

RENU KHATOR
CHANCELLOR'S REPORT
UH SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS MEETING
AUGUST 14, 2013

UH SYSTEM ACHIEVEMENTS

- Standard & Poor's Ratings Services (S&P) has just raised its long-term credit rating for the UH System from AA- to AA, the highest rating ever for the UH System from S&P. The upgrade reflects S&P's view that the UH System remains on a fairly impressive enrollment growth trajectory, and it is the culmination of the hard work by Executive Vice Chancellor Carl Carlucci and his finance team, as well as leadership at our universities. S&P cited the UH System's expanding breadth, depth, and quality of programs, its strong financial operating performance, its favorable location in one of the nation's strongest local economies, and ongoing support from the State of Texas.

- We thank our Board of Regents and our alumni for their support and advocacy during the 83rd Legislative Session. Even though no university in the state received any TRBs, we are pleased that our base funding has improved. Another major change relates to the "B on Time" program which will allow all universities to offer special loan assistance to those students who complete their degree in four years.

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ACHIEVEMENTS

- Provost Paula Short has announced the creation of a Graduate School to better serve our faculty and students in certificate, master's, and doctoral programs, and appointed Dmitri Litvinov as Interim Vice Provost and Dean to provide leadership. The new school will leverage and coordinate resources and support infrastructures aimed at student success, and create a culture of continuous quality improvement.

- Ramesh Shrestha, professor of civil engineering and director of UH's National Center for Airborne Laser Mapping (NCALM), has received a five-year, \$3 million NSF award to extend the center's operations. A collaboration between UH and UC-Berkeley, NCALM provides airborne laser swath mapping (known as LiDAR) data to the scientific community. The center is being credited with the discovery of a buried pre-Columbian city in Honduras, called Ciudad Blanca. The discovery was widely covered by the news media nationally and internationally.

- Olafs Daugulis, associate professor of chemistry, received the prestigious Norman Hackerman Award from the Welch Foundation. This award is presented annually to Texas scientists who are in the early stages of their careers. This is the first time a Hackerman Award has been bestowed upon a UH faculty member.

- A \$1 million endowment from ExxonMobil will help UH's *teachHOUSTON* to continue training young secondary science and math teachers. The endowment is part of a matching program coordinated through the National Math and Science Initiative, and is a partnership between the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics and the College of Education.

- The Moores Concert Chorale took the top prize at the 13th Annual International Chamber Choir Competition in Marktoberdorf, Germany. The chorale also earned the award for best interpretation of a religious chorale work. Led by director Betsy Cook Weber, the chorale was among 10 elite groups from around the world selected to participate in the competition.

UH-CLEAR LAKE ACHIEVEMENTS

- UHCL's School Education was recognized for two of its programs by the Quest for Quality Teacher Preparation in Texas project, a collaboration between the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Advancement of Teacher Education, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Two-Semester Internship was named an exemplary Field-Based Instructional Practice, while the Early Childhood Model Classroom and Practicum was cited as an Exemplary Faculty Practice.

- The Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities received a grant from the Fondren Foundation to help kick-start a unique training program for young adults with high-functioning autism. The program will offer training to prepare these individuals for employment and careers as behavior interventionists, working with young children with autism.

- To assist veterans transition from active duty to college, the Veterans Service Office has created a peer-to-peer mentorship program that connects a new student veteran with one who has been at UHCL for at least two semesters. Resume/interview workshops specific to veterans, mental health counseling, and other services will link veteran students with job opportunities.

UH-DOWNTOWN ACHIEVEMENTS

- UHD has received a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish watershed environmental camps. The camps will be offered during the 2014 and 2015 summer sessions, bringing up to 80 local students and 40 secondary science teachers to campus to research the health and environmental needs of the many watersheds in Greater Houston's 13-county region.

- Experts from 19 universities across the United States and United Kingdom converged at UHD in May for the three-day Second Annual Peer-Led Team Learning International Society Conference, where academic leaders and students exchanged ideas. In addition to the academic presentations, UHD students made presentations on the influence of peer-led team learning on future teachers, ways in which peer-led team learning promotes enhanced understanding of course material, and the use of the peer-led team learning model through online workshops.

■ Viola Garcia, chair of the Department of Urban Education, was nominated to the National School Boards Association (NSBA) board of directors. She was elected to the Texas Association of School Boards in 2004, where she has held every office, including president. The NSBA represents more than 90,000 local school board members, most of whom are elected, overseeing nearly 14,000 local school districts serving 50 million public school students.

UH-VICTORIA ACHIEVEMENTS

■ The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved UHV's Master of Science in Nursing-Family Nurse Practitioner track, paving the way for classes to start this fall. The program will help address the shortage of health care providers by preparing advanced practice nurses who can diagnose and prescribe medication for health care needs.

■ A ribbon-cutting ceremony next Monday, co-hosted with the Victoria Chamber of Commerce, will mark the opening of the \$11.5 million Jaguar Suites. The facility will house up to 216 sophomores and upperclassmen, and features 54 units, each with private bedrooms, two baths, shared living space, and kitchenette. The building will also contain academic spaces, computer labs, and group study rooms on each floor.

■ Administrators from UHV and Wharton County Junior College have signed three agreements to allow students to seamlessly obtain associate degrees from WCJC and bachelor's degrees from UHV.