NATIONAL CHAMPION

EMMANUEL KORIR IS A 2017 NCAA TRACK CHAMPION

UTEP Brings H.O.P.E.
The Multiple Faces of UTEP Postdocs

Community Engaged Miners
Campus Snapshots
More than 100 Miners representing disciplines throughout the institution participated in TCM Day, The University of Texas at El Paso’s oldest annual tradition, on March 24, 2017. Festivities started at Magoffin Auditorium with the simulated dynamite blast, followed later by the whitewashing of the giant “M” on the mountain across from Sun Bowl Stadium, shown here. Other highlights included the Team Mining Challenge at venues around campus, and the parade along the Long Green Line through the Engineering Building lobby that led to the kissing of the Blarney Stone on the patio outside the college’s administrative offices. The celebration ended with the customary St. Pat’s Feast.
This is precisely what happens when UTEP students share their expertise and skills in settings across the surrounding community, not only by volunteering through such service activities as Project MOVE, but working with off-campus organizations that are tackling the big issues of our day. Health care, social services, the arts and economic development all benefit from the contributions of UTEP students, and their faculty and staff mentors, adding to El Paso’s prosperity and quality of life. But the impact is not one-directional. Participating UTEP students are also beneficiaries as they gain invaluable knowledge and skills through such community outreach experiences.

With a new student success initiative, the “UTEP Edge,” UTEP students are offered a range of structured opportunities for community involvement and engaged scholarship, which enable them not only to serve others, but also to gain the confidence and enhanced personal and professional skills that will give them a competitive edge as they graduate and enter the workforce or pursue a graduate degree.

This issue of UTEP Magazine contains many examples of such community engagement, from student and faculty research focused on cleaning up Ascarate Lake, to healthcare services for the homeless, and marketing expertise for local nonprofit organizations. These activities and many others have enabled UTEP to achieve for four consecutive years the highest federal recognition a university can earn for its commitment to service-learning and civic engagement – inclusion on the U.S. President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

We invite you, our alumni, to join us in expanding the scope of the UTEP Edge by mentoring students, offering pathways for them to apply their skills and education through volunteer activities, internships and jobs, and involving them in a range of experiences highlighted in this magazine. You know well the value of social capital in professional development, and your participation in the UTEP Edge will have an impact on today’s UTEP students and, ultimately, the exciting UTEP success story.

Go Miners!

Diana Natalicio
President
At just 21 years old, Emmanuel Korir became an NCAA Indoor Champion in the 800-meter run, the first Miner to do so in that event. The “Mining Minds” pickaxe sculpture was lit in orange and blue in his honor in March 2017 to celebrate the accomplishment. Photo by Ivan Pierre Aguirre. Story, page 16.
**The XX Factor: A Century of Women at UTEP**

One hundred years ago, the first female students enrolled at the State School of Mines and Metallurgy, now The University of Texas at El Paso. Since that time, women have played an important role in making UTEP what it is today.

**1914** - The State School of Mines and Metallurgy, also known as the Texas School of Mines (TSM), is established.

**June 1916** – At the recommendation of University of Texas Board of Regents member Rabbi Maurice Faber, the University of Texas revises TSM’s first and second-year curriculum to add more courses outside of mining.

**1916** - TSM catalog lists Ella W. Martin as the school’s registrar, making her the school’s first female staff member.

**August 1916** - Dean Steve Worrell begins to promote the admission of women. He announces that TSM is coeducational and offers a two-year program for non-engineering students.

**September 1916** - Ruth Brown and Grace Odell enroll at TSM as the first female students.

**1917** - 12 women enroll in the TSM and College of the City of El Paso (CCEP) teacher certification program. CCEP is the city’s newly established junior college.

**1917** - Ruth Monro Augur replaces Ella W. Martin as registrar. She also gains responsibility for the school’s library, making her the first librarian.

**June 1918** - Ruth Brown, Dorothy Clark and Grace Odell are the first women to graduate as part of the TSM/CCEP program.

**1919** - After excelling in her chemistry courses, Ruth Brown is hired as a chemistry assistant. She is the first woman to hold a teaching position.

**1920** - Susan Buck is hired as the first female faculty appointment. Buck would teach English, sociology and history until 1921.

**1923** - Myra C. Winkler is appointed as an adjunct professor of history and economics. She is the second female faculty member.

**1924** - Carrie M. Crosby enrolls in the College of Mines as the first female engineering student.

**1927** - Abi Elizabeth Beynon is the College of Mines’ first female tenured faculty member, department head and dean of women.

**September 1929** - Gladys Gregory joins the staff. She would later become the first tenured full professor.

**1932** - The College of Mines awards the first B.A. degrees to a cohort of only women.

**1942** - The College of Mines’ first M.A. degrees are awarded to an all-female cohort.

**March 1955** – African-American Thelma White sues Texas Western College (TWC) and the U.T. Board of Regents after being denied admission to TWC based on her race. Four months later, an El Paso federal judge rules in White’s favor. White never attends TWC, but as a result of her victory, 10 black students enroll and are accepted into TWC in the fall of 1955.

**1957** - Martha Sue Schooler is the first female engineering graduate of TWC.

**1976** - Carol Ann Rogers receives her commission as part of the first group of 150 women who participated nationally in ROTC.

**1981** - Kathryn Evans is the first woman to earn a Ph.D. at UTEP.

**1988** - Diana Natalicio is selected as UTEP’s first female president.

**2013-14** – For the first time, the number of doctoral degrees awarded to women exceeds those awarded to men, 56 to 51.

See a video and timeline about the history of women at UTEP at utep.edu/magazine.
President Natalicio has guided UTEP’s transformation into a national model for educating a 21st century student population.

Good Fortune

UTEP President Named Among Magazine’s Top 50 World Leaders

Fortune magazine included University of Texas at El Paso President Diana Natalicio on its 2017 list of the World’s Greatest Leaders. The fourth annual global ranking features 50 leaders the publication said excel at leading effectively in today’s environment and teach three lessons: acknowledge reality and offer hope, bring followers physically together, and build bridges.

President Natalicio is in the company of Theo Epstein, president of baseball operations for the Chicago Cubs; Pope Francis, head of the Roman Catholic Church; Melinda Gates, co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; Justin Trudeau, prime minister of Canada; and John Roberts, chief justice of the United States Supreme Court.

The magazine highlighted her priority to provide access and excellence in higher education for low-income students and a predominantly Hispanic student body. The story in the April 1, 2017 issue of Fortune noted UTEP’s steady climb in national college rankings, and soaring research funding during President Natalicio’s tenure.

“I am extremely pleased by this recognition of the remarkable accomplishments of a talented and dedicated team of UTEP faculty and staff who have enabled us to achieve our dream of fostering the social mobility of talented and hard-working students whose modest financial means and complex life challenges too often impede educational and career pathways,” President Natalicio said.

UTEP’s leader for 29 years, and the longest-serving president of a U.S. public research university, President Natalicio has guided UTEP’s transformation into a national model for educating a 21st century student population. Recognizing the critical importance of pre-college preparation to students’ enrollment and success at UTEP, she has been a driving force in creating community partnerships to raise the aspirations and educational attainment of all young people in the Paso del Norte region and, through a deep commitment to both access and excellence, to provide them authentic and stimulating educational opportunities. She is a leading voice in the national conversation on higher education, and an advocate for reaching past borders to develop robust international collaborations.

- Lauren Macias-Cervantes

The story in the April 1, 2017 issue of Fortune noted UTEP’s steady climb in national college rankings, and soaring research funding during President Natalicio’s tenure.
One of The University of Texas at El Paso’s oldest assets is the Hoover House, home to the institution’s President since 1965. The historic two-story home at 711 Cincinnati Ave. in the Kern Place neighborhood was on the outskirts of the city when it was built 100 years ago for the family of banker, Texas legislator and future El Paso Mayor Richard M. Dudley. Local architect Charles M. Gibson designed the residence for Dudley in 1916. Robert and Louisiana Hoover eventually purchased the property in 1944. Robert Hoover died in 1960 and his wife donated the property to The University of Texas System in 1965 to be home of the University’s President. Some modifications have been made through the years, such as the addition of air conditioning in 1966. Much work has been done to restore the home’s original architectural style. Today, University President Diana Natalicio uses the property to entertain visitors and VIPs for special UTEP events.

- Daniel Perez

Randi Zuckerberg
Randi Zuckerberg overcame obstacles to become a successful businesswoman, Emmy nominee, author and Broadway performer. Her lecture Feb. 21, 2017 at UTEP discussed the roles and responsibilities of media in our lives, including the rise of ‘fake’ news and how Judaism has played an integral role in Zuckerberg’s life.

Greg Sandow
American music critic, composer, writer, consultant, Juilliard professor and public speaker Greg Sandow shared his thoughts about how classical music should change to survive in modern times. His April 4 lecture was part of UTEP’s Centennial Lecture Series.

Lisa Napoli
Journalist Lisa Napoli shared the story of Joan Kroc, heiress to the McDonald’s fortune, and her husband, Ray, during a Centennial Lecture April 13. Napoli tells the full story in her book “Ray and Joan: The Man Who Made the McDonald’s Fortune and the Woman Who Gave It All Away.”

Roderick Hart, Ph.D.
Roderick P. Hart, Ph.D., is the Shivers Centennial Chair in Communication and Professor of Government at The University of Texas at Austin. His April 25 lecture titled “Why Voters Felt What They Felt in Campaign 2016” touched on the events leading to and the impact of the 2016 presidential election result.

The Hoover House has been home to five UTEP Presidents including the current resident, Diana Natalicio.

Robert Thompson Hoover was a prominent businessman who started a cotton business in El Paso.

See Then and Now photos of the Hoover House at utep.edu/magazine.

Photo by J.R. Hernandez
Closing Education Gaps

Education Partnership Celebrates 25 Years of Success

The El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence launched in 1992 with a mission to create sustainable initiatives to narrow the historical disparity in student performance linked to race, ethnicity and poverty. In 2017, the partnership, headquartered at The University of Texas at El Paso, celebrates 25 years of enhancing the region’s educational aspirations that benefit students from pre-K to graduate school. Today the collaborative, made up of leaders from UTEP, El Paso Community College, Region 19 Education Service Center and the region’s three largest school districts, is more attuned to preparation for higher education and the 21st century workforce.

“The beauty of the collaborative’s vision is that it was so broad that it allows us to adapt to the current needs,” said Ivette Savina, assistant vice president for outreach and student access at UTEP. “Our focus is on finding solutions.”

Part of Savina’s job is to direct the collaborative, which has been called one of the country’s most innovative and effective education reform initiatives. For the past few years, the collaborative has promoted dual credit courses for high school students because research has supported the long-term benefits of this approach. High school students earn dual credit when they take and pass a college-level course taught by a credentialed instructor. This creates a savings of time for the student and money for families who do not have to pay for those college credit hours. Savina said 6,800 area students took dual credit courses in 2016 compared to 91 in 2001.

A 2016 study by UTEP’s Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning (CIERP) showed El Paso area high school students who took dual credit courses from 2005-15 earned higher GPAs, were 40 percent more likely to continue their studies in higher education, and 60 percent more likely to graduate in six years or less. They also saved $36 million in tuition and fees.

The collaborative has earned numerous state and national grants through the years – the most recent a $1.4 million grant from the Greater Texas Foundation in March 2017. The funds will be used to create academic scholarships for students, and to support programs at UTEP to help high school teachers earn their master’s degrees and certification to teach college courses.

-Daniel Perez

Dual Credit = Student Success

- **GRADUATE IN 4 YEARS**
  - Dual credit students are more likely to graduate from college in 4 years or less than non-dual credit students.

- **GRADUATE IN 6 YEARS**
  - Dual credit students are more likely to graduate in 6 years or less than non-dual credit students.

- **PERSISTENCE**
  - Dual credit students are more likely to **continue their studies** in higher education than non-dual credit students.

- **GPA**
  - Dual credit students earn a higher GPA than non-dual credit students: **3.28 vs. 3.08**

- **MORE THAN 7,000**
  - More than 7,000 dual credit students enrolled from 2005-15

See Then and Now photos of the Hoover House at utep.edu/magazine.
Top Ten Seniors

Class of 2017

SAMUEL ALVIDREZ
Major: Finance
Future Plans: Entrepreneur and professional soccer player

LIZETTE GUTIERREZ
Major: Biological Sciences with Biomedical Concentration
Future Plans: Medical school

ANDREA NORTE
Major: English and American Literature/History
Future Plans: Graduate school at Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland
RAUDEL OSWALDO AVILA
Major:
Mechanical Engineering
Future Plans:
Graduate school at Northwestern University

KIMBERLY GONZALEZ
Major:
Forensic Science
Future Plans:
A career in DNA analysis at the FBI Laboratory
Class of 2017
Top Ten Seniors

RYAN SAENZ
Major: Biological Sciences
Future Plans: A career as a healthcare administrator

CAITLIN HARMON
Major: Biological Sciences with Biomedical Concentration
Future Plans: Medical school
MAYRA RODARTE
Major: Stage Management
Future Plans: Executive director for a nonprofit organization

ILANA GOMEZ
Major: Philosophy
Future Plans: Law school

EDEN KLEIN
Major: Economics
Future Plans: Law school

To learn more about the Top Ten Seniors, visit utep.edu/magazine.
Hitching a Ride to Space

A device built by UTEP students is going to space.

A student team from The University of Texas at El Paso’s NASA MIRO Center for Space Exploration and Technology Research, or cSETR, placed first in the United Launch Alliance (ULA) CubeSat launch competition, known as CubeCorps. The company is the nation’s most experienced launch service provider. ULA President and CEO Tory Bruno traveled to El Paso and made the announcement Feb. 16, 2017 on the UTEP campus.

“Congratulations to the team; you are the next generation of rocket scientists and space entrepreneurs, and we are honored to be your ride to space,” Bruno said.

The UTEP project, Orbital Factory II (OF2), will be on board the Atlas V rocket and placed into an elliptical orbit approximately 26,000 miles above Earth’s center.

“It was absolutely, hands-down, far above all the others,” Bruno said of the UTEP team’s CubeSat proposal. “We’re actually pretty excited to fly the UTEP CubeSat.” ULA’s CubeCorps was established to encourage hands-on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) experiences and provide universities with the opportunity to launch their CubeSats. Students and faculty members from UTEP’s Department of Mechanical Engineering will collaborate with engineers and technologists from Lockheed Martin Space Systems to design and develop the OF2, which will demonstrate on-orbit repair of solar cells using 3-D printing technology. The UTEP student team was led by research assistant professors Angel Flores-Abed, Ph.D., and Arifur Khan, Ph.D.; cSETR research engineer Michael Everett; and David Espalin, associate director at UTEP’s W.M. Keck Center for 3D Innovation.

- Lauren Macias-Cervantes

Accreditation Reaffirmed

SACSCOC Announcement Completes 2-Year Process

Every 10 years, academic institutions engage in a thorough review of their missions, policies, procedures and programs to assure that they are in compliance with the principles of accreditation and to reflect on ways in which they can further enhance the student learning environment.

After a more than two-year process, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, or SACSCOC, reaffirmed The University of Texas at El Paso’s accreditation in December 2016 for another 10 years.

The successful reaffirmation was a result of the hard work and dedication of faculty and staff across the campus, led by Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Howard Daudistel, Ph.D., and Assistant Provost Toni Blum, Ph.D., chair of UTEP’s Reaffirmation Steering Committee.

- Jenn Crawford

UTEP Music Goes Live

Since February 2017, the Department of Music’s new multi-camera live-streaming system has enabled UTEP music lovers to enjoy concerts by University ensembles, including the Symphonic Winds and UTEP Chorale, and faculty and student recitals, on their personal computers and mobile devices.

“This is really raising the profile of our department,” said Steve Haddad, UTEP commercial music division coordinator. “A great advantage to our community is that those who cannot attend these events in person can see and hear the excellent work being done in our department.”

Commercial music program students are in charge of streaming the productions, which are available on the department’s official Facebook page at www.facebook.com/utepmusic. The plan is to stream most performances.

- Laura L. Acosta
Center for Arts Entrepreneurship
New Center to Expand Opportunities for UTEP Musicians

To help music and other creative arts students prepare for successful careers, The University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Pro-Musica have teamed up to create the Center for Arts Entrepreneurship (CAE), opening in fall 2017 on the UTEP campus.

The center will engage students in projects and workshops geared toward resume enhancement, creating digital portfolios, audience development, and creating performance opportunities, said Steve Wilson, DMA, Department of Music chair. In 2017-18, the center plans to offer a series of weeklong artist-in-residence workshops with world-renowned musicians that will allow UTEP music students to have up-close, meaningful interactions with them.

Additionally, the center will host workshops on working with the media and job interviewing, and will sponsor innovation grants to support students’ capstone projects.

The center, supported by state funding, will be housed in the Department of Music in UTEP’s College of Liberal Arts.

“Through hands-on, intensive interactions with nationally renowned artists, the CAE will help [students] develop communication skills, both written and verbal, improve audience engagement, and provide real-life performing opportunities at a variety of on-campus and community engagement events,” Wilson said.

Zuill Bailey, senior lecturer of cello at UTEP and artistic director of El Paso Pro-Musica, will be the center’s artistic director.

Ultimately, the center could grow to offer a minor in arts entrepreneurship for students pursuing liberal arts degree programs.

- Leonard Martinez

Research
Legislative Spotlight

Three students had the opportunity to share their research with lawmakers at the state and national levels in spring 2017.

In April, physical therapy graduate Evelyn Villarreal participated in the 21st annual Posters on the Hill event, a selective poster session sponsored by the Washington, D.C.-based Council on Undergraduate Research.

Villarreal, who graduated in December 2016, presented her research on preparing Doctor of Physical Therapy students to better serve a Hispanic majority community by integrating Spanish language training into their curriculum.

In March, undergraduate researchers Lauren Chacon, a junior kinesiology major, and Gilbert Carranza, a May 2017 electrical engineering graduate, represented UTEP at the 2017 Texas Undergraduate Research Day at the state capitol in Austin.

Chacon presented her project aimed at identifying and preventing risks for heart disease among Hispanics.

Carranza’s research looked at developing the tools to construct 3-D electric circuits that could make electronics more efficient.

Laura Diaz-Martinez, Ph.D., associate director for the Campus Office of Undergraduate Research Initiatives, said the presentation opportunities put El Paso and UTEP on the map as a place where research and breakthroughs are happening.

“Students get the opportunity to go to conferences and talk to other researchers, but the opportunity to talk to legislators and people who are deciding how to allocate tax dollars is very important because it brings to the attention of these representatives that the tax dollars they are putting into research are actually producing results that are advancing our knowledge,” Diaz-Martinez said.

- Lauren Macias-Cervantes

See a video about the Center for Arts Entrepreneurship at utep.edu/magazine.
In his new book, “All They Will Call You,” Tim Z. Hernandez writes poignantly about 28 Mexican migrant farmworkers who died on Jan. 28, 1948, after the DC-3 airplane flying them home exploded over Los Gatos Canyon in California’s central San Joaquin Valley.

The tragedy made headlines across the United States, but newspapers only named the pilot, flight attendant, first officer and immigration officer who were also on board and referred to the rest of the passengers as “deportees.”

“It’s easier to generalize people with words like ‘deportee’ or ‘immigrant’ instead of using their real names,” said Hernandez, a creative writing assistant professor at UTEP. “But I feel that when we use words like that, whether it’s in the past, or now, or in the future, what we’re really doing is making them unidentifiable. We’re stripping away their faces so we don’t have to look directly into the eyes of the people that we treat poorly.”

For six years, Hernandez searched for information about the migrants whose remains were buried in an unmarked mass grave at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Fresno, California.

After comparing their death certificates to the misspelled names on the Roman Catholic Diocese of Fresno’s church register, Hernandez identified the 27 men and one woman and raised funds to have their names engraved on a memorial at the gravesite.

Hernandez also located the families of seven of the farmworkers. In 2015, the award-winning novelist and poet traveled to Mexico to interview relatives of three of the victims.

“All They Will Call You” was released in January 2017 on the 69th anniversary of the plane crash. Hernandez borrowed the title from lyrics in the Woody Guthrie song, “Deportee (Plane Wreck at Los Gatos).” Guthrie wrote it to protest the media’s disregard for the Mexican laborers.

Jaime Ramirez’ maternal grandfather, Ramon Paredes Gonzales, and his great-uncle, Guadalupe Ramirez Lara, were passengers on the flight.

“I hope people at least now know exactly what happened and how they were forgotten,” said Ramirez, whose grandfather and great-uncle’s stories are part of the book. “My satisfaction is they have a stone with all their names. They may get some peace now.”

- Laura L. Acosta
Psyched: Marketing Key to Making Sustainable Choices

Making environmentally sustainable choices has been a hard sell for years because many consumers are more concerned about product cost and personal convenience, but that could change if the product is marketed differently.

Data from a recent marketing study done at The University of Texas at El Paso showed that more people would select environmentally friendly products if the companies hit the right psychological buttons, such as promoting doing the right thing and preserving the Earth for future generations.

Research by marketing faculty members Roland Gau, Ph.D.; Edward Jimenez, Ph.D.; and Fernando R. Jiménez Arévalo, Ph.D., showed that the personalization of an advertising message leads to higher acceptance of environmentally sustainable products.

Companies spend almost $23 billion annually trying to craft the right sustainability message for skeptical consumers from a wide socioeconomic background. The biggest pushback comes from less educated people with limited incomes.

The UTEP researchers added that the same kinds of marketing campaigns could be useful to public policymakers to reduce undesirable behaviors, such as illegal drug use, cigarette smoking, and dietary habits that lead to obesity and poor health. - Daniel Perez

Conference Champs Women's Track, Men's Golf Claim C-USA Titles

The Miners earned two conference championship titles in the first four months of 2017.

The men’s golf team claimed the 2017 Conference USA championship title on April 25. It is the first conference title for UTEP men’s golf since 1985 and only the second in program history.

The Miners earned the title after a 4-1 victory over Charlotte in match-play format.

The team also earned a bid to the NCAA Regionals for the first time as a team since 2004.

The UTEP women’s track and field team claimed the 2017 Conference USA indoor title for the third year in a row on Feb. 19.

Tobi Amusan led the Miners, scoring 25 team points. The sophomore ran a meet record in the 60m hurdles with a time of 8.01 and also captured gold in the 200m. She was named the High Point Scorer of the Meet.

- Jenn Crawford

Silencing Whooping Cough New Biomedical Device Shows Promise

Thanks to new technology developed by researchers at The University of Texas at El Paso, a simple nasal swab may help detect pertussis — commonly known as whooping cough — a highly contagious respiratory infection that affects more than 16 million people worldwide each year.

XiuJun (James) Li, Ph.D., assistant professor in UTEP’s Department of Chemistry, in collaboration with Delfina C. Domínguez, Ph.D., a professor of clinical laboratory sciences, has produced a paper-based microfluidic point-of-care (POC) biochip device that integrates isothermal DNA amplification to diagnose pertussis. Recently, they completed testing the biochip on 100 clinical samples with excellent results.

The handheld device uses a sample from a nasal swab and changes color to indicate the presence of the bacteria. Results are available in less than an hour.

“We found that the chip has high sensitivity and specificity and is comparable to real-time PCR – the technology used to diagnose infectious diseases in hospitals,” Domínguez said.

Li plans to continue testing the device using additional clinical pertussis samples.

- Laura L. Acosta
Emmanuel Korir, a first-generation college student in a family that includes eight siblings, made the 9,086-mile move from his hometown of Iten, Kenya to El Paso, Texas to run for The University of Texas at El Paso’s track and field team. He says he was not afraid to leave home – he knew the chance to go to college and race was what he was meant to do.

‘I feel like with the help of the coaching staff and my teammates, I can do great things for the University and the track program,’ Korir said. ‘It was not easy, but at the end, everything worked out.’

So far, it has more than just ‘worked out.’

At 21 years old, Korir became an NCAA Indoor Champion on March 11, 2017 in the 800-meter run with a time of 1:47.48, the first Miner to do so in that event. Korir became the 40th national champion for the UTEP track and field program and garnered the first national championship of his career.

Korir also broke the 600m world record at the New Mexico Cherry and Silver Invitational on Jan. 20 with a blazing 1:14.97. That time was bettered by Penn State sophomore Isaiah Harris (1:14.91) seven days later.

‘When I get to a race, I’ll take a look at what the record is for that facility and I set that time as my goal,’ Korir said. ‘I didn’t think I would break the world record, but when I found out I did, I knew I could do it again and lower that time.’

‘Within an hour after my race, my brother called me and congratulated me on setting a new world record. Having that support from my family really helps me stay motivated and focused on running.’

Though he is not able to see his family often, Korir finds a piece of home in teammate and fellow freshman Michael Saruni.

Saruni, a native of Ravine, Kenya, arrived at UTEP at the same time as Korir in the fall of 2016. Both competed for the Miners in cross country to help build their endurance, though track, with its shorter distances and sprints, proved to be their forte.

The first meeting between the two came on the track at the qualifying race for Kenyan junior trials in the 400m. Saruni finished in third, while Korir took home gold.

‘He and I push each other every day,’ Korir said. ‘We like to compete against each other at practice, and during a race we hope to finish first and second. We work together a lot and make each other better athletes.’

Saruni agreed.

‘Our goal is to score as many points for our team, whether he wins or I win,’ he said.

Saruni has built an impressive resume himself, qualifying for the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships after winning gold in the 800m run at the Conference USA Indoor Track and Field Championships. Saruni, unfortunately, was disqualified at the NCAA championships after officials reviewed some jostling between him and Drew Piazza from Virginia Tech.

‘I made a mistake,’ Saruni said. ‘I tried to pass the guy in front of me on the inside instead of going on the outside, and when I heard they disqualified me, I was disappointed. I will learn from this mistake and improve to do better next time.’

Inspiration from family helped bring Saruni’s talents to the Sun City. His dad, Alfred, is a runner, and his mother was the first in the Saruni family to earn a degree.

Both played huge roles in the direction Michael Saruni wanted to drive his life.

‘My mom is very smart,’ he said. ‘Back then, for a woman to get a degree in Kenya was very difficult. She inspired me to come to UTEP and get my degree as well.’

Alfred Saruni went to high school with current UTEP head cross country coach and associate head track and field coach Paul Ereng. A 1988 Olympic gold medalist, Ereng became the first Kenyan to take a collegiate coaching job in the United States when he was named UTEP’s cross country and distance coach in 2003.

“They’ve been friends for a very long
“He and I push each other every day. We like to compete against each other at practice, and during a race we hope to finish first and second.” - Emmanuel Korir

time,” Saruni said of his father and his coach. “When Coach Ereng came to recruit me, I already knew who he was and it was an easy choice to make. Coach [Davian] Clarke and Coach Ereng have been my biggest supporters here. They are like my second parents and they helped me grow so much.”

Both Korir and Saruni have goals that far surpass Kidd Field.

For Korir, his eyes are now set on helping his team win a Conference USA Championship, after he crossed “becoming an NCAA Champion” off his list. With that, the kinesiology major is aiming to graduate with a 3.5 GPA or higher and qualify for the 2020 Summer Olympics.

“With the help of my coaches and teammates, I will get there,” he said.

The laid-back Saruni, a political science major, is unhurried.

“After college, if I’m good enough, I hope I can go pro in track and field,” he said. “But if not, maybe I can get into politics here or back home in Kenya.”

As for the 2020 Olympic games, Saruni gives the same easygoing answer.

“You know, if it happens, that would be great,” he said. “But if it doesn’t, I wouldn’t be too upset.” - Ellie Vega

Left, Emmanuel Korir
Hometown: Iten, Kenya
Class: Freshman
Major: Kinesiology
Sport: Track and field

Right, Michael Saruni
Hometown: Ravine, Kenya
Class: Freshman
Major: Political Science
Sport: Track and field
UTEP BRINGS HOPE

BY LAURA L. ACOSTA
Before sunrise on a brisk Monday in April, dozens of homeless and uninsured individuals lined up outside the Opportunity Center for the Homeless in downtown El Paso to see a health care provider.

OR SOME LIKE OSCAR SALAS, THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST TIME THEY RECEIVED MEDICAL ATTENTION IN YEARS.

“My dad was a doctor in the Army and my mom worked at a hospital,” said Salas, who waited patiently for results from his blood work. “When we were sick, we would always get a shot.”

But after Salas fell on hard times, finding affordable health care was almost as difficult as finding a place to sleep at night.

Lately, the 62-year-old found himself feeling more anxious than usual. His inability to get help further exacerbated his anxiety, but hope was on the horizon.

In April 2016, The University of Texas at El Paso organized the first of four H.O.P.E. (Health Opportunity Prevention Education) Health and Job Readiness Fairs at the Opportunity Center to improve health care access and address unemployment among individuals who have experienced homelessness.

This one-of-a-kind partnership has enabled students from UTEP’s College of Health Sciences, School of Nursing and School of Pharmacy to get real-world experience while giving back to the community.

“These clinics help our students to get better trained and educated,” said Eva Moya, Ph.D., a UTEP College of Health Sciences associate dean and social work assistant professor. “And it’s also the right thing to do. We have the talent, we have the skills, we have the partnerships, and it’s a perfect way for us to serve our community.”

Throughout the year, more than 100 health sciences, nursing and pharmacy students worked together and applied the skills they learned in the classroom to take care of 632 of El Paso’s displaced and unemployed individuals.

“Volunteering is in our blood,” said Mario Herrera, who took Salas’ blood pressure and checked his feet for ulcers and sensory neuropathy, a condition that often causes weakness, numbness and pain, usually in the hands and feet. Herrera graduated
from UTEP in 2016. “As nursing students, we just want to help people. When opportunities arise to help those in need, we’re first to volunteer.”

According to the Point-in-Time (PIT) count, about 1,100 people were homeless on the night of Jan. 21, 2016 in El Paso. Out of this group, 516 were people in families and 581 of them were single adults. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development requires the annual PIT count of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons to be taken on a single night during January.

Since opening its doors in 1994, the Opportunity Center has provided meals, beds, transportation, substance abuse counseling, and medical and employment services to 350 individuals a day.

Its founder, Ray Tullius, a UTEP graduate, understands better than most that homeless persons have an overwhelming need for support services, from medical care to job training, to help them get their lives back on track.

A serious illness ended Tullius’ career in construction and farming. Unable to work, Tullius ended up homeless and living in shelters. He was 40 years old and staying in a friend’s basement when he returned to UTEP to get a bachelor’s degree in social work.

“I saw many people that I could relate to who would never leave homelessness without some support, so I began developing different options for them,” Tullius said.

In 2014, Tullius and UTEP’s Department of Social Work established a learning partnership that enabled graduate social work students to help homeless persons reintegrate into the community.

The idea for the H.O.P.E. clinic came about two years later while faculty members from the College of Health Sciences, School of Nursing and School of Pharmacy were visiting the Opportunity Center as part of the UTEP Provost’s Community Engagement Faculty Tours.

“It is important for students and faculty from health sciences, nursing and pharmacy to learn from each other while also learning the scope of practice of the different professions,” said Guillermina Solis, Ph.D., assistant professor in the School of Nursing. “In providing service to the homeless population, students become connected intellectually and emotionally, and they begin to see and understand the difficult living situations which impact health.”

At 6 a.m. on April 11, 2016, participants filed into the Opportunity Center’s Women’s Resource Center for the first H.O.P.E. Health Fair. Many hoped to get preliminary diagnoses on diseases such as diabetes that might otherwise go unnoticed. Nearly 200 participants attended the two-day fair.

Students in the clinical laboratory science program pricked Ervin Smiley’s finger to test his blood sugar and cholesterol levels. They also tested for anemia and other conditions.

“I’m getting old so I have to see how the body is holding up,” Smiley joked. The 56-year-old worked in the Opportunity Center’s Safe Haven facility, which houses single men and women with mental disabilities.

UTEP clinical faculty members reviewed test results. Participants with results outside the normal range were referred to San Vicente Family Health Center for follow-up care.

“Working with the homeless is not what I expected,” said Alexandra Garcia, who graduated from the clinical laboratory sciences program in 2016. “I think it made us more compassionate because you hear some of their stories, but you don’t feel bad for them. You feel good because you helped. I feel like I made a difference in their lives.”

In the Opportunity Center’s emergency shelter, pharmacy students worked alongside Walgreens and McCrory’s pharmacists to administer more than 60 flu shots. Social work graduate students like Krizia Mendez and community mental health providers screened 125 adults for depression and anxiety.

Mendez was facilitating a study on mental health and homeless individuals at the Opportunity Center. Participants responded to a patient health questionnaire, which was used to detect depression and anxiety. Those who scored moderate to severe were referred to San Vicente Family Health Center for treatment.

“We get to interact and hear their stories and see what they’re going through every day,” said Mendez, who also took a macro-level social work class taught at the Opportunity Center. She graduated in May 2016. “We see the difference that we’re making.”

Melanie Jabalie (left), a student in UTEP’s Cooperative Pharmacy Program, gives a participant a flu vaccine at the H.O.P.E. Health Fair in April 2016. Photo by Laura Trejo
The final phase involved two job fairs organized by Workforce Solutions Borderplex and the H.O.P.E. employment clinic.

“This initiative reflects a need within our community, and counters the opinion that all homeless are job ready,” said John Martin, fund development director at the Opportunity Center. “We as a community need to be in a position to assist and support federal initiatives to end homelessness … They want to work – they need the skills and resources to do so. The community needs to be engaged in this effort.”

The clinic also provided a valuable community-engaged service learning opportunity for 22 MRC students who applied much of what they learned in the classroom to help homeless individuals move toward job readiness.

“The most important thing that I learned about working with the homeless is that each individual has a personal story that explains their current state of homelessness,” said Donald T. Andrus, a graduate student and research assistant in the MRC program. “But despite their homeless status, they remain optimistic about their futures and independent living goals.”

UTEP also collaborated with 11 community partners to offer basic health care screenings, vouchers for women’s wellness exams, substance abuse prevention and tobacco cessation.

The El Paso Department of Public Health tested 140 individuals for syphilis and HIV and 21 individuals for Hepatitis C. The department also screened 145 adults for tuberculosis.

In September 2016, UTEP organized a second H.O.P.E. Health Fair at the center. Sixteen community organizations and 92 volunteers served 155 individuals. A third health fair in April 2017 served 187 individuals.

“It’s complicated to get these (health) services when you’re uninsured or underinsured, especially if you’re also having to deal with other issues like being home free or not having a regular place to live,” Moya explained. “We have a wealth of resources in this community, and if we can come together through partnerships, more of these services could be provided on a more regular basis.”

Prompted by the success of the H.O.P.E. Health Fair, UTEP’s Master of Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC) program collaborated with 11 community partners to host the first H.O.P.E. Employment Clinic at the Opportunity Center in summer 2016.

Ninety-three individuals participated in a job readiness workshop on July 28, the first of three phases to help individuals experiencing homelessness find sustainable employment.

“When it comes to employment, there are a lot of barriers that individuals who are homeless experience, like not having an ID card,” explained Kristin Kosyluk, Ph.D., assistant professor in UTEP’s MRC program. “It’s important to address those barriers, but it’s also really important, especially from a rehabilitation counseling standpoint, to recognize that people also have strengths and interests that can be used to help them develop training and employment goals.”

During the project’s first phase, participants focused on identifying barriers to employment, such as limited skills or work experience or a lack of transportation, and how to overcome them. In the second phase, participants worked with MRC students to identify skills, strengths and goals related to employment, learned how to search for jobs, created a resume and practiced interview skills.

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- Guillermí Solís, Ph.D.
RESEARCHERS, MENTORS, TEACHERS...
Jay M. Bhatt was raised in Mumbai, India, the home of the lucrative Bollywood film industry. His dreams started at an early age, but have less to do with the silver screen and more to do with science.

Classically trained in Indian singing and an award-winning table tennis player through his undergraduate years, Bhatt turned down an invitation to attend medical school to make his mark in scientific research. His doctoral dissertation about how proteins move within Golgi, part of the cell’s endomembrane, was based in part on a book he read in eighth grade.

The question he faced after earning his Ph.D. was similar to that faced by many like him: what now?

Those who earn doctoral degrees often must take one more step before they realize their professional goals in academia, government or industry. That step is to become a postdoctoral fellow, or postdoc, and more of them are finding work at The University of Texas at El Paso.

These fellows are hired for one to two years, maybe more, for mostly grant-funded assignments that help them gain additional education and training in research while developing professional skills. These positions are critical to the growth of postdocs as scholars and researchers, and are a major driver for universities to achieve and maintain the status of a national research institution.

According to a 2015 survey sponsored by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), there were 63,861 postdocs in the health, science and engineering fields at U.S. colleges and universities. Of those, about 40 percent were female, 45 percent were U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and 2.4 percent were Hispanic or Latino.
During the 2016-17 academic year, UTEP employed almost 60 postdoctoral fellows, most of them in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Many perform a combination of tasks – teaching, managing labs and mentoring graduate and undergraduate students – as they establish themselves as scientists and independent investigators.

University leaders want to enhance the experiences of these temporary employees so they will have a competitive edge when they apply for future jobs. To achieve that, UTEP has instituted several professional development programs and organized meetings to allow postdocs to share their needs and concerns.

Charles Ambler, Ph.D., dean of the Graduate School, said the University has seen substantial growth in its number of postdocs during the past 10 years due to an expansion of research activity and funding. These fellows, working with faculty, play a pivotal role in growing research and training doctoral, master’s and undergraduate students in research settings. The growth in the number of UTEP postdoctoral fellows also provides the institution with another opportunity to contribute to the greater participation of Hispanics in research and higher education, especially in the STEM fields.

“Increasing the number of underrepresented people in the professoriate, Ph.D. programs and postdocs is an important goal,” Ambler said. “At UTEP, one of the reasons we developed Ph.D. programs is to address that, and we’ve been very successful.”

Major federal funders such as the NIH and NSF are pushing institutions to work together for this purpose. Stephen Aley, Ph.D., associate vice president of research in UTEP’s Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, is part of the faculty leadership who hires postdoctoral fellows for two of those grants at UTEP: the NIH BUILDing SCHOLARS (Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity: Southwest Consortium of Health-Oriented Education Leaders and Research Scholars), and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute-PERSIST (Program to Educate and Retain Students in STEM Tracks).

Aley compared postdocs to apprentices who get to work with top scholars and use “top-notch” equipment. The new hires learn from faculty and more seasoned fellows. In return, these fresh, highly trained fellows share different techniques and independent points of view that enhance the knowledge and capabilities of the other researchers.

One example of University support is the Postdoctoral Development Group, a cohort of fellows who are involved in research on drug addiction and other topics related to neuroscience. Laura O’Dell, Ph.D., and Eddie Castañeda, Ph.D., professors of psychology, lead the group. The goal of this effort, funded by a National Institute on Drug Abuse contract, is to increase diversity in the scientific workforce.

The professors said they started the group to raise the level of postdoctoral preparedness. They meet every few weeks in a Prospect Hall conference room to discuss topics the fellows request. One meeting was about negotiating salaries and start-up packages for academic positions at research-intensive institutions. A future topic will be about developing their philosophy of research statements for job interviews.

“For O’Dell, her program goal is simple: ‘I want to see them in tenure-track faculty positions.’

Adelle Monteblanco, Ph.D., a postdoctoral teaching and research fellow, is assigned to BUILDing SCHOLARS, a multi-institutional consortium tasked with training the next generation of biomedical researchers. She considers postdocs a vital link to UTEP President Diana Natalicio’s commitment to become a top-tier research university.

“UTEP’s aspiration to become a leader in producing cutting-edge scholarship and doctoral graduates will necessitate a growth in the number of postdocs employed and a stronger integration of postdocs into the UTEP community,” Monteblanco said.

Here are four examples of the caliber of postdoctoral fellows whose passion, intellect, diversity and knowledge benefits the University, and vice versa.
Jay M. Bhatt

Jay M. Bhatt has been interested in science since he was a youngster. That curiosity grew through graduate school, when he also discovered a desire to teach. He has taken those two loves to another level as a UTEP postdoctoral fellow.

Bhatt started at UTEP after he earned his doctorate in neuroscience in 2016 from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. His desire to come to El Paso was the result of a stop at the University’s table during a research conference at The University of Texas at Austin. The table promoted UTEP’s Campus Office of Undergraduate Research Initiatives (COURI) and its BUILDing SCHOLARS program.

“BUILD represented quality,” Bhatt said during a quiet break in his second-floor office in the Chemistry and Computer Science Building. His lab with an electron microscope is a few minutes away on the ground floor. “UTEP clearly was a leader.”

He splits most of his time between researching how mutations in certain proteins lead to neuromuscular defects in humans, and teaching research techniques to undergraduate students. The dual research-teaching responsibility is the main reason he chose UTEP, which was among a dozen or so institutions that provide this opportunity, he said.

“This kind of experience opens an entire job market for me,” said Bhatt, who earned his bachelor’s degree in pharmacy from the University of Mumbai in India in 2008 and his master’s in pharmaceutical science from Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, two years later. “It exemplifies UTEP’s mission.”

He takes his postdoc responsibilities seriously, especially when it comes to his students. He is passionate about research and likes to see others who share his enthusiasm.

“I didn’t choose research,” he said. “Research chose me.”

Bhatt said his UTEP experience will make him a more competitive candidate when he moves on to a tenure-track position in academia.

Lynnsay Marsan

Lynnsay Marsan grew up in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where academic success was rewarded with reading materials, especially books and magazines about science. Raised to be inquisitive, she left her Caribbean country at age 18 to follow her dreams of medical school in Miami, Florida.

While attending Miami Dade College, Marsan decided her true interest was research. Barry University in Miami accepted her application for a minority academic research training scholarship. After earning her bachelor’s in biology, she took a position with the National Institute on Drug Abuse in Baltimore, Maryland, which confirmed her love for neuroscience research.

“Science literacy is the greatest economic equalizer,” said Marsan, who received her doctorate in neuroscience from Penn State University in 2014. “It’s about using critical thinking to have a voice and a seat at the table.”

She was excited about the prospect of a postdoctoral position with UTEP’s BUILDing SCHOLARS program because its goal was to increase the number of future scientists from underrepresented communities.

“It spoke to me,” said Marsan, who recalled the many times she was the only student of color in summer science workshops. “That’s not acceptable.”

She arrived at UTEP in January 2015 and divides most of her time between her lab and her classroom, where she teaches about lab research foundations with an emphasis on science education. Her work helped her earn a University teaching and learning grant, and her science education research was published in 2016 in the Journal of Microbiology and Biology Education. Her time at UTEP spurred her to switch her research focus from neuroscience to science education.

“I am proud of my work here,” she said. “I think I’ve made a difference.”

Marsan said she plans to pursue a tenure-track job, or a position with a federal agency where she can promote STEM education.
Adelle Monteblanco

The University of Texas at El Paso was the perfect fit for Adelle Monteblanco, a multiracial first-generation college student looking for a postdoctoral fellowship that would give her the necessary training to support the country’s changing demographics.

Monteblanco, who is half Latina, earned her doctorate in sociology in 2016 from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She learned about the UTEP postdoctoral openings through a sociologist group and was intrigued by the University’s access and excellence model that served a predominantly Hispanic student population.

“Many institutions of higher education are ill-prepared to support these populations,” Monteblanco said. “I would like the experience and tools to help Hispanic, first-generation, and/or low-income students to thrive.”

UTEP hired her in June 2016 to assist in the departments of Social Work, Sociology and Anthropology, and to work with the BUILDing SCHOLARS program. She co-teaches, mentors and collaborates with her mentors on her research on out-of-hospital midwives as disaster responders, and effective teaching and student learning. She called it a pleasure to serve as a role model for UTEP students in this bi-national community.

Away from the classroom, she sought opportunities to learn about higher education. She said one faculty member taught her how to develop inter-professional collaborations with the likes of politicians, business executives, health providers, community advocates and academics outside of their disciplines. The native of Portland, Oregon, also serves on a campus committee and recently was a panelist who discussed how to co-teach an interdisciplinary course.

Monteblanco, who earned her bachelor’s degree in environmental science from Regis University in Denver, said her UTEP experience has made her a more competitive candidate for future tenure-track positions. She wants a job where she can continue to teach and do research in the areas of sociology, public health, environmental studies or a related interdisciplinary program.
Sundeep Inti

Sundeep Inti was a successful project engineer in his native India working on multimillion-dollar highway and airport projects, but he saw glitches in the project management process. His engineering mentors strongly suggested one place to find the answers: The University of Texas at El Paso.

The native of Hyderabad, India earned his Ph.D. in civil engineering at UTEP with a focus on sustainable pavements in 2016. The Texas Department of Transportation awarded UTEP a grant during his doctoral studies to research the durability of materials for low-volume “farm” roads. When it came time to graduate, Inti accepted the offer to stay as a postdoctoral fellow to build his skills and finish the project with his team of five undergraduates.

He talked about his postdoctoral experience during a tour of his cavernous lab in the engineering complex, where he uses state-of-the-art equipment to do large-scale testing of natural pavement materials used with geosynthetic reinforcement.

Inti said he was fortunate to side-step into his postdoctoral assignment. The additional time at UTEP allowed him to enhance his research, mentorship and academic understanding, as well as his abilities to write proposals and handle projects.

The married father of a young daughter lauded UTEP faculty members within and outside his college for their patience and willingness to help when he faced academic and professional challenges.

“I’ve loved my time at UTEP,” he said as he walked around a maze of black 55-gallon drums and stacks of orange five-gallon buckets filled with test materials from the Texas cities of Dallas, Paris, El Paso and San Antonio.

“It gave me the freedom to explore and the opportunity to learn with a mature mind.”

Inti, who volunteers with community groups that feed the homeless, said he looks forward to becoming a faculty researcher of sustainable highway materials at a four-year university.
BETTER TOGETHER:

UTEP SCHOLARS ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY

BY
CHRISTINA RODRIGUEZ
“COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT”

typically brings to mind community service, civic duty, or volunteering for a local charity or cause. But in the context of higher education, the meaning is much more dynamic.

At The University of Texas at El Paso, community engagement is the tie that binds the University and the community together. It allows academic resources to be used for the greater public good through partnerships and relationships with a variety of sources outside the University. Through community engagement, UTEP can achieve broader community goals in line with its public higher education mission.

In academic-based community engagement, students, faculty and staff participate in projects where the benefit offered to the community is achieved through the process of teaching and learning.

Some examples include community-based research, where the research being conducted by UTEP faculty and students takes place in the community and covers community-related issues. Another model is community participatory research, where the community is not only the subject matter of a particular study but also participates directly in the design of the study. Other models include clinical internships and student teaching opportunities.

“Community engagement can be departments, groups of students, or faculty members engaging with our community,” explained Azuri Gonzalez, director of UTEP’s Center for Civic Engagement. “There are so many different ways to engage, and the main concept to keep in mind is who benefits from this engagement. The most beautiful models are the ones where the institution, students, faculty and community members all benefit from the mutual experience.”

At UTEP, nearly 9,500 students participate in academic service-learning annually, contributing to the more than 1.1 million total hours of service performed by UTEP students each year.

Mark Lusk, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Social Work and faculty fellow for the Center for Civic Engagement at UTEP, has been actively involved in community engagement projects throughout his career. Students in his department spend hundreds of hours in the community as part of their training in practicum experiences and service-learning projects. He has seen the benefits these experiences have on students firsthand.

“Invariably, it takes them out of their comfort zone initially until they become more skillful and informed in engaging with clients,” Lusk said. “They begin to see the world in far greater complexity, and it challenges their assumptions and requires them to grow as citizens and as future professionals.”

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF UTEP’S COMMUNITY-ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP IN ACTION.
In spring 2016, Giangiulio took advantage of an opportunity to do both in collaboration with the Rescue Mission of El Paso – a local homeless shelter that provides meals, showers, laundry facilities, job placement assistance, counseling and Bible study classes for those in need.

“With their new facility, the Rescue Mission desired a new look, one that would better convey its message and roles,” Giangiulio said. “They contacted me, given this class’s past reputation of taking on jobs for nonprofits and the common good.”

Student research for the project included visiting the Rescue Mission, speaking with its residents and eating at its restaurant.

Civil engineering students in a senior design course are working closely with the El Paso County Commissioners’ Court to improve Ascarrate Lake’s water quality and make Ascarrate Park more functional and appealing.

In September 2016, county commissioners provided students with five charges: restoring lake water quality and protecting it from golden algae blooms and fish kill; making walking and hiking trails compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act; locating and designing soccer fields; resolving stormwater ponding issues; and designing a scenic event amphitheater.

Under the direction of Ivonne Santiago, Ph.D., civil engineering clinical professor; Raed Aldouri, Ph.D., research associate professor and director of the Regional Geospatial Center at UTEP; and Elizabeth Walsh, Ph.D., professor of biological sciences and director of UTEP’s Border Biomedical Research Center, students have already collected data on oxygen levels, pH and depth, and will be performing further sampling for other contaminants, as well as the presence of algae. As the project progresses, they will be testing several plants to see which ones are best at controlling nutrient concentrations in the lake.

“There are 12 students in the course but we have additional students who are volunteering,” Santiago said. “We also have private consultants who volunteer as mentors for the students in the areas of structural, geotechnical, environmental, transportation, and construction management.”

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A BUG’S LIFE

Ron Wagler, Ph.D., associate professor of science education and founder and director of the Living Arthropod and Environmental Education Laboratory, has spent the past eight years educating the public about the Sixth Mass Extinction – an ongoing event that threatens extinction, or in some cases already has caused the mass extinction of living species due to activities by humans that are destructive to the environment.

“From an educational standpoint, the Sixth Mass Extinction provides the best way for people to fully understand the environmental impact we are having on Earth, because it encompasses all of the major human activities causing the Sixth Mass Extinction,” Wagler explained.

Wagler and his team of students perform informal and formal living arthropod presentations throughout the region at schools, museums, libraries, science centers, nature centers, community centers and other gathering places. Their presentations aim to educate the community about the essential and positive ecological services arthropods provide to humanity and how the Sixth Mass Extinction is impacting the overall health of our planet.

The class then had about a month to create their logos and trifold brochures. The six best designs were presented to the Rescue Mission. UTEP senior Montserrat Covarrubias was one of the finalists. The experience left a lasting impression on her both personally and professionally.

“The idea of helping others motivated me beyond just getting a good grade on the project,” she said. “I wanted to help those who help others, and by trying my best, I felt like I was also helping the cause. Professionally, this experience enabled me to become more aware of the market I’m going into. Now I have a better grasp on what companies and organizations are looking for and how to deliver that.”

Ron Wagler has spent the past 8 years of his career educating the general public about the Sixth Mass Extinction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Alternate location for amphitheater and soccer fields
- Bioretention basin and detention ponds to control storm runoff from the parking lot
- Installation of solar aerators and floating islands to control algae and assist with water clarification

Ascarate Lake

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Lucía Durá, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of English and director of the Rhetoric and Writing Studies program at UTEP, has spent the past six years challenging the conventional structures typically used to organize how people work together that often stifle engagement and inclusion among members.

Liberating Structures are group facilitation techniques that enable peer-to-peer learning and collaboration. The techniques are based on the premise that changing structures – time, space, group configuration and the question or prompt given to a group – changes outcomes.

Durá and other members of the UTEP Liberating Structures community of practice have worked diligently to offer community organizations the opportunity to learn about these techniques. The group has provided workshops to staff at the YWCA El Paso del Norte Region, Project Vida, Smoke-Free Paso del Norte, El Paso Community College, House of Hope, Housing Authority of the City of El Paso, the United Way of El Paso County and Alamo Auto Supply, to name a few.

"In my research, I use certain Liberating Structures to conduct focus group discussions so that participants learn from each other," Durá said. "As the director of the Rhetoric and Writing Studies program and in service/leadership activities, I design meetings and retreats using Liberating Structures to maximize energy, vision and efficiency in new ways. And as an instructor, I use them to facilitate all of my courses since I believe relationship-building is key to learning."

Davi Kallman, a professional development graduate assistant at the Graduate School at Washington State University, completed her master’s in communication theory at UTEP in 2012. As a doctoral student, she utilizes Liberating Structures techniques in her teaching, service and research groups.

"Liberating Structures has become a way of life for me," Kallman said. "It has given me the opportunity to listen first and ask questions later, which is something I have struggled with my whole life. My participation with Liberating Structures has given me a new toolkit to engage everyone in meaningful dialogue."

Liberating Structures

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Discovering STEM in the Community

**El Paso is the largest urban area** in the United States with no STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) education center, realized UTEP Associate Professor of Mathematical Sciences Amy Wagler, Ph.D. “What can I do to change this?” was her next thought.

The idea behind Wagler’s upcoming project is to enrich the El Paso region by providing STEM outreach in the community by way of pop-up STEM centers, tentatively called Discovery STEM Centers or Descubre CTIM Centros. These centers will be a permanent fixture at local libraries and other community centers.

The STEM centers will highlight research topics of UTEP’s Border Biomedical Research Center (BBRC) and focus on making the STEM topics approachable and engaging to children ages 5 and older.

In the initial phase of the project, two UTEP students will have leadership roles as STEM ambassadors. Additional students will have service-learning roles with the centers starting in fall 2017. A majority of the students involved will be pre-service STEM teachers and a few may be museum studies students.

UTEP BBRC faculty will work with the lead UTEP students to devise materials for the STEM centers and make it engaging for the age groups being targeted. The students will lead the public workshops and help with rotating content and collecting data.

“These centers address an immediate and important need in our community in a way that can affect our future educational outcomes among area youth, improve job opportunities and economic development,” Wagler said. “It also has the potential to reach non-museum-going populations and provide access to informal STEM education to these youth populations.”

Members of the Association of Applied Border History (AABH), a student group in the Department of History at UTEP, not only receive a rich lesson in history, but are helping to keep the history of the Bracero Program alive.

**The Bracero Program** consisted of a series of bilateral agreements between Mexico and the United States from 1942 to 1965 that allowed millions of Mexican workers to come to the United States temporarily to work on labor contracts, usually agricultural.

In 2015, a graduate public history class at UTEP created an archival plan to help organize and digitize the holdings of the Border Farmworkers Center of El Paso, an organization dedicated to educating field workers about their right to a fair wage and safe work environment and alleviating the day-to-day problems that workers face. After the archival plan was created, the AABH began implementing it.

The center has an immense collection of more than 10,000 original documents from former braceros, including labor contracts, insurance policies, photographs, identification cards and personal letters. The plan to archive these documents is aimed at making them accessible to the community, the family members of the braceros, and researchers.

The students have volunteered their time each week for the past two years to ensure the plan is carried out.

Angelina Martínez is a second-year graduate student pursuing her Ph.D. in borderlands history and one of the co-chairs of the association. Her experience with AABH has provided her with opportunities she may not have had otherwise.

“I have become more involved in social justice work than I have ever been before,” Martínez said. “Working with the AABH catalyzed that. Fortunately, the AABH also offers a space where we can connect our academic skills and social justice community involvement in a way that may have been impossible if I was not a member of the organization.”

What is especially fascinating to Yolanda Chávez Leyva, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the Department of History at UTEP, is that as the students digitize the documents and organize them, they also stop to read them. She said they end up developing a profound understanding of the importance of documents from a historian’s perspective and learn about the day-to-day Bracero Program experience.

“Few students have the opportunity to work hands-on with hundreds of primary documents,” Chávez Leyva said.

The center has an immense collection of more than 10,000 original documents from former braceros, including labor contracts, insurance policies, photographs, identification cards and personal letters. The students have volunteered their time each week for the past two years to ensure the plan is carried out.
**1960s**

Jerry G. Armstrong (B.A. ’66) was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. Armstrong was a longtime high school basketball coach in the state and part of the 1966 Texas Western College (now UTEP) basketball team that won the national championship.

Velia D. Minjarez (M.Ed. ’74) was appointed conservator of the Southside Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas, by Mike Morath, the state’s commissioner of education.

**1970s**

Julio Chiu (B.S. ’74) was named chairman of the Paso del Norte Biomedical Cluster, formed in 2016 to build stronger links between manufacturers and border health care institutions. He also was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas – El Paso Branch. He is president of SEISA Group, a manufacturer and developer of medical devices based in Juárez, Mexico.

Blanca E. Enriquez (B.S. ’75; M.Ed. ’85) was recognized by the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency Business Center – El Paso at the group’s annual Minority Enterprise Development Week luncheon. Enriquez, director of the National Head Start Program, was recognized by the El Paso Chamber of Commerce’s Business Center – El Paso.

Luís Herrera (B.S. ’75) was appointed by President Barack Obama to serve on the National Museum and Library Services Board. Herrera has been a city librarian for the San Francisco Public Library system since 2005. He was first appointed to the board in 2012.

Don Luciano (BBA ’71) is part of an El Paso business group that bought a Clovis, New Mexico, Toyota dealership. The group, RB Motors, will operate RB Toyota. Luciano owns and operates Trade In Cars, a wholesaler of vintage and other specialty vehicles in Central El Paso.

**1980s**

Eloise A. Blake (MSN ’87) was elected in February 2017 to another four-year term with the Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell Branch Community College Board, District 3. She is a retired ENMU-R faculty member and division chair who has been on the board since 2008.

Annette R. Brigham (B.S. ’87) was installed as a member of the Canutillo Independent School District Board of Trustees. She was elected as the board’s vice president. Brigham recently retired from CISD as an associate superintendent.

Manuel Castruita (B.S. ’88; M.Ed. ’92) was appointed to the El Paso County Historical Commission by the County Commissioners Court.

Robert Jacob Cintron (B.S. ’83; MBA ’96; M.Acc. ’02) is the new CEO of University Medical Center of El Paso.

Roger V. Gonzalez (B.S. ’86) was named an ASME Fellow by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. Gonzalez is a professor and chair of UTEP’s Department of Engineering Education and Leadership.

Shahidul H. Joarder (M.S. ’88) was promoted to senior associate at Dewberry, a privately held professional services firm. Joarder is a professional engineer with more than 35 years of experience as an electrical design engineer.

**1990s**

Javier R. Calderon (BBA ’92) is a senior zone sales manager (Southwest Region) for the Acura Division of American Honda Motor Co., Inc. in Dallas, Texas. He has held many positions with the company during the past 23 years.

Michelle Maldonado Casillas (BIS ’97; M.Ed. ’01) is the new principal of Tom Lea Elementary School in the El Paso Independent School District. She previously was an assistant principal at Ascarate Elementary School in the Ysleta school district.

John Conner (B.S. ’92) was named senior vice president of GMP Manufacturing. The company is a global leader in the manufacturing of vaccines, viral vectors and biopharmaceuticals. Conner most recently had been senior vice president of operations with CDMO CytoVance Biologics.

Diane N. De Hoyos (M.S. ’94; Ph.D. ’16) was recognized by the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency Business Center – El Paso at the group’s annual Minority Enterprise Development Week luncheon. De Hoyos, UTEP assistant vice president of purchasing and general services, earned the Distinguished Supplier Diversity Award.

Laurie Enloe (M.Ed. ’97) was named principal of Harry “Hut” Brown Middle School in the El Paso Independent School District. She had been assistant principal for guidance and instruction at EPISD’s Burgess High School.

Edward Escudero (BBA ’92) is part of an El Paso business group that bought a Clovis, New Mexico, Toyota dealership. The group, RB Motors,
From Miner to Googler:

UTEP Alumnus’ Journey to Success

As a child, when Gilberto Contreras would receive a new toy, his eyes would light up; not because he was excited to play with it, but because he could not wait to take it apart.

The University of Texas at El Paso alumnus spent much of his childhood disassembling toys, radios, calculators and remote controls. He loved to learn how things worked.

Contreras, Ph.D., was born in Torreón, Mexico, in the state of Coahuila. His family moved to Juárez when he was 5.

In middle school, Contreras enrolled in a vocational school in Mexico and studied electronics. He spent hours browsing through electronic hobby catalogs, dreaming up ideas for DIY projects.

His fascination deepened when he got his first computer at 13.

“Nobody in my family had used a computer before, so I had to read every single book about computers that I could get my hands on,” he recalled. “It was at that time I decided I wanted a career in engineering.”

A college degree was something Contreras always wanted, but coming from a lower middle-class family, his options were limited. A friend persuaded him to attend UTEP. He was able to afford his college education thanks to the P.A.S.E. program, which allows Mexican nationals to pay in-state tuition. He also received a scholarship from the Margarita Miranda De Mascareñas Foundation.

At UTEP, Contreras was first exposed to academic research as a member of the Neuro-Fuzzy Logic Team led by Patricia Nava, Ph.D., associate dean of the College of Engineering and co-director of UTEP’s Distributed Computing Lab. Nava became Contreras’ first mentor and encouraged him to pursue a doctorate.

Contreras graduated from UTEP in 2002 with a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering. He went on to earn a master’s and doctorate in computer architecture from Princeton University.

Today, Contreras is a systems reliability engineer at Google. His advice to current UTEP students is to think big.

“Many students believe that it is virtually impossible to be admitted to an Ivy League school or be hired by companies like Google, Facebook or Amazon,” Contreras said. “One thing is for sure: if you don’t apply, you won’t be admitted, no matter how smart you are.”

- Christina Rodriguez

Photo by J.R. Hernandez
Miguel Angel Gamiño (BBA ‘99) was hired as the chief technology officer for the City of New York, New York. He will lead the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications. Gamiño previously held the same position for the City of San Francisco, California.

Renard Johnson (BBA ‘95) was elected chairman pro tem of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, El Paso branch board of directors. He joined the board in 2012. Johnson is CEO of Management and Engineering Technologies International, Inc.

Brian J. Kieser (BBA ‘92) is managing partner of Fountainhead Investment Partners, a venture capital firm that oversaw a spinal implant project with UTEP mechanical engineering students that could affect the biomedical field. Kieser’s group funds companies that are accessing innovative technologies.

Cindy Ann Stout (MSN ‘94) was named the chief nursing officer at University Medical Center of El Paso. She previously held the same position at Del Sol Medical Center in El Paso.

Alfonso V. Velarde (BBA ‘99) was named executive director of the Paso Del Norte Children’s Development Center, which provides comprehensive services to children with disabilities. He had been executive director of the Child Crisis Center of El Paso.

Omar Veliz (B.S. ‘98) was recognized by the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency Business Center – El Paso at the group’s annual Minority Enterprise Development Week luncheon. Veliz’ company, president of Veliz Construction, was named the Minority Construction Firm of the Year.

Joshua I. Villalobos (B.S. ’99; M.S. ’02) was named dean of instructional programs and campus dean of El Paso Community College’s Mission del Paso campus. He is a nationally recognized geology faculty member.

2000s

Marshall C. Barclay (MBA ’05) was named Financial Planner of the Year by Lincoln Financial Advisors. He is a Certified Financial Planner and a Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor.

Bethany J. Barrow (B.S. ’02) has joined the Lovelace Medical Group as a board-certified OB/GYN at the Lovelace Women’s Hospital in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Natalie K. Bellman-Seeskin (B.A. ’02) was named site training director in El Paso by Sovereign Health, a leading national provider of behavioral health treatment services. Her last job was as the clinical psychologist with the El Paso Veterans Administration Health Care System – Home Based Primary Care.

Roberto A. Coronado (BBA ’00; M.S. ’02) was promoted to vice president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, El Paso Branch. He previously served as the assistant vice president.

Rafael A. Gonzalez (B.S. ’01; M.S. ’03) was named a director with the New Mexico Museum of Natural History Foundation Board. He is a factory manager with Sandia National Laboratories.

Stormy M. Monks (B.S. ’03; Ph.D. ’12) was selected to be vice president of the Child Crisis Center of El Paso Board of Directors. She is a public health specialist with Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso.

Alejandro O. Palomo (BBA ‘04; M.Acc. ‘04) was promoted to managing director – investment management at Hines, an international real estate firm. He joined the Houston-based firm in 2012 and is primarily focused on portfolio oversight.

Sandra Ramirez (B.A. ‘08) was hired as a reporter at KOAT-TV Action 7 News in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She had been a reporter/anchor at KVEO-TV, which serves the Texas Rio Grande Valley.

Armando I. Rodriguez (BBA ’08) was elected to the board of the Texas Association of School Boards for Region 19, Position B. He will serve a three-year term. He also recently was installed as a member of the Canutillo Independent School District Board of Trustees. This will be his fourth term with the CISD board.

2010s

Danira Y. Avila (BBA ‘11) was hired as vice president of commercial lending at the BBVA Compass Bank branch in West El Paso. She has five years of experience in banking and lending.

Alvin J. Garcia (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 double-A baseball team.

William Guzman (Ph.D. ’10) was appointed director of the Lee Hagan Africana Studies Center at New Jersey City University. He had been the director of the Office of Black Diasporan Culture at Florida A&M University.

Samuel Peña (B.A. ‘10; MBA ‘15) was hired as the 39th fire chief for the City of Houston, Texas. Peña previously had worked with the El Paso Fire Department for 21 years, where he served in a variety of roles, including fire chief since 2013.
The Heart and Soul of Giving: UTEP Alumnus Gives Back Through Service and Scholarship

Ronald J. McDaniel '61

UTEP alumnus Ronald J. McDaniel believes that giving increases the heart and soul of an individual. This belief is what inspired him to give back to The University of Texas at El Paso, an institution that has remained close to his heart for over half a century.

McDaniel was born in Paducah, Kentucky. When he was 12, his family embarked on a move to Phoenix, Arizona. On the way, they stopped in El Paso for a while to raise money for the rest of the trip. What was meant to be a temporary stop became permanent: McDaniel’s family stayed and called El Paso home.

Growing up, McDaniel had dreams of becoming a ranch cowboy like his grandfather. That dream was still on McDaniel’s mind when he started college at New Mexico State University. After a year, he decided to move back to El Paso and attend Texas Western College (now UTEP). He worked on the railroads to pay for his college education.

After taking classes with TWC business and economics professor Wade Hartrick, Ph.D., McDaniel’s interests switched from ranching to business. He would often look to Hartrick for advice and guidance.

McDaniel graduated from TWC in 1961 with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. After graduation, he worked for Mountain States Telephone, where he got his first taste of being a successful salesman. A lucrative career in sales would follow with El Paso CBS affiliate KDBC-TV, where he worked for three decades. He later became general manager of Univision in El Paso and concluded his career in sales with the Yellow Pages.

Through the years, one thing remained constant for McDaniel: his commitment to his alma mater. After graduation, he became an active member of UTEP’s Alumni Association. In 1970, he joined the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

During his nine years on the board, he served as Alumni Association president and chairman of the Matrix Society, an alumni organization whose purpose was to give greater recognition to leading alumni contributors to the University.

“Being part of the Alumni Association was a phenomenal conduit for meeting people and pulling others together for a common and greater good,” McDaniel said. “My involvement was a way to give back to the University that means so much to me, as well as a way to stay connected to mentors and advancements in the world of education.”

In January 2017, McDaniel established the Ronald J. McDaniel Endowed Scholarship to provide undergraduate students with funding for tuition, fees and other education costs.

“My hope for the Ronald J. McDaniel Endowed Scholarship is that others, as they enjoy the benefits of the scholarship, will want to replenish the wells from which they have drunk.”

- Christina Rodriguez
# In Memoriam

## 1940s

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margo B. Adams</td>
<td>B.A. ’43</td>
<td>Austin, Texas</td>
<td>Dec. 26, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracy Peele Clark</td>
<td>B.A. ’48</td>
<td>Midland, Texas</td>
<td>Dec. 22, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Francis June Gingery</td>
<td></td>
<td>Arlington, Texas</td>
<td>Dec. 1, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alice Nan Richards</td>
<td>B.A. ’49</td>
<td>Bryan, Texas</td>
<td>Aug. 28, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Spencer</td>
<td>BBA ’42</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>Feb. 1, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary M. Suggs</td>
<td>B.A. ’47</td>
<td>Fabens, Texas</td>
<td>Sept. 2, 2016</td>
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## 1950s

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<tr>
<td>Jaime F. Torres</td>
<td>B.S. ’50</td>
<td>Riverside, California</td>
<td>Oct. 21, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jose Luis Carrera</td>
<td>B.A. ’69</td>
<td>Tempe, Arizona</td>
<td>June 2, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlos Jesus Corella</td>
<td>BBA ’62</td>
<td>Clint, Texas</td>
<td>Dec. 1, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe David Fraire</td>
<td>B.S. ’65</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>Nov. 15, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfred J. Goytia</td>
<td>B.A. ’63</td>
<td>Boerne, Texas</td>
<td>Dec. 1, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Beall Lengefeld</td>
<td>B.A. ’65</td>
<td>Fayetteville, Arkansas</td>
<td>Dec. 10, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Romeo H. “Red” Lewis Jr.</td>
<td>B.A. ’60</td>
<td>Dallas, Texas</td>
<td>July 6, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Michael “Tommy” Breitling Jr.</td>
<td>B.S. ’01</td>
<td>Dumfries, Virginia</td>
<td>Jan. 8, 2017</td>
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## 1960s

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<tr>
<td>Clar Marie Dixon</td>
<td>B.S. ’65</td>
<td>Calhoun, Georgia</td>
<td>Feb. 5, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alfred J. Goytia</td>
<td>B.A. ’63</td>
<td>Boerne, Texas</td>
<td>Feb. 4, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenneth Lytle Hamilton II</td>
<td>B.A. ’68</td>
<td>Sugar Land, Texas</td>
<td>Feb. 7, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerry Mack Johnson</td>
<td>BBA ’69</td>
<td>Edmonds, Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>William T. “Bill” Lovelady</td>
<td>B.A. ’68</td>
<td>Fabens, Texas</td>
<td>Jan. 20, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eleanor Ruth “Ellie” Madison</td>
<td>B.A. ’61</td>
<td>Houston, Texas</td>
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<td>Daniel H. Smith</td>
<td>B.S. ’50</td>
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<td>John P. Berta</td>
<td>BBA ’80</td>
<td>Round Rock, Texas</td>
<td>Nov. 5, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winifred Ann Foy “Wini” Momsen</td>
<td>B.A. ’89</td>
<td>Silver City, New Mexico</td>
<td>Aug. 18, 2016</td>
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<td>Charles A. Walls</td>
<td>B.S. ’80</td>
<td>Castle Rock, Colorado</td>
<td>Jan. 21, 2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheryl Ann Wilson</td>
<td>B.S. ’81</td>
<td>Albuquerque, New Mexico</td>
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## 1990s

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<td>Beatrice Cantu</td>
<td>BIS ’96</td>
<td>San Elizario, Texas</td>
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<td>David D. Gomez</td>
<td>B.S. ’96</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
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<td>Maria Norma Montellano</td>
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<td>El Paso</td>
<td>Feb. 20, 2017</td>
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## 2000s

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<td>Samantha Aragones</td>
<td>BFA ’02</td>
<td>Dumfries, Virginia</td>
<td>Jan. 8, 2017</td>
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## 2010s

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<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Arzate</td>
<td>BBA ’13</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>April 2, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rebecca Reyes</td>
<td>BSN ’10</td>
<td>El Paso</td>
<td>Dec. 15, 2016</td>
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</table>
1. Yvette Garcia (BBA ’08, MBA ’13) and Joe Gutierrez (B.S. Kinesiology ’08, DPT ’15) were married on Feb. 25, 2017 in El Paso. 2. Daniel Esquivel (B.S. Health Promotion ’08) married Carolina Trejo (BBA ’06) on Sept. 3, 2016 in El Paso. 3. Davi I. Kallman (B.A. Corporate and Organizational Communication ’10, M.A. Communication Theory ’12) married Kyle Gonzalez on Sept. 4, 2016 on the beach in San Diego, California. 4. Sergio E. Maldonado (B.S. Mechanical Engineering ’11, M.A. Mechanical Engineering ’14) and Marketa Vavrova (M.A. Civil Engineering ’12, Ph.D. Civil Engineering ’16) were married on Dec. 10, 2016 in El Paso.
Obituaries

Eugene Alan Dean

Eugene Alan Dean, Ph.D., professor emeritus at The University of Texas at El Paso, died in El Paso on Feb. 14, 2017. He was 85 years old.

Dean earned a B.S. in physics from Texas Western College (now UTEP) on a Saturday in 1958 and taught his first physics class at the University the next Monday. He earned his master’s at New Mexico State University and his doctorate at Texas A&M University. In 1969, Dean and his family returned to El Paso and UTEP, where he taught physics and astronomy, conducted research, and served as assistant dean of the College of Science.

"Alan was a gifted teacher," Dean’s daughter, Mary Wells, said. "His favorite component of the experience was when a light came on for a student and they suddenly understood a concept or equation."

In 1997 Dean was given the Service to the University Award. After retiring from UTEP in 2000, he taught at the University’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

"There's nothing Alan loved more than teaching," Wells said. "He was one of those very lucky humans who discover their bliss and are able to do what they love most for a living."

He and colleagues in the physics department developed the Physics Circus, which included entertaining demonstrations of physical principles and concepts for young audiences. He also was part of a contingent of UTEP science faculty who spent a year in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, teaching and mentoring Malaysian college students.

Dean was a founder of El Pan, El Paso’s first food pantry. He was very involved in community theater, enjoyed playing softball, was an elder in his church, brewed his own beer, grew tomatoes and chili peppers, and was known for his extensive wardrobe of hats and his refusal to wear a tie.

He is survived by his wife, their children and three grandchildren. - Leonard Martinez

Srinivas Kuchibhotla

Srinivas Kuchibhotla was cut from a special cloth. A caring intellectual with an adventurous spirit, he was a favorite of faculty and peers during his brief time at The University of Texas at El Paso. He earned his master’s degree in electrical engineering in 2007 and embarked on a successful career as an aerospace engineer. He died Feb. 22, 2017, during a shooting at an Olathe, Kansas, bar and grill.

The 32-year-old native of Hyderabad, India, was employed at Garmin, a GPS navigation and communications device company in Olathe, about 20 miles southwest of Kansas City. Friends and family described him as calm, smart, personable, compassionate, levelheaded and technically skilled.

Kuchibhotla came to UTEP with high hopes of pursuing the American dream, said Benjamin Flores, Ph.D., professor of electrical and computer engineering, who knew Kuchibhotla through the Indian Student Association, for which Flores was a faculty sponsor.

"He was a kind and bright individual," Flores said. "We knew he would be successful. We’re terribly sad for his loss."

Suman Sirimulla, Ph.D., assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences, roomed with Kuchibhotla for two years as the two pursued their master’s degrees. Sirimulla recalled his friend’s academic focus that included late nights studying or doing research on campus. He also remembered a person who loved action movies and Chips Ahoy cookies, casual student potluck parties, road trips to regional attractions, and involvement in campus activities.

"He cared about other people," Sirimulla said. "He would attend thesis defenses as a sign of support and helped (Indian students) who came to UTEP."

Kuchibhotla is survived by his wife, Sunayana Dumala, his parents and two siblings. - Daniel Perez
Miners Around the World

Yvette Garcia (BBA ‘08, MBA ‘13) and Joe Gutierrez (B.S. Kinesiology ‘08, DPT ‘15) show their UTEP pride in the Bahamas.

Ismael de la Rosa (BBA Marketing, ’13) visits Toledo, Spain.

Hector Anaya (B.S. Electrical Engineering, ’08) and Alejandro Gomez Jr. (B.S. Electrical Engineering, ’02; MBA ’07), co-workers at the Department of Defense, visit the world’s tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

UTEP was well represented on the beaches of St. Teresa, Costa Rica on Thanksgiving Day 2016. Siblings Jack Coulehan (B.S. Physical Education, ’82) and sister Cecelia Shelton (BBA Business, ’89) spent their Thanksgiving catching waves. They proudly chanted “Let’s go Miners!” with every wave they caught all the way to shore.

To submit a Miners Around the World photo for possible inclusion in UTEP Magazine, send the photo and caption information to univcomm@utep.edu.
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More info at [www.utepathletics.com](http://www.utepathletics.com)

Dates subject to change