

NOTICIAS

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Hispanic enrollment at the University of Houston is at an all time high. The official figures show that 6,256 Hispanic students enrolled during the Fall 2003 semester and that we make up approximately 18% of the total student enrollment. Among first-time college freshman 715 or 22% of the 3,271 students are Hispanic. The number of Hispanic students has been rising for at least twenty years and the resultant growth line has been extending impressively upward. This is good news and it reflects several related trends like the explosive growth of our population, a decline in the high school drop out rate, an increase in the number of high school graduates and greater numbers seeking a college education.

The Center for Mexican American Studies has played a promi-

nent role in recruiting students to our campus. Through our annual college career days we estimate that over 25,000 Latino students from high schools throughout Houston have visited our campus in the last 20 years. Most of the students are juniors and seniors, and they attend workshops on financial aid, admissions procedure, college life and careers where they learn more than 298 majors that can be pursued on campus. We also sponsor SAT workshops, and visit schools and Parent Teacher Organizations on a regular basis speaking to students and parents about the rewards of higher education and how to apply and pay for college. We have been aided in our efforts by the dedicated staff from the University of Houston Office of Admissions and by a supportive administration that recognizes the educational needs of the community.

I do not wish to overstate the good news. We are far from being where we need to be in terms of our overall educational attainment level and much work needs to be done. Only 8% of all Hispanic adults in the United States have a college education and among Mexicans the figure is 5%. Further, the cost of attending college is rising and there are limits as to how much more we can grow at institutions like the University of Houston that are reaching capacity enrollment overall. Capacity en-

rollment means that Hispanics students can continue to grow but only at the expense of other students. This could have serious political implications.

Nevertheless, the trend is in the right direction and it is a far cry from the late 1960's when I was student here on campus. There were less than 700 of us enrolled at the time and you had to look hard to find each other but we somehow managed to find one another. We developed the idea of a Center for Mexican American Studies that would play a role in addressing the educational concerns of our community. That idea is now a reality.

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Continuing in its tradition of recruitment and support of outstanding graduate students interested in research in the areas of Latino/Mexican American scholarship, CMAS is proud to welcome two new students to the ranks of its graduate fellows: Ms. Itzel Richarte and Ms. Uyen Tran.

and award. During her undergraduate years at the UH, she was on the Dean's list every semester. She was also awarded a four-year Mary Gibbs Jones Scholarship, and a three-year Success Scholarship Award. In the summer of 2002, she received the Ugo di Portanova Scholarship for study in Sienna, Italy. She graduated summa cum laude in May 2003.

At present, Ms. Richarte is immersed in the coursework of her first semester of graduate school. She says, "It's exciting to be learning linguistics. We are learning about Spanish and about other languages. My favorite course is 'Spanish for Native Speakers', which is an Applied Linguistics course. My interest is in being an educator and we are learning the best ways to teach all types of students – both traditional and non-traditional."

Ms. Richarte's goal is to complete a Master's degree in Spanish Linguistics with an emphasis on the study of linguistic phenomena as related to sociological factors. She also intends to complete a Ph.D. The study of both French and Italian, in addition to her native Spanish, will be an excellent academic base for the position

"My interest is in being an educator and we are learning the best ways to teach all types of students – both traditional and non-traditional."

as program director of foreign languages at a university. In fact, Ms. Richarte started as an undergraduate preparing for the dual roles by the completion of the requirements for two minors (in Mexican-American Studies and in Italian), in addition to her major in Spanish for her Bachelor's degree.

Ms. Richarte gives this advice to undergraduates considering the possibility of graduate study. "Don't leave the university without a Master's degree. It gives you more knowledge and it opens your mind. A Bachelor's gives you general knowledge; a Master's gives you focused and applied knowledge so that you can actually work in your field."

Ms. Uyen Tran graduated in the fall of 2002 with Honors receiving a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Sociology (as double majors) from the UH. Informing her decision to go to graduate school is her desire to contribute to an understanding of the complexities of society and (in her own words)



Even though she is beginning the first year of graduate study, Itzel Richarte has a history of accomplishment

“I was able to see a very small sample of the Latino community, but what I learned intrigued me to study more.”

“its seemingly bizarre functions.” She feels comparative research is essential when studying society. She also is quite eloquent in speaking of her “vision” that she will be able to ultimately participate in a social movement for change on a large scale. From her work with at-risk children and her own experiences coming to America as an immigrant with no English-speaking skills, she knows that the complexity of societal factors causing (for instance) small children to go hungry at home. It is her fervent hope that her research will contribute to the changes necessary within our society to solve problems, especially for young children.

Ms. Tran was awarded a sociology internship at the Mayor’s Anti-Gang office in Houston in the academic year of 2002. The opportunity afforded her the experience of working with a specific population within Houston’s Hispanic population. She says, “I was able to see a very small sample of the Latino community, but

what I learned intrigued me to study more. I found myself wanting to compare the troubled Vietnamese youths I grew up with to the troubled Latino youths I now knew existed beyond statistics. They were real, right in front of me, but yet I couldn’t ask them all the things I wanted to. I had to think of a way to get my questions answered, and that way is available through a higher level of education. I now have this desire to understand things, such as where it is that society fails for the youths of the Latino and Vietnamese communities. Research is the key to understanding.”

At present, Ms. Tran is working on her Master’s degree in Sociology with a goal of completing a Ph.D. as well. When questioned as to the most noticeable difference between undergraduate studies and graduate studies, she said, “I feel graduate school is challenging because it pushes you to be an individual, to think for yourself. Especially in Sociology, you have to have the room to think and to make a statement with what you are doing, i.e. researching. This freedom pushes you to be your best. Everyone in graduate school in Sociol-

ogy who I’ve met is a shining star. They all are individuals. The professors are there to help you do the research to support your individual stance. It is very exciting.”



For more information about our Graduate Fellowship Program, call 713-743-3136.

A recent addition to the University of Houston's History department, Dr. Luis Alvarez brings a fascinating series of specializations within the larger framework of American History. These areas include: Latina/o history, African American history, borderlands history, comparative race and ethnicity, popular culture, transnationalism, resistance, identity and community formation, and cultural theory.

How did Dr. Alvarez become interested in the history of Mexicans in the U.S. during the twentieth century? He says, "As for many scholars of color historically, [it was] an interest in my own family's history – their migration from Baja to San Diego. As for my interest in youth culture, I remember interviewing my uncle Tony about being a zoot-suiter in the 1930's in East Los Angeles for an undergraduate project." He continues, "I am a Chicano historian by training, but am interested in ethnic culture more broadly. My work is driven by questions like how Mexican-American communities intersect with other racialized groups. We see those intersections in youth culture. There is a real power in youth culture. I respect it and am curious about how it creates new and unique social worlds."

From there, he went to the

University of Texas at Austin for his master's coursework. The University of Texas awarded his Ph.D. in May of 2001 subsequent to his completion of the qualifying exams with honors. Since then Dr. Alvarez has spent the academic year of 2001-02 at the University of California (UC) at San Diego's Department of History enjoying the distinction of being awarded the UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship. This year Dr. Alvarez has been awarded a position as a Visiting Scholar of the Center for Mexican American Studies.

Dr. Alvarez is eloquent about the energy and academic excitement created by the commitment to hiring History faculty committed to Mexican American studies. "To have four Chicano scholars is a major investment. It immediately puts the UH History Department and the Center for Mexican American Studies on the national map. People all over the U.S. are recognizing that the UH intends to be a major player.

The History department has been fantastic. We have the support to be a flagship institution in Chicana/o history. The four Chicano historians all have a stake in what Chicano studies are -- Dr. San Miguel studies education, Dr. Ramos the nineteenth century, Dr. Perales (who will be here in the Spring 2004) studies border identity and also brings a gender focus, - I do comparative race and ethnicity in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Now it is up to us to write the books, bring in the students, start placing the students. It's an incredible opportunity."

There are several reasons Dr. Alvarez cites as instrumental in his acceptance of the UH job offer. Foremost, is the UH's and CMAS' extraordinary commitment to Chicano/Latino hiring in History, as stated above. Second, is the opportunity for time to work on his own research, which the position as a Visiting Scholar gives him. The third, is the diversity of young students on campus. To quote Dr. Alvarez, "Such a multi-ethnic, multi-racial student body is rare."

One of the on-campus organizations Dr. Alvarez is most excited to participate in is La Colectiva, a support network for graduate students and junior faculty interested

in Latino/Chicano Studies. Its members reach across academic ranks and traditional boundaries to help each other, but also to air issues within their respective disciplines, e.g. how do Chicano/Latino Studies relate to Latin American Studies. One of the group's functions is to be a space for learning ways to connect all the major steps required by a university structure from a grad student to a junior faculty member. By organizing both research and writing to build each step in a career while also preparing for the next step is an incredible skill. The members of La Colectiva help each other learn the pragmatics of such skills as writing grant proposals, writing a dissertation, how to present a talk at a conference, and how to study for and pass qualifying examinations. Dr. Alvarez says, "It's important for a graduate student to know that he/she doesn't have to do it alone."

Dr. Alvarez is working on his book manuscript entitled, "The Riddle of the Zoot: Race and Resistance in American Youth Culture" this semester and will teach one undergraduate course in the Spring. But he says, "if you're thinking about going to graduate school, call me."

A review of Dr. Alvarez' publications and invited lectures shows the specific areas

of the twentieth century history of Mexicans in the U.S. he has chosen for research. Organizations and academic entities as diverse as the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies, the American Studies Association (Houston), the Black History Workshop at the



University of Houston, and the Center for American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California have heard him speak on a wealth of topics. Here is a partial list: "From Zoo Suits to Hip Hop in Chicana/o Youth Culture: Toward a Comparative, Post-National, and Social Movements Based Chicana/o Studies"; "Of Pachucos, Hep Cats, and Social Horizons: Masculine Bodies, the Zoot Suit, and Dignity in World War II"; "Youth Culture and Dignity in Wartime America"; and "Who's Zooting Who? Race, Region, and Gender in American Youth Culture."

Having already taught both graduate and undergraduate courses at the University of Houston in "The Mexican – U. S. Borderlands in the Twentieth Century", "U.S. History since 1877", and "Readings in Chicana/o History", Dr. Alvarez is planning the introduction of both undergraduate and graduate courses that would reflect his areas of research. In the Spring of 2004, he will teach an undergraduate course entitled "From Zoot Suits to Hip Hop: Chicana/o Youth Culture Since World War II". Possibilities for future graduate courses include: "Comparative Race and Ethnicity in the U.S."; "Consciousness and Resistance: Readings in Social Theory"; "Crossing Borders: Readings in U.S.-Mexico and Comparative Borderlands."

For more information about our Visiting Scholars Program, call 713-743-3136.



Reviewing professor Nestor P. Rodriguez' list of professional and academic accomplishments leaves the reader with a sense of the tremendous energy and commitment Dr. Rodriguez has shown since arriving at the University of Houston's Sociology department as an assistant professor in 1984. His research and publications confirm his status as an expert in his field. In 1995 he and other researchers founded the Center for Immigration Research in the College of Social Science. He is its co-director. This Center exists almost entirely on grant money. Yet, its groundbreaking research has been covered in the national and international media many times. It is one of a handful of centers across the U.S. researching

immigration. In addition, Dr. Rodriguez was recently named chair of the University of Houston's Sociology Department.

Dr. Rodriguez' long history of accomplishment began as early as 1973 when he was awarded the Governor's Public Service Internship during the last year of his bachelor's coursework in Sociology and Government at Texas A&I University in Kingsville, Texas. He completed this degree summa cum laude and a year later completed his M.A. (also in Sociology and Government), thereby earning the Distinguished Graduate Student Award from Texas A&I. Upon the completion of his Ph.D. in 1984, he accepted a position at the University of Houston.

Reviewing a list of grants awarded to Dr. Rodriguez both before and after 1995, reveals major funding sources such as the Ford Foundation, the Open Society, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Loyola University/HUD, and the Tomas Rivera Center (UT-Austin).

What is the energy driving Dr. Rodriguez's prolific research? He says, "One impetus is trying to understand the workings of international social systems; the second is trying to understand the effects of government policies

on local communities."

One noticeable characteristic of the many research projects done by Dr. Rodriguez either as Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator is their variety among ethnic groups studied and factors studied. For instance, the subject population ranges from Asian to Central American to Mexican. The sites of research for some of the grants are local, while some have been in other areas of Texas, Mexico, or Central America. Here's a brief listing of several recent grants.

A Ford Foundation grant in 1997-98 to study how 1996 immigration and welfare laws affect low-income and immigrant communities in six Texas localities, and in adjacent Mexican border communities. Co-principal investigator of the study was Professor Jacqueline Hagan.

A Hogg Foundation for Mental Health Grant for a study of mental health conditions (anxiety, depression, stress) among immigrants separated from families by U.S. immigration laws restricting travel between the United States and communities of origin.

A University of Texas at Austin collaborative grant to investigate transnational economic linkages between immigrant households in Hous-



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ton and communities of origin in Monterrey, Mexico. Jacqueline Hagan was a co-principal investigator in the Houston site.

Another mark of Dr. Rodriguez's professional accomplishment is the number of academic books to which he has been a contributor and the one book he co-authored with Dr. Tacho Mindiola and Dr. Yolanda Niemann entitled, "Black/Brown Relations and Stereotypes" published in 2002 by the University of Texas Press-Austin. A few of the books to which he has recently contributed as a co-author of a section are:

Immigrant Communities

and Welfare Reform in North America, edited by Ana Parico, Phil Krestedemas, and Kalyani Rhai; *Race and Racism: Essays in Honor of Joe R. Feagin*, edited by Bernice McNara Burnett; *Latinos: Remaking America*, edited by Marcelo Suarez-Orozco and Mariela Paz; *Caught in the Middle: Cross Border Communities in an Era of Globalization*, edited by Demetrios Papademetriou and Deborah Meyers; *The Maya Diaspora: Guatemalan Roots, New American Lives*, edited by James Loucky and Marilyn Moors.

Despite his research and teaching load of two courses

per semester, Dr. Rodriguez maintains an active schedule of conference presentations. The year 2003 saw two presentations to the Latin American Studies Association (Dallas, Texas) on "The effect of 9/11 on U.S. Border Security" and "Mayan Immigrant Community Life: What Changes and What Stays the Same?" The year 2002 saw presentations to the American Sociological Association, the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American studies at Harvard University, and to the Annual Traverse Ethics Conference at the University of California at Berkeley.

Researcher & Educator

Dr. Amaury Nora's path from Kingsville, Texas in 1971-72 where he was a teaching assistant in the Biology Department for a Genetics course at Texas A&I University has been a road of extraordinary achievement and professional recognition. Now, he is a full professor and Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development in the College of Education here at the University of Houston. One of his notable and recent accomplishments is being named Editor of *The Review of Higher Education*, a leading



research journal in his field. Dr. Nora is the first minority ever to serve in that role.

Dr. Nora's Bachelor of Arts was awarded in 1970 in the field of Zoology from the University of Texas at Austin. This degree was followed three years later by a Masters of Science in Biology from Texas A&I University in Kingsville, Texas. In

1985 he was awarded a Doctorate in Higher Education at the University of Houston.

Before returning to the University of Houston in 1996 to teach, from 1987 to 1989 Dr. Nora was an assistant professor at the University of Southern California and from 1989 to 1995 he held an appointment as an associate professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago. During this time he was also a Senior Research Associate at the National Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (NCTLA).

Dr. Nora's C.V. contains a plethora of publications in peer-reviewed journals, chapters in books, technical-



reports, bulletins, white papers and monographs. Some of the more recent articles include topics such as, "The depiction of significant others in Tinto's *Rites of Passage*: A reconceptualization of the influence of family and community in the persistence process," and "How minority students finance their higher education."

Dr. Nora's research often deals with issues of particular importance in this era of increasing Hispanic population throughout many regions of the U.S. For instance, a summary of several articles currently under review with journals shows a focus on remediation and retention. Such titles as "An exploration of the influence that perceptions of remediation have on the persistence of developmental students in higher education" and "The impact of psychosocial factors on the achievement, academic and social adjustment, and persistence of college students" demonstrate some of Dr. Nora's research interests.

He says that his interest was piqued in research years ago when he was working at the Laredo Community College in a Title III program. He became interested in why so few Latinos came into higher education and why so

many of them dropped out. As he says, "We can't afford to lose those few Hispanic students who come through our doors. We need to ask, 'What obligation does the institution have to provide a learning community that fully engages all students?' To do so involves an understanding of the factors that impact the adjustment, achievement and persistence of our diverse student populations. Why do we put such an importance on degree attainment? The bachelor's degree represents a first step. It's our ticket to graduate and professional schools. It allows us [as Hispanics] to become fully engaged in the structuring and governance of society. Only it and higher degrees will allow us full access to discussions and decisions affecting our lives."

As might be expected, Dr. Nora's professional career has been replete with honors and awards. As early as 1985 when he was completing his doctoral dissertation, Dr. Nora was awarded "Dissertation of the Year" by the Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education. In addition, his dissertation was also approved with distinction within the

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Educational Leadership and Cultural Studies, College of Education at the University of Houston. His early professional career is studded with awards from the Association for the Study of Higher Education, the Association for Institutional Research, and the American College Personnel Association. More recently, Dr. Nora was awarded the Award of Appreciation for serving as the Program Chair for the 1999 ASHE (Association for the Study of Higher Education) Conference. In academic year 1999-2000, he was awarded the Research Excellence Award within the College of Education at the University of Houston. He was named to the Hall of Honor at the College of Education in 2000. The year 2001 saw Dr. Nora receiving a Certificate of Appreciation for a Presentation on Research on Students at Arizona State University West, Learner-Centered Summer Institute.

The tireless approach Dr. Nora takes toward his re-



search is evident not only in the lists of peer-reviewed articles, colloquia, and invited papers, but is also quite evident in a review of the refereed papers presented at the annual meetings of such organizations as the American Educational Research Association, the Association for the Study of Higher Education, and the Southwestern Educational Research Association. In some years, such as 2002, Dr. Nora presented as many as three different papers to these associations. The most recent was in April 2003. Along with Dr. R.G. Anderson, Dr. Nora presented "The role of religiosity as a determinant of persistence for minority and nontraditional college students: A logistic regression analysis of a theoretical model of student persistence" to the American Education Research Association.

Dr. Nora has served on the editorial boards of the three leading research journals in his field: the *Journal of Higher Education*, *The Review of Higher Education*, and *Research in Higher Education*. As mentioned earlier, he was recently named Editor of *The Review of Higher Education*, the first minority to serve in that role. Dr. Nora will officially take over the editorship of the

journal in January 2004.

Dr. Nora teaches doctoral level courses in Research Design and Statistics. He says, "Research must utilize those designs/methodologies and data analyses that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. It is only through the use of such techniques and designs that factors can be examined within a specific context and studies fully acknowledge the simultaneous interplay of multiple variables." In his course, Dr. Nora teaches multiple regression, logistic regression, and structural modeling. He has also developed a doctoral course entitled "College Students" which is an overview of what is currently known through research about college students, e.g. ways they achieve, how they adjust to college, why they drop out.

In looking at some of the unknown and complex side effects of the UH's stated current goal of becoming a Tier I research university, Dr. Nora offers a few considerations. Based on his own deeply-held belief that the knowledge produced by research should be used to better the lives of individuals in our communities, Dr Nora believes that becoming a Tier I institution means increasing the university's op-

portunities to have an impact on many issues affecting so many people through the research of its faculty. However, as he points out, Tier I status is mainly focused on graduate programs and the research produced in such programs, an area where there is an underrepresentation of minority students. Not counting international students, roughly 10% of the university's professional and graduate students are minorities. The misconception that to achieve Tier I status requires setting higher standards often leading to a decrease in minority enrolment is one that must be addressed. Achieving Tier I research status must be successfully accomplished with diversity in mind.

The University of Houston is fortunate to have Dr. Nora in its ranks – a topnotch researcher with tireless devotion to both research and teaching, and the use of both to better our community.

For more information contact, Amaury Nora, Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Development, Department of Education at 713-743-8636.



Reading Assistant Professor Delilah Montoya's resume takes the reader on a journey from New Mexico to France, from Smith College in Massachusetts to the Institute of America Indian Art in Santa Fe. At present, Ms. Montoya teaches both digital imaging and photography on a graduate and undergraduate level in the Art Department of the University of Houston.

Ms. Montoya's M.A. in Printmaking and M.F.A. in Studio Art were awarded by the University of Mexico. In both, she achieved academic excellence by graduating in 1990 with Honors for her M.A. and in 1994 with Distinction for her M.F.A. Her

teaching experience there combined with a ten-year medical photography career to uniquely prepare her for her current teaching and her prolific artistic output.

Reviewing Ms. Montoya's appointments give an idea of her commitment to her community as well as her commitment to furthering the enhancement of her skills. During her appointment at the Working Classroom Storytellers in Albuquerque, New Mexico, she taught printmaking techniques to inner-city youth ranging in age from 10 to 17 years. At the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, NM, she taught skills in preparation for the exploration of fine art photography. In addition to the explicit instruction required by beginning students, the course provided assigned projects to develop the student's technical skills, as well as conceptual and esthetic ideas.

Ms. Montoya was then concurrently awarded an appointment as a visiting professor at Smith College in the Art Department and a part-time appointment in the Film and Photography Program at Hampshire College in the School of Humanities and Art. In addition to teaching technical skills, Ms. Montoya states that she introduced students to ideas regarding con-

ceptual vision to promote a deeply personal and expanded way of seeing. With the teaching of technical skills during hands-on application, the student was encouraged to intellectually develop with the concurrent mastery of the medium. The courses taught were Photography I and II, and Advanced Studies in Photography. Additionally, she chaired the Special Studies Projects.

Ms. Montoya's time at California State University in Los Angeles brought her the opportunity to direct the programming in her department's fine art gallery. In addition, she developed upper division, graduate and undergraduate courses in Chicano and Latin American Photographic Art History. While teaching such core courses as Written Expression, Design II, and World Art I, Ms. Montoya developed and taught a special topics course introducing photo printmaking techniques to studio majors.

Teaching is central to Ms. Montoya's commitment to art-making. She states, "as an educator, I realize the classroom thrives when the ambition for self-invention is kindled." Also central to Ms. Montoya's vision is a realization of the potential of historical symbols. She says, "Not

only must students learn formal concerns but [they] must be introduced to an ever-expanding world vision. The incipient artist develops an intimate expression by understanding styles, ideology and the sagacity of symbols as well as metaphors. The art history discourse is a potent source for this kind of awareness. Because image interpretation endows the artist's vision, concepts should be used as a creative springboard in the pedagogy."

One of the most important of Ms. Montoya's projects with young artists exploring historical symbols is the El Sagrado Corazon/Sacred Heart Series in 1994. Ms. Montoya's stated goal was to involve the community in a contemporary manifestation of the heart as a cultural icon. Young artists from the community painted murals on her studio walls to serve as backdrops for the Sagrado Corazon portraits.

Another of her fascinating projects is the "Codez Delilah: A Journey from Mexicatlan to Chicana" which approaches the Spanish/Indian encounter for a mestizaje perspective. As Ms. Montoya states, "this project attempts to correct that injustice [the undermining of historical contributions of Chicana women] by rethinking

the traditional interpretation of the European/Native Encounter. The narrative of this artist book is viewed from the perspective of Six Deer, a fictional Mayatec young girl. From her home to the nuclear weapons laboratories in New Mexico, the codex details Six Deer's journey of enlightenment. As she journeys 'pal norte' towards Aztlan, Six Deer also travels forward in time, meeting well-known women of the Chicano folklore tradition. Each of these informs her of the long and negative historical processes that were initiated by the European Encounter. For example, Six Deer meets La Llorona, a manifestation of Cortez' mistress, Malinche, who describes the effect of the Conquest on her people. As Six Deer travels through time and space she learns and simultaneously reveals to us our historical identity, and how for our people, survival has meant learning to live within a multicultural heritage and ambiance."

To quote Ms. Montoya, "I believe photography majors should understand the camera's capability for indexing suggests that the medium provides 'contiguous imprints' of the tangible world. These imprints realize time-based visual memories,

which are distinct from objective-based reality. The construction and interpretation of the photographic image arises as a joint project between the photographer's and observer's interpretation of the image. My position is the viewpoint of the photographer as the photograph's author and its interpretation by the viewer is a mix of insight and blindness, reach and limitation. Impartiality and bias together do not achieve omniscience or the unified master narrative of 'reality'. Rather, the photograph spurs complex understandings of an ever-changing multifaceted existence. Since culture shapes reality or, perhaps, it is reality shaping culture, we must recognize that the photographic representation is bracketed by the artist's and viewer's own perceptions."

Ms. Montoya's own work has taken her from the inspiration of Cartier-Bresson's notion of decisive moment (a documentary approach) to alternative approaches incorporating mark making and graphic skills with photographic processes. Her images range from large, colorful photographs to intriguing assemblages comprised of painting, printing and photography. Her current works are digital collages that que-

tion the limits of gender roles through the exploration of human anatomy.

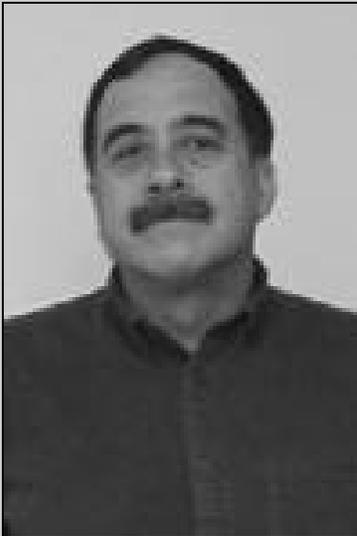
Montoya states, "as a Chicana artist, my own personal quest in image-making is the discovery and articulation on Chicano culture, and the icons which elucidate the dense history of New Mexico." She further states, "as a Chicana artist, my work –

interpreted as an alternative to the mainstream – stands as a personal statement that evokes an identity."

Given the impressive array of exhibited pieces and museum lectures, Ms. Montoya's work has found audiences around the world. Currently, Ms. Montoya is exploring a formal interest, which is to incorporate com-

puter and graphic skills with photo processes that together form a photographic printing technique. She feels that this composite skill -- a result of experimentation with print-making, computer technology and photography -- will allow for the interjection of her conceptual expression onto the photo image.

Office for Drug & Social Policy Research



Barely two years ago Dr. Avelardo Valdez came to the University of Houston. He left the University of Texas at San Antonio after twenty-one years at that institution to establish the Office for Drug and Social Policy Research within the Graduate School of Social Work at the University of Houston's cen-

tral campus.

By training Dr. Valdez is a sociologist, having both a Ph.D. and a M.A. in Sociology from the University of California at Los Angeles. He was also awarded a M.A. in Urban Affairs from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, the institution that granted his B.A. His is the additional distinction of having been a Fulbright Scholar in 1987-88 at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México D.F.

Dr. Valdez is one of a number of top Hispanic research scientists in the U.S. who specialize in the study of Hispanic drug use and its consequences. He is the recipient of federal research grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH),

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). As a valuable member of the National Hispanic Science Network, Dr. Valdez was awarded a three-year grant in 2000 through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to coordinate an annual training institute for graduate students from all over the U.S. who are committed to studying the drug abuse problem among Hispanics. This training is taught by many of the outstanding research scientists who are experts in their field, most of whom are also members of the National Hispanic Science Network. This past summer saw the second year's NNSA NHSN training institute at the University of Houston's campus successfully completed by eighteen graduate

and post-doctoral fellows from multiple disciplines.

In addition, Dr. Valdez is currently the principal investigator for two other federally-funded grants. "Proyecto Safe: San Antonio Family Enhancement" is the most recently funded through SAMHSA. Its goals are the creation of a substance abuse treatment network focused on providing family-based therapy to high-risk adolescents in low-income barrios in San Antonio. It is anticipated that this 5-year project will increase the knowledge of effective treatment approaches and strategies for this population of hard to reach Mexican American adolescent substance users. This project expands upon a successful SAMHSA-funded project completed by Dr. Valdez titled, "Drug Treatment for Gang Affiliated Hispanic Adolescents."

Dr. Valdez' other research interests include social stratification, violence, adolescent gangs, and sex workers in South Texas and the U.S./Mexico border. A review of his most recent publications shows how these research interests have produced numerous publications in leading, peer-reviewed journals in the field. These include such journals as the *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol*

Abuse, Journal of Drug Issues, Substance Abuse and Misuse, Drugs and Society, Contemporary Drug Problems, Journal of Psychoactive Drugs, Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, International Journal of Offender Therapy, and the Journal of Border Health. Titles of several articles are as follows: "Getting High and Getting By: Dimensions of Drug Selling and Dealing Among Mexican American Male Gang Members in South Texas" (with S.J. Sifanek) in the *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, "Sex Work, High-Risk Sexual Behavior and Injecting Drug Use on the U.S.-Mexico Border: Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas" (with A. Cepeda) in the *Journal of Ethnicity and Criminal Justice*; "High Risk Mexican American Gang Associated Females: Sexual Relations, Partying, Substance Use and Crime" in the *Journal of Adolescent Research*.

An intriguing aspect of Dr. Valdez' research is his interest in conjunto music. In May of 2001 his book (co-authored with Juan Tejada), entitled "Puro Conjunto: Seventeen Years of Collected Writings from the Tejano Conjunto Festival", was published by the University of Texas-Austin Press. It is regarded as a ground-breaking collection

of source material in the field.

Dr. Valdez sees the role of the Office for Drug and Social Policy Research at the University of Houston as a catalyst for generating federally funded grants that will enhance drug research from a multi-disciplinary perspective. Building this type of research infrastructure is essential for the University of Houston to evolve to a Tier One status.



Edited by Juan Tejada & Avelardo Valdez

For more information on Drug & Social Policy Research, contact Dr. Valdez at 713-743-8539.



Students Aspiring to a Better Education

CENTER FOR MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES



The S.A.B.E. (Students Aspiring to a Better Education) program continues to provide East End high school students with information, skills, and encouragement through its meetings, tutoring, mentoring, and the annual Leadership Retreat. The S.A.B.E. program was established as the outreach program of the Center for Mexican American Studies with the purpose of encouragement for high school students to complete their high school education and proceed onward to study at the college level.

Looking at the success for the last academic year of 2002-03, four SABE students graduated from high school. Two of them – Arturo Gutierrez and Dennis Perez – graduated as Texas Scholars from Eastwood Academy and

Stephen F. Austin Senior High, respectively. Dennis Perez graduated with the highest academic honors of the SABE graduates – in the top 5% of his class. Three of the four graduates are currently enrolled at the UH-Central campus and one is enrolled at Houston Community College with plans to transfer to the UH. Those ex-SABE students now at the UH have the added benefit of automatic acceptance into the Urban Experience program with its strong structure of both academic and leadership sessions, as well as financial assistance. Looking at the academic success of S. A.B.E. students for the current class of seniors, already three of them – Jessica Arredondo, Vanessa Perez, and Leonel Rios – have been each awarded a \$10,000 Linda Lorell Scholarship, a laptop computer and a gold class ring.

During each summer, the S.A.B.E. students for the upcoming academic year begin preparations with a Leadership Retreat in June. This year's retreat was situated in San Antonio. Workshops with titles such as, "Education Now, Marriage Later", "The Purpose of Meetings", and "What is MALDEF?" focused attention on issues from a dual perspective of both community-involvement and the primacy

of attaining of a college education. Cultural tours to the Missions and the San Antonio Barrio Murals plus such recreational visits to the River Walk and Six Flags Fiesta, Texas completed the trip.

One of the most important aspects of the Leadership Retreat each year is the genesis and planning of community service projects. Two of the projects born during this year's Retreat are described below. The stated goal behind all the S.A.B.E. community service projects is that the chosen project must make a positive difference in its neighborhood. After hearing a negative remark about the offensive graffiti on the bathroom walls in one of the girl's bathrooms at Stephen F. Austin High School, one of the S.A.B.E. groups, the Mixtecas, and its mentor, Ruben Morales, decided that their project would be the repainting of this bathroom. This decision required the composition of a proposal for presentation to the school's principal, Ms. Linda Llorente. She was so impressed with the proposal that she wrote a letter of request to area businesses asking for supplies and donations. Businesses, such as Sherwin Williams, responded with donations so quickly that the students (Pablo Flores, Luis Orozco, Vanessa Perez,

Leonel Rios, Stephanie Tello, and Maricela Villanueva) were able to begin painting almost immediately. By working for over a month the students were able to repaint the bathroom. Some members of the team completed over 100 hours of community service on this project alone. The benefits are not only tangible – a freshly painted, clean bathroom – but also intangible – the pride of accomplishment, self-respect, creativity, and a positive experience with teamwork. The Mixtecas are justifiably proud of their artwork – with each wall or stall assigned to one or two team members for the design and its implementation on the wall – but also of having inspired other school projects reflecting pride. Who would not be inspired by original artwork, such as the school mascot holding a baseball bat (by Luis Orozco), the underwater seascape (by Stephanie Tello), or the combination of abstract art and a bubble gum theme (by Maricela Villanueva and Vanessa Perez)? Other areas painted by Pablo Flores and Leonel Rios with the school mascot, the Mustang, and the Lady Mustangs banner and wording complete the project. In fact, this S.A.B.E. group has begun a trend. Since their project completion, other

school groups such as the Dance Team and Cheerleading Squad have also adopted other sections of the school's physical plant.

The second community service project to come out of the summer Leadership Retreat was the decision by the S.A.B.E. group, the Incas, to adopt Cullinan Park at 5120 Polk Street. The group, composed of students Jessica Arredondo, Nestor Gonzalez, Jeanette Martinez, Rosa Ramos and Maria Guadalupe Vega along with mentor, Vanessa Calderon, has been meeting every second and fourth Saturday to clean and help beautify the park. One of the group's goals is to build a new flowerbed at the park's entrance. By contacting area businesses for donations, it is the group's hope to be able to create a lasting flowerbed to add to the visual appeal of the park.

The S.A.B.E. program also accomplishes many other important activities during its summer session. In the summer of 2003, the summer session consisted of workshops in Essay Writing, SAT Math Preparation, and Academic Preparation. There were also presentations in motivational topics by community leaders, such as Ms. Elizabeth Nieto, an HISD teacher, and Dr. Carlos Moreno, Vice Presi-

dent of the Office of Community and Educational Outreach at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Be on the lookout for S.A.B.E. students during the Noche Cultural Banquet this year. Both they, and the Program Coordinator, Ms. Maria D. Gonzalez, are eager to share the program's success stories. Next spring, the S.A.B.E. program anticipates that over 20 of its members will graduate from high school and already have college acceptance letters in their hands. This is truly exciting news in an era that bombards listeners with constant news about the high school dropout rates for Mexican-American students.



*Vanessa Perez
S.A.B.E. Program*

S.A.B.E. student, Vanessa Perez, is a senior at Stephen F. Austin High School. She is in the fortunate position of being recently awarded a \$10,000 Linda Lorell scholarship, a laptop computer, and a white-gold class ring. At the moment, she is considering whether to attend Rice University or the University of Houston next year.

Vanessa found out about the S.A.B.E. program through two sources: a cousin who had previously been in the Urban Experience Program and other students at Austin high school. She has been a

S.A.B.E. student three years and credits it as “the biggest reason I have excelled in high school.”

The S.A.B.E. program component that has been the most helpful to Vanessa is the tutoring. She says, “I always aim for a high A in a class, but sometimes you need help. The S.A.B.E. mentors/tutors give you problems to help you get the grasp of how to solve them. It’s really good to be able to practice and to look at old tests. You can sharpen your thinking by learning how to go through the steps to solve problems.”

When asked what she might like to say to a high school student trying to prepare for college, Vanessa had this to say, “The junior and senior years are going to go by really fast. You need to take every opportunity to get tutoring, to do community service, to apply for scholarships. You need to find ways to develop leadership skills, and ways to show that you are responsible and hard working. Working hard pays off. A lot of high school students don’t think it matters to do their work well. It does matter and it does pay off.”

Urban Experience Program



Ms. Rebecca Trevino, director of the Urban Experience program (UEP), reports an-

other year of outstanding results achieved by the students in the program. Originally designed and implemented as a joint project between the Center for Mexican American Studies and the President’s Office to aid in the retention of Hispanic students at the University of Houston, a brief review of the academic year statistics show success on all counts.

In the Spring of 2003, the following students made the Dean’s List: Sergio Alquicira, Sandra Arredondo, Melissa Cavazos, Claudia Escobar, Glenda Flores, Vanessa Guerrero, Angeles Perez, and

Alma Verdejo.

Scholarships were awarded to UEP students by the following organizations: Sembradoresde Amistad, the Childress Foundation, the Hispanic College Fund, the Houston Endowment Foundation, Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Scholarship, Institute of Hispanic Culture Scholarship, Houston Foundation Scholarship, The Simmons Foundation, Lucia La Madrid Cain Scholarship, and El Paso Energy/Jeff Davis High School.

In keeping with the goal of preparing today’s Hispanic students to become successful

employees upon graduation, the UEP sponsored two of its students to attend the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Technical and Career Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Six business students were also sponsored to attend a Networking Luncheon sponsored by the UH Small Business Development Program entitled “Energizing Your Business Through Better Marketing Ideas” at the University of Houston Hilton Hotel.

In the Spring semester 2003 UEP students were hosted by Ms. Connie Krisak, the Station and Urban Design Manager of the Metro rail, during a job site visit to the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s location in order to review the designs for the new rail system. Internship and job possibilities were also explored during the visit.

Also in the Spring semester of 2003, Mr. Rodolfo Santa Cruz, an attorney with the Small Business Development Center, gave a presentation summarizing his college experiences. Mr. Santa Cruz spoke to the students about the qualities and characteristics that would aid in becoming a success after graduation.

The Leadership Retreat for thirty-five of the Urban Experience students in January of 2003 provided a wealth of

information. Mr. Lorenzo Cano, the CMAS Associate Director, began the retreat by leading a discussion on Leadership. State Legislator Irma Rangel sponsored the welcoming reception where Ms. Helena Spangler, Chief of Staff, talked to the students about internship opportunities, the Texas Grant program, scholarships, as well as the job of a legislator, and succeeding in college. Other presentations were as follows: “Voices from the Mexican American Past” by Dr. Emilio Zamora (University of Texas at Austin), “Educational Accountability & Political Process” by Dr. Angela Valenzuela (University of Texas at Austin), “Civil Rights in 2003” by Mr. James Harrington, Director, (Texas Civil Rights Project), and “Immigrants and the Labor Movement” by Ms. Adriana Cadena (AFL-CIO). The Retreat also included a visit to the “Flor y Canto” art exhibit at the Mexic-Arte Museum.

One of the outgrowths of the Leadership Retreat was the requirement that each student deliver a speech to a school or community group about their understanding of the importance of education, voting, or community involvement. All speeches were made before the end of

the spring semester 2003 and a few of the locations included Berry Elementary, Edison Middle School, Lamar High School and Jack Yates High School.

In May 2003, twelve Urban Experience students graduated from the University of Houston. Congratulations are due both to them and to the Director of the Urban Experience Program, Ms. Rebecca Trevino.



*Francisca Escamilla
Urban Experience Program*

Francisca Escamilla has a high G.P.A. that would cause envy in most students. She’s a senior in Computer Science and has been in the Urban Experience Program (UEP) – the program sponsored by the Center for Mexican American Studies and the President’s Office to aid in the university’s retention of Hispanic students - since her freshman year. Yet, she almost slipped through the cracks of the U.S.



educational system. Here's a little of her story.

"I only found out about the Urban Experience program because of a high school counselor. You see, I was ready to join the Army because I didn't have the money to go to college. Also, I really didn't understand the process of applying and going to college. When the recruiter contacted my counselor, she got really upset that I wasn't going to college even though I was third in my class academically. That's when she called Dr. Mindiola and Mr. Cano to try to find some financial help for me."

Ms. Escamilla then applied to the UEP and was accepted.

Four years later, here are her responses when asked which component of the UEP has

helped her the most. "Well, there are many things. The money, of course. And the support. They were very supportive – even about the small things, like doing my class schedule. And if they couldn't help me, they suggested other places at the UH where I could go to get help, like the Scholars Community. They also paid for tutors and review sessions, and that was very helpful."

Francisca continues to explain some of the ways in which the UEP made it possible for her to be successful at the UH. "The program helped me to not be afraid of the university. It taught me to be more friendly and not be scared of the huge 33,000 university. Now I know things that can help younger students

in the program. I can see them come into the university and not know things I didn't know, and I can help them. I've learned how to mentor younger students. Now, even in talking to high school or community college students, people tell me I sound like a counselor – trying to tell them things that will help."

Francisca's plans after graduation? "At first, I was just trying to find employment in my field. Now my thinking has changed. I'm thinking of getting a job with an employer who would be willing to pay my tuition to go back to school after a couple years of working."

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For more information on the Urban Experience Program, contact Rebeca Treviño at 713-743-3140.

Latino Faculty Updates

2003

Dr. Gabriela Baeza Ventura received an NEH Scholarship for the summer of 2002. She was also awarded the New Faculty Research Grant for the summer of 2003. Her book, *Latino Literature Today*, will be published in 2004 by Longman.

Dr. Ivan Bernal traveled to Namibia and South Africa to lecture on his research in August of 2003. In Namibia he was hosted by the Chemistry

Department and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia at Windhoek. There was an international meeting at Kruger National Park in South Africa, the topic of which was "Patterns in Nature". Professor Bernal was one of the invited speakers where he lectured on "Supramolecular Chemistry of Infinite Strings, Nets and 3-D Linkages of Coordination Compounds. The

Consequences of Such Interactions for the Magnetic Behavior of Those Compounds"

Dr. Paul Guajardo was awarded tenure. This promotion took effect in the Fall of 2003. Dr. Guajardo's book, entitled *Chicano Controversy: Oscar Acosta and Richard Rodriguez*, was published (Peter Lang, New York) in 2003.

Dr. Arturo Hernandez was hired as an associate professor



in the Psychology Department.

Dr. Nicolás Kanellos, the Brown Foundation Professor, was elected an Honorary Associate of the Hispanic Society of America. He also received the Barnes & Noble Bookstop Literary Achievement Award. In September 2003, Oxford University Press issued the paperback edition of *Herencia: The Anthology of Hispanic Literature of the United States*. Oryx Press, a division of Greenwood Press, will issue his book *Hispanic Literature of the United States: A Comprehensive Reference*. Dr. Kanellos also wrote the comprehensive entry on Latino literature and its history for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. His article "La expresión cultural de los inmigrantes mexicanos en los Estados Unidos, desde el Porfiriato hasta la Depresión" on the literature of Mexican exiles during the Mexican Revolution was accepted and will be issued by the Instituto Nacional de Estudios de la Revolución Mexicana. From October 7-11, 2003, Dr. Kanellos will be a Visiting Distinguished Professor at the University of Georgia. As Director of The Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Program, Dr. Kanellos recently signed a contract with the world's largest data-

base publisher to distribute to libraries and schools the hundreds of thousands of texts and research, indexed and digitized by the Recovery Project. Dr. Kanellos was appointed in the fall of 2003 by the President of the U.H. to serve on the Search Committee for a Provost.

Dr. Rafael Longoria was elected the president of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture of the U.S. and Canada. In the spring of 2003 Dr. Longoria was inducted as the thirty-third member of Mexico's Academia Nacional de Arquitectura.

Ruben Martinez was featured in the national PBS documentary "Matters of Race" which aired September 23, 2003. His book, "The New Americans", a series of essays on immigration, will be published by The New Press in Spring 2004. In the summer of 2003, he began research on a new book about the Southwest desert and also began writing a screenplay about the U.S.-Mexico border with Academy Award-nominated writer/director Colin Campbell. Last summer also saw the finishing of recording sessions for his first musical album slated for release in 2004.

Dr. Tatcho Mindiola was recognized by Royce Builders

and their Foundation for Youth at their Fourth Annual Scholarship Luncheon for his "Outstanding Contributions to the Education of Hispanic Americans" on May 23, 2003.

Dr. Guadalupe Quintanilla reports that the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of the Houston Public Library is organizing permanent archives on her life. Dr. Quintanilla co-authored, along with Dr. Martha J. Haun, a new edition of the book "Estrategias Efectivas para Hablar en Público", published by Mc-Graw-Hill, Inc.

Dr. Romilia Ramirez was hired as an Assistant Professor in Educational Psychology.

Dr. Nestor P. Rodriguez was named the chairman of the Sociology Department.

Dr. Guadalupe San Miguel's book "Tejano Proud: Tex-Mex Music in the Twentieth Century" was one of the finalists for the 2003 Association for Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) Award for Excellence in Historical Recorded South Research. In July 2003 this book was awarded a "Certificate of Commendation" award by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).

This annual AASLH Award is the most prestigious recog

dition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of local, state, and regional history.

Dr. Maria Elena Soliño was awarded tenure. In addition, she published a book entitled “Women and Children First: Spanish Women Writers and the Fairy Tale Tradition” (Potomac: Scripta

Humanistica).

Ms. Rebecca Treviño was given a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition by the Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee at the Thirteenth Annual Willie Velasquez Hispanic Excellence Award Gala on July 24, 2003. Ms. Treviño was also awarded the Hispanic Excellence Award

for Her Outstanding Contributions to Our Community by Telemundo 47 and the Tejano Center for Community Concerns, Inc. Ms. Treviño was selected to be interviewed as a “Perfil de la Semana” in honor of her work in the community relating to education.

Center for Mexican American Studies

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This newsletter is written to provide the university community and the greater Houston area with information about the Center for Mexican American Studies’ programs, activities, faculty, and publications.

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