

BY KATE HUNGER

What has wheels, is loaded with fruits and vegetables, and funds social services for San Antonians looking to improve their lives?

The answer: 'Truckin' Tomato, a mobile farmers market packed in a 26-foot trailer set for its debut in April. It will feature high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables, bakery items, snacks and juices from local farms and food producers in the San Antonio-Austin area, and will make it easier for people who might not be able to squeeze in a visit each week to their local farmers market, said Shaun Lee, the company's chief executive officer and founder.

The trailer will make regular appearances at The Point Park and Eats, off Boerne Stage Road, and at businesses such as Rackspace, the Weston Centre and Vision Works. Lee hopes to eventually be at special events such as marathons.

Lee and a group of fellow students in the UTSA Executive M.B.A. program created the Truckin' Tomato business plan as their capstone project. He was

the only student from the group to nurture the plan into an actual business.

"To be honest, I had no inclination to start a business when I went into it," he said. But the experience "awakened an entrepreneurial spirit in me."

Lee, who has worked with Haven for Hope for six years and has served as its executive vice president since 2012, had been encouraged by mentors to round out his expertise with a master's degree. He decided to enroll at UTSA, earning his E.M.B.A. in 2013.

As someone who has dedicated his career to working with the homeless to improve their lives through education and job opportunities, Lee wants the new venture to be an extension of that philosophy.

"I also have a real heart for people who need a second chance as far as employment goes," he said. "Meaningful work creates identity for people. If they are able to go back to work, it really restores their hope and dignity."

The business is a social enterprise, Lee said. In addition to offering training and jobs for Haven for Hope clients, it will send more than half of the profits from the first truck to the Christian Hope Resource Center, a faith-based nonprofit that uses a case-management model to work with people experiencing food insecurity. The organization also offers a food pantry,

among other services.

"We're going to drive revenue to them so they can feed hungry families on the West Side," Lee said.

Megan Legacy, executive director of CHRC, said the support from Truckin' Tomato will help her organization diversify its funding and raise the 30-year-old agency's profile.

"He has a big heart, and I think he strategically wants to move the needle in the community," she said of Lee.

Lee said the majority of the \$90,000 startup costs for Truckin' Tomato were covered by fundraising efforts, including a \$50,000 grant from the 80/20 Foundation and an online crowdsourcing campaign.

The message of the business will be included on the trailer's signage and in pamphlets given to customers at checkout. Lee said customers won't be moved to patronize the mobile market simply to support a charity, but because they will be getting high-quality products.

The trailer's daily location will be updated online and via social media. Lee sees more trailers in the company's future, perhaps bolstered by an online pre-ordering system.

"We're kind of viewing this as a pilot," he said. "We think that San Antonio could easily support at least three or four trailers."

## Web Extra:

To view a video about Shaun Lee's enterprise, go to [www.truckintomato.com](http://www.truckintomato.com)





## CLASS NOTES

### 1977

\\ **FIDEL RODRIGUEZ JR.**, M.B.A., has been named 2014 Aggie Lawyer of the Year by the Texas Aggie Bar Association. He currently runs a law office in San Antonio. He is a 1973 graduate of Texas A&M University and also obtained his law degree from UT Austin. The association honored Rodriguez in March.

### 1982

\\ **RICHARD DES CHENES**, B.A. in geography, recently published the second edition of his book "The Insignia, Uniforms & Equipment of the U.S. Army Balloon Corps: 1917-1922." He is a leading expert on the World War I Balloon Corps and became interested in the subject because his grandfather was assigned to Camp John Wise in San Antonio, where the Army trained balloon pilots and observers.

### 1990

\\ **DENISE SIKES**, B.B.A. in management, was nominated for the DallasHR 2013 Human Resource Executive of the Year Award. She currently is the vice president of human resources at CyrusOne, a co-location solutions provider. DallasHR is a nonprofit association with nearly 2,000 members and more than 1,000 companies represented in its membership.

\\ **BLAKE POUNDS**, M.B.A. in interamerican management, was recently appointed to managing director of Accenture's Houston office. He will lead a staff of approximately 1,500 and oversee developing local business relationships, expanding civic presence and fostering employee engagement. He has been with Accenture for 23 years, including leading the Energy Trading & Risk Management Practice for five years and serving on the Energy Leadership Team.

### 1994

\\ **KENNETH H. BENNETT JR.**, M.S. in electrical engineering, has been promoted to vice president of the Applied Physics Division at Southwest Research Institute, where he will

lead a staff of more than 100 engaged in research, development and testing in electronic, mechanical and chemical engineering; radio frequency; optics; acoustics; and sensor design. He was previously director of the Electronics Systems and Robotics Department. Bennett holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is a member of the Audio Engineering Society.

### 1995

\\ **VALERIE A. CARILLO**, B.A. in political science, is chief legal counsel for the Fort Worth Independent School District. After graduating from Texas Tech University Law School in 1998, she served as in-house counsel at Dallas Independent School District. Her peers nominated her as a "Top Attorney in Education Law in the City of Fort Worth" for 2013.

### 1996

\\ **DARRELL COLLEY**, B.A. in criminal justice, received the Outstanding Graduate Award, M.P.A., on Dec. 6, 2013, from Wayland Baptist University.

\\ **MARISOL PEREZ**, B.A. in political science, serves as secretary of the board for the Martinez Street Women's Center. Perez received her law degree from St. Mary's School of Law, where she received the Richard Green Spirit of Social Justice Award in recognition of her clinical work on behalf of low-income people in San Antonio and South Texas.

### 1998

\\ **JEFF TEMPLE**, B.A. in psychology, has been named vice chairman of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission Task Force on Domestic Violence, the result of legislation signed into law in 2013. The law calls for measures to examine and address the impact of domestic violence on the health of women and children during pregnancy. He currently is an associate professor and director of behavioral health and research at UTMB. >>>



PHOTO: ASHLAND UNIVERSITY/ALLISON WALTZ

## There's a code for that

DARIELA RODRIGUEZ '00, M.A. '08

**ON APRIL 15, 2013, WHEN TWO BOMBS EXPLODED DURING THE BOSTON MARATHON, RAPID COMMUNICATION WAS PARAMOUNT. THE JOB OF IMPARTING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC FELL TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, HEALTH OFFICIALS AND EVEN LOCAL MARATHON ORGANIZERS.**

Making that process better and more efficient is one of the goals of UTSA alumna Dariela Rodriguez, who is helping to combine health, risk and crisis communication studies into one program at Ashland University in Ohio.

Rodriguez, an assistant professor of communication studies at Ashland, has been integral in revamping the communications curriculum and creating Health and Risk Communication programs at the graduate and undergraduate level.

"We looked into health communication issues, [and] risk and crisis communication issues and pulled a program together—where most of these are usually separate," Rodriguez said.

The Master of Arts program is online-only, making it the first of its kind in the nation, Rodriguez said. It will launch this summer and Rodriguez couldn't be more excited.

"We decided to do [online courses] basically because we wanted to be able to give as many people as possible the opportunity to try to benefit from the program," Rodriguez said.

The university recruited top scholars from across the nation to teach the classes, and with a projected 24-percent growth in employment of health and risk communication professionals by 2018, the timing is impeccable.

The program garnered attention from agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and student interest from India after the program was promoted in the Journal of Risk and Crisis Communication out of London.

As she makes a name for herself at Ashland, Rodriguez said she cherishes the time she spent at UTSA and hopes to return one day as a professor.

Rodriguez earned her bachelor's degree in 2000 and a master's in communication in 2008. She completed her doctorate at the University of Oklahoma.

Rodriguez said the idea of what safe means and how safe we are has changed since the Sept. 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. No longer are concerns about risk and safety communication under the exclusive purview of governmental officials, the San Antonio native said.

"Everybody needs to understand how to communicate risk now," she added. "Your sports team needs to understand how to communicate risk. If I go to my rec center here at Ashland and I pass out—there's a code for that."

—LUCILLE SIMS THOMAS



## BY THE NUMBERS

# 47,574

LinkedIn members who list themselves as UTSA alumni.



### //IN BRIEF//

## Diploma Dash hits 30

On March 1, more than 2,100 runners turned out for the 30th annual Diploma Dash.

The 5K City Championship race helps fund alumni programs, services and scholarships.

The course takes runners through Main Campus and medals are awarded in a variety of categories.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 86

LinkedIn members who list themselves as UTSA alumni and are now Las Vegas residents.

## 2002

\\ **ROLAND RIOS**, Ph.D. in educational leadership, is the director of technology at Fort Sam Houston ISD.

## 2003

\\ **SANTIAGO ALANIZ**, B.A. in political science and criminal justice, has been promoted to partner with the law firm of Fisher & Phillip, LLP. Santiago also was selected as one of San Antonio Business Journal's 40 under 40.

\\ **AARON K. PARENICA**, B.S. in civil engineering, has been promoted to vice president of the Phoenix office of Bury, an engineering and design firm.

## 2006

\\ **PHAN TONG**, B.S. in biology, went on to Texas A&M College of Pharmacy and in 2011 graduated with a PharmD. He is currently pursuing an M.B.A. from UT Pan American and is a candidate for graduation this spring. He's now assistant manager at Scott & White Center for Diagnostic Medicine-Pharmacy, in Temple. A fervent football fan, he has been a season ticket holder since the first UTSA season.

## 2012

\\ **KRYSTAL CANTU**, B.A. in communications, was featured in the Dec. 27 issue of the San Antonio Express-News for being a fitness inspiration. The Rackspace employee lost her arm in an auto accident but continued doing CrossFit. Shortly after the accident, she was invited to Virginia to compete in the Working Wounded Games for people with disabilities, and took part in the Gladiator Rock 'n' Run.

\\ **KATHARINE CAREY**, M.A. in art history, is director of education at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio. She was named the 2013 Museum Educator of the Year.



PHOTO: PATRICK RAY DUNN

# BANKING WITH A HEART

## Steve Schipull B.B.A '89

The values of hard work and caring for others are lessons that Generations Federal Credit Union President and CEO Steve Schipull learned while growing up on his family's farm.

"I don't think we even had a stoplight," he said of Goldfield, Iowa, where his family raised cattle and pigs, and grew vegetables. "You could drive right through."

The fourth of five siblings learned about the importance of family when one of his brothers was diagnosed with a brain tumor. Multiple surgeries and ongoing treatment compelled Schipull's family to move out of state and back several times to be near specialists. Schipull matured at a young age as a result of those challenges.

"I basically took care of the household through that whole summer," he recalled of the months between his freshman and sophomore years of high school. His parents were in another state and his older brother came to stay with him. "It made me grow up a lot faster."

After completing a year at

the University of Missouri, Schipull joined his parents in Austin. Later, he and his wife settled in San Antonio, and he enrolled at UTSA to study accounting. He also worked as a bank teller full time, earning his B.B.A. in 1989.

Schipull's first job after college was as an auditor for what is now Bank of America. He stayed with that organization for 10 years, moving up to increasingly challenging assignments, including a five-year post in Japan, where both his children were born.

In 1999 Schipull joined GFCU as senior vice president of finance and technology, becoming chief financial officer when the credit union adopted a new organizational structure in 2007. He stepped into the CEO role in November 2012.

"I felt that this was someplace I could make a difference," he said, stressing that cultivating a strong team that works hard and has fun is his priority. "When you work for a huge company sometimes it's hard to differentiate yourself the right

way. I'm not a big ego, politics kind of guy. I believe the work should prove the worth of the person and also how well you work with the team."

GFCU held about \$175 million in assets when Schipull first came on board, he said. As of the end of February, that had grown to \$475 million.

"Maybe we'll get [to half a billion] this year," he said. "We've got some pretty aggressive growth goals."

Geraldine Breeding, CFO of GFCU, has worked with Schipull during his entire tenure at the credit union. She said his positive attitude and "employee-centric" focus enrich company culture and boost morale.

"I enjoy coming to work because of him," she said.

Schipull encourages employees to spend time with their families and sets the example by being there for his own, she added.

"There is more to life than your job," Schipull said. "You don't want to miss the time when your kid kicks that winning goal at the soccer game."—BY KATE HUNGER



# Post Scripts

How Times  
Have  
Changed!



PHOTO: GIL BARRERA



PHOTO: PATRICK RAY DUNN

## Graduation traditions then and now

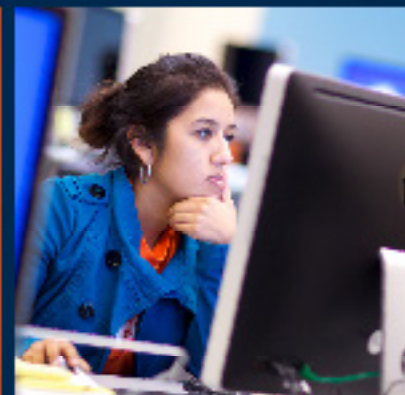
A Mariachi troupe serenades the first graduating class in 1974. The music has become a commencement tradition that lives on today.

In December 2013, a contemporary Mariachi ensemble performs for the graduating class.





# 100,000 Ways We're Changing the World



*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.*

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