

SOMBRILLA

SPRING/SUMMER 2015 | THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO

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Traditions & Icons

A SPECIAL LOOK AT
WHAT MAKES THE UTSA
EXPERIENCE UNIQUE
AND MEMORABLE



INSIDE

13

Uniquely UTSA

From the birth of Rowdy the Roadrunner to the latest Fiesta pin—and a self-reflective nod to Sombrilla Magazine's 30 years of covering campus life—we take a look at the university traditions and icons that have evolved to be unmistakable parts of the UTSA experience.

THE PASEO

4 DO THE ROBOT

A new professor adds to an already exciting robotics program.

6 TECH IT TO THE LIMIT

The Open Cloud Institute is further advancing UTSA's computing cred.

7 SERVICE AWARD

A national nod and new division put Community Service in the spotlight.

8 SPARKING FUN

Architecture and construction students help transform community parks.

9 MAYA BLING

Researchers uncover an ancient tomb in Belize with royal treasure.

10 COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Three students' efforts epitomize UTSA's volunteer spirit.

12 A FOCUSED LENS

Via a passion project, one student reveals the Humans of UTSA.

COMMUNITY

26 PAVE THE WAY

Roadrunner alumni leave their mark with Pave the Paseo program.

28 ARTIST'S PALETTE

Joan Fabian ventures into profiling other artists on TV.

28 CLASS NOTES

Catching up on alumni news.

29 CREEPY FRIENDS

Veronica Campbell Stich is winning accolades for her novels.

30 HE IS KING

As El Rey Feo, Jon Gary Herrera is an advocate for education.

31 HUMAN TOUCH

Social worker Michael Cirlos builds community through photography.

32 BUILDING TOMORROW

The university launches new strategy for its future.

Incoming freshmen learn the tradition of the UTSA creed at the Convocation Ceremony.

PHOTO: MARK MCCLENDON

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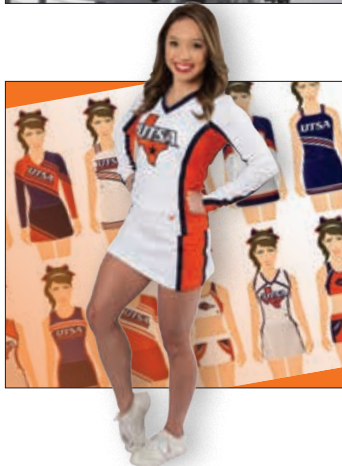
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SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW UTSA:

As a companion to our Traditions & Icons coverage in this issue, we've put together a quiz about all things UTSA. Just how good is your knowledge about your alma mater? Take our test and see how you measure up to other Road-runners' efforts.

AVAILABLE NOW



CLICK FOR DOLLARS:

The university's crowdfunding website, Launch UTSA, started last year as a way to have small donations add up for research, service learning, study abroad trips and even the purchase of new uniforms for the UTSA Cheer team. Learn how all projects have been meeting or exceeding their funding goals.

AVAILABLE NOW



UTSA ♥ TO GIVE BACK:

Faculty, staff and students fan out across San Antonio on a Saturday each spring to donate their time at more than a dozen local organizations. This year, *Sombrilla Magazine* followed some of these United to Serve participants, who helped with a group's annual spring celebration. Check out our video of their volunteer efforts.

AVAILABLE NOW



BUILD IT BETTER:

A group of UTSA students has substantially cut the cost and time required to produce a functional robot by 3D-printing the parts for a class project. Watch their efforts in UTSA's Autonomous Control Engineering laboratory with us and learn what it could mean for the future of robotics.

COMING IN JULY



CAMPING IN: Forensics, archaeology, engineering and music are some of the areas that secondary and primary school students travel to UTSA to study each summer. Follow along as we check in on these summer camps as they prep the college students of the future.

COMING IN AUGUST

SOMBRILLA

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SHOWCASING ROADRUNNER PRIDE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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"Love my school! #fiesta2015 #UTSAfiesta #vivaUTSA"



@osnapitzsaraxo

"Have you met my little squirrel friend? #squirrelsofUTSA"



@utsaathletics

"Only one day left in the @UTSA_softball Senior Day countdown! #10 Kelsi Ott will be one of four honored on Sunday. #birdsup"



@05_becca_23

"See you in the fall, UTSA. #futuretexan #goodbyecalifornia"



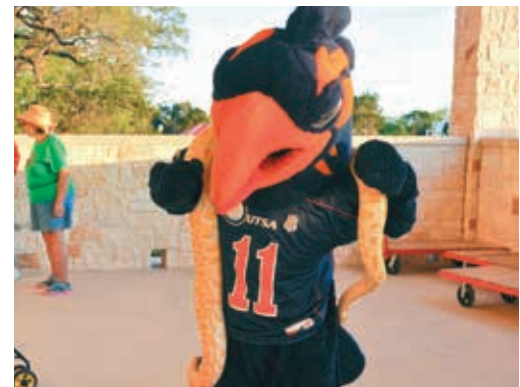
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"Toast to all them aspiring Roadrunners. #birdsup"



@rowdyutsa

"Had to wrestle this python while on my way to campus, but I showed him Roadrunners are faster!"



THE PASEO

A STROLL AROUND CAMPUS



An engineering team works on Ein, a robotic leg.

Robotics Frontiers

RESEARCH | STUDENTS ARE TAKING ENGINEERING SKILLS TO NEW LEVELS, INCLUDING BOTS THAT INTERACT WITH HUMANS

BY MICHELLE MONDO

The cheering of excited students echoed through the atrium of the Biotechnology, Sciences and Engineering Building, coaxing the curious out of their offices and to the overlooking stories to investigate. The Battling Rowdy Bots had begun.

It was late afternoon, just after the College of Engineering's annual Technology Symposium, and on the ground floor, students in Pranav Bhounsule's mechatronics class fought to win. Well, more accurately, their robots did the fighting. The robot combat was part of the class's final, and it was certainly popular, attracting people four floors up to watch what was unfolding.

Bhounsule, a mechanical engineering assistant professor, was one of 40 new faculty researchers to join UTSA in fall 2014. His enthusiasm in the lab adds to an already well-established robotics curriculum that includes the work of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering's Mo Jamshidi. A Lutzer Brown Endowed Chair and Professor, Jamshidi is also the director of the university's Autonomous Control Engineering laboratory.

Senior engineering students who worked with Bhounsule say he has brought energy, excitement and support to the program. "He's also really pushed mentorships, and he's always helping us in the robotics lab," says Christian Trevino, a mechanical engineering senior who worked in the lab for her capstone project with three other teammates.

Along with their time in the robotics lab, Trevino, Racquel De La Garza, Robert Brothers and Eric Sanchez spent more than 250 hours in a machine shop to make 58 parts for Ein, a robotic leg meant to be part of a quadruped industrial robot. They also created a 3D-printed toy of a wolf that incorporated the leg design.

More and more jobs in the U.S. require some skill in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, according to STEMconnector, a consortium of companies, nonprofits, educators and other experts working to provide resources and services related to all things STEM. Robotics are seen as a good way to get students at younger ages interested in STEM fields, and robot competitions have been on the rise.

"Dr. Bhounsule is exactly the type of faculty member we aim to hire," says JoAnn Browning, dean of the College of Engineering. "His excellent educational credentials, coupled with his experiences working at Carnegie Mellon and with Disney, enable him to bring really exciting and unique elements of robotics to our engineering students."

Prior to graduation this spring, electrical engineering senior Roberto Mexquitic had already used the work he did on his team's capstone project for his job search. "I'm in my second round of interviews at one company, and I think [human-interaction robotics project] SHUSHbot made a difference," he said a week before the final project was due.

Mexquitic and his teammates worked on one of two senior capstone projects that involved human-interaction robots.

SHUSHbot (or Smart Humanoid for Silencing Humans) was designed and programmed to tell people to quiet down in a library setting. A yellow smiley face shows up on a laptop "head" as the robot travels around to tell patrons they are being a bit too rambunctious.

Other projects designed by UTSA students included GuideBot (a robot programmable to give directions around any campus) and a rimless wheel made of mostly 3D-printed materials (essentially a set of "legs" radiating out on a wheel like spokes but without the outer rim).


Rico Jovanni Ulep and Scott Miller have an ideal use in mind for their rimless wheel project. Now, if only they could get Curiosity back to Earth from its Mars mission. The wheels on the robotic rover have suffered damage because of the unexpectedly rugged conditions. "Legged robotics are good on rough terrain," Miller says, "so Mars or even the lunar surface, for example, would be ideal for a rimless wheel."



More and more jobs in the U.S. require some skill in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Sparking interest in STEM is a mission of Bhounsule's, who says he chose to come to UTSA because the university strives to balance teaching with research. "I think UTSA is one of the rare [research-focused] schools that also prioritizes teaching. The vision is to become Tier One but also one of the big things you do here is educate first-time college students."

To help with that mission, Bhounsule hopes to focus on outreach to high schools. He also believes mentoring minorities underrepresented in the field is imperative. He points out that Hispanics are the fastest growing population in the country but represent only 5 percent of minorities getting STEM degrees. By bringing minorities into the field and providing outreach and mentoring, Bhounsule says, those students can in turn become ambassadors for STEM.

SHUSHbot project teammate Javier Gonzalez is one such student. From a low-income area in San Antonio, Gonzalez says he knew he wanted to study engineering but didn't know which discipline to pursue. "In my last semester of high school a college graduate came to volunteer and teach us about circuits," he says. "I knew I wanted to pursue robotics as a kid, but once I saw what circuits could do, I made sure I got into the electrical engineering school. For me, to go back and make an impact in someone's life—like that one person did for me—will be a great satisfaction." 

Heads in the Cloud

RESEARCH | UTSA TAKES STEPS TO FURTHER POSITION ITSELF AND SAN ANTONIO AS WORLD LEADERS IN CLOUD TECHNOLOGY

Under an initiative to develop degree programs in cloud computing and big data and to foster collaboration with industry, UTSA announced in February the creation of its Open Cloud Institute.

Through the philanthropic 80/20 Foundation and other industry supporters, the institute launched with

“The Open Cloud Institute will enhance UTSA’s capabilities, while boosting the supply of cloud engineers that all of our businesses need.”

—GRAHAM WESTON

initial gifts and in-kind investments of \$9 million. The foundation has committed \$4.8 million to support four endowed professorships, up to two faculty research positions, 10 graduate student endowments and research funding.

“I believe that academia is just at the

beginning of the cloud revolution,” says Graham Weston, founder and chairman of 80/20 and Rackspace, which is also supporting the institute. “We’re going to see amazing

innovation that is created from it. We can’t even imagine what those innovations will be.”

UTSA is already recognized as the top university in the country for cybersecurity education, with research and education programs that span its College of Business, College of Engineering and College of Sciences. The Open Cloud Institute further distinguishes UTSA as a top-tier research institution.

“UTSA is emerging as a global leader in academic research built upon open technologies,” Weston says. “The Open Cloud Institute will enhance UTSA’s capabilities, while boosting the supply of cloud engineers that all of our businesses need in order to power the technology companies of the future.”

The institute will actively engage with industry partners, such as Rackspace, to facilitate technology transfer and provide a platform for industry projects in next-generation cloud technology.

“By recruiting the nation’s most sought-after scholars, UTSA has developed tremendous expertise in cloud, cyber computing and analytics,” says UTSA President Ricardo Romo. “The Open Cloud Institute further builds on that strength. With the support of our industry partners, UTSA



Honors for Outreach

COMMUNITY SERVICE | A STRING OF ACCOLADES FOR UTSA'S EFFORTS BUILDS MOMENTUM TOWARD TIER ONE GOAL

To kick off the university's 11th annual United to Serve event, students gathered in the H-E-B University Center ballroom, listening to music, joking around and enjoying free food, while awaiting special guests. San Antonio officials Ron Nirenberg and Ivy Taylor were arriving on that Friday afternoon in April to present citations from the city to recognize UTSA's commitment to volunteering and community service.

"I want to say how inspiring your service is," Nirenberg said at the ceremony. "What you do is an example for every San Antonian."

In total, 348 students volunteered 1,557 hours as part of the event.

Only a few months earlier the university was named to the U.S. President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for the fifth consecutive year.

It's these types of efforts that helped garner UTSA the prestigious Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching this year. The honor acknowledges the university's "dynamic and noteworthy" community outreach efforts in San Antonio and its impact on the global community through teaching and research, public service, volunteerism, civic partnerships and economic development.


"The Carnegie designation speaks to our commitment to community outreach and our drive

to make a difference in the lives of our students and our community," says UTSA President Ricardo Romo. "It is a remarkable milestone for the university and another advancement in our journey to Tier One recognition."

That commitment to service has grown even stronger with the launch of the university's Center for Civic Engagement in late 2014. The center serves as a nucleus of support to students, faculty and staff who aspire to advance the common good of San Antonio and surrounding communities.

"We are an engaged university," says Jude Valdez, vice president for community services. "It is part of our DNA. Since UTSA was first established, we have been deeply connected to our region and our community."


UTSA is among 83 U.S. universities to receive the Carnegie designation for the first time and among an elite group of only 361 campuses to gain the designation. There are more than 4,700 colleges and universities in the U.S.

The foundation awarded the designation based on a university-wide evaluation that documented UTSA's extensive community engagement efforts, including its \$1.2 billion annual impact on the local economy; support of almost 16,000 jobs; public service and volunteer programs; leadership in area public schools; and outreach to Hispanic, military and underserved communities. 



Graham Weston speaks with students after the launch event for the Open Cloud Institute.

students and researchers now have unparalleled opportunities to collaborate on projects that will lead to new innovations in this dynamic field."

The university has also received in-kind donations from industry leaders such as AMD, Intel, Mellanox Technologies and Seagate as well as support from the Open Compute Project and the OpenStack Foundation. 



San Antonio children from Camelot Elementary cut the ribbon to signify the opening of their new park facilities.

Creating a Spark

COMMUNITY SERVICE | STUDENTS TRANSFORM LOCAL SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS INTO PARKS

BY MICHELLE MONDO

As hundreds of San Antonio executives descended on Wheatley Middle School to tackle the final construction needed to transform the playground and sports fields into what would become a new community park, a class of UTSA students waited for their moment to stand out.

In a role reversal designed specifically for the city's latest San Antonio Sports SPARK park, UTSA construction students would be the ones managing nearly 300 managers from H-E-B and the company's many vendors. The June 4 event followed six months of planning after the Wheatley SPARK was chosen as one of several charity work projects to be completed during H-E-B's 30th annual Tournament of Champions.

"This whole project wouldn't have happened without UTSA," says George Block, chairman of the San Antonio Sports Foundation. "On the front end, the architecture

students did the fundamental site plan and design. On the back end, the construction students slammed the rest of the construction together and made it all happen."

SPARKs are hybrids of school playgrounds and community parks. The Wheatley SPARK was one of the largest San Antonio has seen since adopting the Houston program in 2012. With previous projects, under the tutelage of architecture professor Taeg Nishimoto, only UTSA architecture students were involved. They drew up the plans to be handed over to an architect, saving money for organizers.

The Wheatley design included, among other improvements, more lighting, a soccer field and exercise equipment in the area of the existing football field. Former NFL player Priest Holmes is consulting on the circuit exercise equipment, according to Roger Rodriguez, the physical education and health coordinator for San



Camelot Park Plan

Antonio Independent School District.

John Murphy, dean of UTSA's College of Architecture, Construction and Planning, says the SPARK program fits into the mission of providing service learning for students, adding, "Our students need to graduate with a sense of cultural leadership."

Because this project was picked for such a large group of volunteers, organizers decided senior construction students would plan out what was needed from the volunteers. The students led the orientation, going over safety protocols and organizing the groups while managing the site, says Yilmaz Karasulu, chair of the Department of Construction Science.

"It was really cool how motivated the park made the community," says Genevieve Ramirez M.Arch. '15, who was involved in the city's first SPARK, at Sky Harbour Elementary School. Ramirez's role grew for a project at Camelot Elementary School, where she led meetings with the public to hear feedback that was incorporated into the design. "Community members had their ideas of what it should be," she adds, "and they took pride in that project because they had a say in it."



Members of the UTSA student team present proposed plans for park improvements to community members.



A King's Treasure

RESEARCH | ANTHROPOLOGISTS DISCOVER SPECIAL LINK TO THE PAST

BY MICHELLE MONDO

Buried with a Maya king some 17 centuries ago in the Mopan River valley of Belize and discovered by a UTSA research team last summer, a marine-shell pendant has helped solve an important mystery—the ancient name of an archaeological site.

"The hieroglyphic text carved on this shell pendant has a glyph that names the site of Buenavista and the date that the king ascended to the throne," says UTSA anthropology professor Kathryn Brown. Also carved on the shell, Brown says, is an elaborate portrait of an ancient Maya ancestor.

Text on the pendant denoting the title of the individual also could mean that the research

team unearthed remains that are of one of the earliest kings in the Belize River Valley.

While there could be many more discoveries ahead as researchers continue to sort through the artifacts found in the tomb, Brown says the pendant alone provides an important piece of the political history puzzle in the region.

Brown and Jason Yaeger, the Department of Anthropology chair, have been conducting research in Belize for more than two decades. The pendant is just one of many items discovered in two royal tombs excavated by the UTSA team working under a permit issued by the Belize Institute of Archaeology.





Albert Lee has created three Iron Man costumes for his outreach events.

PHOTO BY
PATRICK RAY DUNN

Commitment to Cause

COMMUNITY SERVICE | DESPITE HAVING TO KEEP UP WITH COURSES, IT'S NOT DIFFICULT TO FIND STUDENTS WORKING TO GIVE BACK

BY MICHELLE MONDO

UTSA students don't shy away from opportunities to serve their university or San Antonio. Last year alone, 12,000 students provided services and programs to more than 660,000 people across South Central Texas. *Sombrilla Magazine* caught up with three busy Roadrunners—Iron Man, the Queen of Soul and Miss San Antonio—to learn what motivates them.

Albert Lee: Iron Man

His Iron Man suit has made him a popular figure on campus, with people asking for autographs and to take photos,

but Albert Lee says he still enjoys some anonymity. "No one recognizes me without the suit," the international business major says. "I like it like that. I like the peace and quiet."

When he dons one of his three custom-made suits, though, that's when Lee transforms into the superhero—with the outgoing personality to match. The suits he builds are not just for fun, although



Miss San Antonio Emma Faye Rudkin wants to bring awareness to deaf causes.



PHOTO BY MICHELLE TRAVIS

he admits the projects are just that. Lee creates the suits to help UTSA student organization For the Kids, which hosts a dance marathon each year to raise money for children with cancer. “Last year was the first time I got involved,” he says. “I wanted to use the suits to help recruit people to the organization, promote the dance marathon and do hospital visits.”

Lee recalls one girl from this year’s event who was undergoing chemotherapy. Unlike some of the more shy or nervous kids, this young lady, he says, walked right up to him and took his hand: “She goes, ‘OK, Iron Man. Let’s dance.’”

Spending 12 hours dancing in the suit got hot at times, but, Lee says, he didn’t really consider it: “The children with cancer, the children doing chemo—they have it so much harder. I would gladly wear my suit to help them.”

Kamilah Avery: Queen of Soul

Since she began classes at 5 years old, dancing has been a salve for Kamilah Avery, especially after moving to Texas as a preteen. “I found a studio and started taking dance again—contemporary, jazz and modern,” which helped her cope, she says, with what was a difficult change.

Avery decided to stay in her newly adopted home state for college, opting for UTSA because she liked its reputation. She says mixing dance, business and communication into a multidisciplinary studies degree has helped her prepare for her ultimate goal—owning her own performing arts school for girls. Meanwhile, she’s been traveling to her native California every summer since she was 16 to help her aunt run a summer conservatory school for singing and dancing.

Now that she’s been crowned Fiesta San Antonio’s Queen of Soul, she’s representing the pageant at schools, senior centers and other locations while balancing her final year of university as well as her job as a stylist at Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th.

As a pageant queen, Avery experienced Fiesta for the first time this year and was blown away by the size of the 10-day party. “Everyone comes out to celebrate,” she says. “It was amazing!”

Avery is also raising awareness about the need for more scholarships for African American girls, a goal of the pageant. “I do believe that African American women experience a lot more marginalization,” she explains, “but you still have to be the best you can be, work 100 times harder, which says so much about our race and how beautiful and strong we can be.”

Emma Faye Rudkin: Miss San Antonio

Riding on a float during the Battle of Flowers Parade, Miss San Antonio, Emma Faye Rudkin, was waving to the crowd when she spotted a woman who started to sign with her hands. “She signed to me, ‘I’m deaf too,’” Rudkin says,

recalling the “coolest thing” that happened during her first time at Fiesta. “We both had this intimate moment, just her and I, because we shared this. That’s why I wanted to do the pageant—to say, ‘You aren’t alone.’”

The first legally deaf Miss San Antonio, the 19-year-old says her childhood was marked by acute loneliness and depression. The curiosity of her classmates about her bulky hearing aids and limited speech sometimes came with stinging words: “I was made fun of because of how I talked.” Although Rudkin lost her hearing at age 4—likely caused by a high fever that led to an infection—she learned to talk by working with a speech therapist to move her mouth to the shape of certain sounds.

Rudkin says a Christian camp for the deaf was the transformative experience needed for her to accept herself. “I took vocal lessons,” she says, “and did the school talent show. I learned to play the guitar, ukulele and piano.” She entered high school afterward with a newfound confidence.

Her talent in the Miss San Antonio pageant was singing and guitar, which she plays by feeling vibration on the strings. She’ll be competing for Miss Texas in July.

Her parents, who she describes as her biggest advocates, helped her start her nonprofit, Aid the Silent, to bring awareness to deaf causes. She hopes to someday have her own camp for deaf children and wants to dedicate more time to becoming fluent in sign language. “I want to reach out to all kids who might need support,” she says. “I want them to be proud of themselves just as they are.”

Queen of Soul Kamilah Avery helps highlight the need for more scholarships for African American girls.

COURTESY OF SAN ANTONIO QUEEN OF SOUL, INC.





Roadrunners Revealed

A STUDENT'S PASSION EVOLVES INTO DOCUMENTING PERSONAL CAMPUS STORIES

BY MICHELLE MONDO

For Vinh-Son Nguyen, walking up to a stranger to ask if he can take a photograph for the Humans of UTSA page on Facebook is a form of exploration. And if the premed major loves anything, it's exploring. He's come to the realization, he says, that becoming an astronaut would be his dream job and has actually interned at NASA. "Being the next explorer to do things no one has ever done and expand the bounds of human reach are something that really inspires me," he says. "And I find that space, like the stories of fellow humans, really makes people think."

When it comes to Humans of UTSA, which he began in February, Nguyen has some rules about whom he approaches. Primarily, a person needs to be alone; he doesn't bother students who are studying, talking on their phone or hanging out in groups. He finds people are more apt to be personal when no one else is around. He's also discovered that talking to faculty and staff has been one of the more enjoyable aspects of the project, he says, because "they've just lived more than students, and there's more wisdom there."

A sense of wonder, surprise and connection are just a few of the things Nguyen wants Humans of UTSA to bring to its followers. Despite wanting to instill that sense of community, he was reluctant to reveal himself as the man behind the camera, explaining he doesn't want Humans of UTSA to be thought of as just his project, especially since his days here are winding down. He'll begin his third and final year at UTSA in the fall but will spend spring 2016 interning in Washington, D.C. He'll then transfer out to complete his medical studies.

With time constraints in mind, Nguyen wants to

make Humans of UTSA something that can be handed down. He'd like to see a student organization formed around the project to ensure its longevity. As a UTSA Ambassador and head of media production for the campus organization For the Kids, Nguyen recognizes how hard it is for one student to keep up with an ongoing project. Until then, he is lining up friends to help him collect photos and interviews that he can post at least once a week while he is home in Houston for the summer.

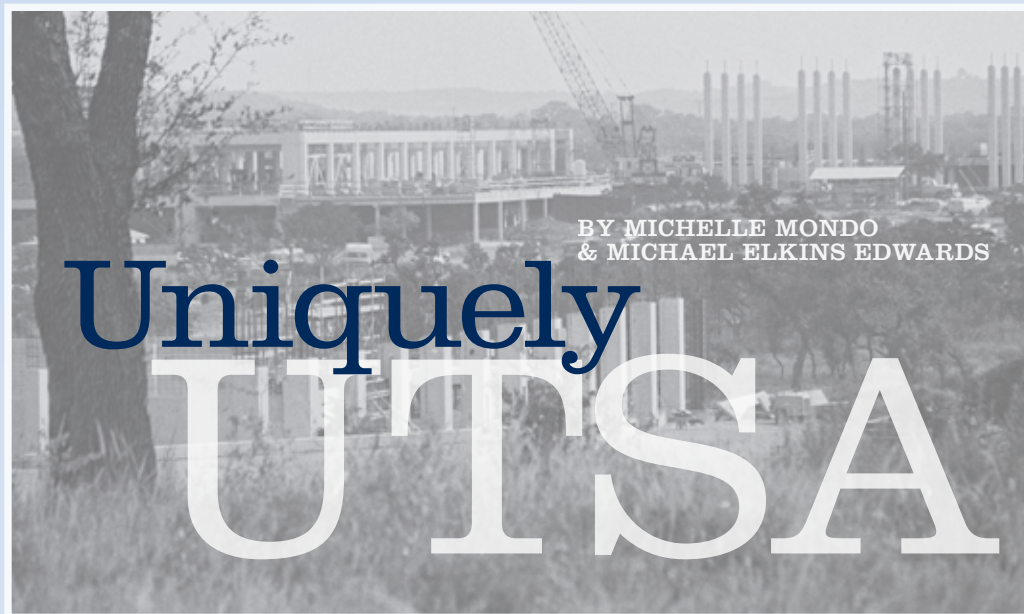
Ultimately, Nguyen hopes that when people read the Humans of UTSA stories, they take a moment to consider their fellow students as well as the faculty and staff around them. "I want to give a bit of humanity back to society," he says. "I see people on their phones all the time. If they have free time, they're on the phone. We're geared toward technology and are missing those potential connections and conversations that could be made. I want to make people think about that." 🐇



PHOTO: PATRICK RAY DUNN

Vinh-Son Nguyen hopes his Humans of UTSA stories make people stop and consider the people around them on campus.

A similar project—but focusing on downtown San Antonio—is being led by one of UTSA's alumni; see "Building a Sense of Community" on page 31.



It's been less than 50 years

since UTSA was created by an act of the Texas legislature, but in that truly short era, the university has built a solid reputation as an emerging premier research institution. Much of UTSA's advancement has to do with the core values that support its educational mission: integrity, excellence, inclusiveness, respect, collaboration and innovation.

It's the added layers of personal touches, though—decades of accumulation of individual flair of students, faculty, administration and staff—that have built the rich, diverse, colorful tapestry that is indisputably UTSA. It's a vision of promise and achievement that makes current and former Roadrunners so proud and that makes future Roadrunners want to become part of the developing story.

Over the years the teams that have produced *Sombrilla Magazine* have been proud to tell these stories and to be part of UTSA. In celebration of the magazine's 30th anniversary we're taking a look at the university traditions and icons that have evolved to be unmistakable parts of the UTSA experience.

We invite you to take a moment to enjoy the vision you've helped to build, learn about something you never knew or maybe had forgotten and be inspired to continue strengthening UTSA's traditions, its history and its reputation. >>

BIRD WATCHING

You've Come a Long Way, Rowdy

During a series of elections in 1977, either a star or an armadillo was supposed to become UTSA's mascot. But like any good sporting tale, the roadrunner made a comeback and prevailed in a final student vote over the armadillo. And Rowdy the Roadrunner was born. The university mascot has had a few makeovers through the years. And can we just say, we believe they've definitely been for the better.

5

- 1 The 1970s featured a Warner Bros.-inspired mascot.
- 2 The early '80s were the beginning of our own identity.
- 3 In the mid-1980s, old and new styles were blended for a unique Rowdy.
- 4 The 1990s heralded a reconfigured costume to more accurately reflect the UTSA print version of Rowdy the Roadrunner.
- 5 In 2008 a redesigned and refined Rowdy was sleeker, more animated and reflected the spirit of UTSA and its expanded athletics endeavors.

WEB EXTRA

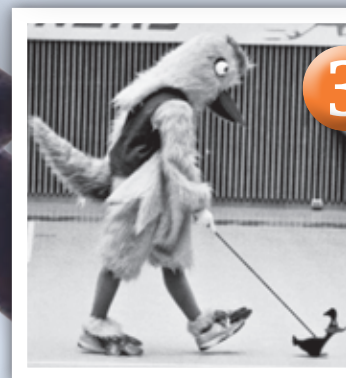
Read the backstory on how Rowdy came to be by visiting us at *Sombrilla Magazine* online.



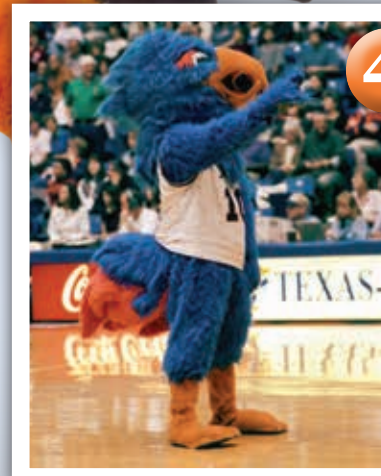
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3



4



ROAD TO THE ROADRUNNER

The route to selecting a university mascot had some twists and turns.

SEPTEMBER 1977

- Vote 1: Top votes: armadillo, eagle, el conquistador, jaguar, puma, roadrunner, star, toro, vaquero

NOVEMBER 1977

- Vote 2: Contenders narrowed: armadillo, star
- Student government nullifies vote for failure to adhere to election rules

NOVEMBER 1977

- Nine original candidates return to ballot
- Vote 3: Contenders narrowed: armadillo, roadrunner

DECEMBER 1977

- Vote 4: Roadrunner wins student vote

JANUARY 1978

- UTSA's acting president recommends adoption of roadrunner mascot to regents

FEBRUARY 1978

- UT System regents approve the roadrunner as UTSA mascot

UTSA Cheer squad members flash the new roadrunner hand signal.



A Bird in the Hand

THE GENESIS OF THE ROADRUNNER HAND SIGN

The story about how the roadrunner hand sign came to be is another bit of legend where memories and recollections have to be trusted. Back in 2010, Joe Michael Feist, *Sombrilla Magazine's* associate editor, wrote that the story unfolded on a Thursday night at Wursthfest in New Braunfels in 1979, when there were signs, signs, everywhere a sign. Except a roadrunner hand sign. And that didn't seem right to a group of pledge brothers from UTSA about to join Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity.

Charles Guerra '84, who was there that night, claims that was the birth of the roadrunner hand sign as we know it today. "It was some kind of college night," says Guerra, who earned a B.B.A. in finance and economics. "There were kids from colleges all over Texas. And they all started doing their hand signals—the gig 'em from the Aggies, hook 'em from the Longhorns, the Baylor claw. And somebody asked where we were from and what our mascot was. UTSA wasn't very well known then. We said 'Roadrunners,' and they asked what our hand sign was. We realized we didn't have one."

Fueled by a few cold beverages, a "creative spirit" took hold of the group, Guerra recalls.

Eddie Rios '85 (B.B.A. in marketing) was another pledge brother at Wursthfest that night: "We all started talking about school spirit and traditions, and just began trying out different signals with our hands. Soon, we started throwing out the thumb and the pinkie and yelling beep-beep like the roadrunner cartoon."

It seemed to fit, Guerra remembers: "Somebody said the thumb is the beak and the little finger is the tail."

The pledge brothers took their creation back to campus where, Guerra adds, there weren't many opportunities to flash the sign. There were no intercollegiate sports at the time; basketball wouldn't start for another two years. But the hand signal survived, ultimately thrived and became, at least for UTSA, the sign of the times.



BUILDING A LEGACY

The First Campus?

From a historic perspective, one could look at the Institute of Texan Cultures as UTSA's "first campus."

Administrative offices for the university's first president, Arleigh B. Templeton, were set up in 1970 at ITC's HemisFair Park location while architects got busy planning.

By 1973, construction began on Main Campus on a 600-acre tract in the rolling foothills of San Antonio's northwest side while classes were temporarily being held at the Koger Executive Center. In September 1975 classes started at the location for students enrolled in five colleges: Business, Fine and Applied Arts, Sciences and Mathematics, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Multidisciplinary Studies. Enrollment was 4,433, with 2,247 undergraduates. When the John Peace Library opened in 1976, it became the new administration building.

The Institute of Texan Cultures formally became part of UTSA in 1986, the same year the institute's annual Texas Folklife Festival celebrated its 15th anniversary.



Who Are You?

You've seen the names—from Alvarez to Ximenes—on streets and buildings around Main and Downtown campuses. But who are these people, and what's their connection to UTSA? Don't worry. We've done the research for you, and here's a sampling of the surnames that come across our paths on a daily basis. For our expanded list, visit us at *Sombrilla Magazine* online.

James E. Bauerle: *Campus Connection:* **Bauerle Road**, which runs along the eastern edge of Main Campus from Peace Circle to UTSA Boulevard, and **Bauerle Road Garage**. *The Person:* The Texas native spent much of his professional career as a dental surgeon and mentor in San Antonio. He became a member of the UT System Board of Regents in 1973, the year the first class enrolled at UTSA. Among his numerous honors was being recognized as an Outstanding Citizen of Texas by the state legislature and being given an honorary doctor of laws degree by UTSA. He died in 2007.



Flawn

Peter T. Flawn: *Campus Connection:* **Flawn Sciences Building** and numerous professor endowments. *The Person:* Flawn was a prominent geologist and author who took the reins as the university's second president in 1973, the year UTSA first held classes. From 1960 until his move to UTSA, he was an educator and ad-

ministrator at UT Austin, including being an executive vice president and later president. During his UTSA presidency, Main Campus opened, and the university held its first commencement ceremony and achieved full accreditation of its graduate programs.

Mary E. McKinney: *Campus Connection:* **McKinney Humanities Building**. *The Person:* A San Antonio native and former school teacher, McKinney left UTSA her estate—which included 5,240 acres in ranch land located above the Eagle Ford Shale as well as stocks and bonds—valued at \$22 million upon her death in 2009. Known for her hot pink lipstick (which was reportedly an act of rebellion against her strict father), McKinney was a strong advocate for education and enrolled in 11 postgraduate courses at UTSA from 1992 to 1996 to supplement her role as an educator. Her gift is the single largest private donation in university history.



McKinney

John R. Peace: *Campus Connection:* **John Peace Library**, which was dedicated to Peace by the UT System Board of Regents in 1974 after his death, was completed in 1975 and opened to students in 1976. Also: **John Peace Boulevard**, which is the primary entrance to Main Campus from Loop 1604, and the connected **Peace Circle**, which radiates into Main Campus and toward West Campus. *The Person:* Peace was a San Antonio



In the Beginning...

There's an unassuming structure at the intersection of Bauerle Road and Key Circle on Main Campus that looks like it couldn't possibly serve a purpose. Perhaps it's simply some piece of art-work, being so close to the Arts Building, to adorn the trip from East Campus? Not according to the 1997 publication *UTSA Uncovered* by former student James Pinkard.

When renowned San Antonio architect O'Neil Ford was helping to plan UTSA, he wanted to know what his desired building-construction material—a new, soft beige formulation of concrete—would look like amid its surroundings. And so this prototype for the university's original seven buildings was cast. Once the initial construction phase was complete, the monument was left behind, Pinkard says, “as a reminder of how the university began.”



Tobin

lawyer and public official who was appointed to the UT System Board of Regents in 1967 and served as chairman from 1971 to 1973. He is credited with “being the driving force” in establishing UTSA, according to the Texas State Historical Association. He donated his Texana collection of some 900 books and 500 manuscripts, dating back to the 1700s, to UTSA Special Collections.

Margaret L. Batts Tobin: *Campus Connection:* **Tobin Avenue**, which runs somewhat parallel to Loop 1604 between West Campus and Peace Circle, the **Tobin Avenue Garage** and the **Margaret Batts Tobin Laboratory** on West Campus. *The Person:* A Texas native who gained

an appreciation for cultural events in New York City as a young woman, Tobin became a civic leader in San Antonio, where she helped organize the symphony orchestra in the 1930s and later established an opera series. In the '50s she was president of the Symphony Society and served on the boards of directors for other local cultural organizations. She was a member of the UT System Board of Regents from 1949 to 1955. After the death of her husband she chaired the board of his aerial survey company. She died in 1989.



Professors who taught early UTSA classes are now creating an oral history of those days.

REMEMBER WHEN...

A project to record and preserve testimonies about the early years of UTSA is now under way by the very individuals who helped shape the university. Members of the Retired Faculty Association have already recorded approximately 30 interviews for its Oral History Project. The recordings will become part of the Institute of Texan Cultures' Oral History Collection, housed at the UTSA Libraries' University Archives.

The goal of the project is to capture and archive faculty statements about UTSA's development, making them accessible for future historical reference and interpretation.

“We are just collecting the data and our stories are being stored in the University Archives for historians and their students who would like to examine them later,” says Marian Martinello, RFA president. “The older this university gets, the more these early days are going to be viewed as significant precursors of where it's gone—to see things we can't see now but can be seen only in hindsight.”

GO AHEAD, TOUCH!



Flowing Luck

Placing two hands on the fountain in Sombrilla Plaza just before finals is said to bring good luck on exams, according to university folklore. But don't try to abuse the fountain's manna, since touching it at any other time, legend says, brings bad luck.

In January 2014, 35 years after

being built, the fountain returned to service after extensive renovations, becoming fully sustainable by using only reclaimed water from air conditioning systems of neighboring buildings—an idea proposed by students to ensure it could remain operational year-round without straining the water supply.

For the Romeos and Juliets

Legend has it that two UTSA students fell in love on the bridge that connects the Arts and Sciences buildings. Based on the couple's romance, it became known as the Bridge of Love, according to a 1997 article that set the scene at "more than 20 years ago." But categorize this under "Things That Make You Go, Hmm?"

The story recalls that Julie, an undergraduate art student, and boyfriend Jason met, fell in love, separated and then fell in love all over again on the bridge. The two were separated when Jason got drafted and left Julie a note, only to return a year later and

surprise her.

The legend creates a bit of a historical pickle, though. If Julie was getting a bachelor's in art, that means she wouldn't have been admitted until 1976, the first year UTSA was open to undergrads. The Vietnam-era draft, however, was suspended three years earlier, and even the Selective Service registration requirement was dropped in 1975 and didn't resume until 1980.

It appears Jason has some explaining to do about that missing year. Or if you know Julie or Jason, have them get in touch with us! We'd love to hear from them firsthand.



Hand on Heart

UTSA's Downtown Campus is home to *Milagros*, an art piece consisting of 31 unique bronze hearts created by artist and UTSA alumna Diana Rodriguez Gil M.F.A. '86.

"This art is inspired by small representational objects that are placed at sites of contemplation," according to a plaque on campus that cites the author. "These *milagros* are offered as a continu-



ous prayer and are intended to be testimonials, memorials or landmarks of community history.

The hearts also represent the love and dedication shown by many persons involved in the education of our community."

The word *milagro* is Spanish for *miracle*, and over time UTSA students on the Downtown

Campus have started rubbing them for good luck or a miracle, especially around finals.





A wooden gong, which is a circular, flat percussion instrument. It has a light-colored wood grain and a black cord tied around its handle. The gong is shown in a close-up, slightly angled view.

But what's Fiesta without medals to collect? Check out some of UTSA's vintage designs.



What does a roadrunner say? Both chicks and adults make a clacking sound that's seen as a potential warning sign to predators or as a way to find other roadrunners.

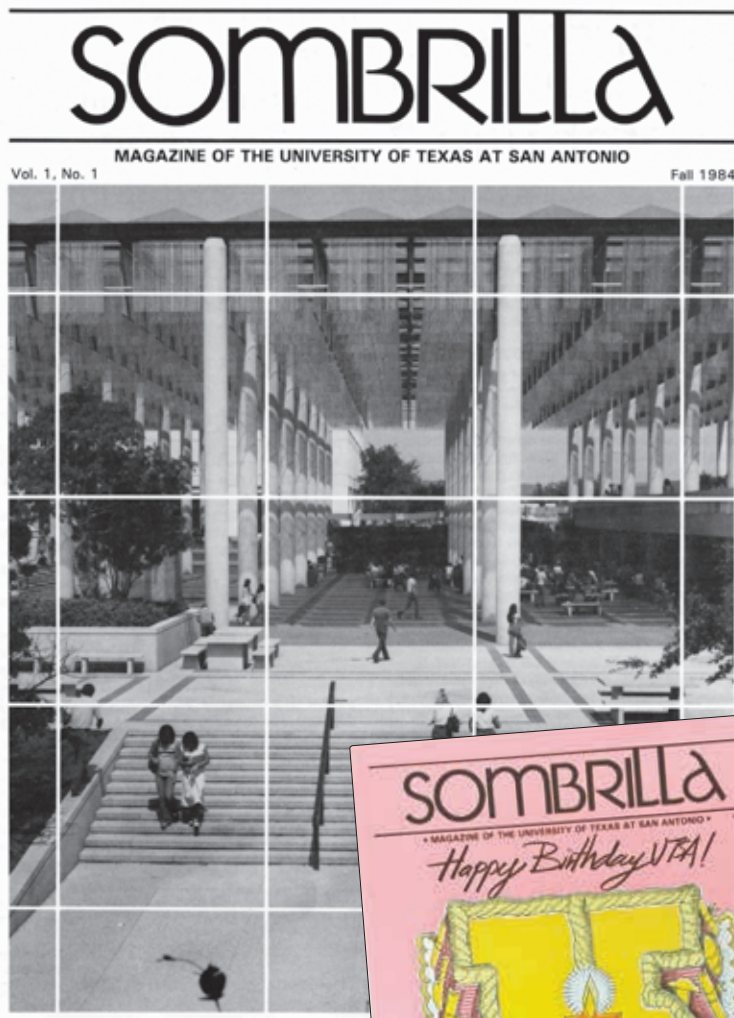
SPRING/SUMMER 2015

The Way We Were

Published since fall 1984, *Sombrilla Magazine* is a university tradition in its own right. We've chronicled UTSA's milestones, collective spirit and physical growth in an effort to bring the entire university family the best and most interesting stories of campus life and academics. In fact, a self-reflective nod to our 30th

anniversary was the inspiration for this Traditions & Icons issue. The editor summed up in the first issue in 1984, "We're excited about *Sombrilla* and know you will be too." For us, that still holds true today, and we hope it does for you as well.

Our archival issues show how the magazine has evolved over the years.



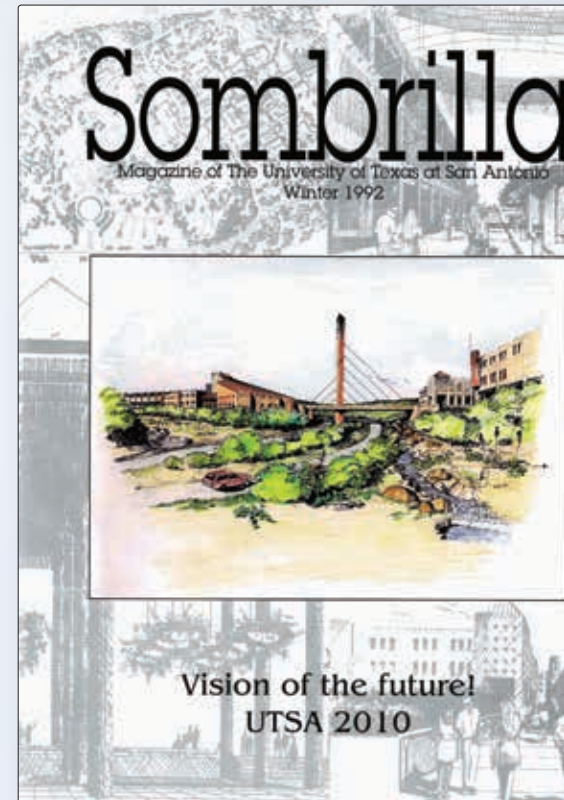
Fall 1984
Our first issue.

Spring 1988
The cover gets some color.



WEB EXTRA

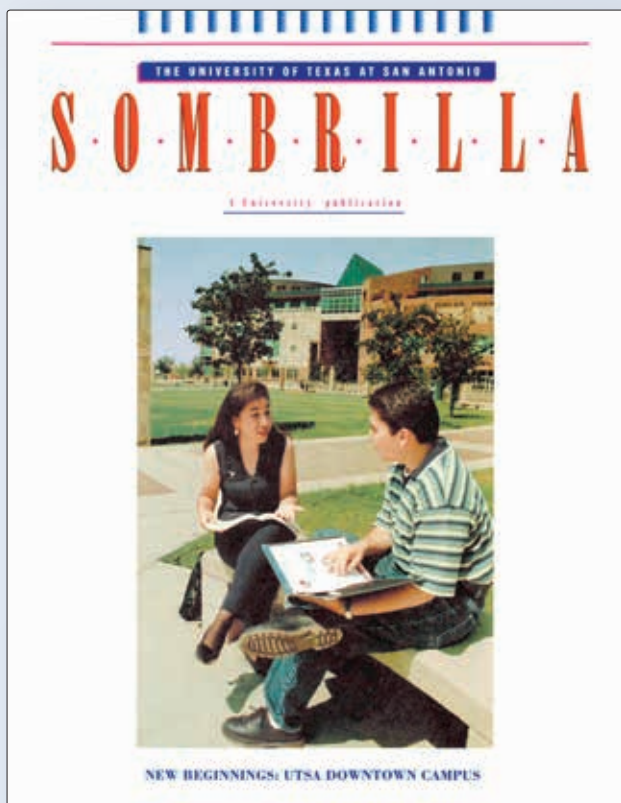
Our archive of back issues is continually growing, so visit *Sombrilla Magazine* online to check them out.



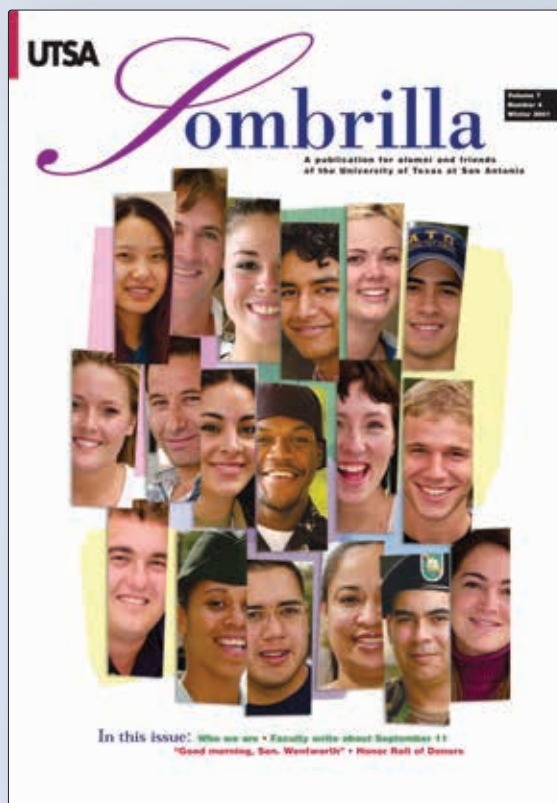
Winter 1992
Envisioning UTSA's 2010 future.



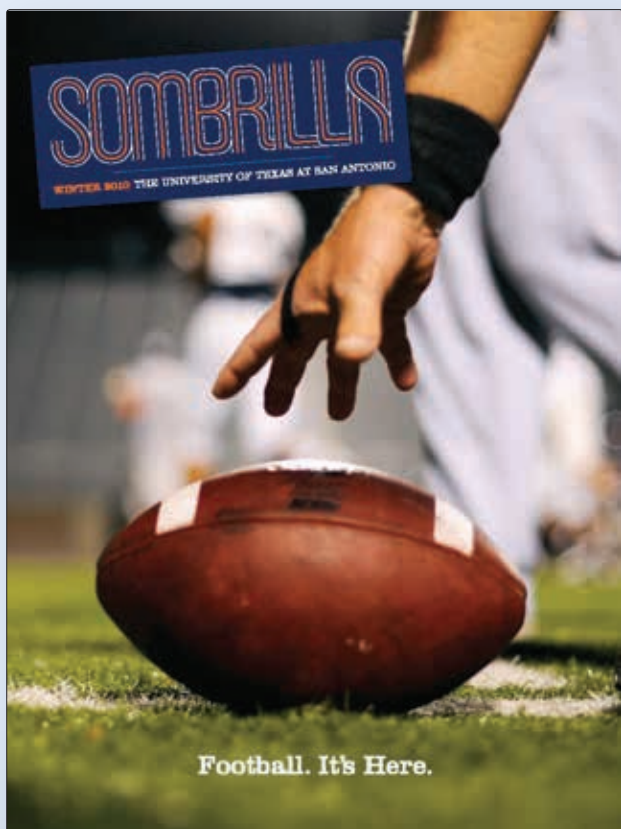
Summer 2004
The ITC expands its mission.



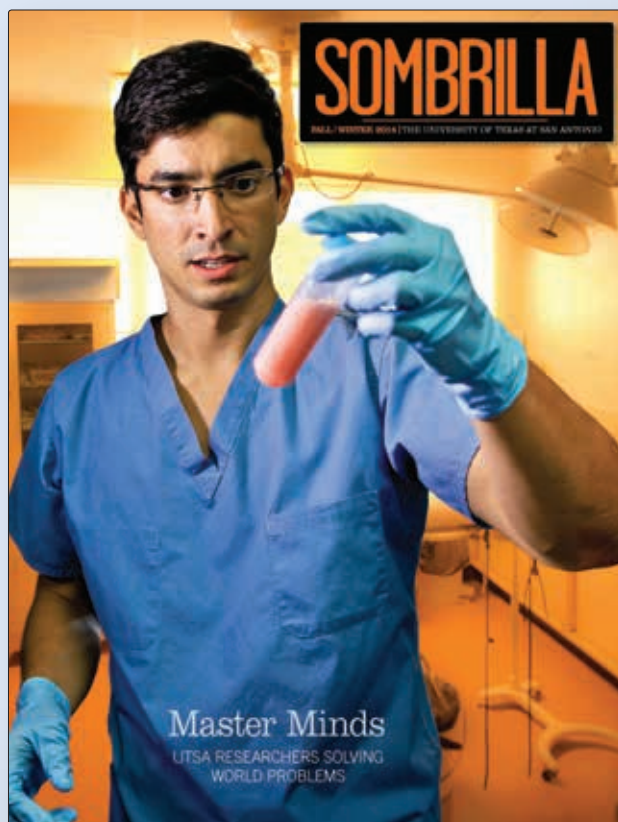
Summer 1997
Opening the Downtown Campus.



Winter 2001
Faculty write about 9/11.



Winter 2010
Football arrives.



Fall/Winter 2014
Research furthers the Tier One goal.



GOAL ORIENTED

Game On!

You won't be short on tradition if you're attending UTSA home football games.

Forming a human tunnel for players and coaches to enter the Alamodome field just minutes before the kickoff, UTSA freshmen join the Spirit of San Antonio marching band at the home opener games in a tradition known as **Rowdy Rush**. The inaugural Rowdy Rush, in 2013 at the UTSA–Oklahoma State game, resulted from a year of planning and collaboration between UTSA Athletics and Student Activities staff, who were searching for a way to introduce freshmen to school spirit and increase student attendance at home football games. More than 500 incoming freshmen registered at student orientation and purchased an orange jersey to be part of that event.

But if you want more action than just the game, you're in luck. The day prior to every home game day, Main Campus hosts **Rowdy Rally**, which

includes a spirit rally, the **Spirit of San Antonio** marching band, Rowdy the Roadrunner and food. On game day the **Alumni Tailgate** has already taken hold as a favorite pastime at Roadrunner Station at the Alamodome. From there, attendees can watch the **Spirit Walk**, when SOSA and the cheerleaders lead the Roadrunners team on a parade through Roadrunner Station and into the Alamodome.

And things really rev up during **Homecoming Week**. This tradition began in fall 1985, prior to football's arrival, to allow students and alumni to share in the excitement of university support. It features the selection of Mr. and Ms. UTSA [see also page 25], the themed **Golf Cart Parade** and **Family Weekend**. But two of the most anticipated highlights of the week are **Best Fest**, which began in 1978 and sees student-run food and entertainment booths set up to add to the week's Fiesta atmosphere, and **Rowdy Rampage**, a concert, spirit rally and fireworks display.



Play Ball!

Contrary to some impressions created by our state's ubiquitous love of football, it's not the only NCAA sport at UTSA. The Roadrunners' first football game took place in the Alamodome in September 2011, but way back in 1981, the men's and women's basketball teams began competition as NCAA Division I affiliate teams. The men qualified for the NCAA tournament in 1988, 1989, 2004 and 2011; the women qualified in 2008. UTSA hosted the NCAA Men's Final Four tournament in 1998, 2004 and 2008 and the Women's Final Four in 2002 and 2010; the university will be host again for the men in 2018.

Still not enough sports for you? UTSA men also compete in NCAA in baseball, cross-country, golf, tennis, and track and field. The women compete in cross-country, golf, soccer, softball, tennis, track and field, and volleyball.

Aglow with Spirit

Couldn't make the game? Watch for a special orange glow at Main Campus's John Peace Boulevard entrance [see also page 21]. If the Monument Lights are all orange, there has been a game or tournament victory. So go ahead, smile with UTSA spirit and pride!



WEB EXTRA

Explore the new color schemes by visiting us at [Sombrilla Magazine](#) online.

A Roll Call of Traditions

Like any proud university, UTSA has established some much-loved traditions over the years. In addition to the ones covered elsewhere in this issue, here's a roundup of some of the others.



Special transport for the UTSA rings waits to take them to their overnight stay at the Alamo.



The stage is set for the presentation of the University Life Awards.

THE OLDEST

University Life Awards: Started in 1978 to recognize the outstanding efforts of students, faculty and staff who are working to improve UTSA and the San Antonio community, these awards are given out each spring semester and are coordinated by the Student Government Association.

THE NEWEST

Monument Lights: The UTSA Monuments at the John Peace Boulevard entrance to Main Campus have a changing color scheme to recognize various events, from academic and athletics achievements (like commencement and game victories) to special occasions (UTSA Day, Fiesta UTSA, homecoming, etc.). A committee of student leaders helped to plan the color combinations, enabled by full-spectrum LED lighting, including UTSA orange, blue and white. The tradition began in 2014 with the Midnight Light ceremony at the end of Roadrunner Days [see below].

AND IN BETWEEN

UTSA Diploma Dash 5K: Established in 1985, this race is held on Main Campus each spring by the Alumni Association to raise funds for alumni-sponsored scholarships and programs. A certified 5K event, it's open to runners, walkers, families and dogs.



Howdy Rowdy Bash: Started in 1995, this party, which features dance and step celebrations, is held prior to the first home football game to allow students to meet student athletes.

Ring Ceremony: Sponsored by the Alumni Association since 1996, the official UTSA ring is made available to junior and senior students to represent a link with fellow classmates and alumni. Before being distributed each fall and spring semester, newly purchased rings are held overnight inside the Alamo, symbolically linking bearers to the proud and rich history of Texas.

Roadrunner Days: A series of events for all freshmen and freshman transfers that traditionally takes place on the days prior to the first day of classes to introduce the newcomers to UTSA life.

Time Capsule: It's not celebrated annually, but UTSA has a time capsule buried on Main Campus that's a well-established part of the university. In 1983 the Student Representative Assembly (the forerunner to the Student Government Association) celebrated the 10th anniversary of UTSA's first classes by burying in the lawn that surrounds Sombrilla Plaza a trove of university paraphernalia to be opened 50 years later.

UTSA Ambassadors: With 70 students serving and 17 in training each year, this group provides a variety of services, including guiding campus tours for prospective students and their families as well as ushering at commencement ceremonies and other events. Yearlong, comprehensive training includes workshops on leadership, communication skills, etiquette, committee work and philanthropy. As a group, members volunteer more than 10,000 hours annually and celebrated 25 years of service to the university in 2014.



Sharing a UTSA ring moment.



The 1983 time capsule is ready to be buried.



ABOVE: In 1985, Wayne Terry and Trish DeBerry were named Homecoming king and queen, the equivalent of today's Mr. and Ms. UTSA.

RIGHT: Now successful professionals in San Antonio, Terry and DeBerry visit UTSA for a reunion shoot.



The First Mr. & Ms. UTSA

In 1985, Wayne Terry '85 and Trish DeBerry were named Mr. and Ms. UTSA at the university's inaugural homecoming ceremony.

Since there was no football team in 1985, the Alumni Association chose February during basketball season. A photograph of DeBerry and Terry at the time show them on the court in the Convocation Center—the ceremony was held at a men's basketball game.

Active in Lambda Ki Alpha, elected as student body president and involved in the university program council, Terry says no one really knew what to expect as they planned events. Would activities be welcome? Would people show up?

"I remember it being very exciting for us a university," DeBerry says. "We saw that as a step in the right direction."

DeBerry remains active with UTSA and is a member of the development board, while Terry was named Alumnus of the Year in 2012.


The two say they have had the chance to reminisce when they run into each other at various events around San Antonio or when visiting UTSA. About four years ago at the president's dinner, Terry says, that

their homecoming photo was part of the Through the Years theme.

"People said, 'Is that really you and Trish DeBerry?'" Terry says, joking that he thought to himself, *Let's just push those off the table.* "I had the early '80s Jheri curl going on."

DeBerry also chuckles at the decade of tortured, big hair: "It certainly was damaged and fried, and lots of overuse of product. I don't know how we all thought that looked good."

Both are now successful professionals in San Antonio, with Terry working with small, minority- and women-owned businesses as the manager of supplier diversity at H-E-B, while DeBerry runs her own public relations firm. She spent only two years at UTSA before transferring to Trinity University because UTSA didn't have a PR program at the time.

"I would have stayed if they had it back then," she says. "It's just that the university was so new. They have a great PR program now. It makes me really proud to see how the university and degree programs have grown." 

COMMUNITY

UNITING OUR ALUMNI



FERNANDO ORTIZ
AND AYSE DERMAN

Leave Your Mark

ONE DONOR PROGRAM ALLOWS ALUMNI TO CARVE THEIR NAMES
IN THE UNIVERSITY'S BUILDING BLOCKS

BY MICHELLE MONDO

For alumnus Fernando Ortiz Jr. M.A. '14, the thought that thousands of future UTSA students walking along Main Campus's Paseo Principal will be trampling on his name without a care is actually comforting. It's just one reason he decided to buy an engraved brick through the Alumni Association's Pave the Paseo program.

"When I was first presented with the opportunity to add my name to a permanent roster of graduates, I accepted it without a moment's thought," Ortiz says. "That people will regularly step on it reminds me to stay humble, keep my sense of humor and never take myself too seriously. Most important, it reminds me that my time at UTSA was so much fun."

Ortiz, a former journalist, works part-time at UTSA as a research assistant in the Department of History, after receiving his master's in history in December. His brick, which includes the name of his wife, hasn't been placed among others yet in the paseo, but he thought it would be a fun reminder of his time here and a way to give back. The funds raised through the program, according to the Alumni Association, go toward scholarships and various University Center activities.

"The university helped me redefine myself intellectually and creatively," Ortiz says. "My professors challenged me to both leave behind the comforts of my past journalism expertise and also to recast it as a new weapon for an academic world. These fascinating men and women of the history department pushed me far beyond my comfort zone to follow ambitions unimaginable only a few years ago."

Relaunched in 2008, the Pave the Paseo program got a boost with the expansion of the H-E-B University Center. The engraved bricks—as well as dedicated benches—are located between the UC buildings.

There are still plenty to be had—about 68,000 are

available, according to Anne Englert, director of alumni programs and services. "We need the opportunity to promote Pave the Paseo to all our alumni and invite them to have their very own brick," she says.

"One thing that is very exciting is the installation day of each new set of bricks." Installation occurs in the summer and winter.

For some, the program has become something of a group or family affair. The men of Lambda Chi Alpha have purchased bricks for fraternity members who have graduated or were killed during military service. They are installed side by side in the upper corner on the paseo. "We thought it would be a great way to honor our members and serve as a reminder of our time here," says Josh Juarez, fraternity president.

And Englert points to Milt Kramer '84 and Ingrid Faris

'83 as examples of alumni who have bought numerous bricks as family members graduate. Faris, once the Alumni Association president, has been active in promoting the university since graduating with a bachelor's in applied science in 1983. She would one day like to see the program become so successful that student names fill the paseo.

"They're really nice to go back to look at," she says. "You put your heart and soul into being at UTSA and getting your degree. Your university becomes part of you. It's a way to say 'I was here.'"



Workers install a set of newly inscribed bricks in Paseo Principal.

1980

\\ **GERARDO "JERRY" SALINAS**, B.B.A. in accounting, has been named chief financial officer of Cullen/Frost Bankers. Since 1986, Salinas has held various financial positions within Frost and Cullen/Frost. He was named bank and corporate controller in 1989 and treasurer in 1997.

1983

\\ **MARY BAILEY**, B.B.A. in accounting, has been promoted to San Antonio Water System vice president of business planning and controller. Bailey has been a controller with SAWS for nine years, managing accounting functions for the organization.

1984

\\ **KELLY "TODD" NEWTON**, B.B.A. in accounting, has been named chief executive officer of Apollo Endosurgery. Prior to becoming CEO of Apollo, Newton was executive vice president, chief financial officer and chief operating officer at ArthroCare Corp.

1991

The Hispanic IT Executive Council has named **ISRAEL MARTINEZ JR.**, B.B.A. in accounting, to its HITEC 100, a list that ranks the most influential and notable Hispanic professionals in information technology. The list represents all sectors of the IT industry, and many are top individuals within Fortune 500 companies. Martinez is chairman of Texas-based Axon Global, an affiliate of the Newport Board Group.

1992

\\ **ADAM SAENZ**, B.A. in English and M.A. in education '95, was the keynote speaker at the Washington Association for Career and Technical Education's 2014 summer conference. Hundreds of educators and vendors attended the conference to promote career and technical education.

1993

Tesoro has appointed **TRACY D. JACKSON**, B.B.A. in accounting and M.B.A. '12, as the San Antonio-based refining company's new vice president

The Artist's Artist

JOAN FABIAN M.F.A. '95

PHOTOS: PATRICK RAY DUNN

As a painter and mixed media artist, Joan Fabian understands why the people who are the subjects of her arts-focused TV program get nervous when she's in their studio. She also knows how to make them feel comfortable.

"When I'm asking questions, I'm asking as an artist, and what I try to show them is that I am really interested in their work," Fabian says about working on *Artist Palette*, a 30-minute series that's broadcast on inTV, a San Antonio public-access and educational channel. "I really am honored to be in their sanctuary. When I have people in my studio, I feel very vulnerable."

Fabian, who received her master of fine arts at UTSA in 1995, has worked off and on for San Antonio College since 1998. She is currently the curator for art exhibitions at SAC's Moody Learning Center as well as the artist in residence in the college's creative multimedia department. "It's innovative and interesting to me as an artist; that's what I like about this department," she says. "People come to us and have this creative idea. Well, we're going to help you [execute your vision]."

That flexibility led to the creation last year of *Artist Palette*. The goal is to expose incoming and current students—as well as the public—to artists in San Antonio. Her first episode profiled UTSA associate professor of art history Scott Sherer, who is director of UTSA's Art Gallery as well as Terminal 136, UTSA's off-campus gallery. Other artists interviewed include Gisha Zabala, Cathy Cunningham-Little and David Peche.

Finding artists hasn't been a problem for Fabian, considering the deep ties to the San Antonio arts community that she's been building since she first moved here in the mid-1990s. She'd already been supporting herself as an


artist for a decade when she left her hometown of Chicago to attend UTSA as a graduate student.

"When I first got accepted," she recalls, "they said, 'Why in the world would you go to San Antonio, Texas? You've got everything here in Chicago!'"

But Fabian wanted something different—a "big change," she explains. "I thought it would be a good kick in the pants as an artist."

Fabian says the atmosphere at UTSA was one of support and creative collaboration. From the large studio spaces inside to the starlit sky outside, Fabian grew to love what would become her adopted hometown.

Since receiving her master's, Fabian has traveled to Pakistan as a Fulbright scholar, teaching in Lahore at the National College of Arts; she also received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation artist grant. Her work has been shown internationally as well as across San Antonio, including at UTSA. Several of Fabian's pieces were chosen for the *Revealing Culture* art exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution's International Gallery. The contemporary exhibit was hosted by VSA, an international organization that focuses on arts and artists with disabilities that is part of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Fabian, who is hearing-impaired, strives to assist students who may benefit from working in a creative field and getting one-on-one instruction and guidance. "I take that as my own personal mission," she says. 

WEB EXTRA

You can check out Fabian in *Artist Palette* segments by visiting *Sombrilla Magazine* online.

and controller. Jackson replaces **ARLEN O. GLENEWINKEL**, B.S. in biology '77 and B.B.A. in accounting '80. The company's board of directors also appointed Jackson to a dual position as VP and controller of Tesoro Logistics GP LLC.

\\ **LARRY THOMPSON**, B.F.A. in art, has been appointed associate dean and professor of visual arts in the Samford University's School of the Arts in Birmingham, Ala. An avid UTSA fan, Thompson keeps a football helmet signed by Larry Coker in his office.

\\ **DEBRA "DEBBIE" KAY AARON**, B.A. in interdisciplinary studies, was named Teacher of the Year at Boerne ISD's Fabra Elementary School, where she serves as the math specialist. Aaron has taught in Boerne for 15 of her 21-year teaching career. At Fabra, Aaron has served as academic committee leader for math, participated in curriculum writing and volunteered to provide weekly homework help with the SAMS Kids organization.

1994

\\ **GAVINO RAMOS**, B.A. in criminal justice, has been hired as San Antonio Water System vice president of communications and external affairs. Ramos will be responsible for leading communications efforts with a focus on community engagement and messaging, developing and implementing comprehensive outreach efforts as well as building and maintaining local governmental relationships with the City of San Antonio.

1995

\\ **MICHAEL L. DUNNING**, B.A. in political science and German, is a member of Perkins Coie's environment, energy and resources practice in Seattle and has been promoted to partner. He counsels and litigates for clients on environmental, energy and project development, policy matters, legislative advocacy and strategic communications. Dunning's environmental counseling and litigation experience includes the federal Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act as well as Washington state's

Shoreline Management Act and superfund law.

1996

\\ **MARC JOHNSON**, B.S. in architecture, has been named a principal of Fisher Heck Architects. He is a member of the American Institute of Architects and the current president of Keep San Antonio Beautiful.

1997

Chief information officer of MUY! Companies, **DAN KARAM**, B.B.A. in information systems and M.S. in information technology '01, was the closing keynote speaker at the fifth annual San Antonio IT Symposium. Karam also issued an alumni challenge in 2015 called #ILoveUTSA and pledged to match any donations to UTSA up to \$25,000.

\\ **PAUL ROBERT "ROB" KILLEN**, B.A. in political science, will serve as the 2015 chairman of the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. The group, with approximately 1,200 businesses representing about 160,000 employees in the San Antonio area, is an advocate for economic development, infrastructure and education.

1998

\\ **KARL BIERMANN**, M.A. in history, who has served as pastor at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Cuero since 2009, has accepted an offer to be assistant to the bishop of the Northeastern Ohio Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Biermann's chief responsibility will be to match pastors and congregations.

Meritage Homes Corp. has promoted **JEREMY FLACH**, B.B.A. in marketing, to president of the company's San Antonio division after having served as the company's local vice president for the past two years. Before that, Flach had been Meritage's vice president of construction for Central Texas, which includes San Antonio and Austin. He has been with Meritage since 2007.

1999

The San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce honored >>



An Inspired Career

VERONICA CAMPBELL STICH '03

Despite launching a career in information security after graduating from UTSA with a bachelor of business administration degree, Veronica Campbell Stich says she had a creative spark that needed an outlet. Luckily, the roots for such an outlet had been firmly planted for years. "It was in high school that I found my style in literature," she says. "I gravitated toward the stories of Edgar Allan Poe and Stephen King. When I read Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, I was fascinated; it was the mix of horror and science fiction. Plus, it was written by a woman."


And that style of Stich's she mentions? It's been described as "the paranormal," "cult fiction" and "dark science fiction."

Now, with five novels published in the past nine years under the name Ronnie Stich, the author has broken new ground. She's written a screenplay on Father Martin Bonaparte, a character from her Secret Afterlife Series (*The Assassination Race* and sequel *Curse of the Sacred Wolf*), which focuses on the complicated relationship between a priest and his government-connected father. Being produced by Maldito Films, *Bonaparte* is the result of Stich's screenplay and delves further into the background of the characters introduced in the series.

Having accumulated no fewer than nine national and international awards for her books, one might think Stich's comfort with her writing came easily.

But as with any good story, the plot isn't that simple. "I finished a book and then realized that writing was who I am," she explains. "As a career, though? I had my doubts for a while, but when I got back the professional reviews on *The Assassination Race*—and they were good—I was pretty motivated to turn writing into a career. Now, I couldn't imagine going back."

But what about that "dark" genre? "My father was a big fan of science fiction. That was a big influence on me as a kid," she says. "And I've always had an interest in things paranormal. People who have been close to me know that I have had some interesting experiences—ghostly encounters, I guess. I think writing about it in a fictitious sense is just a way for me to express my belief in ghosts, otherworldly energies. I wanted to make people think beyond the material world."

Like her father's influence, Stich's other inspiration dates back to a time that predates her information security career. "I was drawn to UTSA because of its reputation as a whole," she says. But her "favorite classes were philosophy and ancient history because they helped me to think outside the box. I loved every minute there. I found the diverse atmosphere very inviting, and I remember lots of smiling faces and other students willing to help each other out when needed. I am very proud of it." 



The Education King

JON GARY HERRERA '92

Jon Gary Herrera is only the second UTSA alumnus to wear the crown of El Rey Feo, a Fiesta San Antonio component started in 1947. As part of his reign, Herrera, a fifth-generation Texan and native San Antonian, has helped raise more than \$200,000 in scholarships. El Rey Feo LXVII and his court visited more than 50 schools with a message about the importance of not only staying in school but also attending and graduating from college. Despite his busy schedule, Herrera, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in public administration in 1992, found the time—and sense of humor—to meet with *Sombrilla Magazine's* **MICHELLE MONDO** to answer some Fiesta questions.

You were crowned on April 17, yet evidence shows you wearing full regalia for months prior. Was there a coup?

No coup. Rey Feo holds the title from October through September. So officially I was crowned in October 2014. On April 17 we conducted a public crowning for all those who were unable to attend the earlier event, and then we hosted the King's Party to celebrate Fiesta, Rey Feo and his court.

Why did you want to be El Rey Feo—when that means being called “ugly” on a regular basis?

Keep in mind that the word *rey* precedes the *ugly* translation [of *feo*], and *rey* translates to *king*. The title Rey Feo comes from a medieval tradition in which peasants elected one of their own as a king. In order to not offend the monarch king, they referred to the people's king as Rey Feo. So the title has historical context.

What do you see as your primary mission?

The primary mission is to promote the importance of college education. As a society, we can no longer accept a high school diploma as the educational attainment standard. A college education is the new standard, and we should push our students toward that. Education is the great equalizer.

Speaking of education, tell me about your time at UTSA.

I was a student in the late '80s and early '90s, and the UTSA campus was in a constant state of new construction. As a student body, we supported our basketball team with much enthusiasm. The UTSA basketball team would occasionally

practice with a local basketball legend by the name of Shaquille O'Neal (nicknamed Shaq), and those practices used to pack the Convocation Center with spectators.

Any fond memories you would like to share?

I have many fond memories of my time at UTSA—from the endless nights at the Roadrunner Roost to the ever-popular Shrimp Fest [scholarship fundraiser]! I am especially grateful for the professional and personal relationships forged while studying at UTSA.

You must have needed a lot of diplomatic skills to be senior vice president of communications at Time Warner Cable for 20 years and now leading development at Lone Star Media. Let's test those skills now. If you had to banish either turkey legs or parades from Fiesta, which would you choose?

As a king, I recognize the tremendous impact this type of decision would have on the people. Either way, banishing turkey legs or parades would cause an uprising and revolution, and therefore, as king, I will banish the original question and leave it to the next king to figure out.

Finally, have you considered wielding your considerable Feo influence to make the Fiesta commission create an official El Rey Gato, since there's an El Rey Fido?

You are correct: There is no official El Rey Gato. But the Fiesta commission does have a process for new ideas and organizations to join the Fiesta movement! 🐾



PHOTOS: PATRICK RAY DUNN

Building a Sense of Community

MICHAEL CIRLOS III '11

Michael Cirlos III wants to break down barriers. He wants people to talk to each other more and better understand different cultures. "I really feel like when you create a world in which people can interact with each other regularly throughout the day and interact with people of a different culture," he says, "then there are more opportunities to better understand the environment you are in. I think if you don't have that, we are really missing out."

So he decided to do something about it.

Cirlos took inspiration from the popular photography project Humans of New York and in 2012 created Humans of San Antonio. He chose downtown as his focus because of its walkability


but also because he's trying to showcase a part of the city he thinks is undervalued.

"I'm happy that it's reached 4,000 fans on Facebook," he says. "I don't know how big or small that is. I really can't say. It's cool that people comment and like the photographs."

Cirlos discovered his love of photography while living in Thailand for two years and later in Holland. After moving back to San Antonio to finish his bachelor's in psychology at UTSA, he became unsure about his decision. He missed what is termed *sabai sabai* in Thailand, a phrase that is more than just words; it's a way of life. "It's Thai slang," he explains. "It means, essentially, *Relax, it's all good.*"

But more than that, he says, is the sense of community that he felt in Thailand. People live where they work or within walking distance. Or maybe they take a *tuk-tuk*, a three-wheeled rickshaw. There's a neighborly feeling that he missed.

"Instead of complaining, I thought how can I get involved and what can I do? And when I ran across Humans of New York, I thought I would do that and see if it works."

UTSA helped him with the culture shock of his U.S. return, especially in reacclimating him to the less than *sabai sabai* attitude of America. "I had a great experience, I had some really cool professors and, honestly, UTSA taught me a lot of discipline." 

MARTHA TIJERINA, M.A. in Spanish, as part of the Making a Mark on the World awards ceremony. The fifth annual awards luncheon honored eight women; UTSA Professor Harriett Romo received the Gisela Girard Innovation Award, while Tijerina of Catholic Television of San Antonio, was given the Barbara Gentry Advocacy Award.

2000

\\ **JENNIFER HENLEY STOVER**, B.A. in anthropology, spent the summer of 2014 in Guyana studying traditional ecological knowledge of the Makushi culture and the potential of local wisdom to guide conservation initiatives. A sixth grade science teacher at Lufkin Middle School, Stover spent time in Guyana for a

course in pursuit of her master's degree from Miami University's Global Field Program.

2004

\\ **WILLIAM "DARRELL" CHAMBERS**, B.S. in civil engineering, has joined planning, engineering and program management firm Lockwood, Andrews & Newman as a senior design manager focused on the transportation market in Central Texas.

2006

\\ **TAMMY BECK**, Ph.D. in business, has joined the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Business Administration as associate dean of academic programs

and associate professor of management. Her research interests include interorganizational collaboration, organizational resilience and qualitative research methodologies. Beck has been published in *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management* and *Organization Science*.

2007

\\ **ANTONIO J. WEBB**, B.S. in biology, traveled to Liberia in spring 2014 to treat patients just as the Ebola outbreak reached Liberian hospitals. Currently completing his residency specializing in orthopedic surgery at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Webb has also published a book about

his experiences growing up in Louisiana and his path to becoming a surgeon, titled *Overcoming the Odds: From War on the Streets in Louisiana to War on Terrorism in Iraq*.

2008

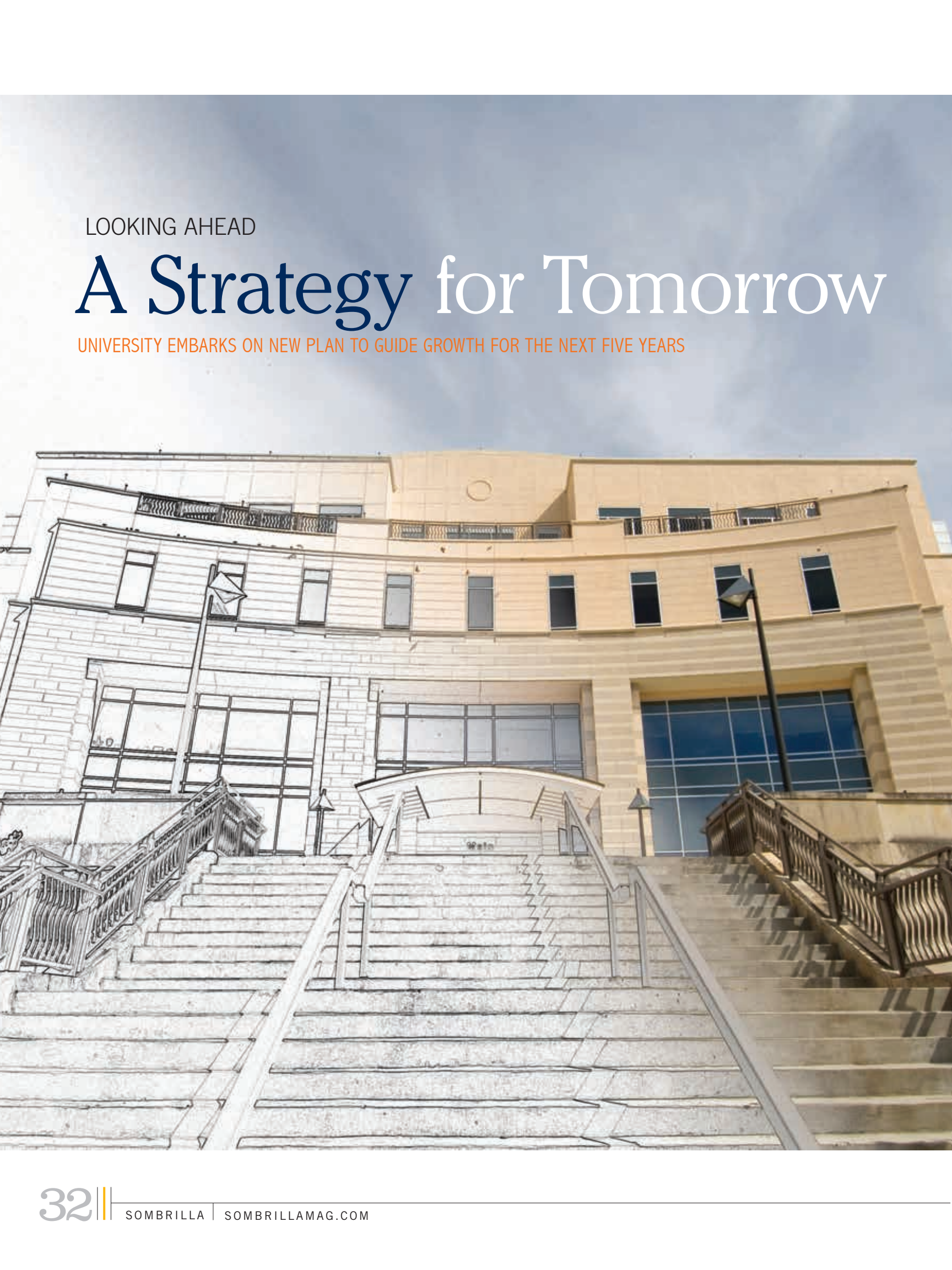
\\ **JESSICA WOODS STONESIFER**, M.S. in civil engineering, has joined Barge, Waggoner, Sumner and Cannon as aviation project manager in the firm's Nashville office. She is responsible for managing and designing tasks through Barge Waggoner's aviation contracts. She also is an Air Education and Training Command's Maj. Gen. William D. Gilbert Awards recipient and has been inducted into the Alpha Chi National College Honor Society.

2010

\\ **JAVIER PAREDES**, B.S. in architecture, B.B.A. in construction management '10 and M. Arch. in architecture '14, has been chosen for the 2015 AIA Emerging Professionals Exhibition as one of 50 people to show their work at the American Institute of Architects' national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Notice

The Alumni Association annual meeting will convene at 6 p.m. on Oct. 29 at the Petroleum Club (Energy Plaza, 8620 N. New Braunfels Ave., Suite 700, San Antonio, TX 78217). Current members are invited to vote on the bylaws. Bylaws may be reviewed at utsa.edu/alumni.



LOOKING AHEAD

A Strategy for Tomorrow

UNIVERSITY EMBARKS ON NEW PLAN TO GUIDE GROWTH FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS



Building on past its successes, UTSA has embarked on the development of a new strategic plan—UTSA 2020 Blueprint—that will move the university forward in its journey to Tier One recognition.

UTSA 2020 Blueprint will guide the university's growth over the next five years by aligning resources with new goals and strategic initiatives in six areas: educational excellence, superior infrastructure, innovative research and discovery, strong community involvement, superior student experience, and world-class graduate programs.

UTSA has made great strides under its existing strategic plan: A Shared Vision 2016. The university has earned an international reputation for excellence in scholarship and research, recruited top-tier faculty and students, expanded public and private partnerships and received the Carnegie Foundation's Community Engagement Classification. Now it is time to take the next step.

With input from the university constituents, UTSA 2020 Blueprint leadership teams are identifying new initiatives in academic, research and community service



"Great ideas are needed to make the UTSA 2020 Blueprint a success," says President Romo. "At the end of the process, we will have a new strategic plan that helps us reach more milestones in our journey to Tier One."

programs. President Ricardo Romo has led a number of forums to gain insights and ideas from the university community. That process will continue as leadership teams finalize the new plan.

"Great ideas are needed to make UTSA 2020 Blueprint a success," Romo says. "I encourage everyone to get involved—faculty, staff, students, alumni and our partners in the San Antonio community. At the end of the process, we will have a new strategic plan that helps us reach more milestones in our journey to Tier One."

WEB EXTRA

Learn more about UTSA 2020 Blueprint by visiting *Sombrilla Magazine* online.

The Six Pillars TOWARD TIER ONE



EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Improve student-faculty ratio
- Enhance academic success
- Improve graduation and retention rates
- Manage enrollment growth
- Expand recruitment and scholarships



SUPERIOR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Align the budget to goals
- Build and maintain state-of-the-art facilities
- Enhance business processes
- Offer quality administrative services
- Expand data and technology infrastructure



INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY

- Increase research expenditures
- Recruit exceptional faculty scholars
- Facilitate breakthrough discoveries
- Bolster partnerships
- Expand internal collaboration



EXPAND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Raise the university's profile
- Strengthen internship opportunities
- Increase endowment funds
- Engage with alumni more
- Promote community engagement
- Expand economic development



SUPERIOR STUDENT EXPERIENCE

- Provide top-tier libraries
- Enhance student services
- Offer quality advising
- Promote recreational programs
- Elevate athletics
- Expand education abroad



WORLD-CLASS GRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Increase graduate enrollment
- Increase Ph.D. programs
- Offer premier graduate online programs
- Conduct global student recruitment





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*San Antonio's
Top-Tier
University*

We conduct research that improves lives. We're making breakthroughs in biomedicine, advanced materials, energy, cybersecurity and nanotechnology.

We've also earned national recognition for our commitment to community service. Opportunities for excellence in academics, research and community service — the very definition of a top-tier university.