



VOLUME 3
ISSUE 3
SPRING
2006

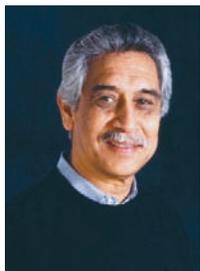
CENTER FOR MEXICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Noticias



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
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FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dr. Tatcho Mindiola

Graduate Fellows Research

This issue of *Noticias* features articles by CMAS Graduate Fellows. The purpose of the CMAS Graduate Fellowship program is to help develop the next generation of Mexican American and Hispanic intellectuals who will continue to discover and disseminate knowledge about our community. Although this current generation of intellectuals has produced an impressive array of scholarship, literature, and art, there is much more to be accomplished. We must ensure that students, like those featured here and who are interested in becoming professors, writers, and artists, receive encouragement and, more importantly, financial support. To date, CMAS has awarded twenty-six fellowships to students. Of these, twelve have completed their degrees, and seven, like those highlighted in this issue, are either still taking courses or conducting research. Our hope is that by focusing on our graduate fellows that our supporters will not only be informed but will also be motivated to help us

continue to develop the future intellectuals of our community.

Juan Galvan is pursuing a Ph.D. in history and his article discusses his dissertation research that deals with Niño Fidencio, the popular folk healer and saint. Nino Fidencio died in 1938 but he still remains a powerful cult figure to Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Northern Mexico and South Texas, respectively. Ana Villegas is studying for her Master's degree in Social Work and has aspirations to become an attorney. Her research concerns the very serious issue of obesity among Mexican Americans and the role that culture may play in fostering behavior that leads to being overweight. Sonia Hernandez is a Ph.D. student in history and is currently writing her dissertation on the effects of modernization in Mexico during the late nineteenth century on gender and family relations. She describes how modernization led to dislocations and how families took matters into their own hands in order to cope with the changes. Jesus Benitez is a Master's student in photo-

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Endowment Board Member Javier Loya and His Multi-Faceted Success

Three years ago Enrique Javier Loya, the Chairman and CEO of Houston-based CHOICE! Energy, began serving on the CMAS Excellence Endowment/Advisory Board. Loya was drawn toward serving on the Board for many reasons, including his own deep commitment to the importance of education, and his and his wife, Lucinda's commitment to giving back to the community.

The importance of education was always stressed in the Loya family as he and his six siblings grew up. Loya's parents are from Juarez, but

Loya is a first-generation Mexican-American born in El Paso, Texas. When the family gathered to eat dinner, the children were encouraged to discuss what they had learned in school that day. Loya says, "It wasn't an issue of *would* I go to college, it was *where* would I go to college." All of Loya's siblings have graduated from college and have successful careers marked by achievement and professional accomplishment.

Loya says that by sixth grade he had already perceived that the key to achieving success in

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E. Javier Loya

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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.

Graduate Fellows Research

PHOTOGRAPHING HOUSTON'S MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

by Jesus "Chuy" Benitez, CMAS Graduate Fellow, 2005-07

In comparison to other Mexican American communities in the Southwest, Houston's Mexican American community is relatively young. There is not an established community that has existed for multiple generations. For instance, cities south and west of San Antonio were established by Spanish and Mexican governments and have a Hispanic influence that goes back to the Conquistadors. In contrast, Anglo-Americans established Houston and its Mexican popula-



Jesus Benitez

tion became clearly established when a notable number of Mexicans fled to Houston during the Mexican Revolution of 1910. In the past two decades, Houston has witnessed another influx of Mexican citizens who have made Mexican Americans the largest community in Houston.

My interest is in the entirety of Houston's Mexican American community and, in particular, the positive relationship that has taken place between the older communities of Mexican Americans and the newer citizens. I am also fascinated by the rejuvenation of Mexican traditions that has taken place in the past few years. In my documentary project I will capture the following elements: the cultural rejuvenation that has and is taking place in Houston, the various local groups who are promoting the Mexican traditions and culture of Houston, the daily life within the Mexican community, and newly-established customs in Houston arising from older traditions merging with Houston's sprawling urban environment.

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Charros at Fiestas Patrias, 2005

Photographer: Jesus Benitez



Matachines, All Saints Catholic Church, 2005

Photographer: Jesus Benitez

Graduate Fellows Research *continued from page 3*



Banderos, 2005

Photographer: Jesus Benitez

My research started with guided tours through Houston's Second and Sixth Wards by UH Professor Delilah Montoya. I also learned about the Mexican American community's history from texts previously written and published by CMAS about the community. One of the key texts I use as a resource is *Ethnicity in the Sunbelt*. I have also contacted several local cultural groups who have helped me get a better sense of the pulse of the Mexican neighborhoods and are giving me an insider's perspective of the city. One of my goals for this semester is to photograph these cultural groups and show how they are influencing and preserving Mexican culture.

I am using digital photography to better capture and create panoramic images as my final products. I feel the panoramic format is appropriate for the Mexican community as it mimics the longer form of mural art. It also grants the ability for close, detailed photography that captures both human subject matter while showing the greater surroundings of each subject and situation.

Even after all my research, a greater knowledge of the community exists within the large number of CMAS friends and alumni, and I would like to use this chance to ask the greater CMAS community for their help in the completion of my project. I believe that my research and connections have thus far been successful, but with a project whose goal is inclusiveness of all components within Houston's Mexican American community, it would be beneficial to have new connections, new people, new topics, and new suggestions. Thank you in advance for your help. Please contact me at chuybenitez@gmail.com or at 832-259-0816.

NORTEÑOS IN A TRANSITIONAL BORDERLAND

by Sonia Hernandez, CMAS Graduate Fellow 2001-03

As a Mexican American from the Rio Grande Valley currently living in New England, I have had to adjust and adapt to a different environment. As I deal with varieties of people living in the Boston area, a dramatically different climate, and a lack of things Mexican (especially food and music) I have come to better understand how we as a people deal with change.



Sonia Hernandez

As I reflect on my own ways of coping with transitions—life in the East Coast, writing a dissertation, and becoming a professional historian—I have gained new insights about my own dissertation subjects, the men and women of the Mexican Northeast (a region defined as the ports of Tampico and Matamoros, Monterrey as an industrial nucleus, and the border crossings at Reynosa and Laredo) and how they coped with a dramatic societal transition—the transition to industrialization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century a strategic alliance developed between a pro-capitalist Mexican government desperate to “modernize” the country and ambi-

tious foreign industrialists, including Americans, British, Spanish, and Irish. Inspired by European and American ideas of modernity and progress, national, regional, and local elites sought to transform Mexico through industrial development. The technological know-how and required capital could be imported from “more advanced” countries to convert Mexico into a modern nation. The solution to Mexico’s economic and social problems, according to national and regional elites was unquestionably industrial development.

Yet for the people of the Mexican Northeast, the dynamics of change in the region between 1880 and 1940 profoundly altered labor, gender, and family relations. Changes in the organization of production, increased migration from the countryside to urban sectors, and a growing concentration of wealth in a few hands (principally foreign), created a new environment for *norteños*. However, men and women found ways to continuously voice their demands to improve their socio-economic positions. Through the use of pre-industrial cultural mechanisms (including *amparos*, formal petitions for aid *protestas* or *quejas*, and through ideas of *cooperativismo*), and finally by circumventing gender and class restrictions, men and women not only coped with change but demonstrated that they too had a voice in the industrial project.

The practice of officially petitioning (in writing or verbally) local, state, and national heads of states derives from a long tradition of an awareness of available means through which people can voice demands to their representatives. The use of cultural practices, evident in a wide variety of archival documents, points to how more often than not change was handled through forms of continuity. The archival research provided the necessary data to recreate a society in transition. This research was conducted in various collections in *Archivo General de la Nación* including the *Secretaría de Gobernación*, *Departamento de Trabajo*, and personal papers of governors as well as records from the state and municipal archives of Nuevo León and Tamaulipas which consists of the sub-archives of *Trabajo*, *Sindicatos*, *Junta Local de Conciliación y Arbitraje*, *Departamento de Fomento*. Moreover, documents uncovered that within the context of community, gendered and class solidarity differences existed. For example, as women dealt with the continuation of a sexual division of labor in the cigar/cigarette industry, they found ways to individually and collectively negotiate workplace conditions while claiming a space in industrial society.

However, *cigarreras* (considered part of the urban working class) could move up in the ranks if they had a certain number of years providing their services and if management considered them *trabajadoras de confianza* or trustworthy employees. In fact, these trustworthy employees had more in common with management (predominantly male) than with other *obreras*, often siding with management in labor conflicts. Thus, despite cases of gender solidarity and the persistent gender restrictions found in many industries, the possibility of transgressing the boundaries through ‘good’ work and years of service became a reality for many. At the same time, women who became *trabajadoras de confianza* and mingled with management on a daily basis softened the border between class groups.

As I find ways to cope with my own transitions including the dissertation-writing phase, I have realized that what is at the forefront of historical processes is human action. It is the way in which this human action intersects, shapes, and defines those moments in history that are truly watershed moments. Indeed a turning point for *norteños*, the transition to industrialization profoundly altered labor relations and provided yet another space in which ideas of gender and class could be expressed and challenged.

THE CULT OF NIÑO FIDENCIO

by Juan Galvan, CMAS Graduate Fellow, 2004-06

My dissertation project explores elements of popular Catholicism in the north-eastern Mexico and South Texas cult of Niño Fidencio. The study contributes to the scholarship in transnational studies and the borderlands by tracing continuous cultural practices across time and national spaces in Mexico and the United States.



Juan Galvan

By offering an alternative source of healing, Niño Fidencio became a powerful folk saint sought not only by the Mexican folk but also by the national elites, and even the President of Mexico himself. Within this context, folk Catholicism is different from orthodox Catholicism in the centrality of healings, penance, and the miraculous presence of the saints in the daily lives of their devotees.

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Niño Fidencio

José de Jesús Fidencio Constantino Síntora was born in the Rancho de las Cuevas, municipality of Iramuco, Guanajuato, on the 13th of November of 1898. Early in life he showed a preference for religious activities in local parishes. During the Mexican Revolution, Fidencio migrated to Yucatán where he worked in the *henequén* industry.

By the early 1920s he moved to the Hacienda of Espinazo, municipality of Mina, Nuevo León, where he soon became a famous healer. In this region with a weak presence by the Catholic Church and struck with smallpox and cholera epidemics, Fidencio offered hope and healing. By 1928 he had a following of about 10,000 people and was sought as a divine healer not only by the poorest of the poor but also by the elite as represented by the president of Mexico, General Plutarco Elías Calles. Because of his popularity, Fidencio necessarily took away precious clients from both religious and medical elites, presenting a threat to civil, health, and ecclesiastical authorities who unsuccessfully tried to destroy him. By the time he passed away on the 19th of October of 1938, many worshipped him as the reincarnation of Jesus Christ, and after his death he is believed to descend upon the bodies of his mediums and to heal through them. Today, the cult of Niño Fidencio extends throughout Mexico and among the Mexican American communities in the United States.

After his death, Fidencio's following initially grew smaller. Many expected Fidencio's influence to fade with his death. Instead, his followers grew and he came to be venerated as a saint among many Mexican and Mexican Americans. By the early 1990s his followers were clearly divided into three camps: the Monterrey group, the Iglesia Fidencista Cristiana in Espinazo, and the South Texas group based in the McAllen area. In addition, important Fidencista centers exist in San Antonio and Austin, where Fidencismo continues to grow in all of these groups.

Fidencistas identify themselves as orthodox Catholics, but nevertheless gather formally and informally around altars dedicated to the saint. The Catholic Church discourages the worship of Fidencio while refraining from condemning it, since that would alienate many followers. As in the late 1920s, Fidencistas are still primarily the

poorest of the poor in search of healing after exhausting other available resources.

Today, his cult combines Christian and non-Christian elements. In the city of Monterrey, Fidencista centers exist mostly in the shantytowns, where places of worship often include the worship of other historical figures such as Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Among Mexican Americans, the worship of Fidencio is important especially in South Texas, but it has spread among the Mexican American communities of the United States.

CULTURAL IDENTITY IN SOUTH TEXAS

by Trini Gonzales, CMAS Graduate Fellow, 2000–02

My dissertation examines three distinct ethnic Mexican identities as found in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (the Texas counties of Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy) during the last phase of United States conquest from 1900 to 1930. This research provides one explanation for understanding today's internal ethnic Mexican divi-



Trini Gonzales

sions between United States citizens and non-citizens. The three identities under examination include México Texanos, Mexicanos, and México Americanos. All shared a common "Mexican" culture rooted in Spanish and Indígena traditions. While some scholars currently use labels such as Tejano, Mexican American and Mexican, I prefer to use the labels that the ethnic Mexican community utilized during the early part of the twentieth century.

México Texanos, descendants of the Spanish/Mexican/Indígena settlers, chose to continue to live on the United States side of the border after the War of Aggression of 1846 (also known as the Mexican American war). The México Texanos ambivalently accepted United States citizenship while incorporating limited United States ethnic cultural forms to a Mexican cultural core. They continued to view themselves and the land they lived on as belonging to Mexico, but learned to live under United States occupation. México Texanos maintained a strong Mexican nationalism and their ambivalence toward the United States is best exemplified through their lack of support or outright evasion of joining the United States military during times of war from 1850 to World War I. On the other hand,

México Texanos readily supported the Mexican government with finances and men during its fight against the French occupation of the 1860s (e.g., Ignacio Zaragoza, hero of Cinco de Mayo) to supporting different factions that fought in the Mexican Revolution.

Mexicanos were immigrants to the United States and they maintained a Mexican cultural core through celebrating Mexican holidays, music, and literature, along with an intention of returning to Mexico. They also intermingled easily among México Texanos. México Americanos were México Texanos that changed their identity to one that emphasized United States citizenship and patriotism during the 1920s. They maintained a Mexican cultural core but sought to be bilingual and bicultural, and founded the League of United Latin American Citizens in 1929. Hence, México Americanos considered themselves México Texanos but because of their experiences, particularly serving in World War I, they decided to change their identity. Both México Texanos and Mexicanos harmoniously co-existed in the Lower Rio Grande Valley from 1900 to 1920 with slight differences based on which side of the border they had grown up

The railroad's arrival in 1904 began the final phase of United States conquest of the area when a dramatic migration of white farmers entered the Lower Rio Grande Valley, taking political and economic control of the area. The need for cheap farm labor increasingly pushed ethnic Mexicans into the bottom rungs of society. In response to the last phase of United States conquest with its harsh treatment of ethnic Mexicans, both México Texanos and Mexicanos revolted in 1915 (Plan de San Diego) against the United States government. Ethnic Mexican insurgents fought over seventy battles against local, state and federal forces.

Despite the events surrounding the failed México Texano Revolt of 1915, a limited number of México Texanos served in World War I. However, when these veterans returned to the Lower Rio Grande Valley after the war they were greeted with continued racism and segregation even when they wore their uniforms. With the realization that armed resistance was no longer an option to address civil rights violations, these México Texanos began to advocate for their rights based on the notion that they were patriotic United States citizens. As a result they began to call themselves México Americanos to emphasize they were "American." They also began to view the Lower Rio Grande Valley as an American place and no longer as Mexican land lost in an illegal war. LULAC's formation in

1929 represented the México Americano efforts that began in the 1920s and signaled an important shift for internal ethnic Mexican relations that we recognize today.

México Americanos change of identity and their arguments for civil rights fractured internal ethnic Mexican relations by dividing the community along citizenship lines. Prior to the 1920s México Texanos and Mexicanos, while quite aware that they were different because of their distinct experience were nonetheless united in their sense of being Mexicans. However, México Americanos came to view themselves as patriotic Americans who accepted El Río Grande/Río Bravo as a true boundary and this split the community apart. Thus, my dissertation is an examination of ethnic Mexican identities during the last phases of United States conquest. It was that conquest that came to divide the ethnic Mexican community between those who came to consider themselves American and those that considered themselves Mexican. In bringing this history to a wider audience I hope that as a community we can gaze back into the past and break a pattern of division that continues to exist.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS

by Ana Villegas, CMAS Graduate Fellow 2004-06

The purpose of my research is to look at the data available about child obesity and how the Hispanic culture may be a contributing factor in this health issue.

According to research, 65% of adults in the U.S. in 2001 were either overweight or obese, which caused the nation an estimated \$117 billion in health-related problems.

Research has also found that being of Hispanic origin was a good predictor of being overweight. In this same study, the prevalence of Hispanic girls having a greater risk than non-Hispanic girls for being overweight was seen as being a culturally defined influence.

The Hispanic population, more specifically Mexican Americans, has the highest prevalence of obesity in the U.S. Unfortunately, children are becoming a larger percentage of the obese population. The number of Hispanic children, ages 4–12, who are overweight has increased more than



Ana Villegas

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Sam Quintero: Scientist and Educator



Sam Quintero, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Optometry

Looking at Sam Quintero's professional accomplishments, honors, awards, and extensive publication history in the field of Optometry, it's hard to believe that it all started with a little book falling on his foot. Here's the story.

As a young student, Quintero had a natural affinity for math and science. As he progressed through high school, and most of his male friends were joining the Army, Quintero felt that there had to be other alternatives, even though he had already been told by a school counselor, "there's no future for you in college." Quintero went to his school library and began researching professions that would use his skills in math and science. As he researched, a little book fell down off the shelf onto his foot. It was a book on the profession of optometry. After reading the book, Quintero gained further knowledge by talking with a practicing optometrist in downtown Houston. At this point, Quintero was convinced. By the time he reached UH, he knew which classes he had to take and he put into motion his plan for taking those classes.

When Quintero was ready to graduate with his four-year degree and apply for graduate school in optometry, the Vietnam War was in progress. Consequently, the number of available seats for incoming optometry students was small. Competition for the 69 seats was fierce among the over three hundred applicants, but Quintero gained admission. This is how Quintero describes his experience of optometry school, "It was extremely competitive. It was really survival of the fittest. Fortunately, we had extremely interested faculty who brought the class members together so we helped each other out."

Quintero never wavered in his resolve to practice optometry. He says, "Back then optometry school was six years—if you did it straight through. But I knew what I wanted to do, and I took my courses one after the other. I actually had fun in optometry school. There was a lot of work and while the work was hard, it was not that difficult."

After graduation, Quintero was hired as an instructor at UH. In these early years of his career, Quintero spent

most of his time teaching. Even though Quintero has always loved teaching, he became interested in developing innovative processes whereby the student could self-teach. Thus, Quintero introduced the use of video and slide presentations for processes that students could learn and memorize on their own. Then, Quintero was promoted to assistant professor in 1975. At this point, what was required within the greater institution of UH was

an emphasis on publications. Consequently, Quintero presented at conferences within his chosen field and had the opportunity to introduce other colleagues to the innovations he had already introduced at UH College of Optometry. It was during this time that Quintero wrote several manuals used in the Clinical Diagnostic Methods Laboratories taught at the College of Optometry at UH. With the promotion to Associate Profession in 1982, there was an increase in the emphasis on scholarship in publications and research. Quintero says that his philosophy is that research is a sub-set of scholarship. In fact, he and other colleagues have defined a set of activities, i.e. applied research in areas pertaining to the contact lens, that can be defined as scholarship. In 2004 Quintero was named as the chair of the Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Optometry.

As he talks about his role as an educator during the past 33 years, Quintero re-affirms that this part of his career has been and continues to be "tremendously important" to him. A review of the number and range of courses taught by him through the years reveals his commitment to his students and his profession. A tribute to his professional effectiveness as a teacher was the award given to him in February 2005 from the Texas Optometric Association as "Educator of the Year." Quintero was thrilled at the award ceremony to see that everyone in the audience or on the dais with him was a former student. One of the comments from a former student was characteristic of many such comments, "You were tough. But because you pounded it into me, when I do it now, I do it right."

Quintero has also served as a consultant to such organizations as the Texas Board of Examiners in Optometry, the National Board of Examiners in Optometry, the Public Information Committee of the Texas Optometric Association, and to organizations and universities in Bogota, Columbia. When he has functioned as an exam consultant to such organizations, Quintero has brought his emphasis on clinical applicability to bear on those sections he has commented on. He says that the imprint he has left with these organizations is his belief that exam questions should have a direct bearing on the knowledge necessary for serving patients.

Quintero is a member of both statewide and national organizations in his profession ranging from the Texas Optometric Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Harris County Optometric Society, the American Optometric Association, and the Texas Association of College Teachers. As an educator and as a member of his profession, Quintero deeply believes in the need for participation in those professional organizations that can lobby issues affecting their members. During his time with the American Academy of Optometry, Quintero went from a minor volunteer role to heading a volunteer committee that organized and ran the national convention. For this outstanding work, he received the Eminent Service Award in December of 1998. At UH, Quintero has served as Chair of the Latino Faculty Council and has been closely working with CMAS and the Council for many years to recruit Latino faculty.

Beginning in 1974 Quintero's list of publications covers a wide range of journals in his field, such as the *Journal of the American Optometric Association*, *Journal of the Texas Optometric Association*, *Journal of Optometric Education*, *Optometry and Vision Science*, and the *American Journal of Optometry and Physiological Optics*.

Clearly, that little book falling on the young high school student Sam Quintero's foot was a blessing. His deep and unwavering commitment to excelling in all aspects of his chosen profession has brought professional recognition both to himself and to UH, and his passion for teaching has inspired and benefited his students for over three decades.



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

College of Optometry

Graduate Fellows Research

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120% from 1986 to 1998.

The factors believed to contribute to child obesity are many, with diet and lack of exercise being the most prevalent. However, to date, there is little data available about the role of Hispanic culture in obesity among children. In general, it is believed that a permissive environment with few constraints on food intake and few requirements for physical activity are at work.

While some researchers have examined activities as a source of obesity, others have examined the effects of race, socioeconomic status, and health insurance status. Research comparing White, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific Islander youth found that Hispanics had the highest rate of uninsurance, parental education less than 12 years, and household income of less than 125% of federal poverty level.

It can be assumed that dietary and nutritional factors along with physical activity can be strong determinants to weight status. However, my research is focused on the effects that the Hispanic culture may have on obesity in children. It is my hope that further investigation will help us understand why Hispanics are the fastest growing obese population in the United States.

From the Director

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graphy. His interest is in capturing through photography the history of Mexican Americans in Houston, especially the relationship between Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants, and how the presence of immigrants here is keeping Mexican traditions alive. In order to illustrate his work, we are printing three of his photographs. Trinidad Gonzales is also a Ph.D. student in history and likewise is writing his dissertation. His research concentrates on Mexicanos in the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas and how their identity was affected by the U.S.-Mexico War of 1848. He finds that there were at least three distinct identities, México Texanos, Mexicanos and México Americanos. Gonzales states that he uses these terms because his research has found that they were the identifiers that the community used.

We feel you will be inspired by these graduate students' research projects and their own commitment to gaining insight into the varied complexities of our community.

CMAS STAFF

Paloma Flores: Inspired and An Inspiration

When Paloma Flores heard about the Academic Achievers Program at CMAS, she was thrilled to learn about a program supporting Hispanic students with tutoring and financial assistance. However, when she applied, there were no openings. Undaunted, she decided to submit an application to become a work-study student for the Center for Mexican American Studies. Thus began her association with the Center. Now she is a full-time program assistant to Mrs. Rebeca Treviño for the Academic Achievers Program component at UH.



Paloma Flores, AAP-UH Office Assistant I

Flores was born in Monterrey, Mexico and came to Houston with her parents at age eight. She attended the Middle College for Technology Careers High School. This unique program, housed on the TSU campus, concentrates on providing an environment for learning computer and programming expertise for 75–100 high school students. One of the benefits it offers due to its location is the experience of attending classes in a collegiate environment instead of a more restricted and typical high school schedule. For this reason, Flores found the transition to the UH's format of independent decision-making and class attendance easy.

Even though Flores loved computers and loved working with them in high school, she also was drawn to working with people. In fact, while still in middle school she participated in peer-mediation. Her interest in counseling others led her to choose psychology for her UH major.

When Flores began working at CMAS, she was eighteen years of age and just beginning her UH education. Now she is close to graduation, working full-time and going to school full-time. She feels that her experience working with Treviño has taught her valuable lessons for both her own life and for her chosen career. She says, "The AAP students inspire me. We have such a close relationship with our students in the AAP program. We want them to feel comfortable talking to us about everything going on in their lives." Flores also continually finds inspiration in the visitors from all of Houston's walks of life that visit the

Center to talk with Tatcho Mindiola, Director.

Flores began at CMAS doing mostly clerical tasks. However, she has grown into the position of attending presentations and tutoring sessions, helping amass data, and assisting in sessions with the AAP students and/or parents. She says, "I attend all the activities that the students attend. It's wonderful because I am able to understand them better and also benefit from certain program components, like the networking aspect which we teach them." During the time that she has been mentored by Treviño, Flores has learned many skills to help her and help the students. For instance, she mentions the professional terminology in Spanish that she has been able to add to her existing vocabulary. She has also acquired through observation the skill of tactfulness, which is so important in advising.

At this point, Flores feels she will seek her own career in Advising. She wants to obtain her certification and be an advisor "just like Becky [Treviño]." Listening to Flores talk about how much she loves working in the Center with the AAP students, one can sense the positive energy generated by her enthusiasm for her work and her own commitment to the goals of CMAS—*Changing Lives through Education, One Person at a Time*.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVERS PROGRAM—UH

Spring Update

The AAP component at UH, under the direction of Mrs. Rebecca Treviño has continued to be recognized statewide for being awarded the Star Award by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board last fall. On November 17, 2005, Ms. Natalie Coffey, Senior Director for Success of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board visited the AAP-UH staff and students. The purpose of the visit was observation of program components, which then could be used as models across the state. Coffey spent time with the AAP-UH students who are serving as tutors for the high school-AAP students at Austin High School. Her site visit also allowed time for her to visit informally with AAP students to glean a better understanding of how the program functions for them. Coffey and Mr. Chris Alvarado were instrumental in recommending and assisting the AAP-UH to qualify for a \$25,000 grant earmarked for First Generation College Students (FGCS) through the Texas



Natalie Coffey, Senior Director for Success, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and Chris Alvarado, Senior Program Director For Outreach, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.



AAP-UH students enjoy lunch with presenter Rick S. Figueroa (center) from Merrill Lynch at the Annual Leadership Retreat.

Workforce Commission, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The goal of the FGCS Grant Program is to increase the participation and success of first generation students in college. In addition, the Greater Houston Partnership recognized the AAP for being selected as a Star Award winner. (Photo below)



AAP-UH students participate in icebreakers at the Annual Leadership Retreat.



Breakfast sponsored by the Greater Houston Partnership honoring CMAS and other Star Award recipients.

The program was selected to participate in the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education (TACHE) conference in February 2006. The focus of this year's conference was "Minority to Majority: Implications for Higher Education." Both components (the collegiate and the high school) of the AAP were selected to participate in the annual P-16 Conference: Partnering for Students' Success in April 2006 in Austin, Texas.

This spring semester will see the graduation of many students who began in the first SABE cohort in 2001. Therefore, this year's Annual Leadership Retreat focused on Planning for Graduation. The featured speakers presented seminars on topics such as resume and cover letter preparation, networking, communication, internships, and also preparing for job interviews.

Please see the "Kudos" section for the names of those students named to the Honor Roll or who attained other recognition.



AAP-UH seniors conducting a seminar on preparation for graduation.

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVERS PROGRAM—
HIGH SCHOOLS**

Spring Update

The AAP component at Austin High School and Eastwood Academy brought in the New Year with the first tutoring session in early January. The beginning of this semester also saw the admission of two new students: Karen Perez and Ruth Torres. Barely a week later began the Tuesday afternoon tutoring mathematics class in preparation of the

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AAP–High Schools *continued from pg 11*

SAT. These classes are taught by Mohamad Elkhatib, teacher and Math Division Chair at Jesse H. Jones High School. Mr. Elkhatib says, “This is a dedicated group. I have taught the same class for other after-school programs, but I’ve never had this many students participate. They are really interested in being prepared for the test, and they will be.”

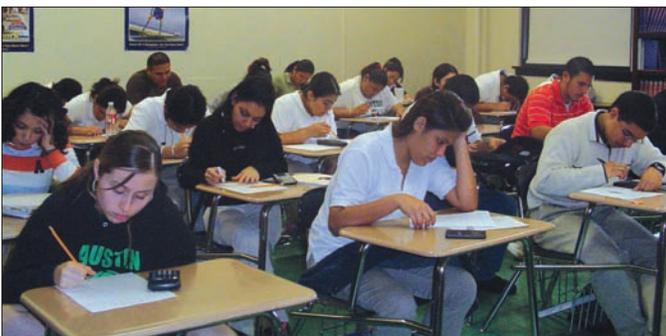
Two workshops will be given in the spring by Ms. Sandy Robertson, Special Programs Counselor, UH Department of Learning Support Services, entitled “Writing Papers” and “Preparing for Exams.” This series of classes are part of the third workshop series that Ms. Robertson has conducted for the current cohort of students. As such, the classes are a key element in preparing the AAP students for the college experience.

AAP students will attend a conference entitled “What is Medical School Like?” sponsored by the National Network of Latin American Medical Students at UT-Houston. This conference will include a tour of UT Houston Medical School and Memorial Hermann Hospital, a session on Microbiology, a session on Neurobiology, and a presentation by a forensic scientist. During March, the students will learn about the human body through the Houston Museum of Natural Science’s Body Worlds 3: The Anatomical Exhibition of Real Human Bodies. They will also attend a showing in the IMAX Theatre of “The Human Body.”

Before the semester ends, all the students’ parents will meet with AAP Program Coordinator, Mrs. Maria Cobio, to learn about the activities and workshops in the upcoming Leadership Development Retreat to be held May 26-28 and the Summer Session.

At the Leadership Development Retreat the students will be able to begin learning the skills that will equip them to participate in decision-making in their own communities throughout their lives.

Please see the “Kudos” section for the names of those students named to the Honor Roll or who attained other recognition.



AAP–High School students during SAT math class.

AAP STUDENT AT UH

Estella Gonzalez: AAP–UH Student in TLIP



Estella Gonzalez, AAP student, University of Houston

Every year since 1990 the Texas Legislative Internship Program (TLIP) chooses a select group of undergraduate and graduate students at Texas colleges and universities with a major in either political science or political administration to be awarded a spot as an intern in the office of a Texas politician. The interns are afforded an opportunity to gain academic credit hours for their participation combining academic study and research with supervised academic training. One of the honorees this year is AAP-UH graduating senior, Estella Gonzalez.

This internship in the office of State Representative Ana Hernandez for District 143 has brought Gonzalez into the daily workings of a busy district office. Since the District includes the East End, Jacinto City, and the Houston Ship Channel, many of the district’s citizens are concerned with environmental issues. This concern has focused Representative Hernandez’s attention on the complex and varied environmental situations both within her district and throughout the state.

Gonzalez has gained experience in a variety of duties, such as database management, research, attending meetings as a representative of Hernandez, and working directly with constituents. Among her many responsibilities, it is this direct work with citizens that Gonzalez finds herself enjoying the most. She says, “My interest is in the people and in their human rights. I prefer the hands-on experience of working with people. I ask myself, ‘Can I help out? What can I do to help?’”

When Gonzalez began in the first SABE cohort in 2001 at Austin High School, she had no idea that her academic

Continued on page 13

journey would one day bring her to the TLIP internship. In fact, she had been planning to major in English at the University of Houston, but a Career Day presentation in her senior year changed her plans. When she heard Senator Mario Gallegos explain that being a politician meant that a person really cared about problems affecting their constituents as human beings on a day-to-day basis, whatever those problems might be, from street repair to illegal drugs, Gonzalez knew immediately that she would choose a career in politics.

Gonzalez credits SABE and AAP-UH with teaching her to have confidence in her leadership skills through workshops and the annual Leadership Retreat. In fact, she credits the AAP-UH program with allowing her to begin her freshman year with the crucial academic support of tutors, academic sessions, study hour requirements, and a computer lounge. She says that it is this academic structure that set the stage for her making the Honor Roll numerous times while enrolled. Gonzalez also points to the financial assistance that allowed her to attend summer school and thus stay on target with her degree plan.

Now, as she is about to graduate with honors, Gonzalez feels even more certain about her choice of career. While she does not see herself as an elected official, she does see herself remaining an advocate for human rights. She says, “I am moving toward a role as a grassroots activist continuing to work hands-on with people.”

Gonzalez emphasizes the importance of everyone—particularly young people—realizing that each and every vote counts in every election. She says, “Young people don’t vote—it’s a fact. But students need to be informed. Everything is affected by the decisions that politicians make—from education to biology. People need to educate themselves and vote.”

AAP STUDENT—HIGH SCHOOL

Danielle Tristan:

AAP Student and Mathematician

The intersection of enthusiasm and hard work produces success. And it is this special success that AAP fosters in our community’s high school students. Ms. Danielle Tristan, a junior at Austin High School, is an amazing example of the program’s viability in helping students achieve their fullest potential.

Tristan became an AAP member in the summer before her sophomore



Danielle Tristan, AAP Student, Austin High School

year. She discovered the program through Ms. Betty Shaw, who had been Tristan’s Magnet Coordinator at Jackson Middle School. Tristan was drawn to the program for several reasons. In particular, the SAT preparation classes appealed to her desire to be as academically prepared as possible for both the SAT and for the college classroom. She was also excited about the prospect of scholarship money awarded by CMAS to help her afford a college education.

In speaking about the benefits of the AAP, Tristan is fervent in acknowledging the benefit of the weekly tutoring sessions. In fact, she cites the fact that her solo status as the only AAP student at Austin in high-level math class makes her tutoring sessions with AAP mentors in mathematics particularly important.

Tristan says that her heart is set on attending Texas A&M University. In fact, she recently returned from the Annual Conference of the Society of Women Engineers at Texas A&M. This experience afforded her the opportunity to learn about the various types of engineering degrees offered and to attend classes in session. Tristan’s reaction to attending a Calculus II class of about eighty students with only five female students? “That only motivates me more!”

Tristan loves math. At her high school she is the only junior enrolled in the two senior math classes of pre-calculus and statistics. She is also a member of the Austin High School Math and Science Team, which regularly competes in 5A District competitions. Tristan has been inducted into the Mu Alpha Beta Chapter of the National Honor Society for Mathematics. In fact, Tristan has been a member of the National Honor Society since her freshman year in high school and was elected secretary this year. Tristan’s smiling determination is apparent in her voice when she says she plans to run for president next year.

One of Tristan’s accomplishments was being selected as one of five students from Harris County to attend a one-week Leadership and Citizenship Seminar sponsored by the Future Farmers of America at San Angelo University last summer. Approximately 150 students from across the state attended this workshop to learn and explore various aspects of the basic documents defining the U.S. government.

Tristan credits the tutoring provided by AAP with enabling her to perform so well in her classes. This, of all the benefits of the program, means the most to her as she prepares for a promising academic future.

We’re sure to be hearing more from Tristan. There’s no doubt that her hard work and enthusiasm will continue to bring her success.

Stephanie Rivera: AAP Graduate and Community Activist

Meet Stephanie Rivera—one of the shining examples of both academic success and the special brand of community involvement fostered by CMAS programs. When Rivera began in the SABE program (as the AAP-High School component was previously named) near the end of her freshman year in 1998 at Stephen F. Austin High School, she also began participation in a program for high school students at the then-called Chicano Family Center. Rivera acknowledges that early on in life she had ambition, but that these two vital programs provided her with practical study skills and tremendously important lessons in community building and cultural awareness. Rivera remained in the SABE program until she graduated from Austin High School in 2001.

Rivera's original set of college choices were on the East coast. However, when those plans didn't materialize, she began looking elsewhere. She was invited for a college visit at De Pauw University in Greencastle, Indiana and fell in love with the college and its small-town environment. She acknowledges that her parents were a little scared for her to leave home to attend college, but her parents' attitude has always been "to do what you have to do" to succeed. This emotional support from her parents has been a major component in building Rivera's confidence and accomplishments.

Once in Indiana at De Pauw, Rivera no longer had the encompassing support of the two programs through CMAS and the Chicano Family Center to rely on. Although this change made her freshman year difficult, Rivera became determined that no other Latino college freshman at her university would have the same type of difficulties. This resolve brought Rivera to serve three years as the president of the Committee for Latino Concerns. This organization promoted Latino community building, cultural awareness, and activism through campus-wide and membership-based programming. During Rivera's tenure, the Committee doubled its annual budget. While at De Pauw, Rivera was asked to serve as a Student Officer for the Admissions Office. She performed many crucial services to further the goal of bringing more Latino students to campus. For instance, Rivera translated the Admissions material into Spanish and created a bilingual PowerPoint presentation on financial aid. Rivera's bilingual skills also allowed her to talk with prospective students and their parents during the Admission process. One of Rivera's goals was to increase the involvement of Latino students on campus in recruiting other Latinos, and this was accomplished as well.



*Stephanie Rivera, SABE Alumna,
Austin High School*

In May 2005 Rivera graduated with a B.A. in Sociology-Anthropology with a minor in both Spanish and Philosophy. Her senior thesis was entitled "Cultural Capital of College-Bound Latino Students: How a High School and an Outreach Program Provide and Teach the Use of Skills and Resources."

During the time Rivera attended De Pauw, she visited Houston reconnecting with her family and mentors who had assisted her during her high school years. One of these visits to the Community Family Center (the re-named Chicano Family Center) began the next phase of Rivera's career as the Education Coordinator there. In broad terms, her responsibilities are to plan, implement, and improve the educational components of the Center's youth programs. She has already designed the XCEL program (X-celle in Community, Education and Leadership), which is a tutoring program targeting middle school and high school students. This program entered Phase I in February 2006 with enrollment capped at twenty students.

Last summer and fall Rivera worked with a group of high school seniors in a program entitled "Countdown to College." Last fall Rivera also hosted a five-part series of discussions and meetings for parents focused on "College for Your Child." Rivera is emphatic in asking parents to dream big with their children. She reminds all of us that parents who wish their child to go to college must start planning early so that the reinforcement of study skills, language skills, and a desire for higher education are a constant in the child's life.

In addition to all of these programs, Rivera recruits volunteers to tutor students while also tutoring students herself in the subjects of math and the basic skills of critical reading, writing, and the TAKS/THEA preparation. She does this tutoring either one-on-one or in small classes. She says, "Our philosophy is to never turn down a student [for tutoring]."

Rivera loves all of her job components, but she is particularly drawn to the hands-on experience of tutoring. She says, "I ask the seniors hard questions like 'Where do you want to go with your life?' Students who aren't motivated, won't go [anywhere]. I challenge them to do good work."

As Rivera looks ahead to additional projects she wishes to implement for parents and for the additional tutoring of students, she is glad that the Community Family Center will be expanding its facilities in the near future. She is grateful for everything given to her by the SABE program

and is fervent in acknowledging its importance in motivating her both academically and with a vision for her community. She says, “The SABE program gave me the lessons of community building, the realization that people need support, respect, and cultural education. Once you know yourself, where you came from, and that you matter, you can go forward to demand respect.

Endowment *continued from page 1*

life—as well as financially—was a college degree. Loya chose to attend Columbia University in New York City, where he played football and graduated in 1991 with a B.A. degree in Political Science. Ivy League schools, such as Columbia, don’t grant scholarships, but Loya worked his way through by participating in programs, such as work-study programs. Fortunately, the international character of El Paso made the cultural switch to New York City easy for Loya.

Prior to establishing CHOICE! Energy, Loya was a natural gas options broker with First National Crude Oil where he managed accounts consisting of major oil companies, natural gas producers, electrical utilities, institutional banks and energy marketers. By helping to found CHOICE! Energy in 1994, Loya created one of the first institutional natural gas brokerage houses following industry-wide deregulation. Today, CHOICE! Energy is one of the leading institutional energy brokers in the country.

Loya’s success in the business world has afforded him the opportunity to have a meaningful voice in certain influential policy-making organizations, such as the Energy Market Access Partnership Board under NARUC (National Association of Utility Regulatory Commissioners). Loya also serves on the board of directors of the Greater Houston Partnership, the primary advocate of Houston’s business community. Loya’s commitment to serving both the greater Houston community and Houston’s Hispanic community has led him to accept board appointments with the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Junior Achievement, and Arte Público Press. In 2004 he received a mayoral appointment to the City of Houston Task Force on Tourism.

Loya has received wide recognition for his 2002 signing as a minority owner of the National Football League’s Houston Texans. He has also been appointed to the NFL’s Diversity Committee and the Houston Super Bowl XXXVIII Host Committee. His list of awards is numerous and includes the Entrepreneur of the Year in 2002 from the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and in 2003 from the Young Entrepreneur Organization (YEO). In 2004 Loya received the prestigious John Jay Award from his

alma mater, Columbia University, for distinguished professional achievement.

Loya says that he has gravitated toward helping young people who wish to attain an education because he has seen the opportunities in his and his siblings’ lives that have opened up because of their education. Two years ago Loya established an endowment in honor of his parents as part of the CMAS Excellence Endowment Campaign.

Loya is often asked to speak to groups ranging from young kids to middle-aged entrepreneurs. His message is always the same—follow your dream. He points to the facts of his own life, “My dream was to be a Dallas football player. I worked really hard at it. It became clear that I wasn’t going to make it. I never got my dream. But I carried forward inside of me that passion. My dream didn’t turn out the way I had thought it would, but the way it’s turned out is great.”

As Loya reflects on his already amazing list of successes, honors, and awards, he encourages everyone, “Raise your expectations. Work hard. Make a total commitment. Dream big.”



KUDOS

Congratulations to the following

Academic Achievers Program students who made the Honor Roll at the end of the fall 2005 semester at Austin High School or Eastwood Academy:

Melina Alvarea	Joel German
Laura Hernandez	Sanjuanita Mottu
Karen Perez	Rene Ramirez
Susan Solis	

Congratulations to two AAP students who will graduate as Texas Scholars:

Eleazar Rodriguez at Austin High School
Leandro Solis at Eastwood Academy.

Congratulations to the following Academic Achievers Program students who made the Honor Roll at the end of the fall 2005 semester at the University of Houston:

Vanessa Calderon	Yolanda Cruz
Carlos Fernandez	Carla Gonzalez
Daniel Hernandez	Rosalinda Martinez
Mayra Moreno	Tania Puentes
Jorge Sanchez	Stephanie Tello

Congratulations to **Mr. Bruno Gonzalez**, AAP student and senior in Communications, who was highlighted in the UH President’s Report.

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