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CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Noticias



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
Learning. Leading.™

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dr. Tatcho Mindiola

The 1000 Club

During the 2005 fall semester, the Center for Mexican American Studies will launch the 1000 Club as part of our on-going effort to raise \$5 million for our Excellence Endowment Fund.

The 1000 Club allows supporters of higher education to donate a minimum of \$1,000 to the Center for Mexican American Studies Excellence Endowment Fund. Contributors can take up to 12 months to pay their donation or pay it all at once. All donations are tax-deductible.

There is a great need to improve the educational standing of Latinos. We have the highest high school dropout rate and the lowest college enrollment rate in the nation. This is why we also have one of the lowest educational attainment levels in the U.S. as well.

And the tragic reality is that this is the way it has been historically, and will continue to be, unless we aggressively pursue solutions and pursue them for a long period of time.

The 1000 Club provides an avenue for each person to do his/her part in providing a solution by helping fund the CMAS programs. The donations we receive will help us fund our College Career days, high school Outreach programs, undergraduate and graduate programs aimed at student retention, and our Visiting Scholars Program. (Please see the articles dealing with these programs in this issue of *Noticias*).

The rewards of increasing the number of college-educated Latinos in our community cannot be underestimated. A college education is associated with higher income, better health, lower rates of anti-social behavior, and increased rates of civic participation, such as is demonstrated by voting and community leadership activity. A college education also raises the probability that a person's children will likewise obtain a college degree.

It is imperative that those of us, who can afford to act, act now to help solve the education dilemma of our community. We Latinos must take the leadership in solving our pressing educational problems. Others will not join us if we do not take the initiative. If not us, who? If not now, when? ¡Adelante!

For more information on The 1000 Club, please contact Dr. Tatcho Mindiola at 713-743-3134 or through electronic mail at tmindiola@uh.edu.

Bank of America Presents the AAP With A Gift

Bank of America presented the Academic Achievers Program with a generous gift of \$150,000 on May 23, 2005. The president of

Bank of America, Ms. Kim Ruth, said, "Bank of America and the University of Houston

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Ms. Kim Ruth (holding the check) and Mr. Rick Jaramillo (center, in tan suit) of Bank of America presenting the gift of \$150,000 to the AAP.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Mexican American Studies (CMAS) at the University of Houston was established in 1972, as an interdisciplinary academic program encompassing the liberal arts, education, and social sciences focusing on the Mexican American and broader Latino experience in the U.S. Its mission is to advance knowledge, promote critical thinking and foster the value of service to the community. This involves designing a broad spectrum of public and scholarly programs. Located within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, CMAS has evolved into an academic unit with several major components: teaching, research and publications, recruitment and retention, leadership training, academic advising and community service.

Lupe Fraga Joins Excellence Endowment Board



Lupe "Champ" Fraga

Reading the resume of Mr. Lupe "Champ" Fraga is to be enthralled by a personal and professional life characterized by innovation, loyalty to family, service to the community, and a strong determination to succeed. The CMAS Excellence Endowment/Advisory Committee is honored to have Fraga as one of its valuable members.

Born in Houston and raised on the Eastside, Fraga was the youngest child of parents from San Luis Potosi, Mexico. It was during his early childhood that Fraga became known as "Champ" due to his trailing after a neighborhood baseball athlete named Champ Cordova. Since Fraga carried the baseball bats and gloves of Champ Cordova, the other players started calling him "Little Champ." Eventually, the "Little" was dropped, and "Champ" remained.

One of Fraga's first honors came when he was 13 years old and awarded a scholarship to attend the private, Catholic high school of St. Thomas. His parents, who had always stressed the importance of an education, supported the decision to attend St. Thomas and Fraga thrived there despite being one of the only two Hispanic students enrolled. He was elected class president and captain of the baseball and basketball teams. He then attended Texas A & M University on a baseball scholarship and completed his B.B.A. in Accounting in 1957. Fraga then joined the U.S. Army attaining the rank of first lieutenant.

While using his accounting expertise for a Houston pipeline coating company, Fraga was offered the chance to purchase a small office supply company. After beginning with one delivery truck, one secretary, and hauling inventory out of a garage, Fraga has built his company, Tejas Office Products, into a remarkably innovative major player in the fast-changing field of office suppliers, who

counts clients such as the United Space Alliance, The Methodist Hospital, and Minute Maid Co. among its customers. In fact, the company projects \$35 million in revenues by 2007.

An examination of some of the strategies used at Tejas gives us clues into the winning combination of Fraga. The philosophy of customer service at Tejas is always "to go the extra mile" for the customer. Therefore, Tejas will deliver at any time a customer requests — even on a Sunday. In addition, Tejas will even do things like pick up other vendor deliveries and combine them with their own to save time for the customer in processing only one delivery from one vehicle.

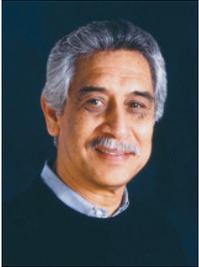
Another key to the success of Tejas is the commitment to innovation. When the Houston-area office supplies business was flooded in the '80's by huge big-box retailers, such as Office Depot, Fraga reacted with the philosophy that his commitment was to figure out what the competitors were doing, then do it better. In fact, "Champ" has often been quoted as saying that the scare and chaos of that time was one of the best things that ever happened to Tejas because it forced the analysis of operations and concomitant change. Later, Tejas was one of the first office supply companies with an early Web presence.

One of the major forces in the life of Fraga has been the desire to give back to the community. Not surprisingly, this desire grew out of the importance of giving and sharing within Fraga's own family. He says, "My parents immigrated from San Luis Potosi. I saw how hard they worked and how generous they were with their meager resources.

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Mexican American Becomes Mayor of Los Angeles

By Dr. Tatcho Mindiola and Dr. Avelardo Valdez



Dr. Tatcho Mindiola



Dr. Avelardo Valdez

We traveled to Los Angeles in May during the Mayoral runoff election between the incumbent, James Hahn, and his challenger and eventual winner, Antonio Villaraigosa. Los Angeles is similar to Houston in terms of its population composition, and it is often said that it represents the direction and political future of Houston. Specifically, we were there to observe how African Americans would cast their vote and the characteristics of the Latino vote. We had also read about Villaraigosa, and how he was electrifying the Latino community with his charisma and political experience, and were eager to observe him in action. We were not disappointed.

Villaraigosa won the election by a margin of 18 points, 59% to 41%, and according to exit polls, he carried every ethnic group except Asian and African Americans. Villaraigosa won 48% of the black vote with most of his support coming from voters under the age of 45. This represents a considerable turnaround for this Mexican American candidate. He ran for mayor four years ago and lost the election and won only 18% of the black vote.

There was much speculation that Villaraigosa's victory signaled the beginning of a Black-Brown coalition, but we sensed from speaking with voters that the coalition at this point was tenuous. (Please see our editorial in the Houston Chronicle, June 5, 2005, for an amplification of this point.)

As everyone expected, Villaraigosa carried a large majority of the Latino vote. The exit poll showed that he received 86% of their vote. What we found interesting about the Latino vote was the number who are naturalized citizens. Approximately 44% of all Latinos who voted said they were born outside of the United States and 72% of this vote said they were born in Mexico. In comparison during the presidential election of 2004, only 21% of Latino voters in Houston said they were naturalized and

53% stated they were born in Mexico.

Our opinion was that the large number of naturalized Latino voters in Los Angeles could be attributed to three factors. One is Proposition 187 that was on the ballot in 1994 and sought to deny undocumented immigrants health care, public education and other social benefits. This galvanized the Latino immigrant community. Second, coinciding with Proposition 187 was an effort lead by the National Association of Elected Latino Officials (NALEO) to increase the number of immigrants who become citizens. Third, are the voter registration drives targeting naturalized citizens that have continuously been conducted by the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project and the labor unions. The only similarity to Houston was the efforts by NALEO to increase the number of naturalized citizens.



Antonio Villaraigosa

The night before the election, we attended a Villaraigosa rally and found that he is articulate, handsome and charismatic. We also read about his life and believe that many Latinos identify with him because he has had to overcome serious obstacles on his way to becoming mayor of Los Angeles. Consider his upbringing.

His alcoholic and abusive father walked out on his family when Villaraigosa was five years old and left his mother to raise four children by herself. He grew up in poverty and wore tattered clothing as a kid. He even put cardboard in the soles of his shoes to cover the holes. He started working at the age of nine to buy his own clothes and to help out at home. He became a troublesome student in high school and dropped out but eventually returned to graduate.

He went to college and graduated from UCLA with degrees in political science and law, but he never passed the bar after trying four times. After law school, he became an organizer for the Los Angeles teacher's union and got involved in politics.

He was elected to the legislature in 1992 and was elected Speaker of the House in 1996, primarily because he was a coalition builder and an excellent organizer who surrounded himself with smart and dedicated people. He also addressed the issues of the common person and earned the reputation of being honest and a hard worker.

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ACADEMIC ACHIEVERS PROGRAM UPDATE

Spring Semester for the AAP at UH

The Academic Achievers Program (AAP) at the University of Houston is sponsored by CMAS and the Office of the President to address the issue of retention among Hispanic students, with secondary goals in the areas of fostering leadership and community service. In the capable hands of Program Manager, Rebeca Treviño, the program is accomplishing these exact criteria.

In the semester ending in December 2004, 10 AAP students were named to the Dean's List. (See the Kudos section for their names.) Five AAP students graduated in December 2004: Jacquelyn Castillo, Melissa Cavazos, Francis Escamilla, Flor Lopez, and Corina Vargas. Also in December 2004, six AAP students majoring in Computer Engineering and/or Computer Science were invited to a job site visit by Mr. Massey Villarreal, the president of Precision Task Group. Villarreal personally hosted the students and shared his own experience in beginning his business. He stressed the importance of remaining focused on one's career goals. The AAP extends its grateful appreciation to Villarreal for his hospitality and personal support of its program. (See the photo below.)

At the beginning of the spring 2005 semester, five new students were admitted to the AAP and completed the New Member Orientation. During the weekend of March 11-13, 2005, the AAP students and staff journeyed to San Antonio, Texas for the Annual Student Leadership Retreat. This yearly event is coordinated by AAP staff with the goals of increasing leadership skills and an intellectual understanding of issues affecting the Latino community. This



Mr. Massey Villarreal, President of Precision Task Group, hosting AAP students.

year 38 of the AAP students participated in the retreat.

The speakers and their presentations presented a range of diverse topics: Dr. Melissa Najera, Assistant Professor of Management, School of Business, University of Houston-Clear Lake, "Becoming an Effective Leader in the Twenty-First Century: Challenges and Barriers Confronting Future Hispanic Leaders"; Mr. A.S. Medellin, The Medellin Group, "Organize! Tools For Community and Precinct Organizing"; Mr. Carlos Guerra, Columnist, The San Antonio Express-News, "The Equitable Funding of Public Education in Texas: Implications for Chicanos and Latinos"; and Rosemary and Roberto Piña, community leaders in San Antonio, presented "Challenges and Opportunities in Our Community" and also gave a tour of the murals of the eastside of the city.

Congratulations to Program Manager, Treviño, and all the AAP students for their commitment to the goals of individual academic achievement and betterment of the greater Latino community.

AAP Student at the University of Houston



Carlos Fernandez

Those familiar with the stories of success and accomplishment of the AAP students have a difficult time choosing which student to highlight. Yet, Mr. Carlos Fernandez stands out for both his commitment to his studies as a junior in Engineering and for his commitment as a math tutor to other AAP members.

In speaking with Fernandez, an immediately noticeable trait is his soft-spoken modesty. One gets a sense of the focus and determination that have resulted in his overall GPA of 3.69 and the perfect 4.0 GPA he attained in the fall semester of 2004.

When asked who helped him get to college, Fernandez credits his entire family in Mexico, who taught him from an early age that he must go to college. However, he says that when he and his family moved to the States when he was 16 years old, he thought that it would be impossible for him to go to college in the U.S. In high school,

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Fernandez joined the J.R.O.T.C. program. In the summer prior to his graduation, Fernandez decided to opt for the Delay-Entry Program of the Marine Corps as a way to be able to attend college. When he mentioned this decision to his J.R.O.T.C. instructors, they mentioned to Fernandez that scholarships existed for Hispanic families with a first-time college applicant, Fernandez went to the counselor's office and researched the database to find scholarships to apply for while still in high school. He says, "I took the initiative. I had always had in my mind since I was little to go to college."

Fernandez did indeed find scholarships, apply for them, and received several, which enabled him to attend UH. In his second semester at UH, he was directed to the AAP by one of his professors. He applied for an AAP scholarship and received it.

Fernandez says that besides the crucial financial support, all the other program components have helped his personally. He is appreciative of the academic tutoring in diverse subjects, such as English and Math. He also credits the tutoring in the practical aspects of a student's life, such as time management.

He has become more cognizant of educational issues facing the broad Hispanic community through his exposure to such issues during the Annual AAP Leadership Retreat. He says, "When I first started college, I wasn't aware that a very low percentage of Hispanics go to college. The program has made me aware of how important it is for all of us to help our community and to encourage our young students."

This desire to help others who might not yet have had the opportunity to gain knowledge is a driving force behind his participation as a math tutor in the AAP. He says, "I like math and I like teaching. I am someone who is patient and likes to explain step-by-step. I want people to learn."

Another aspect of Fernandez' reaching out to help encourage younger Hispanic students was his participation in the "Science Extravaganza" sponsored by the Society of Mexican American Engineers and Scientists (MAES). This one-day event on April 30, 2005 was conceived as a day of encouragement to pursue higher education for middle school and high school students in under-represented minority groups. Fernandez and other members of MAES provided living proof to the younger students that they too can fulfill their dreams of a college education in the fields of science, engineering, or technology.

Fernandez is careful to acknowledge the vital emotional support he has received from his family, friends, and the APP staff and students. He explains, "I would not be where

I am today without the help from my people — family and friends — who encourage me to keep going. If it wasn't for the people who believe I can do it, I wouldn't be here. I am thankful to them all, and hopefully one day, I can do the same for others. My participation in MAES is a small way I'd like to think that I've already started."

When Fernandez speaks of his long-term goals of becoming a teacher himself, as well as taking financial care of his mother, there is no doubt in the listener's mind that he will succeed. Already he is a success and already he is reaching out to help the others coming behind him in age, thus following in the best tradition of the CMAS dream — Changing Lives Through Education, One Person At A Time.

Ms. Sanjuanita Mottu Excelling as SABE Student

Ms. Sanjuanita Mottu, a sophomore at Austin High School, began her participation in the CMAS Students Aspiring



Sanjuanita Mottu

to a Better Education (SABE) in the summer of 2004. Conversation with previous Austin seniors, like Vanessa Perez, about the benefits of the program convinced Mottu to apply.

Mottu has been a student busy at excelling for years before joining SABE. She is enthusiastic about the program, which has helped her academically and in learning skills that

are important in her continuing academic success, such as realistic time management.

A crucial ingredient in the chemistry between the students and the AAP staff is the element of trust, according to Mottu. She says, "The program is like a family. They are always there for you when you need advice. You can trust them."

Mottu participates in several sports and is a member of the National Honor Society, the Science Club, and the Community in the Schools (CIS). She particularly enjoys her work done through the Magnet Program for Teaching Professions. In this program, she and other students go to schools, such as Franklin Elementary and J.P. Anderson Elementary, to help younger students learn. This aspect of providing encouragement and practical knowledge to help

others is a meaningful and rewarding aspect to Mottu.

Mottu is the youngest of three children. When she was eight years old, her family suffered the tragic loss of her father. She says the family had to learn to help each other as much as possible through the difficulties. The family's commitment to education shines clearly in the fact that both of her older siblings have graduated from the University of Houston-Downtown campus. Mottu is emphatic in her appreciation of the financial component of assistance provided by the AAP.

Her final words are a tribute to the exceptional work done by the CMAS staff, principally Ms. Maria Cobio, through SABE, "They do so much for the students—the tutoring in academic subjects, the mentoring, the financial support. It is the best program in my school."

SABE PROGRAM UPDATE

Austin High School and Eastwood Academy

The Students Aspiring to A Better Education Program (SABE) for area high schools begins a new cohort of students every three years. Presentations are made at Austin High School by Ms. Maria Cobio, the Special Programs Counselor, to educate the students and parents about this CMAS program before the application process begins. In the cohort begun in the summer of 2004, there were 35 students accepted out of the 70 plus applications received. All of those students in the new cohort began their sophomore year in high school last September. Once accepted into the program, a student's mentoring and training begins immediately and continues throughout the entire year.

In the spring semester of 2005, the SABE cohort participated in several community service projects, including making Valentine's Day cards for homeless people.

In February, there was a workshop given by the University of Houston's Counseling and Psychological Services. This workshop presented effective study techniques including reading textbooks, retaining information, and taking study notes. Throughout the semester, tutoring services are provided to all SABE students as well as mentoring by the recent graduates of the program.

Events during the summer 2005 included PSAT/SAT courses, a SAT Math class, a writing class, and a workshop series by UH's Learning Support Services and another one by Houston Area Women's Center. There will be rewards to the students for all their hard work in the form of field trips to various Houston-area attractions, such as the Houston Holocaust Museum and Minute Maid Park.

CMAS STAFF

Maria D. Cobio, Special Programs Counselor for the SABE Program

In its drive toward increasing the success-ful completion of high school and the continuation of its members in a post-secondary education, the SABE (Students Aspiring



Maria D. Cobio

to a Better Education) Program is an enormous success. One of the important keys to its implementation is Ms. Maria D. Cobio, who has been at its helm since August of 2001 following in the talented footsteps of Ms. Rebeca Treviño.

Cobio began her work with CMAS in early 2000 as an Office Assistant II. Her performance on such important departmental

projects as the Noche Cultural Banquet and the annual conference gave her an in-depth exposure to the Center's goals and the vitally important role of donors in determining the extent of scholarships available to students. When the position with SABE became available, Cobio was encouraged to apply.

In supervising the program, Cobio's performs a variety of tasks, all of which have two goals — the completion of high school with academic and leadership skills, and enrollment in a college or university. On a typical day, Cobio's job may entail communication by mail or telephone with a student's parents, teachers, or counselors, then, the hiring and training of student mentors and tutors, and even later, she may drive to Austin High School or Eastwood Academy to hold an informational and/or motivational session with the current SABE students at that location.

In addition to duties like those above, Cobio completes pre-grant applications and also writes formal grant proposals, which are then vetted by the CMAS executive staff and the Development Office. Cobio has received funding from the Long Foundation (\$5,000 for each of

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Dr. Norma Olvera: Research Scientist and Community Leader

Dr. Norma Olvera, an associate professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance, first came to the University of Houston through the Visiting Scholars Program of CMAS in the academic year of 1997-98. Before that she was an assistant professor and research director at the Baylor College of Medicine, having obtained her Ph.D. and M.A. in Developmental Psychology from the University of Houston.



Dr. Norma Olvera

In speaking of the transition to UH, Olvera speaks of the importance of CMAS Visiting Scholars Program, “The program allowed me to move from a research-oriented focus at Baylor College to more of a teaching faculty position. I had wanted to teach in a university setting, and I also wanted to do research with Dr. Nestor Rodriguez in the Center for Immigration Research. The Visiting Scholars Program allowed me to do both. Without this program, I wouldn’t have taken the risk. Once I was a visiting scholar, the other support was very important—an office, meeting with other Latino faculty, the semester of teaching to become accustomed to a new setting.”

After her year as a visiting scholar, Olvera worked for an additional academic year with Rodriguez in the Center for Immigration Research as a research associate professor. She investigated perceived stress and coping strategies of immigrants from Mexico and Central America. This additional year allowed Olvera to find an appropriate open position at the University of Houston in 1999 in the Department of Health and Human Performance. In this department, she teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses. She is also the coordinator of the Internship Program, which places an average of 23 students per semester in internships inside and outside of the University. Olvera says that one of the most rewarding aspects of her teaching at UH is her department’s large number of undergraduate minority students. Olvera has implanted a research component in all her undergraduate courses. Through this strategy, as well as active mentoring, she hopes to increase the number of

students going to graduate school in her field.

As the long list of Olvera’s awards and peer-reviewed publications shows, she is a focused and successful research scientist in the area of obesity and physical activity in minority families. Yet, she says her most rewarding moments at UH come when she sees students achieve in an area in which they had previously felt they couldn’t succeed.

Olvera’s major academic and research interests are: socio-cultural, environmental, and psychological influences on children’s obesity and physical activity levels in minority populations; and design, implementation, and evaluation of community health-related interventions (e.g. obesity prevention) for minority populations. These research interests are reflected in her recent publications (to name a few): “Maternal Socialization of Safety Practices among Mexican American Children” in the *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology* (co-authored with T.G. Power and J. Hays); “Ethnic Differences in Social Environmental Correlates of Diet” in *Health Education Research* (co-authored with K.W. Cullen, T. Baranowski, E. Owens, and others); “Observed Maternal Strategies and Children’s Health Locus of Control in Low-income Mexican-Americans” in the *Journal of Family Psychology* (co-authored with R. Remy, T.G. Power, C. Bellamy and others).

Olvera is currently a principal investigator for two research grants: the *Review of Health Interventions for Children and Adolescents* through the Kelsey Foundation (\$6,500.00) October 2003-March 2004; and the *Correlates of Physical Activity and BMI in Hispanic and White Children* through the National Institutes of Health (\$891,000.00).

She is also currently a consultant for two other research grants: *Determinants of Breast Cancer Risk in Latina Girls* funded through the NIH National Cancer Institute

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Dr. Alice Cepeda: Visiting Scholar and Social Science Researcher

Reading the resume of this year's CMAS Visiting Scholar, Dr. Alice Cepeda, is a journey through awards, publications in refereed journals, and impressive grant research experience. Cepeda completed her B.A. in 1995 in Sociology at The University of Texas at San Antonio, where she also completed her M.S. in 1999. At that point, Cepeda left her native San Antonio to work on her Ph.D. at the City University of New York Graduate Center, which she completed in 2004.

When asked why she decided to return to Texas, and specifically why she chose to accept a position at the University of Houston, Cepeda responded, "I wanted to come back close to home. Also, Houston is an ideal place because of its diverse population and large urban feel. Houston has a large immigrant population as well as a large Mexican American immigrant population. I do research related to substance abuse and violent crime, and how they relate to public health issues. The opportunity to continue the research in Houston looking at these same issues that I have researched in border communities is important. As a sociologist, I can contribute to understanding issues of public health that are affecting our Latino community. Also, at UH there is infrastructure to support the research I am interested in doing." In continuing with her reasons for choosing the University of Houston as her choice, Cepeda emphasized the importance of being able to duplicate her research on the sex industry on the border in a large urban city in the U.S. She says, "There are a lot of Mexican immigrant males here. What about the sex industry here? There are all kinds of public health issues — HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. What about transmission?"

Cepeda functioned as the project coordinator in the years between 1997-99 for "Injecting Drug Use and High-Risk Sexual Behavior: The U.S./Mexico Border (El Paso and Ciudad Juarez)", a project funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), and the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) and for "Injecting Drug Use and High-



Dr. Alice Cepeda

Risk Sexual Behavior: The U.S./Mexico Border (Laredo and Nuevo Laredo) also funded by NIDA and UTSA. During the years between 1998-2001, Cepeda held the position of research associate for two other projects, "Sexual and Intimate Violence Among High-Risk Mexican American Females," and "Childhood Trauma, Family Stress and Depression Among Mexican American Gang Non-Injecting Heroin Users." Then, Cepeda advanced to the position of assistant to the principal investigator on two projects: "Drug Treatment

for Gang Affiliated Hispanic Adolescents" and "Proyecto SAFE: San Antonio Family Enhancement." Until 2007, Cepeda will function as the project director for a NIDA-funded study, "Hispanic Heroin Users, Transitions to Injecting and HIV" at the Office of Drug and Social Policy Research focused on risk factors associated with the transitioning from non-injecting to injecting drug use among Mexican Americans.

Not surprisingly, Cepeda was the only Mexican American female in her Ph.D. program cohort. She says, "I took it as a challenge. I purposefully wanted to get away from Texas. New York is a different environment, and there I was just one of a multi-cultural environment. Living in Texas, sometimes we take for granted being Mexican American. Up in New York, my work started to portray the lives of Mexican people in the U.S. It was important for me, my peers, and for the faculty. It gave them a sense of the Mexican American experience. For me, that was very important — to go somewhere like the East Coast and to represent South Texas Mexican Americans."

For Cepeda, it is vitally important to contribute to research that will affect policy for the Latino population. In addition, she hopes to bring her research experience to students as a way of teaching the importance and protocols of quality social science research. She says, "For students interested in pursuing a social science career, research is a fundamental basis. I can contribute by teaching students

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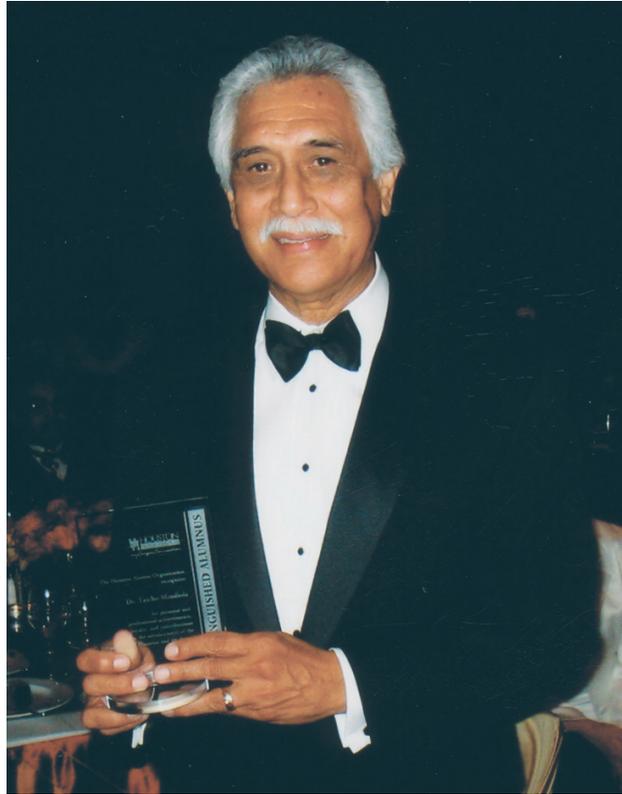
Distinguished Alumnus Award Presented to Dr. Tatcho Mindiola

Dr. Tatcho Mindiola has joined the exclusive ranks of fewer than one hundred individuals who have been chosen since 1949 by the University of Houston's Alumni Organization for the formal designation of a Distinguished Alumnus of the University of Houston.

The criteria for this prestigious award include an individual's contributions to society, his/her professional accomplishments, and the honor that their achievements have bestowed upon the larger worldwide body of UH alumni.

In accepting this honor, Mindiola looks not only to his academic career, but also to the decades of work as director of the Center for Mexican American Studies. It is during this time period that the Center has become known for achievements in its programs dealing with retention and recruitment of students, its publishing series, and its Visiting Scholar Program. One of the benchmarks of the Center's vision was the 2003 inauguration of the Excellence Endowment Committee. It is the success of the Endowment Committee's fundraising efforts that will enable future generations of Latino students, scholars, and faculty to thrive at the University of Houston, as the endowment becomes a permanent source of income.

As the Endowment Committee works toward its goal of raising five million dollars, there are few, if any, in the Latino community who would dispute the seriousness of the educational challenges facing Houston's growing Latino population. The solutions will require years of sustained efforts through successful programs, such as the Center has been implementing and funding.



Dr. Tatcho Mindiola receiving the Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Of course, it will take many members of the community uniting together to help raise the money for the Endowment Fund. For that very reason the Center has formed the 1000 Club to allow the pledging of a minimum of \$1000 to be paid over as long as twelve months. In this manner, all individuals can participate in supporting the Center's many successful recruitment and retention programs for both faculty and students, as well as the publishing series and other research efforts. The

1000 Club seeks to be a major unifying force in the Latino community as people unite to donate and help the Center in its goal of transforming lives through education — one person at a time.

In reflecting on the overall vision of the Center at this point in time, Mindiola adds, "The Endowment Fund is a significant component of our vision, which also includes a major in Mexican and Mexican American Studies, a policy-making and analysis component, and our own building with unique artwork. Once these things have been put in place, the Center will be poised for even greater accomplishment."

As Mindiola reflects upon his designation as a Distinguished Alumnus, he says, "Given our aspirations, there is a part of me that feels, perhaps, the recognition was somewhat premature. Our Endowment campaign is not completed, the Mexican and Mexican American Studies major is in draft form, and the policy center and building remain on the drawing board. However, I sincerely appreciate this honor even as I am very mindful of what remains to be done."

FACULTY UPDATES

Alvarez, Luis, Assistant Professor of History, was awarded the Enron Teaching Excellence Award.

Arbona, Consuela, Professor of Educational Psychology, had the following publications: Arbona, C. (2004). Counseling Puerto Ricans. In C. Negy (ed.), *Cross cultural psychotherapy: Toward a Critical Understanding of Diverse Clients*. Reno, Nevada: Bent Tree Press, Inc. Arbona, C. (2005). Promoting the career development and academic achievement of at-risk youth: College access programs. In S. Brown & R. Lent (Eds.), *Career development counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (525-550). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Dr. Arbona had the following grant funded: Arbona, C. & Nora, A. Predicting college attainment of Hispanic students using the National Educational Longitudinal Study 1988-2000 (NELS) database: Individual, institutional, and environmental Factors. Association for Institutional Research (AIR), \$30,000, June 2004-May 2005.

Bernal, Ivan, Professor of Chemistry, had eleven publications in 2004 in such journals as *Inorganic Chemistry*. An example of these publications is an article co-authored by Dr. Bernal, Manas K. Saha, and Fransesc Lloret, InterString Arrays of Bimetallic Assemblies with Alternative Cu²⁺-Cl-Cu²⁺ and Cu-CN-M (M=Co³⁺, Fe³⁺, Cr³⁺) Bridges: Syntheses, Crystal Structure and Magnetic Properties, *Inorg. Chem.*, 43, 1965-1979, 2004.

Hernandez, Arturo E., Associate Professor of Psychology, had the following publications: Kotz, S.A., Hoffman, J., Valentin, V.V., Dapretto, M. & Bookheimer, S.Y. The neural correlates of grammatical gender decisions in Spanish. *Neuroreport*, 15, 863-866. Hernandez, A.E., & Fiebach, C.J. (in press). The brain bases of reading late learned words: Evidence from functional MRI. *Visual Cognition*. Hernandez, A.E., Li, P., MacWhinney, B. (in press). The emergence of competing modules in Biligualism. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.

Kanellos, Nicolas, Brown Foundation Professor Chair in Spanish and Director of Arte Público Press, received the following recognition for *Hispanic Literature of the United States: A Comprehensive Reference* when it was named an "Outstanding Academic Title, 2004" by Choice, the academic book review.

Dr. Kanellos' reference book, *Hispanic Literature of the United States: A Comprehensive Reference*, (Greenwood

Press, 2004) appeared in 2004 as a Greenwood lead title. It is the culmination of some twenty years of original research, using the texts themselves recovered from the colonial period to the present. Unlike many reference works, this does not rely on secondary texts, as is the first book to deal with most of the texts and subjects covered.

Dr. Kanellos published the following paper on the Internet: "La herencia cultural mexicana en la cultura chicana," Primer Foro de Reflexión Binacional "Los mexicanos de aquí y de allá ¿Perspectivas comunes?"

Dr. Kanellos' book, *Hispanic Firsts: Three Hundred Years of Outstanding Achievement*, was excerpted and converted into a history web site: *Hispanic Heritage Plaza*. Click on the years for the historical data: <http://www.hispaniconline.com/hh/timeline>.

Dr. Kanellos presented the following papers: "The Early Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic War of Words (and Books): Exiles from Spain and Spanish America in Philadelphia, New Orleans and Tampa," Cambridge University Trust for the Book Conference on "Connected by Books: The Forging of Transatlantic Literary Communities," Feb. 26-28, English-Speaking Union, London.

"La herencia cultural mexicana en la cultura chicana," at the Primer Foro de Reflexión Binacional "Los mexicanos de aquí y de allá. ¿Perspectivas comunes?" April 28-29, Mexico City.

"Hispanic American Intellectuals Publishing in the Nineteenth-Century United States: From Political Tracts in Support of Independence to Commercial Publishing Ventures," White Rose Book History Seminar, University of York, England, June 2.

Dr. Kanellos presented the following invited lectures: "Reclaiming the Hispanic Contribution to American History and Identity," President's Lecture Series, Wharton Junior College, Sept. 23. Dr. Kanellos also made the following presentations: Power Point Presentation to Plenary: "An Update and Plans for the Future of Recovery," Eighth Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage Conference, University of New Mexico, Nov. 5, and participated as a panelist in "Pioneering Latino Literature in the 1960s and 1970s: An Informal Discussion," MELUS Conference, University of Texas-San Antonio, March 12.

Longoria, Rafael, Professor of Architecture, is serving as the national president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.

FACULTY UPDATES *continued*

Mindiola, Tatcho, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Mexican American Studies, was selected by the Center for the Healing of Racism to receive the 2005 Ally Award. The award is presented to an individual who has demonstrated through his/her professional, social, community efforts to bring recognition and understanding to the pervasive problem of racism in our worlds. The award recognition was in honor of Dr. Mindiola's efforts to increase diversity within the larger Houston community with his book, "Black/Brown Relationships."

Dr. Mindiola had the following article published: Chicano studies: on the margin or part of the academy? *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, Vol. 18, No. 2, March-April 2005, 235-242.

Dr. Mindiola was awarded the designation of a "Distinguished Alumnus" of the University of Houston by the University of Houston's Alumni Organization in February 2005. Please see the story on page 10.

Nora, Amaury, Professor and Associate Dean for Research, College of Education, received the following Honors and Awards: Named as Senior Scholar by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), 2005. Nominated for the position of Vice-Chair of the Scientific Committee for Europe and North America, Scientific Committees of the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge, 2004.

Dr. Nora had the following journal articles accepted in refereed publications: *Ruban, L.M., Nora, A., & Reis, S.M. Pre-college scholastic factors and self-regulatory variables impacting the academic status of low- and high-achieving undergraduate students. *The Journal of Secondary Gifted Education*.

Dr. Nora had the following peer-reviewed book chapters accepted in refereed publications: Nora, A., Barlow, L., & Crisp, G. The current status of undergraduate Latina/os in four-year colleges and universities. In J. Castellanos & A. Gloria's (Eds.), *Journey to a Ph.D.: The Latina/o experience in higher education*. Stylus Publishing.

Nora, A., Barlow, L., & Crisp, G. (Accepted for publication). Student adjustment, achievement and persistence past the first year in college. In A. Siedman's (Ed.), *The undergraduate experience*.

Dr. Nora made the following professional presentations: Rogers, J., Monteiro, F.M., & Nora, A. "Mentoring for Medical Faculty Development: A Validation Study." Accepted for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.

Dr. Nora continues as editor of *The Review of Higher Education* and as a Member of Editorial Board, *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, and a Member of Editorial Board, *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*.

Dr. Nora received a Grant Award from the Association for Institutional Research, data analysis of NCES database on Hispanic students (\$30,000), AIR/NCES Grant Project (2004-2005).

Olvera, Norma was promoted to Associate Professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance, effective September 1, 2005.

Olivas, Michael, Professor and Director of the Institute for Higher Education Law and Governance, and William B. Bates Distinguished Chair in Law, published the following articles:

Brown and the Desegregative Ideal: Location, Race, and College Attendance Policies, *Cornell Law Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (January 2005) 390-417.

Law School Admissions After Grutter: An Essay on Student Bodies and Pipeline Theory, *Journal of Legal Education*, Vol. 55, (2005) 1-13.

The War on Terrorism Touches the Ivory Tower - College and Universities After September 11: An Introduction, *Journal of College and University Law*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2004) 233-238.

IIRIRA, The DREAM Act, and Undocumented College Student Residency, 30, *Journal of College and University Law*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (2004) 435-464.

State College Savings and Prepaid Tuition Plans: A Reappraisal and Review, *Journal of Law and Education*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (October, 2003), 475-514.

Quintero, Sam, Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Optometry, received the Educator of the Year Award from the Texas Optometric Association.

Reyes, Augustina, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Cultural Studies and Director of the Urban Principals Center, served as an expert witness in the fall of 2004 for the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund in the Texas School Finance Case, *West Orange-Cove Consolidated I.S.D. v. Alanis*, 107 S.W.3d 558, 46 Tex. S. Ct. J. 724 (2003). This spring the research from that testimony will be published in an article, "Texas Compensatory Education," for the *Education Finance Journal*. The Harvard Graduate School of Education Alumni of Color presented Dr. Reyes with the HGSE Alumni of Color Award for 2005.

Rodriguez, Nestor, Professor and Chair, Sociology Department, co-edited a book with Cecilia Menjivar, entitled "When States Kill: Latin American, the U.S., and Technologies of Terror," ed. Cecilia Menjivar and N. Rodriguez, July 2005, University of Texas Press.

Valdez, Avelardo, Professor, Graduate School of Social Work, and Director of the Office of Drug and Social Policy Research, had the following articles published or accepted for publication. Petersen, R. and Valdez, A. (2005) Using Snowball Based Methods in Hidden Populations to Generate a Randomized Community Sample of Gang Affiliated Adolescents, *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 3(2): 151-167. Valdez, A., Kaplan, C.D., and Cepeda, A. (Forthcoming). The Drugs-Violence Nexus among Mexican American Gang Members. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*.

Valdez, A., Kaplan, C.D., Cepeda, A. and Mata, A.G. (Forthcoming). Precocious Transitions and Substance Use Patterns among Mexican American Gang Members: A Correlation Analysis. *Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology*. Valdez, A., Mikow, J. and Cepeda, A. (Forthcoming). The Role of Stress, Family Coping, Ethnic Identity and Mother-Daughter Relationships on Substance Use among Gang Affiliated Hispanic Females. *Journal of Social Work Addictions*. Valdez, A. (Forthcoming). The Consequences of a Changing Heroin Market on Mexican American Youth Gangs. *Journal of Drug Issues*. Valdez, A. and Flores, R. (Forthcoming) Situational Analysis of Intimate Partner Violence among Gang Affiliated Mexican American Females. *Sociological Focus*.

KUDOS

Congratulations to the following Academic Achievers Program students who made the Honor Roll at the end of the fall 2004 semester:

Elizabeth Aleman, Yolanda Cruz, Carlos Fernandez, Juan Garcia, Carla Gonzalez, Raymundo Mora, Tania Puente, Eduardo Robles, Cindy Villarreal, and Maria Zamarripa.

Congratulations to **Carlos Fernandez**, who was sponsored to attend the **Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers National Technical and Career Conference** in Dallas, Texas on January 5-9, 2005. Mr. Fernandez majors in Electrical Engineering.

Congratulations to **Alfred Sanchez**, who has been admitted to the UH College of Optometry for the fall 2005 semester. Mr. Sanchez graduated *cum laude* in 2004 with a major in Biology and a minor in Chemistry as a member of the Academic Achievers Program.

The Spring Lecture Series

In furthering its goal of continuing to educate the broader community about the experience of Mexican Americans and Latinos in the U.S., the CMAS Lecture Series sponsored two presentations this spring. The first was a lecture by Dr. Monica Perales entitled, "Smelertown, Texas: Photography, Gender and the Making of a Mexican American Working Community" on March 31, 2005 at the UH Hilton. The lecture presented an analysis of the conceptual space occupied by gender-based groups during a defined time period within the boundaries of Smelertown, Texas. The second was the screening of a movie titled "Border Bandits" followed by a presentation by Dr. Jose Angel Gutierrez at the UH College of Architecture. The film, produced by Kirby Warnock, presented a view of the circumstances in 1915 South Texas related to a series of violent incidents between Mexican Americans and the Texas Rangers. Mr. Kirby Warnock was present for discussion of his film. Dr. Gutierrez focused on the role of the Texas Rangers in the 1960's. Both of these events were well-attended and CMAS encourages attendance by all interested members of the community.

BANK OF AMERICA *continued from page 1*

have a shared vision of implementing innovative ideas and programs to help individuals realize their dreams."

The bank's commitment to helping CMAS continue to offer scholarships, mentoring and tutoring, and leadership development to Hispanic students in high school and at the university through the AAP is a vitally important demonstration of the bank's confidence in the effectiveness of the CMAS program. This effectiveness has been confirmed by an outside audit showing that AAP students make better grades than their SAT scores would predict, and that they graduate sooner and with a greater certainty than the general UH student population.

The Center offers a heartfelt "Thank You" to the Bank of America.

FRAGA *continued from page 3*

There was a tremendous impact seeing my mother and Mrs. (Ninfa) Lorenzo trying to help others who had even less than us." In addition, Fraga acknowledges his own brother, Felix, who spent years as a dedicated social worker constantly concerned with the underserved in the community. "I was very much influenced by my brother," says Fraga.

Fraga became involved with CMAS through his long-standing friendship with Dr. Tatcho Mindiola, its director. This involvement began many years ago. "At first, I began by buying a table at the annual banquet, but as I grew more and more impressed by the kids in the program, my participation increased." Fraga's commitment to the CMAS mission is paramount in his decision to become a member of the Excellence Endowment/Advisory Committee. In fact, Fraga encourages all who can begin to give to CMAS to do so — in whatever amount. He says, "What keeps many people away from philanthropy is that they feel they have to give large amounts." The remedy? "Develop a mind-set that says, 'This is good.' All donors must see the value of what they are giving. I encourage young, aspiring professionals to put philanthropy in their lives. Having the attitude that says, 'this is good' is vitally important."

The list of civic organizations that have benefited from Fraga's volunteer time as a board member is lengthy. It includes such organizations as the Metropolitan YMCA Board, the Houston Proud Board, the Sam Houston Area Boy Scouts Board, the Strake Foundation Board, the Houston Hispanic Forum Board, the Harris County Child Protective Services, the St. Thomas University Board of Trustees, and many others. Clearly, Fraga has been recognized throughout Houston and beyond for his expertise and leadership. In fact, it is this tie to leadership and its development that forms yet another strong parallel interest between CMAS and Fraga. He says, "I am deeply concerned about the void in leadership in the Hispanic community. Some of us who have been around should step up and focus on how we are going to develop leaders for the future. The schools can only do so much. I believe leadership can be taught. We need to teach it and that is part of why Dr. Mindiola's program is so important. I really believe that the CMAS program is probably the program that will provide the leaders we will need for our community in the future."

When asked what advice he would like to give current students, Fraga shared the following: "Broaden your horizons. Don't be satisfied with just finding a job or going home to your T.V. Start participating in public service — in

an elected office, serving in your own community through boards and commissions. Add meaning to life by giving and developing a community of people to help.”

All of us come away from looking at Fraga’s accomplishments with a feeling of awe — not only because of his innovative leadership of his business, but also because of his decades of dedicated hard work to the ideals of giving and sharing he learned from his family.

MAYOR VILLARIGOSA *continued from page 4*

After term limits forced him out of the legislature, he ran for Mayor of Los Angeles and lost to James Hahn. In 2003, he won a seat on the city council and in May of this year, he again ran for Mayor and won.

Since his election, Villaraigosa has become a national symbol of Latino voting power coming of age but the issues he faces as Mayor of Los Angeles are daunting. He will need all of his skills and experience to be successful within this diverse political landscape. The challenge is for Villaraigosa to lead in a manner that represents the interests of all racial and ethnic groups. How well he does will provide important political lessons in governance for minority elected officials across the nation. We wish Villaraigosa the best as he represents the aspirations of all Latinos.

COBIO *continued from page 7*

three years) and the Simmons Foundation (two \$15,000 grants) based upon her grant proposals.

When asked which part of her job she enjoys the most, Cobio responded, “interaction with the students.” She continued, “I really like having the opportunity to give to these students something that I didn’t have myself — the opportunity to prepare for the future. In addition, the opportunity to learn from them is so important to me — learning about their struggles and what they do to overcome these — it helps me to grow myself.”

Being around the CMAS executive staff has been an inspiring experience for Cobio, who grew up in Pharr, Texas and only eight years ago moved to Houston from Edinburg with her family. She says, “I try to learn as much as I can from my role models — Dr. Mindiola, Mr. Cano, Helen Meza, Rebeca Treviño. These people I work for have motivated me to continue with my education. I try to motivate the students in the same way.”

Cobio reminds all of us that in addition to academic and leadership training, it is tremendously important for challenge and trust to be in the lives of these young students. She says, “There are so many negatives for young Hispanic

students. It’s important to trust them and for them to trust themselves. By completing Community Service projects as a part of our program, the students learn to trust themselves by accomplishing a goal. That reassurance helps them so much. Also, I really do believe in the potential of each student and I communicate that to them at every opportunity.”

OLVERA *continued from page 8*

(\$622,092.00), July 2004-June 2009 with Dr. Christine McCollum as the Principal Investigator; and *Soccer to Prevent Colon Cancer in Hispanic Boys*, funded through the NIH National Cancer Institute (\$200,000.00) with Dr. Russell Jago as the Principal Investigator.

One of Olvera’s most recent awards is the Dorothy Caram Commitment to Leadership Award given by the United Way. The criteria for this award centers around a sustained record of leadership in the community. For many years, Olvera has worked to better life for Hispanics by giving workshops for immigrant families. In addition to this important work, Olvera has also mentored a college student as part of the “Latinas on the Rise Mentorship Program” sponsored by State Representative Jessica Farrar.

Olvera says, “I am very thankful for CMAS. It gave me the opportunity to make the transition from Baylor to UH. I enjoy contact with the students and teaching classes that involve issues that are important to the field.”

CEPEDA *continued from page 9*

how to take the steps from conceptualizing a problem to actually measuring the problem and finding solutions or outcomes. From my past experience, students are exposed to this in the classroom, but the hands-on experience is invaluable. There are undergraduate social science students who don’t know the difference between social science research and descriptive research. I want to contribute to producing high quality students when it comes to conducting social science research. That’s just a little grain I can contribute to the mission of CMAS.”

After her year as a CMAS Visiting Scholar, Cepeda will assume a tenure track position in the department of Sociology. One of the most important goals of the Visiting Scholar Program is to attract scholars who may consider the possibility of continuing their academic careers at the University of Houston. With Cepeda, the UH community of researchers and role models for Hispanic students will become even richer.

Transforming Lives through Education... One Person At A Time

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