Campus Snapshots

Photo by Ivan Pierre Aguirre
Dreams Come True

Graduates wait in Memorial Gym to start the procession to the Don Haskins Center to receive their degrees during one of UTEP’s three spring Commencement ceremonies on May 13, 2017. An estimated 23,000 family members and friends filled the Haskins Center throughout the day with cheers and applause to recognize the achievements of more than 2,600 spring and expected summer graduates from The University of Texas at El Paso. In her address, UTEP President Diana Natalicio spoke of her pride in their accomplishments. “This is a great moment for you and all of us who have been a part of your higher education journey,” she said.
The start of a new school year is always extremely energizing. This year brings an added measure of excitement as we welcome several new faces to our UTEP leadership team, starting with our new provost and vice president for academic affairs, Carol Parker, who comes to us from the University of New Mexico where she served as senior vice provost for academic affairs and professor in the Law School. Provost Parker will be responsible for leading the continued development and promotion of UTEP’s nationally recognized model for enhancing the excellence of academic and research programs, while successfully offering access and affordability to a first-generation and historically underserved student population.

Two new deans have also joined the UTEP family. Theresa Maldonado, Ph.D., has been appointed dean of UTEP’s College of Engineering and professor of electrical engineering. Dr. Maldonado brings to UTEP a distinguished record of academic, research and administrative success, in such positions as associate vice chancellor for research at Texas A&M University System and division director at the National Science Foundation. Most recently, she served as founding senior vice president for research, innovation and economic development at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

College of Health Sciences students, faculty and staff recently welcomed their new dean, Dr. Shafik Dharamsi, who will also serve as professor of public health sciences. Dr. Dharamsi comes to UTEP from the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, where he was founding associate dean in the School of Osteopathic Medicine. With a personal and professional trajectory through Kenya, India and Canada, Dr. Dharamsi is especially well prepared to lead the college’s global health initiatives.

As exciting as it is to welcome new UTEP team members, it is also clear that they all begin their work on the solid foundation built by their predecessors — Howard Daudistel, Carlos Ferregut and Osama Mikhail, who held the interim positions of provost, dean of the College of Engineering and dean of the College of Health Sciences, respectively. Their service to the University has been extraordinarily valuable, and we’re deeply grateful to them for all they’ve done and for their commitment of continued support in the years ahead.

Although these administrative changes — together with the stunning physical transformation of our campus, the growth in doctoral programs and research, and the nationally recognized success of our 21st century student population — all remind us of the dramatic changes that have occurred at UTEP, there are also many constants. What has not changed are our core values, and our mission and vision of providing high-quality educational opportunities at an affordable cost to talented young people in this region, whatever their backgrounds or financial means. It is a mission that all of us at UTEP — whether we are new arrivals or veteran faculty and staff members — fully embrace and work very hard to achieve. Fostering the success of our students and our community is, and will always be, UTEP’s driving passion.

Go Miners!

Diana Natalicio
President
The Hoover House Turns 100

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The UTEP School of Pharmacy is redefining what it means to be a pharmacist in the 21st century.
Chagas Vaccine

UTEP Researchers Receive Patent

Six million to 8 million people worldwide are chronically infected with the potentially life-threatening Chagas disease, according to UTEP researchers who are working on both a vaccine and a treatment for the disease.

Chagas is caused by the parasite Trypanosoma cruzi, which is transmitted to animals and people by insects known as kissing bugs. The disease has been prevalent in Latin America, but is rapidly spreading through the U.S., Europe and other nonendemic regions. Yet, there is no vaccine.

Rosa Maldonado, Ph.D., and Igor Almeida, Ph.D., both faculty in UTEP's Department of Biological Sciences, recently were granted a patent for “Mucin-Associated Surface Protein As Vaccine Against Chagas Disease.” The preventive vaccine had been in development since 2008 and most recently was tested at the Texas Biomedical Research Institute in San Antonio on nonhuman primates in collaboration with John VandeBerg, Ph.D. Results are promising and may soon lead to clinical trials.

A second vaccine – this one therapeutic – also was tested and yielded promising results. Almeida started work on that vaccine 27 years ago and is currently awaiting patent approval. The vaccine studies were funded by the Kleberg Foundation and the National Institutes of Health. - Lauren Macias-Cervantes

Pioneering Healthy Musicianship

Nancy Taylor Combines Music and Occupational Therapy

Body mechanics, ergonomics and performance-related health problems are all factors that come with being a musician. Nancy Taylor, professor of trumpet at The University of Texas at El Paso, is no stranger to these issues. The professional musician and certified occupational therapist practices “healthy musicianship” with all her students.


“Learning healthy musicianship means learning to practice and perform in a way that is most ergonomically and biomechanically appropriate and decreases the chance of a playing-related injury,” Taylor said. “Through workshops and lectures, I am able to combine my knowledge of both music and occupational therapy to provide a practical model for injury prevention.”

Taylor delivers lectures and holds clinics all over the country. At least once every academic year, she also addresses UTEP music students. The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) mandates the standards for healthy musicianship all schools must follow. According to Steve Wilson, DMA, chair of the UTEP Department of Music, Taylor takes it to a whole new level.

“We are virtually the only music school that has a licensed occupational therapist on faculty who can address issues related to healthy musicianship while our students are still in the early stages of development,” Wilson said. “Her publication by Oxford University Press is in great demand, as is Professor Taylor.” - Esmeralda Treviño

Photo by Laura Trejo
Whether you like talking to machines or not, artificial agents likely will be part of our future. The Advanced aGent ENgagement Team (AGENT) at UTEP is working to make sure your interaction with these virtual personalities is a worthwhile experience.

“Artificial agents are an increasing part of our lives, whether you are shopping online or renting a car, and I, for one, want to see agents that are more useful to me, more natural to me and avoid having to make me adapt the way I talk,” said David Novick, Ph.D., UTEP professor of engineering leadership. “To do that, we run experiments about what is natural or what creates rapport, what creates engagement, and in order to run those experiments we have to build systems where we can actually use them.”

Novick formed the AGENT team in 2012, and since then they have published 20 papers on interaction in immersive and virtual environments. They have created tools for building agent-based systems and used these tools to develop several applications.

UTEP College of Business Administration student Monica Pena has experienced many of the team’s creations, but has a couple of favorites, including a haunted house and a quest to help the wizard Merlin destroy a monster.

“The Merlin demo was definitely a good one as I was able to help him in his quest of destroying a monster by actually calling out spells with my own voice,” she said. “I walked through a forest alongside Merlin, who really did look like the character. I still remember the stress and reality of seeing a huge monster standing in front of me as I anxiously screamed the spells.”

Novick said the goal of the work is to help educate students and advance research.

“It’s exciting and fun, but there’s a serious educational component,” he said. “There’s a serious research component. We are really doing fundamental research about the nature of interaction.”

- Lauren Macias-Cervantes

Since 1991 many countries in the world, especially in Latin America, have made great strides toward gender balance in government by requiring that a certain percentage of candidates for elected offices be women. As a result of these gender quotas, women currently comprise more than half of the lower house of congress in Bolivia and over 40 percent in Mexico, but less than 20 percent in the United States, which does not use gender quotas.

“The success of gender quotas depends on various factors, especially how they interact with other features of the electoral system,” said UTEP Political Science Professor Gregory D. Schmidt, Ph.D.

In a new book, “Gender Quotas in South America’s Big Three,” Schmidt collaborated with Adriana Piatti-Crocker, Ph.D., of the University of Illinois at Springfield, and Clara Araújo, Ph.D., of Rio de Janerio State University, to compare the impacts of gender quotas in Argentina, Brazil, and Peru.

“Female candidates have fared best in Argentina, where the electoral system guarantees that women will win about a third of the seats,” Schmidt said. “Women are not guaranteed election in Brazil or Peru, but they have done much better in Peru, whose electoral system and less expensive campaigns favor their success.”

- Laura L. Acosta
New Energy

Provost and Deans Bring Opportunity and Experience

Carol Parker

Carol Parker, The University of Texas at El Paso’s new provost and vice president for academic affairs, enjoyed an idyllic childhood growing up on a dairy farm in rural Michigan. Watching her parents run the family farm and being the oldest of eight siblings, she learned responsibility and the value of hard work early in life.

After graduating high school, Parker attended community college as a first-generation college student. Having to work full time made attending college a challenge. She would often have to leave school and go back. Fueled by support from family and professors, she never gave up.

“It was my professors who helped open my eyes to life of the mind, so to speak, and helped me envision more and more possibilities for my future,” Parker said.

Years of persistence eventually paid off. Parker earned her bachelor’s degree in humanities from the Michigan State University Honors College, a master’s degree in information science from the University of Michigan, and a law degree from Wayne State University in Detroit.

After law school, Parker worked as a research attorney for the Michigan Court of Appeals. She later returned to academia and became a law library director, law professor, associate dean, and then vice provost, all at the University of New Mexico (UNM).

Parker said participating in the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellowship program was a pivotal point for her professionally, and her first introduction to UTEP.

The ACE Fellowship is a yearlong leadership development program for higher education administrators. The program included visits to more than 30 institutions of higher education, foundations, government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

“We visited a lot of universities ... including UTEP,” Parker recalled. “During that visit, I met President Natalicio and learned about the wonderful things UTEP was doing. I kept an eye on UTEP ever since.”

In Parker’s new role, she will be responsible for the oversight and administration of all academic programs, ensuring that they prepare students for a broad range of postgraduate and career opportunities, and increase prosperity and quality of life for the surrounding region.

- Christina Rodriguez
Engineers may be known for designing and building machines, but new College of Engineering Dean Theresa Maldonado, Ph.D., looks forward to constructing possibilities.

“I love the opportunity of being here,” said Maldonado, who was appointed dean and professor of electrical engineering effective July 1, 2017. “My parents grew up in border towns; my dad went into the military to get out. I feel like this country needs us - the Latinos, the Hispanics. We need to inspire, embrace and empower Hispanics to be leaders in this country more than they are, and I hope I can really contribute to that because there is so much intelligence and capacity. I just want to build opportunities for these students.”

Maldonado most recently served as founding senior vice president for research, innovation and economic development at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Starting her engineering career at AT&T Bell Laboratories, Maldonado went on to earn a Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and pursue research and teaching at The University of Texas at Arlington. She also has served as associate dean of engineering at Texas A&M University, associate vice chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, and division director at the National Science Foundation.

With a distinguished career as an expert on optics, Maldonado has published her work in the Journal of the Optical Society of America, the Journal of Lightwave Technology, and Applied Optics. She has competed successfully for millions of dollars to fund research and education from federal and state sources. She also has received numerous awards for teaching, research and leadership.

- Lauren Macias-Cervantes

A young boy comes to North America with his poor, immigrant family, not knowing a word of English. He learns about sacrifice and hard work from his loving parents, and excels academically through perseverance and the help of dedicated educators.

The story of Shafik Dharamsi, Ph.D., is similar to that of many students who attend The University of Texas at El Paso. That is among the primary reasons why the first-generation college student accepted the responsibility of becoming the new dean of UTEP’s College of Health Sciences and professor of public health.

Dharamsi previously was an associate dean at the School of Osteopathic Medicine at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio. The married father of two college students is a native of Tanzania who grew up in Toronto, Canada. He earned his doctorate in 2003 from the University of British Columbia, where he also served as a professor of family medicine. He has extensive education, research and community development experience in Asia, the U.S., Africa and Canada.

He said UTEP’s mission mirrored many of his professional passions, such as a commitment to students, interdisciplinary research, and helping vulnerable populations around the world through community-engaged scholarship.

“UTEP’s College of Health Sciences is in a strong position to help prepare our learners to better understand and engage with a broad range of global issues that affect health and well-being worldwide, (and) to be socially responsive global citizens who can address some of the world’s most pressing problems,” Dharamsi said. - Daniel Perez

Photos by J.R. Hernandez
Three UTEP faculty members have earned the 2017 Regents’ Outstanding Teaching Award for excellence in education. The University of Texas System Board of Regents recognizes instructors who combine knowledge and creativity to serve their students in their classrooms and communities.

This year’s UTEP honorees are Song An, Ph.D., assistant professor of mathematics education; Isabel Baca, Ph.D., professor of English; and Ann Branan Horak, Ph.D., associate professor of practice of religious studies and women’s and gender studies.

Fifty-six awardees from the UT System’s 14 academic and health institutions will receive $25,000 each during an Aug. 23, 2017, celebration in Austin, Texas. Nominees go through a rigorous selection process at the department, college and University levels before they are submitted to the UT System. Faculty members are evaluated on such factors as classroom expertise, curricula quality, innovative course development and student learning outcomes.

The regents have recognized 68 UTEP instructors since the first awards were presented in 2009. - Daniel Perez

Ann Branan Horak, Ph.D.

Ann Branan Horak, who deals with tough subjects in the fields of religion and gender studies, takes pride in striking the right balance of fun and respectfulness. She said that balance in the classroom leads to lively, open learning sessions.

She said reading, talking to others, and learning about the issues she teaches helps her maintain a teacher’s edge.

“You have to be a good student to be a good teacher,” she said.

Isabel Baca, Ph.D.

Isabel Baca is a service-learning advocate who believes that students learn better and learn more in “real-world” settings. They get to practice their craft, but also are exposed to different situations that will help them as students and later as professionals.

She assigns individual and team assignments where students learn about trust, respect, negotiation, conflict resolution and responsibility.

“I consider myself a facilitator of learning because I help students take responsibility for their own learning, become self-learners, and gain a love for learning,” she said.
Song An, Ph.D.

Song An loves conceptual teaching innovations that break down discipline-specific boundaries. For example, he preaches how music and motion can be used to teach math successfully in elementary schools. He looks for interdisciplinary collaborators to develop and implement innovative curriculum.

“‘I keep looking for fun stuff in everyday life,’ he said. ‘I will pedagogically develop these hidden resources as meaningful learning activities as a part of my course.’”

“‘I KEEP LOOKING FOR FUN STUFF IN EVERYDAY LIFE.’”  
Song An, Ph.D.

Photos by J.R. Hernandez
Hoover House Celebrates Centennial

The Hoover House, built in 1917, has been home to five UTEP presidents, including the current resident, President Diana Natalicio. In addition to its role as a residence, the home has served as a center of hospitality for UTEP.

To help celebrate the Hoover House’s 100th birthday in 2017, members of the community were invited to a two-day open house June 3 and 4. “The Hoover House is not only a historic property but a place where University history is made,” President Natalicio said. “Each year, we welcome UTEP students, alumni, faculty, staff, friends and supporters to a variety of University events held in this beautiful residence. For me, it is an honor and privilege to live in UTEP’s official home, and a great pleasure to open its doors to share so many of the University’s happiest occasions with our UTEP family and friends, community members and visitors from across the world.”
Captions

1. UTEP President Diana Natalicio took time for photos with visitors excited to see the University residence. Playing a dual role for UTEP as both a residence and a center for hospitality, the Hoover House has hosted many prominent visitors, including former Texas Gov. Ann Richards, Sen. Lamar Alexander and former First Lady Laura Bush.

2. The grounds of the house feature a sprawling landscape that incorporates a variety of indigenous plants representative of the surrounding Chihuahuan Desert, including the Agave Americana. Also known as the century plant, it only flowers once during its lifetime. Fittingly, it was in full bloom at the open house to celebrate the home’s first 100 years.

3. Hundreds of families and children took time to tour the Hoover House. While there were treats for everyone, children also received Miner hats and pick balloons.

4. Built in 1917, the Hoover House is steeped in UTEP history and legend. Community members celebrated the house’s 100th birthday with a birthday cake and the singing of “Happy Birthday.”

5. Visitors to the Hoover House during the open house weekend had the opportunity to take selfies to commemorate their visit. UTEP cheerleaders and staff helped with the snapshots.

6. UTEP student ambassadors led tours of the historic home for visitors in groups of 10-12.
President Natalicio welcomed neighbors, alumni and community members each day. She delivered brief remarks from a podium outside the home.

These two visitors to the Hoover House took some time to relax under a shaded area that was provided for everyone. Tables were adorned with colorful flower balloons.

Inside the house, visitors first stopped in the beautiful, open foyer.

The first stop on the tour was with Paydirt Pete and a student ambassador on the steps of the Hoover House for a brief welcome and introduction.

Families posed for photos holding their “Picks Up” after the tour. This group stood in front of decorated tables where visitors were able to sit and enjoy cupcakes and water.
This group is greeted at the end of their tour by a UTEP cheerleader. Visitors exited through the back of the home and walked down the driveway. You can see many with UTEP brochures, balloons and hats in hand.
New Leadership
Education and Liberal Arts
Name Interim Deans

William Robertson, Ph.D., professor and co-chair in the Department of Teacher Education, is the interim dean of the College of Education. A former associate dean and associate provost, Robertson has made scholarly contributions in the areas of science education, curriculum development, and technology integration in primary and secondary schools. He uses problem-based learning and action science to develop lessons for children in science, technology and math. President Diana Natalicio awarded Robertson the President’s Meritorious Service Award in 2016 for his community-engaged scholarship.

Robertson assumed the role of interim dean on July 1 upon the departure of Cyndi Giorgis, Ph.D., who served as dean for three years. She is taking the position of Director of the Division of Teacher Preparation at Arizona State University.

Stephen Crites, Ph.D., professor and chair of the Department of Psychology at UTEP, is the interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Crites’ research is in social neuroscience, exploring the processes that underlie attitudes, stereotypes and person perception. His work has been funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and published in Psychological Bulletin, Psychological Science, the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, and Psychophysiology. He is active in multiple professional organizations and has served as the treasurer for the Society for the Study of Motivation.

Former liberal arts Dean Patricia Loya has taken an active role at the University and developed practical skills in leadership, communication and student engagement activities, or UTEP EDGE, which will officially kick off the first week of the fall 2017 semester.

Through interactive workshops, she helps students identify their personal assets and understand the professional and personal benefits of participating in student engagement activities, or UTEP EDGE experiences.

“I’ve been able to further develop my leadership, communication and critical thinking skills, and all of these advantages and experiences are helping me become more well-rounded and more competitive for the real world,” Loya said. - Laura L. Acosta

To find out more about UTEP EDGE, visit utep.edu/edge

UTEP EDGE
UTE Students Edge Out the Competition

Study abroad, internships, research with faculty and service learning opportunities are among the student engagement activities offered at UTEP that will enable Miners to develop the competitive edge they need to successfully transition into graduate school or the workforce after graduation.

These high-impact practices are the cornerstone of the UTEP Edge, the University’s new 10-year student success initiative. They are meant to distinguish UTEP students from their peers at other institutions and prepare them for leadership and lifelong success.

“Through these activities, students will optimize their talents and gain a competitive edge as they prepare for the next step – graduate or professional school, a career, and other areas of personal and community life,” said David Ruiter, Ph.D., associate provost for student and faculty success.

Along with providing access to these high-impact practices, the UTEP Edge also emphasizes the fact that students come to the University rich with talents and assets. Ingrid Loya, a junior social work major, counts her bilingual communication skills, student leadership experience and confidence among her best personal assets.

As a new-student orientation leader, Loya has taken an active role at the University and developed practical skills that have broadened her education and prepared her for graduate school.

Part of her job is to inform incoming freshmen at New Student Orientation about the UTEP Edge, which will officially kick off the first week of the fall 2017 semester.

The full report, “Ladders, labs, or laggards? Which public universities contribute most,” by Dmitrios Halikias and Richard V. Reeves, is available online. The Brookings study examined the performance of 342 public universities along two value dimensions that are commonly used to justify public investments in them: research productivity and student social mobility. After first identifying the institutions that promote knowledge through research and those that promote social mobility (defined as those with the highest share of students from the bottom 20 percent of U.S. household incomes), the researchers sought to determine which universities perform well in both research and social mobility.

“This No. 1 ranking is yet another strong validation of UTEP’s success in delivering on our access and excellence mission, and our quest over the past 25 years to be the first national research university with an authentically 21st century student demographic,” said UTEP President Diana Natalicio. “It contributes significantly to UTEP’s growing visibility as a U.S. higher education leader, and adds value to all UTEP graduates’ diplomas.

“I want to thank all of those who have played a role in UTEP’s success through their commitment to our mission and many contributions to our progress in achieving it,” she said.

The Brookings Institution is a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, D.C.

Chicano Studies
Online Degree Launched

UTEP’s Chicano Studies Program launched a new online Bachelor of Arts in Chicano Studies option in spring 2017, enabling students across the United States and around the globe to have access to one of the oldest and most respected Chicano studies programs in the nation.

The multidisciplinary program is 100 percent online and is ideal for aspiring professionals seeking to work in positions – both in the private and public sector – that require knowledge of the Mexican-origin population together with literacy and digital communication skills.

The online program is offered through UTEP Connect, the University’s collection of fully online baccalaureate, graduate and certificate programs. - Laura L. Acosta

UTEP Ranks No. 1 in Study of U.S. Public Universities

The national spotlight is once again on The University of Texas at El Paso with the release of a study by the Brookings Institution ranking UTEP No. 1 for performing well in both research and social mobility.

The full report, “Ladders, labs, or laggards? Which public universities contribute most,” by Dmitrios Halikias and Richard V. Reeves, is available online.
One-on-One with Kevin Baker

New Women’s Basketball Coach

Kevin Baker has come a long way in 20-plus years of coaching basketball. He worked his way up from high school coach to the new head coach of the UTEP women’s basketball team.

“In the end, no one could match the level of success that he has achieved, winning over 300 games and setting school records for victories at every stage of his coaching career,” said UTEP Athletics Director Bob Stull. “He is a personable and energetic young man and a great fit for UTEP and the El Paso community.”

Baker comes to UTEP from Angelo State University, where he posted a combined record of 50-14 in two seasons (2015-17). Overall Baker has a 344-131 coaching record. He has set school records for wins at every stop of his career and is an eight-time Coach of the Year.

“'I just imagined what it would feel like if we didn’t win this game, and the tears came pouring out,’” Baker recalled her saying. “'I just decided that I’m not going to feel this way. I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure that neither I, nor my teammates, feel the way I felt back there.’ And to make the story a great story, we won the game.”

- Leonard Martinez

Basketball Scholarship

1966 Team Establishes Endowed Scholarship

Few events in the history of college athletics compare to when the Texas Western College Miners stepped to the center of the court on March 19, 1966, to clinch the NCAA men’s national basketball championship. It was the first time in tournament history that an all-African-American starting lineup took the floor. Coach Don Haskins’ team of Orsten Artis, Bobby Joe Hill, Willie Worsley, David Lattin, Willie Cager, Nevil Shed and Harry Flournoy played for the title against an all-white Kentucky Wildcats team led by coach Adolph Rupp. Under the intrepid leadership of Haskins, the Miners took the lead at 9 minutes and 40 seconds into the first half and never looked back.

More than 50 years later, members of the 1966 championship team remain as committed as ever to supporting UTEP’s future basketball heroes. The Glory Road 1966 Team Endowed Scholarship establishes a perpetual fund to provide scholarships to the men’s and women’s basketball programs. Join them in keeping the magic of that night alive by making it possible for other UTEP students to achieve their athletic and academic dreams. Make your tax-deductible donation by visiting givingto.utep.edu/1966Team.

- PJ Vierra

Conference Champs

Women’s Track and Field Earns C-USA Outdoor Title

The UTEP women’s track and field team captured its first ever Conference USA Outdoor Championship on May 14, 2017.

Sophomore sensation Tobi Amusan led the Miners. The Kenyan native took home two gold (100m hurdles and 4x100m relay), one silver (200m) and a fifth-place finish in the long jump. Amusan clocked 12.80 seconds in the 100m hurdles and ran a personal-best 22.92 seconds in the 200m.

Winny Koech added 20 points by capturing gold in both the 10,000m (35:44.15) and the 5,000m run (16:52.87).

Head coach Mika Laaksonen was named the women’s C-USA Coach of the Year for the outdoor season.

“Our women’s team capturing their first outdoor title ever is a huge deal, and to do it here at home makes it that much more special,” Laaksonen said. - Aaron Lozano

Photo by J.R. Hernandez
It is a time of reflection, pride and excitement for the future as Miners from past and present come together to share their school spirit.

This year's Homecoming celebration will be a blast from the not so distant past with the student-selected theme – the ‘90s – incorporated throughout the week’s festivities.

The week will begin with fun for everyone at the 8th Annual Miner Dash 5K Run/3K Walk and Family Fiesta on Sunday, Oct. 1 and will conclude with alumni, students and fans cheering on the UTEP Miners as they take on the Western Kentucky Hilltoppers at Sun Bowl Stadium on Saturday, Oct. 7.

Keep reading to learn about the myriad events and activities planned throughout the week to engage alumni and students.

Mark your calendars, pack your picks and plan on joining us for Homecoming 2017!
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1
8th Annual Miner Dash 5K Run/3K Walk
and Family Fitness Fiesta
8 a.m. – noon | Centennial Plaza
Registration required: minerdash.utep.edu

SGA Homecoming Pageant
5 – 8 p.m.
Magoffin Auditorium

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3
English Department Homecoming Reception
3 - 4:30 p.m.
Hudspeth Hall, Foyer
RSVP required: maveytia@utep.edu

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4
Miner Morning Mania
5 - 8 a.m.
Glory Road parking lot, north of Sun Bowl Stadium

Physics Homecoming Lunch & Physics Circus
1 – 4 p.m.
Physical Science Building, Back Patio & Rm. 321
RSVP required: kcarmona@utep.edu or ayrodriguez2@utep.edu

Gold Nugget & Friends of the College of Health Sciences Reception
4 – 5:30 p.m.
Health Sciences/Nursing Building, Curlin Plaza
Invitation required

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5
School of Nursing Gold Nugget Breakfast
7:30 – 9:30 a.m.
Health Sciences/Nursing Building, 2nd floor terrace
Invitation required

UTEP Alumni Association Past Presidents’ Breakfast
8:30 – 10 a.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center
Invitation required

College of Science Homecoming Breakfast
9 – 10:30 a.m.
Chemistry and Computer Science Building, 2nd Floor Lobby

Math Department Alumni Homecoming Social Lunch
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Bell Hall, Conference Rm. 125

UTEP SGA Past President’s Luncheon
11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center
Invitation required

Pep Rally
Noon
Centennial Plaza

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE EVENTS, VISIT UTEP.EDU/HOMECOMING
College of Liberal Arts
2017 Gold Nugget Reception
3 – 5 p.m.
Stanlee and Gerald Rubin Center for the Visual Arts
RSVP required: 915-747-7016

College of Business Administration
Outstanding Alumni Reception
4:30 – 6 p.m.
Geological Sciences Building, Geology Reading Rm. 310
RSVP required: klsnow@utep.edu

UTEP Black Alumni Network (UBAN)
Homecoming Meet & Greet
$5 – 9 p.m.
Hilton Garden Inn
El Paso/University, Del Norte Ballroom
Registration required: alumni.utep.edu/uban

Fraternity & Sorority Life
Alumni Reunion
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Union Building East, University Suite Rm. 312

UTEP Young Alumni Network Reception
6 – 8 p.m.
Location TBD

UTEP Choirs Fall Choral Concert
$7:30 – 9 p.m.
Fox Fine Arts Recital Hall
For information, please call 915-747-5606

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6
Open House at the Alumni Lodge
8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Peter and Margaret de Wetter Center

7th Annual Ayala Military Breakfast
8 – 9:30 a.m.
Geological Sciences Building, Geology Reading Rm. 310
RSVP required: klsnow@utep.edu

College of Education
Gold Nugget Breakfast
8:30 – 10:30 a.m.
Hilton Garden Inn
El Paso/University, Del Norte Ballroom
Invitation required

Discovering Biology at UTEP
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Biological Sciences Building, Rm. 2.168

Homecoming Luncheon for Civil Engineering and Construction Engineering & Management Alumni
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Chemistry & Computer Science Building, Courtyard
RSVP required: 915-747-5464

100th Anniversary of Old Main
11:30 a.m.
Old Main Building, Outdoor Entrance

International Potluck
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Liberal Arts Building, Room 109
RSVP required: lemendoza2@utep.edu

1967 in History
5 – 7 p.m.
Liberal Arts Building, Rm. 323
RSVP required: history@utep.edu

UTEP Distinguished Alumni Awards Dinner
$6:30 p.m.
Don Haskins Center
For tickets, call 915-747-6361

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7
Engineering Alumni Homecoming Breakfast
$8 a.m. – noon
Union Building East, Tomás Rivera Conference Center, 3rd Floor
RSVP required: 915-747-6444

Communication Homecoming Brunch
9 a.m. – noon
Cotton Memorial Lawn

UTEP Black Alumni Network/African-American Studies Program Black Alumni Summit
$10 a.m. – noon
Union Building East, Templeton Suite, Rm. 313
Registration required: alumni.utep.edu/uban

Department of Political Science Homecoming Ceremony
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Benedict Hall Building, Lawn or Rm. 205

School of Pharmacy Tailgate
3 – 5:30 p.m.
Kidd Field
Invitation required

UTEP Alumni/Miner Athletic Club Tailgate
$3 – 5:30 p.m.
Kidd Field
Registration required: alumni.utep.edu/tailgate

Homecoming Football Game vs. Western Kentucky
$6 p.m.
Sun Bowl Stadium

$ indicates a cost associated with the event.
The Distinguished Alumni award is the highest recognition bestowed upon alumni of The University of Texas at El Paso. The three 2017 recipients are stellar examples of dedication, integrity and hard work and will serve as inspiration to current and future generations of Miners. We salute the 2017 Distinguished Alumni for raising the bar, now and forever.

Stories by Christina Rodriguez
UTEP alumnus Jacob Cintron exudes Miner spirit. The CEO and president of University Medical Center (UMC) of El Paso, formerly known as Thomason Hospital, has such a fondness for his alma mater and his time spent as a UTEP student that he still has his senior class industrial engineering project tucked away neatly on a shelf in his office. From time to time he likes to peruse the large, hardbound book filled with engineering facts and figures that, coincidentally, involved Thomason Hospital.

Growing up in central El Paso, Cintron never considered a college education a possibility. His parents divorced when he was young, and he and his two siblings were raised by a single mother who was a self-taught bookkeeper. The family struggled financially, and as soon as Cintron was old enough to work, he would walk to his job bagging groceries at Safeway and later to a job his mother helped secure at Thomason to help support the family.

At the hospital, Cintron did various jobs in the engineering department. His co-workers took him under their wings and taught him everything from how to drive a stick shift to electrical and mechanical work.

During a business trip with the administrator of Thomason at the time, John Stinson, Cintron’s perspective on college changed. He recalls Stinson turning to him and saying, “Jacob, you need to go to college.” His response was, “I can’t. I have to work to help out my family.” Stinson assured him they could accommodate his school schedule, allowing him to work and go to school.

In 1976, Cintron enrolled at UTEP, four years after he had completed high school. He excelled in industrial engineering and served as president of the student chapter of the Institute of Industrial Engineering.

“I started college late and felt I had forgotten so much since high school, but I loved it,” Cintron recalled. “Anything you do as far as furthering your education is an investment in yourself, not in a car that depreciates, clothes that go out of style or electronics that eventually break. You are investing in your capabilities and success.”

Cintron earned his bachelor’s degree in industrial engineering from UTEP in 1983 and returned to the University to earn a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Accountancy.

As Cintron’s education level advanced, so did his rank at Thomason. He went from doing odd jobs in the Engineering Department at the age of 17 to director of engineering and later assistant administrator of the hospital. He stayed at Thomason for 17 years before moving on to hold executive positions at major health care systems in Chicago, San Antonio, and San Diego. Cintron returned to El Paso in 2006 to become CEO of Del Sol Medical Center, a position he held for 10 years before being named CEO of UMC.

“If it weren’t for UTEP, I would have settled for something else, and my life path would have been very different,” Cintron said. “Thanks to UTEP, I am in a place where I never thought I’d be.”
Beginning in his childhood, The University of Texas at El Paso played a significant role in Allen Gilmer’s life. His father was a proud alumnus of Texas Western College (TWC), now UTEP, and growing up on Kerbey Street, just blocks away from campus, the family had many friends who were professors at the University.

As a child, Gilmer recalls the excitement of exploring the Franklin Mountains and collecting rocks and arrowheads. He even fondly remembers a quest to find the Lost Padre Mine with his grandfather. Unfortunately, the pair never discovered the legendary mine, but Gilmer did find something significant – his love of geology.

Philip Goodell, Ph.D., professor of geological sciences at UTEP, was one close friend of the family who helped further Gilmer’s early geological interests by giving him part of his impressive rock collection; some specimens were even etched with actual dinosaur tracks.

Enticed by his parents allowing him to take his mint green Chevy Camaro along, Gilmer left home to attend Rice University with the intent to one day become a lawyer. While at Rice, he thoroughly enjoyed his geology classes and ended up earning a bachelor’s degree in geology in 1984.

For his graduate studies, Gilmer returned home and attended UTEP.

“I really liked the vibe at UTEP,” Gilmer said. “The geology professors were excellent and did a lot of work on the border and in Mexico. As a master’s student studying geology at UTEP, you had the ability to do research in big areas; your thesis was more like a dissertation.”

At UTEP, Gilmer’s professors left a lasting impression on him. He credits his adviser at UTEP, Professor Emeritus Kenneth Clark, Ph.D., with inspiring him and having a transformative impact on his life by teaching him discipline and the importance of hard work.

Gilmer earned his master’s degree from UTEP in geological sciences in 1987. He went on to work for a mining company before making the transition to a career in the oil and gas industry. He worked several years as a geophysicist at Marathon Oil Co. and went on to co-found several companies in the oil and gas sector.

Today, Gilmer is the co-founder and executive chairman of Drillinginfo, a data analytics company for energy exploration decision support that is a leading provider of cloud-based data and analytics software for the oil and gas industry.

Professionally, Gilmer has received numerous awards and accolades. He was selected as Large Company CEO of the Year for Central Texas in 2014, Top 7 North American Prospect Expo Influencers in 2014, Texas’ Outstanding Geoscientist in 2012 by Texas Monthly magazine, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year in Central Texas in 2012, and a Top 100 Energy Influencer in 2011.

“Throughout the history of TWC and UTEP, there have been some true giants who have earned their degrees at this outstanding university,” Gilmer said. “I am amazingly humbled by being recognized as one of UTEP’s Distinguished Alumni.”
“It doesn’t cost anything to dream, so dream big.” That is the message Maria Castañón Moats’ mother always drilled into her daughter. It still resonates with Castañón Moats, who now passes along these words of wisdom to her team at PwC, one of the world’s largest professional services firms, where she is the U.S. and Mexico Assurance Leader.

Castañón Moats is the first woman and first Hispanic to hold her position at PwC and recently claimed the No. 2 spot on Fortune magazine’s inaugural list of the 50 Most Powerful Latinas. Her success, however, was not an easy feat and required not only lofty dreams but lots of tenacity and hard work.

Castañón Moats was born in Juárez, Mexico. Her parents had a sixth-grade education but believed strongly in the American Dream and came to the U.S. when Castañón Moats was very young. They wanted their children to have access to opportunities they did not, including a college education.

Since childhood, Castañón Moats was curious and loved to learn new things at school. Math and science were particularly enjoyable for her. She knew early on that attending college would be in her future. When the time came, she decided to attend UTEP so she would be close to home.

Throughout college, Castañón Moats juggled being a full-time student and working part-time. She graduated from UTEP in 1990 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

After graduation, Castañón Moats began her career as an internal auditor with Bank of America in Dallas, Texas. She soon discovered that being a Hispanic female CPA in the male-dominated financial services industry in the early 1990s was a challenge.

“There weren’t many women, let alone Hispanic women as CPAs,” she said. “I had to constantly prove myself, show my worth and the value I brought to my profession.”

Castañón Moats applied for a job at PwC through an ad and was hired on the spot after just one interview. She worked her way up at the firm and made partner in 2004. She served as PwC’s U.S. Diversity Leader from 2011-16, where she reported to the company’s U.S. CEO and served on the U.S. leadership team.

“My story is not unique, and with hard work, it’s possible to fulfill your biggest dreams,” she said. “You can have a career that makes an impact not only for yourself, but also for others. I’m incredibly humbled by being named as a Distinguished Alumna. UTEP means so much to me – it’s where I learned the value of hard work and was exposed to a variety of people, cultures and information, all of which contributed to both the person I’ve become and the fulfilling career I have today.”
For more than 30 years, The University of Texas at El Paso and the UTEP Alumni Association have recognized exceptional graduates from each of the University’s colleges and schools who have excelled in their professions and have given back to their communities and alma mater.

The 2017 Gold Nugget Award recipients exemplify true Miner spirit. Their success and achievements inspire those who come after them to follow their example and dare to dream big.
Manuel F. Aguilera’s expertise in traffic engineering paved the way for a successful career, nearly four decades long, with the Texas Department of Transportation. He helped develop and design the traffic signal central computer control system that today controls most traffic signals in El Paso and led to the standardization of traffic signals statewide. Aguilera also helped design El Paso’s “Spaghetti Bowl” interchange at I-10 and U.S. 54, the Patriot Freeway and the new Tornillo Exchange, which carries his name: Aguilera International Highway.

The engineer graduated from Texas Western College, now UTEP, in 1964 with a bachelor’s degree in engineering and served in the Army for a couple of years before returning to find the school with a new name and a new opportunity.

“I went back to UTEP and the College of Engineering because I was thinking about getting my master’s with my G.I. Bill and ran into a former professor (Paul Hassler),” Aguilera recalled. “He asked if I had a job, he made a call, I interviewed, and that was the beginning of my career in the highway department. It was the best thing that ever happened to me.”

Today the alumnus has his own company and is the father of three UTEP graduates.

- Lauren Macias-Cervantes

Russell Broaddus, M.D., Ph.D., credits his education at UTEP with setting the foundation for a successful career.

“UTEP has played an important role in my family,” said Broaddus, a professor of pathology at The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, whose parents and three siblings all graduated from UTEP. Broaddus was awarded a Presidential Scholarship to attend UTEP and earned a bachelor’s degree in microbiology in 1987. He went on to medical school at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Later, he earned a Ph.D. from UT Health Science Center - Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. His work on the molecular pathogenesis of endometrial cancer, the most common gynecological cancer in women, has been published in peer-reviewed journals and his research findings have been incorporated into clinical patient care.

Broaddus said it was transformative to work in the UTEP research lab led by Jack Bristol, Ph.D., and Lillian Mayberry, Ph.D., as an undergraduate. Both inspired and fostered in him a love for research through their mentorship.

“Undergraduate students at UTEP are fortunate because they can get hands-on research experience and careful mentoring by faculty,” he said. “This type of experience is not typical at many larger universities.”

- Lauren Macias-Cervantes

It took Estela Casas 25 years to graduate from UTEP, but that didn’t stop her from enjoying a career as one of El Paso’s finest broadcast journalists.

After graduating from Burges High School, Casas attended an Arizona university on a voice performance scholarship. She left after one semester to pursue a singing career, then returned to El Paso to pursue television news instead.

Casas enrolled at UTEP in 1980. The first time she appeared on camera was during a news production class. A year later, she landed a job with the KTSM-TV news team. Since then, she has worked as a reporter and news anchor at KINT-TV, KDBC-TV and KVIA-TV.

Throughout her 36-year career, Casas has covered major news stories, including interviewing President Barack Obama at the White House. She also has become a strong advocate of women’s and children’s health issues.

Despite her professional success, Casas always intended to finish her degree and set a good example for her three children. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in communication studies in 2005.

“I always felt that if I’m going to leave something to my children, it is the value of an education and the strength to persevere,” said Casas, who has been a news anchor at KVIA-TV since 1993.

- Laura L. Acosta
Sierra Medical Center in El Paso hired Erik Cazares out of UTEP in 2001. Fourteen years later, the center, now called The Hospitals of Providence Sierra Campus, named him its chief nursing officer.

The native of Chihuahua, Mexico, moved around the Southwest as a youth, but his family settled in El Paso during his teen years. A top graduate from El Paso’s Ysleta High School, he was awarded a UTEP Presidential Scholarship. While a nursing student, Cazares earned his U.S. citizenship and worked as a nurse extern at Sierra. His leadership abilities were among the reasons hospital officials selected him as a founding director of the Hospitals of Providence East Campus in 2008. Since then he has overseen different inpatient hospital departments and implemented new strategies to enhance services and patient care.

Cazares, who earned his Master of Science in Nursing Administration from Texas Tech University in 2013, is active in several national nursing and healthcare organizations.

“UTEP launched me into a career where I have the privilege of caring for individuals and families in their most vulnerable moments,” Cazares said. “I am honored to lead teams of passionate professionals who share the same devotion to advance healthcare in our community.”

- Daniel Perez

James Ricardo ‘Jim’ Forbes didn’t hesitate when legendary Coach Don Haskins recruited him to play basketball for the UTEP Miners in 1970.

The 6-foot-7 forward from Bel Air High School dreamed of playing in the NBA. But a knee injury Forbes sustained when he returned to UTEP after playing in the 1972 Olympics sidelined his career as a professional basketball player. Instead, Forbes would go on to become one of the most successful high school basketball coaches in Texas. In February 2017, Forbes, the head basketball coach at Andress High School, won his 600th game in his 33-year career.

“Make sure you have a 10-year plan and try to adhere to that,” Forbes advises student-athletes. “And make the best of your college education. Take advantage of it because you never know what might happen, but you’ll always be able to fall back on your education.” Before coaching high school basketball, Forbes served as a UTEP assistant coach under Coach Haskins from 1981-84. As a high school coach, Forbes led the Riverside High School Rangers to the Texas 5A Final Four in 1995 and the Andress Eagles to the Final Four in 2015.

Forbes was inducted into the UTEP Athletic Hall of Fame in 2011.

- Laura L. Acosta
Sandra Terrazas always has been a team player. From her days as an elite point guard on El Paso High School’s girls basketball team to today as owner of Spectrum Therapy Consultants, she believes her purpose is to bring out the best in others.

The licensed physical therapist and personal trainer opened her El Paso-based company in 2006 and has overseen its growth while also serving as an adjunct professor at UTEP and other area institutions of higher education.

Terrazas said she pursued her Master of Science in kinesiology from UTEP so she could continue to serve as an instructor. The first-generation college student also has a bachelor’s degree in physical therapy and an MBA from other institutions.

“I want to help today’s students become good colleagues who combine technical skill with a personal touch,” said the businesswoman, who was instrumental in introducing the Spanish competency requirement to UTEP’s Doctor of Physical Therapy degree plan. “I want them to understand the culture of the community.”

Terrazas balances her work with humanitarian missions in Guatemala and academic presentations in Mexico, where she advises others how to assist individuals who use prosthetics.

- Daniel Perez
PHARMACY HAS EVOLVED CONSIDERABLY SINCE ITS EARLIEST RECORDED PRACTICE IN THE 6TH CENTURY. MORE THAN A THOUSAND YEARS LATER, UTEP IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF REDEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PHARMACIST IN THE 21ST CENTURY WITH THE OPENING OF THE UNIVERSITY’S NEW SCHOOL OF PHARMACY.

STEPPING AWAY FROM THE COUNTER

by ROBIN STANTON GERROW photos by J.R. HERNANDEZ
The school received ‘precandidate’ status on July 11, 2017, allowing the inaugural cohort of 40 students to begin classes in August, but the program has been years in the making.

UTEP has been part of the six-year UTEP Cooperative Pharmacy Program (CPP) with The University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy since 1999. Students in the program began their first two years at UTEP, followed by two years at UT Austin, and they finished the last two years at UTEP. Students who successfully completed the program received a doctorate in pharmacy (Pharm.D.), creating excellent opportunities for UTEP students, but it had a big drawback — there was room for only 12 Miners each year.

In 2015, The University of Texas System approved the creation of UTEP’s new School of Pharmacy, and Jose O Rivera, Pharm.D., was named the founding dean.

“I have to thank our great team of faculty and staff, UTEP administration, the UTEP community as a whole, and our community partners for this accomplishment,” Rivera said about the school’s establishment and progress toward full accreditation. “Even after more than 15 years of graduating students with the co-op program, the pharmacy workforce in the El Paso region is still below where it needs to be, compared to the state average. We have a big gap in terms of the number of pharmacists overall, but we also need more Latino pharmacists. We need more bilingual, bicultural pharmacists.”

The team building the school’s new curriculum saw an opportunity to provide a unique educational experience that would specifically fill the workforce need for those bilingual, bicultural pharmacists. While the Hispanic population of Texas is about 39 percent, less than 20 percent of the state’s pharmacists are Hispanic.

“AT A NATIONAL LEVEL, ONLY 4 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A PHARMACY PROGRAM ARE LATINO...”

"At a national level, only 4 percent of students enrolled in a pharmacy program are Latino,” Rivera said. “We want to create very special pharmacists by basing the curriculum on what we call ‘IDEAL’ – innovation, diversity, engagement, access and leadership. These are qualities that are necessary for successful professionals in today’s workplace.

“Pharmacists used to be much more passive,” he continued. “But, they are evolving to be much more active and engaged in patient care, especially in underserved areas like ours. When you have
an underserved population, not only do you have a lot of needs, you have a lot of opportunity to help.

The UTEP program also offers the added attraction to students of being a very community-based school, which has also been a big draw in recruiting faculty. For some of those faculty members, coming to El Paso is coming home.

Several of the school’s faculty are former students of the CPP and were very eager for the opportunity to put their specialized skills to use in educating the next generation of pharmacists for the region.

Among those returning faculty are Jacquelyn Navarrete, Pharm.D.; Margie Padilla, Pharm.D.; and Denise Pinal, Pharm.D. Early in their careers, they moved to far-flung places like Boston, Massachusetts; Seattle, Washington; and Austin, Texas, but all came back for the same reason: a passion for teaching, patient care and community.

“MY MOTIVATION TO RETURN STEMMED FROM MY DESIRE TO BE INVOLVED IN PATIENT CARE, RESEARCH AND TEACHING.”

Denise Pinal, Pharm.D.

“My motivation to return stemmed from my desire to be involved in patient care, research and teaching,” said Pinal, who spent time working in pediatric pharmacies in Seattle and Fort Worth, Texas. “The position with the UTEP School of Pharmacy allows me to work in all the areas I am truly passionate about. Moreover, I get to work alongside faculty who were my professors and role models when I was in school. I feel very fortunate to be part of the team!”

While Padilla remained in Austin after completing the CPP, she focused her efforts on the Hispanic community with an eye to returning home.

“After the (CPP) program, I pursued a postgraduate residency experience with Blackstock Family Practice/UT Austin College of Pharmacy,” she said. “I chose this experience because I wanted to continue to work with Hispanic populations and learn how to better manage their medications. When I completed that experience, I moved back to El Paso to care for my father who was terminally ill. My plan was always to return to my community and my family. My heart and passion for pharmacy lies in El Paso.”

Navarrete did her postgraduate residency in Boston, but soon after took the chance to return home.

“When I completed the residency program, I was provided an opportunity to return to my hometown and serve the community of El Paso and UTEP. I returned to provide clinical services to the people of El Paso, and remain close to my family,” she said.

Along with the rest of the School of Pharmacy team, these faculty members are committed to a new type of pharmacy education.

“Because we are a community-based school, we have a better sense of what is happening out there. We aren’t just in the academic building – we are more involved in public health,” Rivera said. “We have to prevent diseases and health problems, not just treat them.”

Another way the curriculum at UTEP is different is the integration of courses.

“We have developed the AIM curriculum: aligned, integrated and meaningful,” Rivera said. “We feel that in other schools there is often a separation of subjects, but we don’t think that is the optimal way for the student to get the most out of an area of study. If those topics are integrated, and paired with meaningful experiences that can be applied to real-world problems and research, the student will better understand how it is used.”

“My experience has been that common models of pharmacy school curriculum are in silos or modular in nature,” Navarrete said. “Our team has been extremely dedicated and focused on integrating all aspects of the curriculum, including experiential education, throughout all years of the program. We hope by this integration, year to year and class to class, students are able
According to Rivera, most pharmacists start their first jobs as managers. The UTEP school wants to address that, as well as produce well-rounded and culturally educated pharmacists. Some of the ways they plan to do that is a requirement of technical Spanish classes, study-away experiences, integrated certificate programs and capstone projects.

“There is a wide distribution of Spanish-speaking households across the country, not just in border regions,” Rivera said. “Employers are coming to us with this need on a national level. But it isn’t just understanding the language, it is understanding the culture – and I mean culture in a holistic way. We want our students to learn those concepts that can be applied to any other population, so if they go to places serving cultures other than a Hispanic or Latino population, they can still find a way to connect to a patient and improve the health outcomes of that patient.”

The faculty echo this concept. “My hope is for our program to become a model for future healthcare programs as they begin to rethink how to incorporate culture and global awareness, community engagement and inter-professional team collaborations,” Padilla said. “Together with the help of UTEP, the healthcare community and the general El Paso community, we can better understand how to work with vulnerable populations. Our students will have the confidence, the ability and training needed to serve any diverse community. Knowing how to serve diverse communities is going to make us different from other programs.”

“Students will accomplish coursework in different ‘tracks,’ which include Pharmaceutical Foundations,
Global Health Colloquium, Patient Care Practice and Innovation, and Integrated Systems-Based Pharmacotherapy,” Pinal said. “Some of the unique experiences that I’m excited will be available to our students require coursework in professional innovation, leadership and life skills, Spanish for the pharmacy professional, and a required study-away experience. I believe these unique aspects will be advantageous for our students, further equipping them to be well-accomplished, globally aware pharmacist leaders who can effectively serve diverse communities, including our own.”

While the cooperative program only allowed 12 UTEP students each year, the UTEP School of Pharmacy will eventually enroll up to 65 students.

“The initial goal was to start with 35 students our first year, but we found more qualified students that we didn’t want to turn away, so we have admitted 40 students for this fall,” Rivera said. “They are primarily from this region – I believe it is important to continue addressing the needs of the El Paso area. Many of these students come from modest backgrounds, and like the rest of UTEP, we want to provide social mobility for those students. Many of them already understand the culture and the language, and many of them will stay after graduating. Even with the co-op program, 75 percent of our graduates have stayed in the El Paso area.”

Ranielle Espinoza is one of those new students. She graduated from UTEP in 2014 with a bachelor’s degree in biomedical engineering.

“I’ve wanted to be a pharmacist since I was about six years old,” she said. “At the time, my father was a pharmacy technician, and my mother became ill and lost her eyesight. Even then, I could see how medications could help my mother during her illness and help her regain her sight. I’m very excited to be part of this first class. It is so important to me to give back to my community, and I am so proud that I can make a difference in this border region.”

This next step is a big one for Espinoza, and for the University.

“We have been very proud of the co-op program, and have many people to thank for the success and achievements of those graduates, especially Dr. Steve Leslie, former dean of the UT Austin College of Pharmacy,” Rivera continued. “It was a great program, but I don’t think we were living up to our potential.”
The Alumni Lounge
ALUMNI NEWS, PROFILES, OBITUARIES AND PHOTOS

1960s

Nolan Richardson (B.A. ’65) received the Father Rahm Segundo Barrio Person of the Year Award. The award recognizes an individual or organization committed to the betterment of and service to the cultural, historical, economic, educational and social empowerment of the Segundo Barrio in El Paso and its inhabitants, values and unique experience.


Pat Thompson (B.A. ’65) was enshrined into the Minnesota Senior Men’s Amateur Baseball Association Hall of Fame and the Men’s Senior Baseball League World Series Hall of Fame in 2016. Thompson is a retired award-winning sports writer and semi-retired public relations professional.

1970s

Robert S. Ayoub (BBA ’70) was promoted to the position of chief public relations officer of MIMCO.


Joel T. Hendryx (B.A. ’77) is the new chief medical officer of University Medical Center. He previously served as vice chief of the maternal child department at the Hospitals of Providence East. He is a graduate of Texas College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Sylvia Dolores Hopp (B.S. ’75; M.Ed. ’82), superintendent of the San Elizario Independent School District, retired after 42 years in education and administration in June. Hopp had been with the district for 17 years and served as superintendent for five years.

Susan A. Melendez (BBA ’79) was elected to the 2017-18 board of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation. Melendez is a senior vice president for investor relations at the Borderplex Alliance, a regional economic development organization.

Alfonso Ortega, Ph.D. (B.S. ’76) was appointed dean of Santa Clara University’s School of Engineering and John M. Sobrato Professor. Ortega was the James R. Birle Professor of Energy Technology and the founding associate vice president for research and graduate programs at Villanova University.

William F. Studer (B.A. ’72) was appointed assistant city manager for Las Cruces, New Mexico. He previously served as deputy city manager and director of the Management Services Department in Arlington, Texas, and the Office of Budget and Research in Dallas.

1980s

Taffy J. Arias (BSN ’84) was named chief executive officer of Gila Regional Medical Center in Silver City, New Mexico. Arias had been the chief executive officer of Martin General Hospital in Williamston, North Carolina.

Jaime Barceleau (BSW ’80) was named committee chair of CommUNITY en ACCIÓN’s Young Achievers Forum (YAF) initiative. YAF is an education-focused event that gives at-risk sixth-grade students and their families a taste of college for a day.

Greg E. Brown (B.S. ’80) is the new secondary coach for Auburn University in Alabama.

Denise Marie Castillo-Rhodes (BBA ’82), Texas Medical Center’s chief financial officer, was named a 2017 Outstanding Women in Banking and Finance honoree by The Women’s Resource of Greater Houston.

Robert Jacob Cintron (B.S. ’83; MBA ’96; M.Acc. ’02) was installed as a new board member of the United Way of El Paso County for 2017-18. Cintron is the chief executive officer of University Medical Center.

Karen Rae Damron (BSN ’83) was named dean of the Elliott School of Nursing at the University of Pikeville (UPIKE) in Kentucky. Damron most recently served as associate professor of nursing at UPIKE.

Gustavo A. Martell (B.S. ’87) is the new chief medical officer for The Hospitals of Providence Transmountain Campus. Martell received a medical degree from The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston. He has 22 years of healthcare management experience in obstetrics and gynecology.

Shawn Mena (B.A. ’86; M.A. ’90) was named principal of Franklin High School in April. Mena had been the director of the Arts and Humanities Academy at Akins High School in Austin, Texas.

Marcela Yvonne Navarrete (BBA ’89) is the board chair-elect of the United Way of El Paso County for 2017-18. Navarrete is vice president of strategic, financial and management services at El Paso Water.

1990s

Bobby Blanco (BBA ’98) was appointed to the Workforce Solutions Borderplex board of directors. He will represent the private sector for the public employment agency’s board. Blanco is a partner and director of insurance and estate planning for Strategic Wealth Advisors in El Paso.

Laura Burciaga (B.S. ’95; M.Ed. ’07) is the new assistant principal at Lincoln Middle School in the El Paso Independent School District.

Troy Thelman Byrne (B.S. ’91; M.Ed. ’05) was named executive director of Transformational Learning for the Fort Bend Independent School District in Sugar Land, Texas. Byrne previously served as the interim executive director of curriculum and instruction at the El Paso Independent School District.

Ruben Chavez (B.S. ’95) will serve as vice chair of CommUNITY en ACCIÓN, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for the Hispanic community in El Paso.

Edward Escudero (BBA ’92) was elected to the 2017-18 board of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation. Escudero is president of High Desert Capital, an El Paso financial services company.

Paul Guerra (B.S. ’93) was reelected Socorro Independent School District 4 trustee in May. Guerra is a territory manager for Inso Distributing.

Laura Guzman-DuVernois (BIS ’96; M.Ed. ’09; Ed.D. ’13) is the new assistant principal at Maxine Silva Health Magnet School in the El Paso Independent School District.

Joseph Dominick Manago (B.A. ’94; M.Ed. ’03) is the new principal of Andress High School in the El Paso Independent School District. Manago has 23 years of experience as an educator. He previously served as the principal of Nolan Richardson Middle School.

Continued on page 36
Abe Mac:
Former Football Player Takes
Country Music Field

University of Texas at El Paso alumnus Abe Mac was used to the cheers of thousands of fans when he played football at the Sun Bowl a decade ago.

But on a summer day during UTEP’s football training camp in Socorro, N.M., he faced a different audience. He strapped on his acoustic guitar and played the song “Saturday Night Lights” — the first song he’d ever written — for his team.

“It was intense. I got up and sang, and everybody was just blown away,” Mac recalled.

After the performance, his teammates carried him off the field on their shoulders, hooting and hollering with pride. Who would have thought this young linebacker from Socorro High School was a budding country music star?

Mac, whose birth name is Abiel Macias (it was former football coach Mike Price who gave him the name “Abe Mac”), may never have found the inspiration to write his own songs, had it not been for classes he took to earn a communication degree in 2007.

“I have to give credit to Dr. (Barthy) Byrd — she was in the communication department — and Mr. (Louie) Saenz, as well,” Mac said. “Those two folks right there really inspired me ... because when I took classes with them for communications, writing was key.”

After graduation, and a stint working for the El Paso Electric Co., Mac decided to pursue music full time. He has become a member of the Nashville Songwriters Association, an organization where each member writes about 400 songs a year.

Earlier this year, Mac released his third full-length album, “A Thousand Pieces,” produced by Grammy-award winning producer Rob Fraboni, who is known for producing albums for the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, and Bonnie Raitt, just to name a few.

“It was an amazing experience and Abe is incredibly, incredibly talented,” Fraboni said. “This guy is the real deal. I know this guy will succeed.”

One of the songs that shows Mac’s songwriting abilities is “Far Away from Home,” a song about members of the U.S. military fighting in a war overseas.

“That song had us all crying in the control room,” Fraboni said. “I had tears coming down, hitting the console. I’ve never done a recording session like that in my life. It was so potent and powerful and so amazing.”

Mac is scheduled to release a folk-Americana-rock ‘n’ roll album this fall. He is hoping he can get guitarist Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones to contribute to the album: Mac’s wife’s aunt, Patty Hansen, is married to Richards.

Mac also is planning to release a “very twang country” album in spring 2018. - Leonard Martinez
Alum Notes

Richard N. Murg (MBA ‘92) was named chief revenue officer of MedNet Solutions, a healthcare technology company specializing in electronic data solutions designed for the global life sciences community. Murg will be responsible for expanding MedNet’s worldwide sales and marketing initiatives and increasing revenue and sales growth.

Orlando P. Riddick (B.A. ‘92) is the new superintendent of the Midland Independent School District. Riddick was most recently superintendent of the Cedar Hill Independent School District.

Aleida Socarrás (M.A. ‘90) was promoted to vice president of Chesapeake Utilities. Socarrás will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day activities of the Delmarva Natural Gas (DNG) and Sandpiper Energy gas distribution systems on the Delmarva Peninsula.

Rebecca Whitaker (BBA ‘83) was installed as a new board member of the United Way of El Paso County for 2017-18. Whitaker is the human resources manager at Freeport-McMoRan Inc.’s copper refinery and rod plant in El Paso.

2000s

Ruben Ahedo (BBA ‘08) was installed as a new board member of the United Way of El Paso County for 2017-18. Ahedo is the public affairs specialist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas’ El Paso Branch.

Mercedes Bauerkemper (BIS ‘02; M.Ed. ‘04) is the new Schools Division Area 3 facilitator in the El Paso Independent School District.

Monica Brinkley (B.S. ‘00; M.Ed. ‘11) is the new principal at Rusk Elementary School in the El Paso Independent School District.

Ragen G. Chappell (MBA ‘05; M.Ed. ‘10) is the new principal at Richardson Middle School in the El Paso Independent School District.

Elizabeth Devon Fowlkes (BBA ‘06) was promoted to vice president of commercial lending at WestStar Bank. Fowlkes joined WestStar in 2008 and has served as a credit analyst, senior credit analyst, business lender and assistant vice president of commercial lending.

Veronica Hernandez (BIS ‘02) was named Teacher of the Year at Montwood Middle School in the Socorro Independent School District.

Julia McBinnie Smith (B.S. ‘01) was hired as manager of the Department of Materials Engineering and Testing Services at LOI Engineers in El Paso. She has more than 16 years of experience in geotechnical engineering and construction materials testing.

Victor Urbina (B.S. ‘00; MBA ‘04) will serve as treasurer of CommUNITY en ACCIÓN, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for the Hispanic community in El Paso.

2010s

Cynthia Alamillo (BBA, ‘10) is the new assistant city manager for the city of Manzanita in Oregon.

Mayela Renata Aldaz-Cervantes (B.S. ‘15) was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF program supports outstanding students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions.

Jonathan Owen Julis Childress (BBA ‘10; MBA ‘12), co-owner of Proper Printshop Production, was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration’s El Paso office.

Alyssa Ronnie Cottman (B.S. ‘14; DPT ‘16) was hired at El Paso Physical Therapy Services.

Veronica Beatrice Escalante (BIS ‘07) was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF program supports outstanding students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions.

Maria Elena Flores (BIS ‘12; M.Ed. ‘15) was one of 25 staff members from Montgomery County Public Schools to receive a Best and Brightest award from the NAACP Parents’ Council. Flores teaches math at A. Marco Loiderman Middle School in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Alvin J. García (B.A. ‘14) has joined the front office of the Albuquerque Isotopes Triple-A baseball team as the club’s graphic designer. He previously served as an intern with the El Paso Chihuahuas Triple-A baseball team.

Annie Lee García (MSN ‘13) is the new chief nursing officer at Del Sol Medical Center in East El Paso. García previously held the same position at Methodist Texas Hospital in San Antonio for the past three years.

Monica García (BBA ‘10; MBA ‘13) was promoted to assistant vice president of commercial lending at Capital Bank in El Paso. García joined Capital Bank in 2012 and has held multiple credit and financial analyst jobs.


Jacqueline Lechuga (B.S. ‘17) was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF program supports outstanding students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions.

Jacob Richard Prat (B.S. ‘16) was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF program supports outstanding students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions.

Jennifer Ann Sifuentes (BMS ‘16) was named Hospice of El Paso’s non-clinical Employee of the Year. Sifuentes is a receptionist and has worked at the hospice for more than a year.

Brian Roman Zamarripa (B.S. ‘15) was awarded a Graduate Research Fellowship from the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF program supports outstanding students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines who are pursuing research-based master’s and doctoral degrees at accredited U.S. institutions.
Meet the New Alumni Association President:

**Bobby Gonzales**

Robert “Bobby” Gonzales will take the helm of the UTEP Alumni Association when he becomes president on Sept. 1, 2017. Gonzales is president and principal-in-charge for Quantum Engineering Consultants, Inc. He is an accomplished multi-sport athlete and certified triathlon coach who also serves as chair of the City of El Paso’s Bicycle Advisory Committee and vice chair of the Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Gonzales’ vision for the association is to develop stronger connections between alumni and students and to strengthen their commitment to UTEP.

With UTEP’s launch of the new UTEP Edge initiative, alumni will have many opportunities to contribute to student success, and Gonzales wants to make that a driving force for the board.

Gonzales, who graduated in 1985 with a degree in civil engineering, joined the UTEP Alumni Association Board of Directors in 2011.

**UTEP Magazine:** What is it about UTEP that you love so much?

**Bobby Gonzales:** That’s easy. The professors, students and personnel/administrators that I’ve had the privilege of meeting in all the years that I’ve been involved with the University are by far the friendliest, kindest, most down-to-earth individuals I’ve ever met.

**UM:** Many people believe that alumni engagement is mostly about financial contributions. What is your definition of alumni engagement for UTEP?

**BG:** It’s definitely not all about financial contributions. One of the main goals of the Alumni Association is to engage the alumni of the institution who can also contribute to, and benefit from, connections to each other and to the University. UTEP is about building connections between alumni and present-day students to foster a sense of community and continuity between generations. Our Alumni Association is committed to a relationship of mutual contributions and benefit, hopefully extending beyond any of our lifetimes.

**UM:** Why is being an engaged alum so important to you?

**BG:** I am engaged because I enjoy giving back to the university that helped my career. By staying engaged, I can also act as a positive role model to the students and provide practical support to them as they start their own careers. I believe that alumni engagement, in general, is so important because it also encourages current students to remain involved and active after graduation, perpetuating a good cycle.
Marriages & Births

1. Andrea Reveles (B.A. English and American Literature ‘15) and Matthew Madrid were married on June 10, 2017 in El Paso.

2. Carmen Daniela Chavez (B.A. English Literature ‘08) and James Travis Cooper (B.A. History and Computer Science ‘15) were married Oct. 8, 2016 in Austin, Texas.


After accepting a position as a clinical psychologist in The University of Texas at El Paso’s University Counseling Center in 2013, Jorge Marquez, Ph.D., a UTEP graduate, received a special office-warming gift from his father-in-law, Calixto Caldera.

Caldera, a retired UTEP custodial supervisor, and his wife Celia, surprised Marquez with a handcrafted UTEP pickaxe sculpture Caldera carved and welded himself to welcome his son-in-law back to his alma mater. Constructed of wood and metal, the six-and-a-half-inch pickaxe is embedded in a stone resembling a paperweight with the letter “M” for Miner.

Caldera took up the art of metalworking when he retired from UTEP in 2007 after 18 years of service. He has gifted the unique pickaxe sculptures to family members and others who count themselves among the tight-knit UTEP community.

He’s made UTEP pickaxe sculptures for his nephew Michael Talamantes, the director of UTEP’s Office of Admissions and Recruitment, who received both a bachelor’s and master’s degree from the University.

Caldera also crafted a unique pickaxe sculpture for UTEP President Diana Natalicio with an “M” shaped out of white pebbles to mimic the white “M” on the mountain off of Sun Bowl Drive. He said this version is one-of-a-kind and President Natalicio will be the only person to ever have one.

“I gave one to Dr. Natalicio because every time my wife and I drove by the University, I was amazed at how much UTEP had grown under Dr. Natalicio,” Caldera said. “In 1990, when I was working there, I saw the architectural renderings of what the University was going to look like in the future. And years later, it came true.”

The message of the Miner pick, breaking new ground, resonates with Marquez.

“I know my father-in-law puts a lot of heart into his art projects, so to have received his first pick sculpture, I was very grateful and honored,” said Marquez, who received a bachelor’s degree in psychology from UTEP in 2005. “I show it off in my office with lots of pride.”

Like the pick sculptures he creates, Caldera’s family bonds with UTEP can definitely be described as “Miner Strong.” His oldest daughter Veronica Hernandez graduated from UTEP in 2002 and was named Teacher of the Year at Montwood Middle School in 2017. His youngest daughter, Laura Marquez, is in the social work honors program at the University.

Laura Marquez was a music major when she first started at UTEP in 2001. Her father was the custodian in the Fox Fine Arts Center, where she was fondly known as “Cal’s daughter” by her professors and classmates.

Marquez took time off from school to raise a family while her husband Jorge Marquez completed graduate school at the University of Illinois. But after the couple returned to El Paso, Laura was eager to resume her UTEP education.

“The fact that my sister and family members have also seen success both here at UTEP and in the El Paso community just solidifies what UTEP means to all of us,” she said. “My dad’s artwork connects us all in an even more meaningful way.”

-Laura L. Acosta
## In Memoriam

UTEP acknowledges the passing of the following graduates

### 1940s
- Eugene Anderson (BBA ’48)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 26, 2017
- Gordon L. Black (B.A. ’40)  
  El Paso, Texas; June 19, 2017
- Mary Jane Enger (B.A. ’43)  
  Alvin, Texas; May 3, 2017
- William Clarence Farlow (BBA ’49)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 15, 2017
- Henry S. Lide Jr. (BBA ’46)  
  El Paso, Texas; Jan., 19, 2017
- Marian Deane Goff Parsons  
  El Paso, Texas; April 9, 2017

### 1950s
- Jose Luis Carrera (BBA ’59)  
  Tempe, Arizona; June 2, 2016
- Sanford C. Cox Jr. (B.A. ’51; M.A. ’52)  
  El Paso, Texas; May 12, 2017
- Ben Lee Crow (B.S. ’53)  
  Dallas, Texas; May 4, 2017
- Alejandro Fierro (BBA ’56)  
  Fabens, Texas; March 19, 2017
- Peter Gordon Gray (B.S. ’56)  
  Lafayette, Louisiana; May 11, 2017
- Vernon R. Haldeman (B.A. ’55)  
  Artesia, New Mexico; March 18, 2017
- Wallace S. “Wally” Hartley (B.A. ’56)  
  El Paso, Texas; Feb. 22, 2017
- Roy Allen Hickman (B.M. ’55)  
  Norman, Oklahoma; April 27, 2017
- James Frank Kucera (BBA ’52)  
  Corpus Christi, Texas; April 4, 2017
- Jose Montoya (BBA ’51)  
  El Paso, Texas; March 27, 2017
- Harry Leslie Moseley (B.S. ’56)  
  Knoxville, Tennessee; May 22, 2017
- Robert Milton Rayburn (B.S. ’50)  
  Ashland, Kentucky; June 2, 2017
- Max George Viescas (B.A. ’56)  
  El Paso, Texas; March 26, 2017
- Bert Williams (B.S. ’50)  
  El Paso, Texas; May 24, 2017

### 1960s
- Robert Randolph “Randy” Bohannon (B.S. ’67)  
  Euless, Texas; Jan. 5, 2017
- James Howard Bradley (B.S. ’69; M.S. ’71)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 13, 2017
- David Myron Buring (B.A. ’61)  
  Dallas, Texas; March 17, 2017
- Anthony Floyd Cieszkiewicz (M.Ed. ’66)  
  El Paso, Texas; March 27, 2017
- Herbert “Herb” Edward Day (B.BA ’68)  
  Friendswood, Texas; Sept. 20, 2016
- Doris May Brunson Duncan (B.S. ’67)  
  Gardendale, Texas; March 1, 2017
- Michael L. Early (B.S. ’66)  
  Phoenix, Arizona; May 16, 2016
- John Louis Fashing (BBA ’60)  
  El Paso, Texas; June 6, 2017
- Harold Bud Fauser (B.A. ’60)  
  Bluffton, South Carolina; Feb. 28, 2017
- Grace Alice Flanagan (B.S. ’69; M.Ed. ’82)  
  El Paso, Texas; March 30, 2017
- Harry E. Gruber (B.A. ’61)  
  Meridian, Idaho; April 2, 2017
- William Thomas Harries (BBA ’65)  
  Garland, Texas; June 12, 2017
- Maria Luisa Alvarez Harvey (B.A. ’65; M.A. ’66)  
  Jackson, Mississippi; Feb. 13, 2017
- Mildred Sue Jones (B.S. ’68)  
  Chillicothe, Missouri; Feb. 23, 2017
- Daniel Lee Lazemberg (B.S. ’69)  
  Friendswood, Texas; June 23, 2017
- Larry D. Lumpkin (BBA ’68)  
  Horseshoe Bay, Texas; April 25, 2017
- Judy Mammel (B.S. ’63)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 15, 2017
- Abel Paredes Jr. (B.S. ’66)  
  San Antonio, Texas; May 5, 2017
- Jeanie Peinado (BBA ’66)  
  El Paso, Texas; Feb. 12, 2017
- Raul O. Peinado (B.S. ’61)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 14, 2017
- Ruth “Ruthie” Pena (B.A. ’68; M.A. ’70)  
  El Paso, Texas; June 13, 2017
- Phillip Hal Rasor (B.S. ’67)  
  Kerrville, Texas; April 17, 2017
- Joe Rubio (B.A. ’60)  
  Dickinson, Texas; May 21, 2017
- Helen Virginia Steele (B.A. ’67)  
  Carmel, Indiana; April 10, 2017
- Susan D. Young (B.S. ’61)  
  Houston, Texas; August 29, 2016

### 1970s
- Joseph W. Alexander (BBA ’77)  
  El Paso, Texas; Jan. 6, 2017
- Fernando Carrasco (B.A. ’71; M.Ed. ’76)  
  El Paso, Texas; March 16, 2017
- Paulina Aldrete Casey (B.A. ’71; M.Ed. ’80)  
  Manhattan, Kansas; March 5, 2017
- Peter G. Como (M.A. ’77)  
  Ellicott City, Maryland; March 14, 2017
- Azucena M. “Susy” Dominguez (M.A. ’77)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 2, 2017
- Stephen B. Dyess (B.A. ’79)  
  El Paso, Texas; June 14, 2017
- Katherine Ann Wright Flowers (B.S. ’70)  
  Odessa, Texas; June 13, 2017
- Frances F. Lindsey (B.S. ’70)  
  El Paso, Texas; June 19, 2017
- James C. Miller (B.S. ’76)  
  El Paso, Texas; June 19, 2017
- Inez S. Moilan (B.S. ’70)  
  Houston, Texas; May 15, 2017
- John Louis Fashing (BBA ’77)  
  El Paso, Texas; June 14, 2017
- Krista Brooks (B.A. ’92)  
  McKinney, Texas; March 22, 2017
- Deborah A. Dunn (BBA ’98)  
  Temple, Texas; March 10, 2017
- Patricia Ann Palmer (B.A. ’90)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 22, 2017
- Mary Margaret Uhrig (B.S. ’90)  
  Dallas, Texas; April 10, 2017
- Nancy Zaky (BSN ’93)  
  Bremerton, Texas; Feb. 22, 2017

### 1980s
- Nancy E. Hayden (B.S. ’87)  
  Sheridan, Oregon; February 23, 2017
- Rodolfo “Rudy” Lucero Jr. (B.S. ’82)  
  Scottsdale, Arizona; May 30, 2017
- William J. Sadler (BSW ’86)  
  El Paso, Texas; May 15, 2017
- Manuel Villaletal Jr. (BBA ’81)  
  Corpus Christi, Texas; April 24, 2017

### 1990s
- Krista Brooks (B.A. ’92)  
  McKinney, Texas; March 22, 2017
- Deborah A. Dunn (BBA ’98)  
  Temple, Texas; March 10, 2017
- Patricia Ann Palmer (B.A. ’90)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 22, 2017
- Mary Margaret Uhrig (B.S. ’90)  
  Dallas, Texas; April 10, 2017
- Nancy Zaky (BBA ’93)  
  Bremerton, Texas; Feb. 22, 2017

### 2000s
- Arcadio "Archie" Durán Jr. (B.A. ’04)  
  El Paso, Texas; April 30, 2017
- Robert Jacob “Jake” Najera (B.A. ’09)  
  Horizon City, Texas; April 13, 2017

### 2010s
- Rita Marie Smith (BBA ’11)  
  El Paso, Texas; March 24, 2017
A Decade of Dedication
UTEP Black Alumni Network Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Every year, a group of University of Texas at El Paso alumni from around the world eagerly anticipate reuniting to celebrate their alma mater with an unforgettable week of UTEP Homecoming festivities. This year, Homecoming will be extra special for UTEP’s Black Alumni Network (UBAN) members as they celebrate the network’s 10th anniversary.

UBAN got its start through the power of sisterhood. In 2007, a group of 12 alumnae from Delta Sigma Theta sorority decided to reunite during Homecoming that year. Since graduating, the women had moved away, started careers and families, and were excited to return to where they all met. They had such a wonderful time that they decided to make the reunion an annual event.

Through encouragement from former UTEP Assistant Vice President for Alumni Relations Richard Daniel, Ph.D., the ladies joined the Alumni Association, created the network and began to recruit other black alumni to join.

UBAN originally started with approximately 28 members. It has since grown to more than 100.

Today, members serve as a resource for alumni services and work with several UTEP departments to enrich students’ lives through educational opportunities, community involvement and personal development.

In 2009, UTEP’s African-American Studies Program and its founder, the late Maceo Dailey, Ph.D., became key partners of UBAN and worked together to support UTEP students needing financial assistance. After Dailey died in 2015, UBAN and the College of Liberal Arts honored his legacy by creating the Maceo C. Dailey Student Support Fund.

UTEP alumnus James E. Jones, UBAN chair, joined the organization in 2008 as a way to give back to the University. He said he enjoys the camaraderie and support the group provides to each other and the University.

Florida Simon Dotson, a founding member of UBAN, said her Miner pride has grown over the years through her involvement with the organization. “I have learned UTEP alumni have much to be proud about,” she said. “UTEP was the first Texas university to integrate in the 1950s. UBAN members are doing great things and impacting families and communities around the country.”

- Christina Rodriguez
JAMES LEE MILSON, PH.D.

James Lee “Jim” Milson, Ph.D., UTEP professor emeritus and chair of the Department of Teacher Education, died May 12, 2017. He was 79.

Milson earned a bachelor’s degree in chemistry from Texas Wesleyan University and his Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from The University of Texas at Austin in 1970. He accepted a faculty position in science education at The University of Texas at El Paso that same year and stayed until his retirement in 1999. He served as chair of the Department of Teacher Education for 17 years.

“Dr. Milson was an effective and dedicated department chair who always looked after the welfare of students,” said Dennis Bixler-Marquez, Ph.D., director of UTEP’s Chicano Studies Program and a former colleague of Milson’s. “He was a strong advocate for Chicano Studies, whose development he greatly facilitated.”

Milson also served as an adviser for the departments of Physics and Biological Sciences, was a member of the School of Nursing Advisory Board and developed many special courses for science teachers. He was on the review board of the National Science Foundation and worked with the Texas Education Agency to develop new science programs for teachers.

“I have nothing but absolute praise and adulation for Jim and his wife for the contribution they made to science education,” said Stanley Ball, Ph.D., former UTEP associate professor of teacher education who was a close friend and colleague of Milson’s. “They always went that extra mile for their students.”

Milson served on the Insights El Paso Science Center board, where his wife, Buena “Dusty” Milson, was executive director. The two frequently put on workshops and took local science teachers on educational trips.

- Jenn Crawford

KARL B. PUTNAM, PH.D.

Friends described Karl B. Putnam, Ph.D., as quiet, kind and tenacious. Putnam, an associate professor of accounting and information science at The University of Texas at El Paso, referred to himself playfully as “GOM,” which was short for “God of the Mountain.” He died July 12, 2017.

Putnam, a UTEP instructor since 1986, died from injuries sustained during a July 2 hiking accident in his beloved Franklin Mountains. Born in Durham, North Carolina and raised in Orange and Victoria, Texas, Putnam was remembered for his passion for academics, hiking and the community.

Denisse Olivas, UTEP’s director of the Center for Hispanic Entrepreneurship, took a managerial accounting course with Putnam in 2000 and recalled a professor who was smart and thorough.

“I enjoyed how he explained things with practical examples,” she said. “There was a kindness to how he dealt with students. He was receptive to their questions.”

Friends also mentioned his likability and willingness to share his expertise in hiking or investing. He loved to talk about pension plans almost as much as sharing mountain vistas at sunrise and sunset.

“He taught what he knew was important,” said Noel Rosenbaum, Putnam’s significant other. “He was a successful investor and was happy to share what he knew for the price of a meal.”

Putnam also was known for his tenacity to promote no-smoking campaigns and other civic causes, as well as his dogged efforts to get a memorial plaque erected on the Franklin Mountains to recognize where a B-36 bomber crashed in 1953. Putnam earned his doctorate in accounting from Oklahoma State University and his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting from The University of Texas at Austin.

- Daniel Perez

JOHN H. HADDOX, PH.D.

For two-thirds of his life, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy John H. Haddox, Ph.D., had a profound impact on the education of UTEP students. Haddox, who taught at UTEP for 58 years, died July 15, 2017. He was 87.

“He always said his students kept him young,” Haddox’s daughter, Grace Haddox, said. “He loved interacting with young people and hearing their stories.”

Born in Oklahoma in 1929, Haddox planned to become a doctor like his father. Instead, he veered into a long and distinguished career teaching philosophy and promoting peace, ethics and human rights.

“He had a huge social conscience,” Grace Haddox said. “He fought for civil rights. He was always concerned about people less fortunate than him.”

Haddox served in the U.S. Army and met his wife, Carmen, while stationed in El Paso. The couple raised 11 children.

Haddox joined the faculty at Texas Western College (now UTEP) in 1957. He specialized in Latin American, Native American and Chicano philosophy and was recognized for his groundbreaking work that introduced Mexican philosophers to the English-speaking world.

Haddox also authored several books and traveled with students on educational trips to Europe and Mexico.

Haddox retired in 2013, but his love for his students couldn’t keep him away from the classroom. He taught part-time for two more years because he wanted to be a faculty member during UTEP’s Centennial Celebration in 2014.

Grace Haddox took three classes with her father and was surprised to see how different he was in the classroom than at home.

“He was kind of quiet at home, but in front of a classroom he would come alive,” she recalled.

- Laura L. Acosta
2017 Alumni PICK-NIC

It is not a picnic unless it is a PICK-NIC! On Saturday, July 15, about 1,000 University of Texas at El Paso alumni and friends across the globe dedicated a summer afternoon to food, friends, sun and fun as they exhibited some serious school spirit at the 6th Annual UTEP Alumni PICK-NIC. This year, more than two dozen cities hosted a PICK-NIC, each lending their own unique UTEP flair to the occasion. Some were big, some were small, some were held indoors and others were outside, but they all shared comradery and an abundance of Miner pride. Here are some scenes from the El Paso PICK-NIC.
SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!

Online Content
To see more Alumni PICK-NIC photos from El Paso and other cities around the world, go to utep.edu/magazine.
Kick off UTEP's Homecoming festivities at the 8th Annual Miner Dash! It's a fantastic opportunity for El Paso community members of all ages to showcase their commitment to a lifetime of health and fitness.

SUNDAY, OCT. 1, 2017 | 8-11 A.M.
UTE P CENTENNIAL PLAZA

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