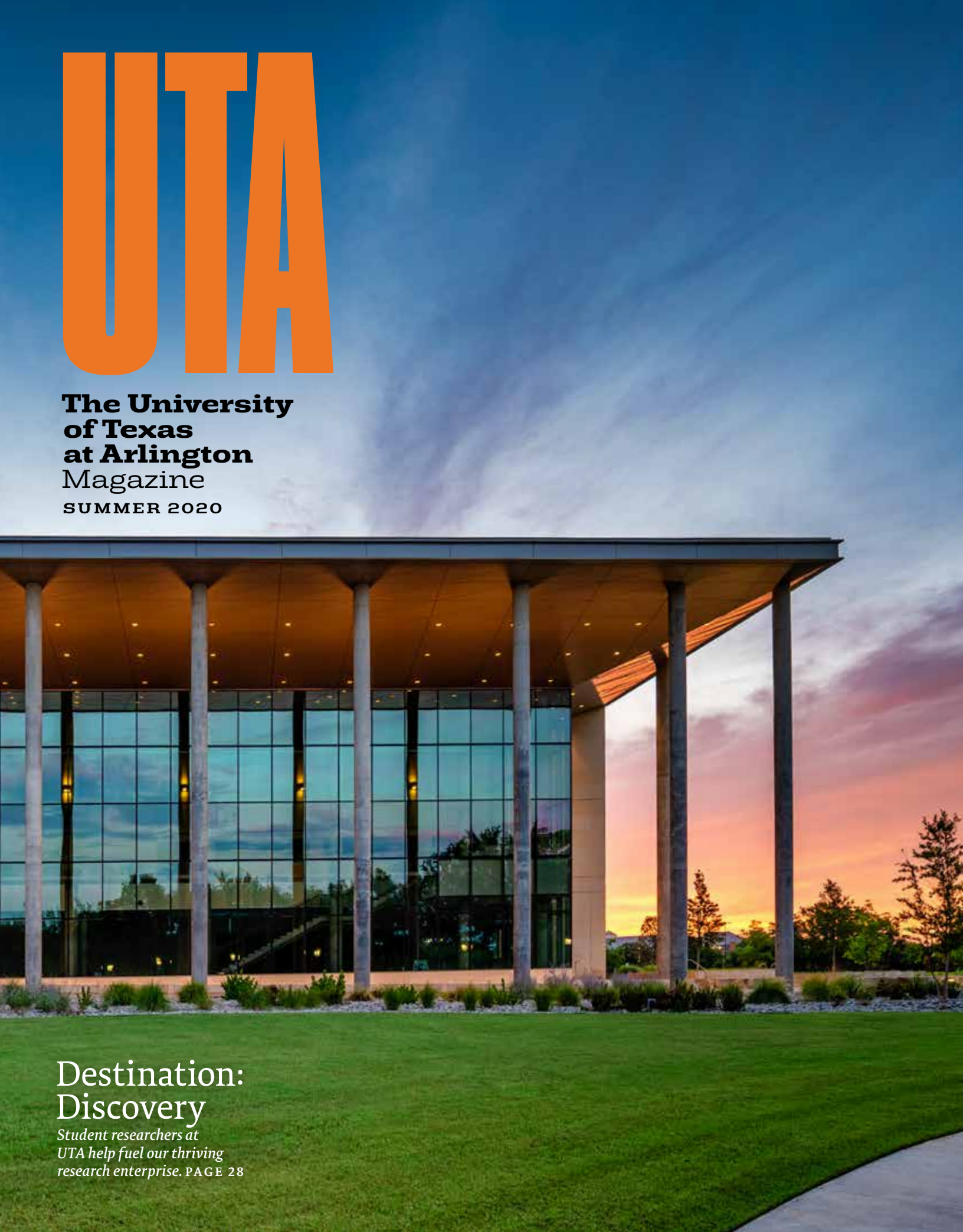


The background of the cover is a photograph of a modern building with a large glass facade and a series of tall, slender concrete columns. The building is illuminated from within, and the sky above is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The foreground is a green lawn.

UTA

**The University
of Texas
at Arlington**
Magazine
SUMMER 2020

Destination: Discovery

*Student researchers at
UTA help fuel our thriving
research enterprise. PAGE 28*



**CARE AND
CREATION**
Alumna Holly D.
Gray explores
motherhood
and caregiving
through her art.
PAGE 22

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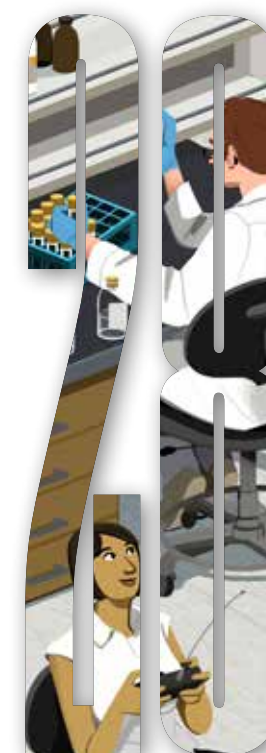
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FEATURES



Student-Powered Discovery

Our students play a crucial role in the groundbreaking discoveries that drive UTA's \$117 million research enterprise.



A Degree That Makes a Difference

A liberal arts degree from UTA provides our alumni with an advantage in the workforce, leading them to rewarding and successful careers.



Care Through Crisis

Maverick students and alumni continue to play integral roles in providing care to their patients throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic.

SINCE WE LAST published *UTA Magazine*, much has changed in the world. You’ve probably heard the words “unprecedented” and “uncertain” many times. But as I reflect on the last several months for UTA, I feel gratitude for the present and hope and optimism for the future. At every turn, I’ve seen spirit, determination, and achievement in our vast network of Mavericks—those students, faculty, staff, and alumni who work hard to keep our community resilient and strong.

Over the spring semester, I saw firsthand how quickly our faculty and staff adapted to the abrupt closure of our campus and the move to online learning and remote operations. I saw how our students responded to that change—with the fortitude that has come to define our student body. And I had the privilege to witness how our alumni came together to support our students in any way they could. As the saying goes, good times build prosperity, but challenging times, like these, build character that lasts a lifetime.

In the pages of this issue, you’ll get a closer look at many of those stories, from a professor who transformed her hands-on courses to enhance learning when we moved to distance learning to the overwhelming support we’ve received for our Emergency Assistance Fund—a lifeline established to support



MAVERICK SPIRIT: UNITED, STRONGER THAN EVER

students in times of crisis—to the Maverick heroes who have stepped up to provide health care to communities in need. You’ll also read stories that reflect how Maverick achievement is at an all-time high, even as the world keeps changing around us.

While these times certainly are unprecedented, I can say with confidence that I have never been more certain about the strength of our Maverick community. Our spirit, our drive, and our commitment to transforming the lives of others have served us well, and they will take us to even greater heights in the future. I am honored to lead and serve the University during this unique time and am more than ever proud to be part of the Maverick family.

Go Mavs!

—Teik C. Lim, Ph.D.
President *ad interim*



Dr. Lim, also a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, was provost and vice president for academic affairs before his appointment to interim president.



The University of Texas at Arlington Magazine

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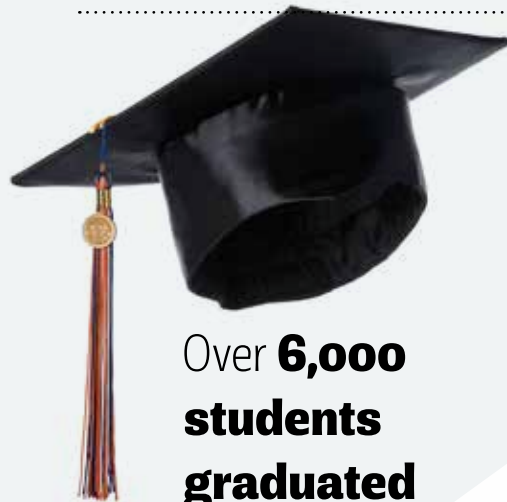
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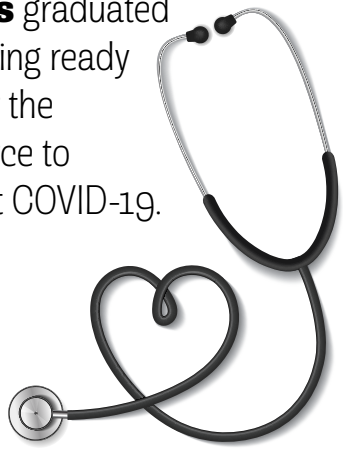
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Excellence AT A GLANCE



Over **6,000 students** graduated in spring 2020, joining nearly 230,000 alumni across the globe.



365 prelicensure nurses graduated this spring ready to enter the workforce to combat COVID-19.



As of July 14, the FabLab has sewn **364 masks** for the campus community and created **680 face shields** for JPS Hospital and smaller clinics and agencies in Arlington and Fort Worth.

More than **200 future Mavericks** celebrated their decision to attend UTA in a unique, socially distanced **drive-thru event** on campus.

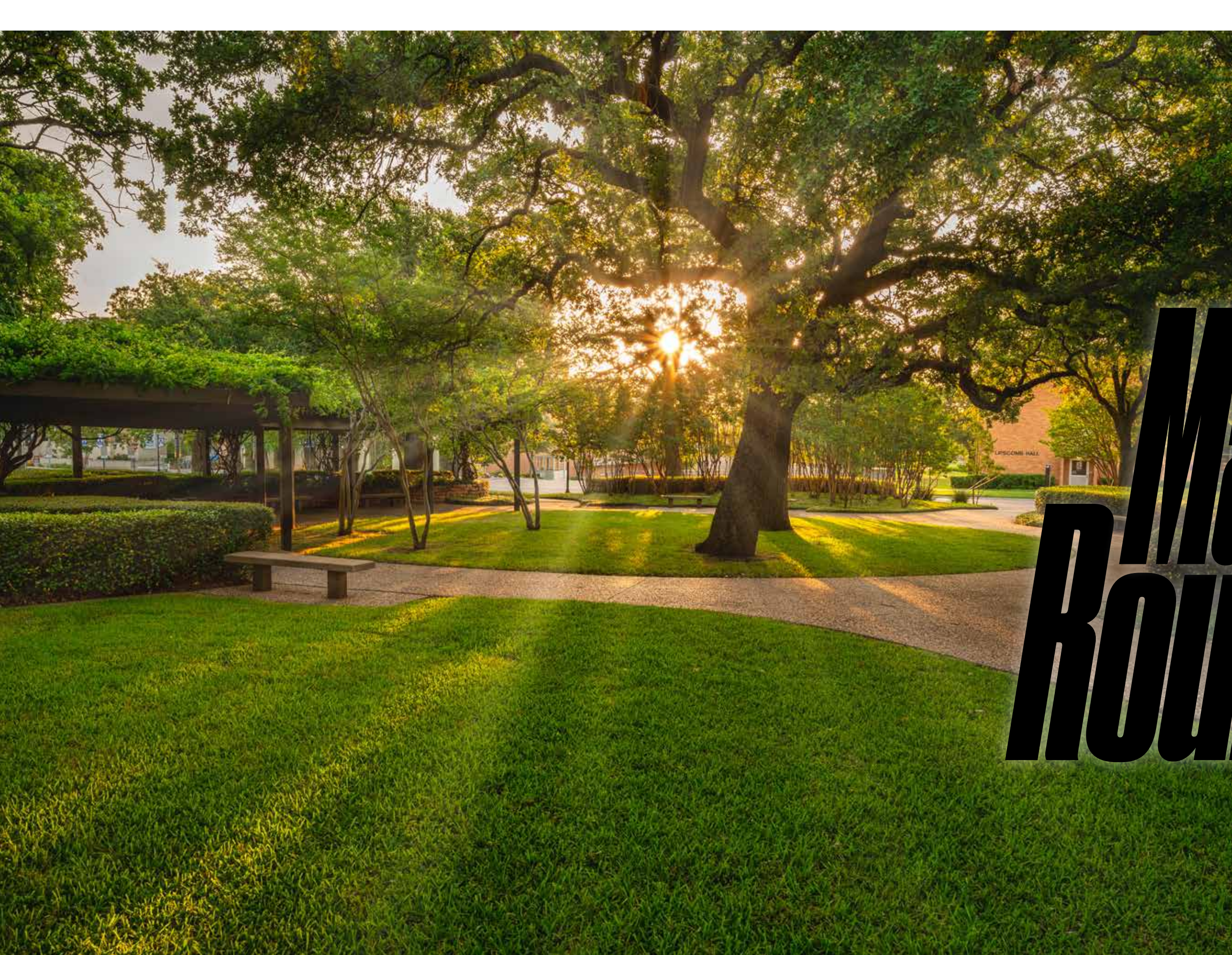


Over **125,000 disposable face masks** and **70,000 fabric masks** will be available for the Maverick community when the campus reopens in the fall.

Through the CARES Act, UTA has provided 10,077 emergency grants—totaling **\$10.6 million**—directly to students as of July 2.

Five engineering faculty members earned fellow status in professional organizations last spring.

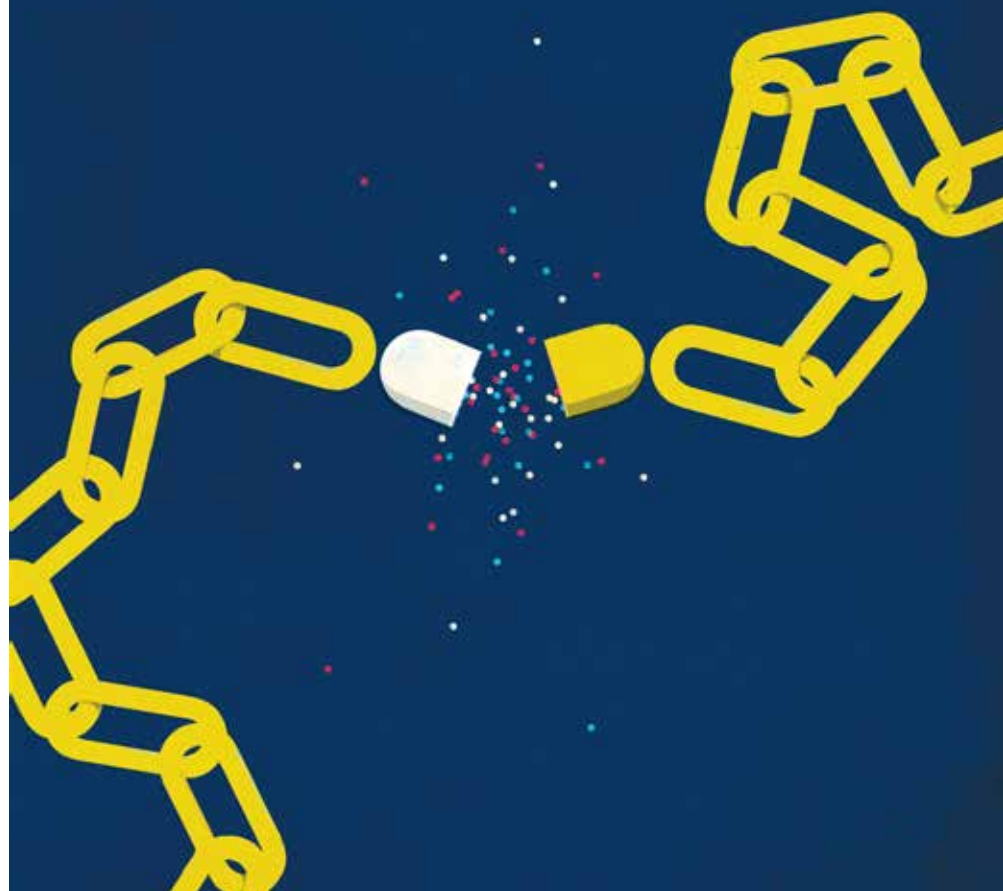




*Stories about
the Mavericks
who shape
the UTA
community
near and far*

Mav Roundup

AFTER SPRING BREAK, at a time when UTA is usually bustling with activity, an eerie quiet took over campus. Because of COVID-19, the entire campus was shut down almost completely—but that doesn't mean the University was any less busy. The majority of operations moved online, research thrived, and Maverick accomplishments continued apace.



BREAKING FREE OF ADDICTION

On the front lines in the fight against opioids

Nancy Ochoa used heroin for the first time when she was 15 years old. At 16, after the birth of her first child, her occasional drug use had turned into a “necessity.”

Ochoa, now in her mid-20s and a mother of two, is one of hundreds of patients in recovery after receiving help from social workers educated and trained at UTA.

The School of Social Work will be able to train more addiction recovery specialists under a new \$1.3 million grant from the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration as part of its Opioid Workforce Expansion Program. UTA will award at least 81 advanced graduate social work students \$10,000 scholarships to intern with different health organizations and federally qualified health centers. The project is led by Debra Woody, senior associate dean in

the School of Social Work and director of UTA’s Center for Addiction and Recovery Studies (CARS).

“There is this a tremendous workforce shortage and a lack of behavioral health providers to meet the needs of this crisis,” says Katherine Sanchez, associate professor in the School of Social Work and part of Dr. Woody’s team. “Through this grant we will train students to address and respond to the opioid epidemic through evidence-based practices.”

Ochoa sought help after eight years of opioid use.

“I didn’t want my baby and me to be another statistic,” she says, crediting her progress in part to everyone involved in her recovery at CARS.

“Recovery will be a lifelong journey, but I’m hopeful,” she says. “My scars are a reminder of where I’ve been and where I don’t ever want to be again.”



John David “JD” Gonzales, nephew of Adelfa B. Callejo, and Amber White, Pre-Law Center director.

ORDER IN THE COURT

Pre-law students now have their own courtroom

UTA’s Pre-Law Center opened the Adelfa B. Callejo Courtroom on campus earlier this year thanks to generous funding from the Callejo-Botello Foundation. The courtroom honors the legacy of Adelfa Callejo, a lawyer who advocated for increased educational opportunities, particularly among low-income and marginalized students.

“Adelfa came from humble roots in South Texas and cared deeply about the lives of others, particularly those who were marginalized,” says Monica Lira Bravo, chair of the Callejo-Botello Foundation Board. “One of her favorite quotes was, ‘Education is the great equalizer.’ It really speaks to her sense of personal purpose and her desire to help others succeed.”

Amber White, director of the Pre-Law Center, concurs.

“Adelfa was a woman who refused to accept limitations. That’s what we want our students to embody.”

The courtroom allows students to simulate mock trials and moot court proceedings. White hopes to add even more advances to the space, bringing the program to the next level.

To break in the new courtroom, UTA hosted the American Mock Trial Association’s Regional Mock Trial Tournament for the first time. This year, UTA’s team improved their performance from the previous Regional Mock Tournament, which was held in Dallas.

Faculty Focus

Yan Xiao, Professor of Nursing, College of Nursing and Health Innovation



YAN XIAO, A professor and patient safety specialist in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation, is researching innovative interventions to reduce unsafe use of medications and provide patients and caregivers more efficient ways to manage and follow discharge instructions.

Dr. Xiao is the principal investigator of the Partnership in Resilience for Medication Safety Learning Lab, a consortium project led by UTA. The lab is one of 29 patient safety learning labs in the U.S. funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality.

The consortium project started in 2019 with a four-year, \$2.5 million grant aimed at improving medication safety. Xiao and his team will employ systems engineering methods and use interviews, focus groups, and design sessions at 12 clinics around the country. The team will add a simulated primary care clinic to UTA’s Smart Hospital to prototype and test interventions.

What past accomplishment makes you proudest?

Being able to build up an interdisciplinary team of collaborators from the different UTA colleges and the R01 research I began at Baylor Scott & White. The study focused on medication safety during transition of care. When patients are discharged from hospitals, they are at a higher risk of adverse drug events. UTA proved to be an excellent institution for working with clinical partners in reaching our patient recruitment tar-

gets and collecting clinical data.

What are you excited about right now?

Innovation of processes and technology to enhance patient engagement in health care. We will study ways patients can be best supported in their decision-making and in understanding educational materials. This will help providers to have meaningful engagements with their patients that will hopefully lead to better health outcomes.

What are you most looking forward to?

My research is based on the understanding of the strengths and limitations of human performance. Our current way of designing the health care system does not take into account basic human factors. So, it is exciting that here at UTA we are advancing in that direction to see how we can support these interactions with human limitations in mind.

Dominique Lange Interdisciplinary Studies Junior

Your interdisciplinary studies degree focuses on leadership, law and legal studies, and political science. Why was this the path for you?

I intend to pursue a law degree, but I struggled to find a major that would simultaneously prepare me for a career in law while touching on other interest areas. An interdisciplinary studies degree allows me to be academically curious while providing me with the knowledge I will need to succeed in the near future.

What are you looking forward to in the coming academic year?

This fall, I will have the opportunity to live, learn, and intern in the nation's capital as a Bill Archer Fellow. This experience will provide me with invaluable insight on how to pursue my mission to counsel, serve, and educate communities that are affected by realities beyond their control. I have also been offered placement in UTA's Undergraduate Research Opportunity program. I will be receiving funding to conduct my

own independent research, which focuses on African American women voters.

What sort of work have you done in the community as a UTA student?

Through my work with the Catholic Charities of Fort Worth Immigration Services Division, I saw firsthand how providing free consultations to immigrant members of the community could provide insightful information on how to remain or become a law-abiding citizen. I got to watch closely as lawyers were able to help and support migrant workers seeking to become legal residents or citizens.

Why are you passionate about law?

I realized from an early age my passion for human life and the rights we are granted upon being born. As I evolved in my knowledge of nations and the effects borders can have on our rights, I developed a deep desire to defend and protect the rights of individuals regardless of gender, race, or creed. I want citizens to

know that knowledge of rights is the most powerful tool in today's society. My career goal is not to make the most money or have the winningest case rate, but to touch a life.



GROWING STEM

Professor advances minority representation in STEM

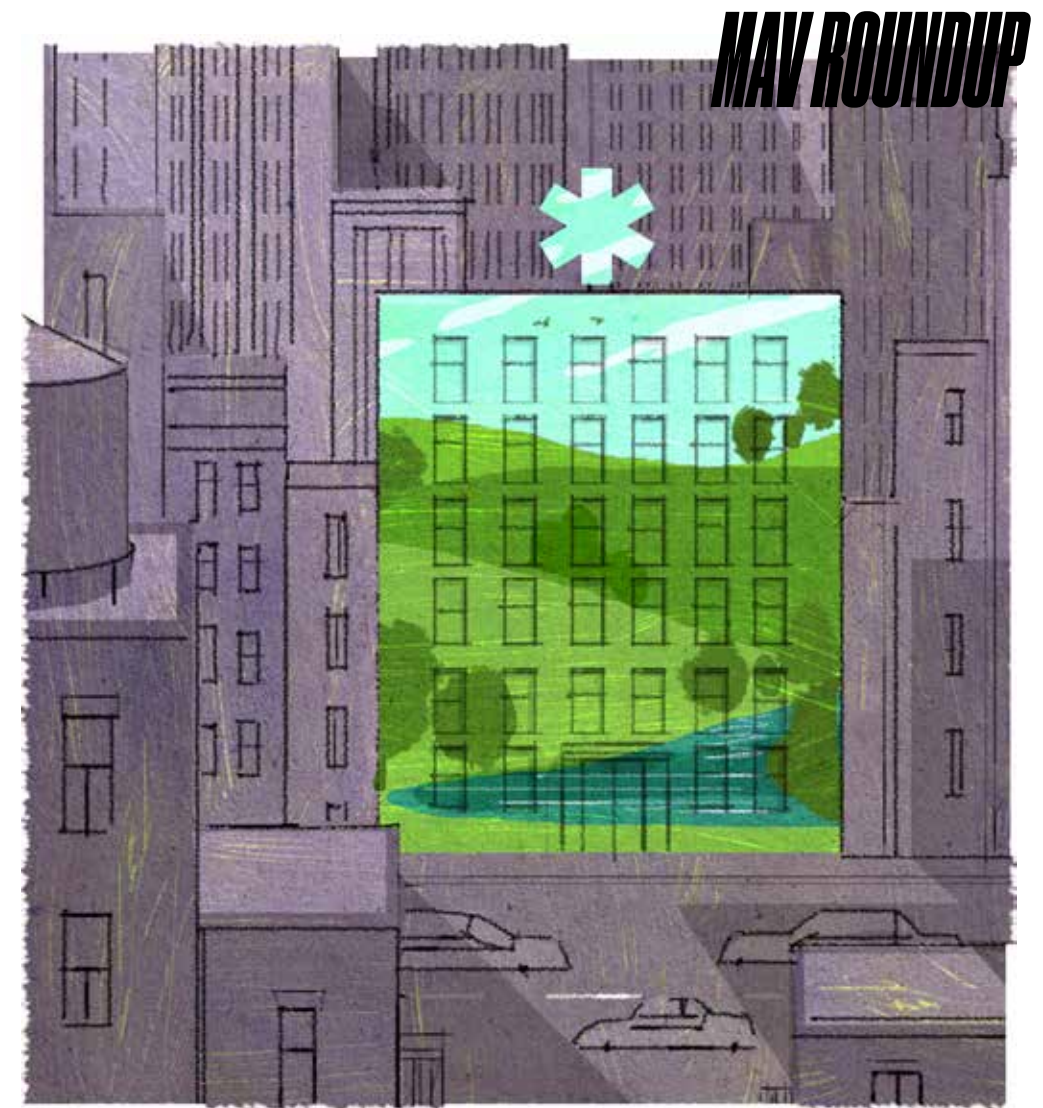
As a Puerto Rican woman, mathematics Professor Minerva Cordero, associate dean in the College of Science, knows the challenges of being a minority woman in the male-dominated STEM arena.

Because of her experiences, Dr. Cordero has advocated for the advancement of women and other minorities in academic STEM careers for two decades. She recently accepted a position in the inaugural class of 125 women serving as IF/THEN ambassadors, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Lyda Hill Philanthropies. Cordero will encourage middle-school girls by sharing her personal career story and serving as a role model to inspire them to pursue STEM-related professions.

"We have to begin attracting women into STEM earlier in their lives," says Cordero. "It's important we show them there is a place for them at the table before they are persuaded differently."

She recently returned from a year-long term at the National Science Foundation, where she served as program director of the ADVANCE and Hispanic-Serving Institutions programs.

"UTA has done extensive work to engage young women, underrepresented minorities, and their parents in the Dallas-Fort Worth community with STEM professions," Cordero says. "I hope to show the world how much we value diversity on our campus."



A FOCUS ON URBAN HEALTH

New degree addresses urban health inequities

As demand for new public health professionals grows, UTA's College of Nursing and Health Innovation has launched a Master of Public Health degree with a focus on urban health—one of only a handful in the nation.

Public health is a broad field that encompasses health management and policy, epidemiology, and community and environmental health. Through a focus on urban health, UTA students will learn to address the complex public health issues prevalent in urban communities. The specialization allows students to understand and help remedy the health inequities among various groups.

"Graduates will be equipped to advocate for policies to address health needs in urban communities as well as apply

skills to conduct health needs assessments, program implementation, and program evaluation," says Erin Carlson, associate professor of public health and director of graduate public health programs.

The coursework covers a variety of skills critical to health in urban areas, including community health assessment, advocacy, policy, and social justice. These provide a foundation for professionals who will develop public health interventions and advocate for policies that bring issues of social justice to the forefront.

Dr. Carlson predicts the program will grow quickly, particularly because it is practice-focused and designed to offer flexibility to working students through on-campus and hybrid evening classes.

Postcard

Following Mavericks as they travel the world

LATE LAST YEAR, the School of Social Work expanded its global footprint with its first student/faculty study abroad course. A group of undergraduate and graduate students traveled to Belize with two social work faculty members—Associate Professor Eusebius Small and Assistant Professor in Practice Tracy Orwig—to better understand which people gain access to health care and how community residents are informed of their health options.

In Belize, the government runs hospitals and clinics and offers health services free or at low cost to citizens. Most hospitals in the generally poor country, however, are unable to perform surgeries, treat complex diagnoses, or offer treatments like dialysis due to shortages of equipment, among other issues.

“When I think about comparative health policy, it reminds me of Dr. (Martin Luther) King’s words about health care,” Dr. Small says. “He said that of all the forms of inequity, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

Now that the entire world is gripped by COVID-19, Samantha Crumrine, a master’s student who participated in the Belize trip, says the lessons they learned there are more relevant than ever.

“The pandemic has reiterated what I learned,” she says. “Rural communities in Belize are cut off from many of the resources in Belize City. It’s crucial for communities to share information, ideas, and

solutions for social issues so that these can be implemented by the community members themselves.”

Small notes the important role social workers play in health care crises.

“For developing countries with already fragile public health infrastructure, the situation is catastrophic. Many local organizations are overwhelmed with an overstretched resource capacity. Social workers can work directly with them to support readiness efforts to mitigate the devastating impact of the disease.”



CLOCKWISE, FROM THE TOP: The group stopped for a photo op in Punta Gorda, Belize.

Part of the group’s activities included a visit to the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired.

The group also made a stop at the Jericho Hillside Clinic in Punta Gorda.

Another expedition included a trip to the Belize Red Cross in Punta Gorda.



WHO: Seventeen students and two UTA faculty members

HOW: As part of academic coursework in two social work classes, Comparative Health Policy and Community Health Promotion

WHY: To encourage students to consider equity in health care policy and whether everyone has a right to universal health care

LESSONS THEY TOOK HOME: “I realized that many aspects of my daily life, including health care, are luxuries. Firsthand exposure to cultural dif-

ferences in access to care helped me to put aside personal bias and differentiate subjective truth from objective truth. I gained a more global perspective on health care issues.”
—Amber Hovanec-Carey, master’s student

“There is a wealth of wisdom and experience held by those around me, if I would simply take the time to ask questions and listen to them. I noticed this among my classmates who held unique backgrounds as well as among locals who we would meet in public settings.”
—Joy Rong, master’s student

“I learned how fortunate we are in the United States to have preventative health care. In rural Belize, women do not have the opportunity to have mammograms and preventative breast cancer screenings. Shortly after returning from Belize, my doctor found a place of concern in my own breast, and I received a mammogram, sonogram, and biopsy within two weeks. My friends in Belize do not have this option. This experience moved me to advocate for more preventative and lifesaving health care for women in Belize.”
—Samantha Crumrine, master’s student



MAV ROUNDUP



THE ART OF CARING

Alumna blends her passions

As an artist and writer, Nehan Shujaat ('19 BSN) has long been interested in the human condition, exploring complex truths about her personal history, culture, family, and more through creative expression. Now, as a nurse at a North Texas hospital, she is exploring the human condition in a more immediate way. From arts to nursing may seem like a leap, but for Shujaat, it’s all inexorably tied together.

“Nursing has helped me become a better writer and an artist, and my artistry and my poetry have helped me become a better nurse,” she says. “It’s all connected.”

Shujaat began college as a psychology major but decided to change course after visiting a friend in labor at a local hospital. She was struck by the expertise and teamwork demonstrated by the nurses who took care of her friend. They easily let her friend feel calm and at peace. Within a week, Shujaat had changed her major to nursing.

While in nursing school, she didn’t lose sight of her drive to create, communicating her world through words and art. She channeled her experiences as a student nurse into her book of poetry, *Here’s the Chai*, published just last year.

“I’m responsible for what I put into the universe. I don’t want to be the type of person who doesn’t think about their actions,” she says. “I want to put hope into this world. I want to inspire people to see that we’re all powerful, and they can inspire the same in others. I think that’s how we can help each other heal.”



WEIGHTLESS WORKOUT

Alumnus designs exercise equipment for NASA

Brian Prejean ('18 PhD, Kinesiology) came to UTA to learn the craft of human performance science. He didn't expect the work would lead him to NASA.

At KBR Inc., an engineering company that provides contractual services to NASA, Dr. Prejean works with engineers to develop exercise equipment for long-duration spaceflights. His education prepared him for collaborating on a project for NASA's Human Physiology, Performance, Protection, and Operations Lab. He works to minimize mass and volume while developing exercise equipment that combines resistance and aerobic exercise capabilities in a weightless environment.

"I'm really excited to operate in a field like this, particularly at a time when we're trying to do more with lunar and deep space exploration," he says.

A former personal trainer, Prejean came to UTA to become a human performance scientist. As a graduate student, he studied kinesiology and exercise science/biomechanics and helped lead UTA's Applied Biomechanics Lab. His doctoral research focused on running and adaptive-throwing biomechanics.

As a teaching assistant, he was exposed to a broad range of learning opportunities, including hands-on work with state-of-the-art equipment.

"Most of the equipment I learned to use at UTA is almost the exact same as what we have at NASA," says Prejean.



VIRTUAL FIGHTS STAY VIRTUAL

Researcher proves violent games don't lead to real violence

Mike Ward understands why people might think violent video games can lead to acts of violence. But the science just doesn't support it.

The economics professor just published a new study with data from more than 15,000 adolescents that shows no link, or perhaps a negative link, between violent video games and acts of violence. Dr. Ward's longitudinal study examines data from a nationally representative sample of adolescents in grades 7-12 in the U.S. between April-December 1995. The participants were followed into young adulthood with four waves of in-home interviews, the last conducted when participants were ages 24 to 32.

"This is my fourth analysis using a fourth methodology and a fourth

dataset on actual outcomes that finds no violent effects from video games," he says. "It is remarkable how consistent these findings are."

Some policymakers and elected officials have decried how playing these violent video games leads to acts of violence, especially following many of the multitude of mass shootings the United States has experienced.

On the contrary, Ward says video game development is among the fastest-evolving forms of human expression.

"It's difficult to imagine the experiences that video games developed over just the next few decades will provide," he says. "One consequence of a policy aimed at restricting content could be to stifle this explosion in creativity."

Crash Course

Museum Studies Minor

IT'S A PERFECT bacon cheeseburger: two golden buns, the top dotted with sesame seeds, and a juicy patty topped with melting cheddar, a tomato, and crisp lettuce. And it's made entirely of glass. The piece is one of many works of art displayed throughout UTA's campus as part of the "Our Campus, Our Museum" program—an initiative managed by Cheryl Mitchell, assistant professor in practice in the Department of Art and Art History, and students pursuing a

museum studies minor under her direction. In the process of installing these satellite exhibitions, students also gain experience in curatorial design and exhibition display, interpretation of thematic ideals, facilities function, and more.

Once students are trained on basic art handling techniques and understand the policies and protocols of a museum career field, they regularly visit area museums and professional art venues, going behind the scenes to learn more about specialty access areas. There, they move beyond exhibition studies to gain a broader view of the art world.

"All areas of employability are open to investigation," Mitchell says. "We have also partnered with museums and organizations for collaborative internships that offer training and experience. This helps students overcome experience requirements listed on job postings."

With such hands-on work being at the forefront of learning, transitioning to online classes in the wake of COVID-19 was a bit of a challenge—but Mitchell saw it as an opportunity both for her students and area art venues.

"I have scoured over the web to find supportive content for the students, such as installation and exhibition design, conservation, virtual tours, vloggers, and even a podcast. Students will assess how these online components represent the museums and if they help or hinder the institution itself," she says. "Both my students and museum partners are excited about this opportunity to better their digital and virtual presence in a time it is needed most. The art world supports each other!"



Giving

The Maverick community comes together to help students in need

LIKE MILLIONS OF people across the country, students at UTA suddenly found themselves navigating an unfamiliar reality when COVID-19 began to spread throughout the U.S. in March 2020. That new existence meant adjusting to online learning, a change of environment as they sheltered in place, and, for some, sudden economic uncertainty.



Their stories are familiar: Decreases in income or complete job loss left several unable to pay bills; some were unable to afford access to internet and necessary technologies for remote learning; and others needed help traveling home.

Fortunately, UTA students in need had a source of refuge. Since 2015, students with unexpected financial setbacks have sought relief by applying to UTA's Emergency Assistance Fund. To qualify for aid, applicants must have a temporary financial hardship resulting from a

sudden emergency that jeopardizes their capability to attend UTA.

The program is made possible largely thanks to individual donor support. As of June 1, 514 donors had given more than \$148,000 in direct response to the pandemic.

"Unexpected financial setbacks caused by short-term crises can make or break a student when it comes to completing their educations," says Lisa Nagy, vice president for student affairs. "Donations to the Emergency Assistance Fund not

only support affected students, but also show their community is behind them."

Almost as soon as the pandemic arrived in North Texas, members of the Maverick community asked how they could help. When Lei Testa ('93 BBA, Accounting) saw the call for support, she was eager to do her part by making a donation.

"More than ever, it's important we come together as a community to help one another," Testa says. "I felt compelled to do whatever I could to support my fellow Mavericks during these challenging times."

Some used their creative skills to garner support, such as Dan Cavanagh, professor and chair of the Department of Music, who hosted a live jazz concert from his living room in April. The hour-long event drew hundreds of viewers and raised more than \$2,500 for UTA students.

The impact of this collective community support will not soon be forgotten by students. In a thank you note to staff, Thao Ho, a junior finance and economics major and Goolsby Scholar, summed up the fund's profound impact.

"You have lightened my financial burden, which allows me to focus more on the most crucial aspect of school—learning," she wrote. "I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me."



STRENGTHENING SENIOR SOCIAL NETWORKS

Interdisciplinary research combats social isolation for elderly populations

Noelle Fields and Ling Xu, assistant professors in the School of Social Work, believe that social distancing requirements during the coronavirus pandemic place older adults at higher risks of physical and mental ailments.

The pair specializes in research and education related to older adults and their family caregivers.

"While social distancing may impact all of us, the negative effect may be greater for older adults who are already at risk for social isolation," Dr. Fields says. "Some in gerontology and other social science fields are calling for 'physical distancing' rather than 'social distancing.'"

There is strong evidence that for older adults, social isolation and loneliness negatively affect mortality and are associated with higher risks for a variety of physical and mental conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, obe-

sity, a weakened immune system, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, and more.

Dr. Xu recently received a grant from the National Institutes of Health to research ways of reducing the isolating stress experienced by families caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease.

"Social workers directly engage clients," she says. "Our work is empathic in nature, so we know the perspective of our clients and can take the initiative and advocate for them. We do not propose new theoretical solutions, we propose action models like intervention or policy."

While social isolation is easily recognized in older adults, it's becoming more common across one's lifespan, says Kathryn Daniel, associate professor and director of the Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner program.

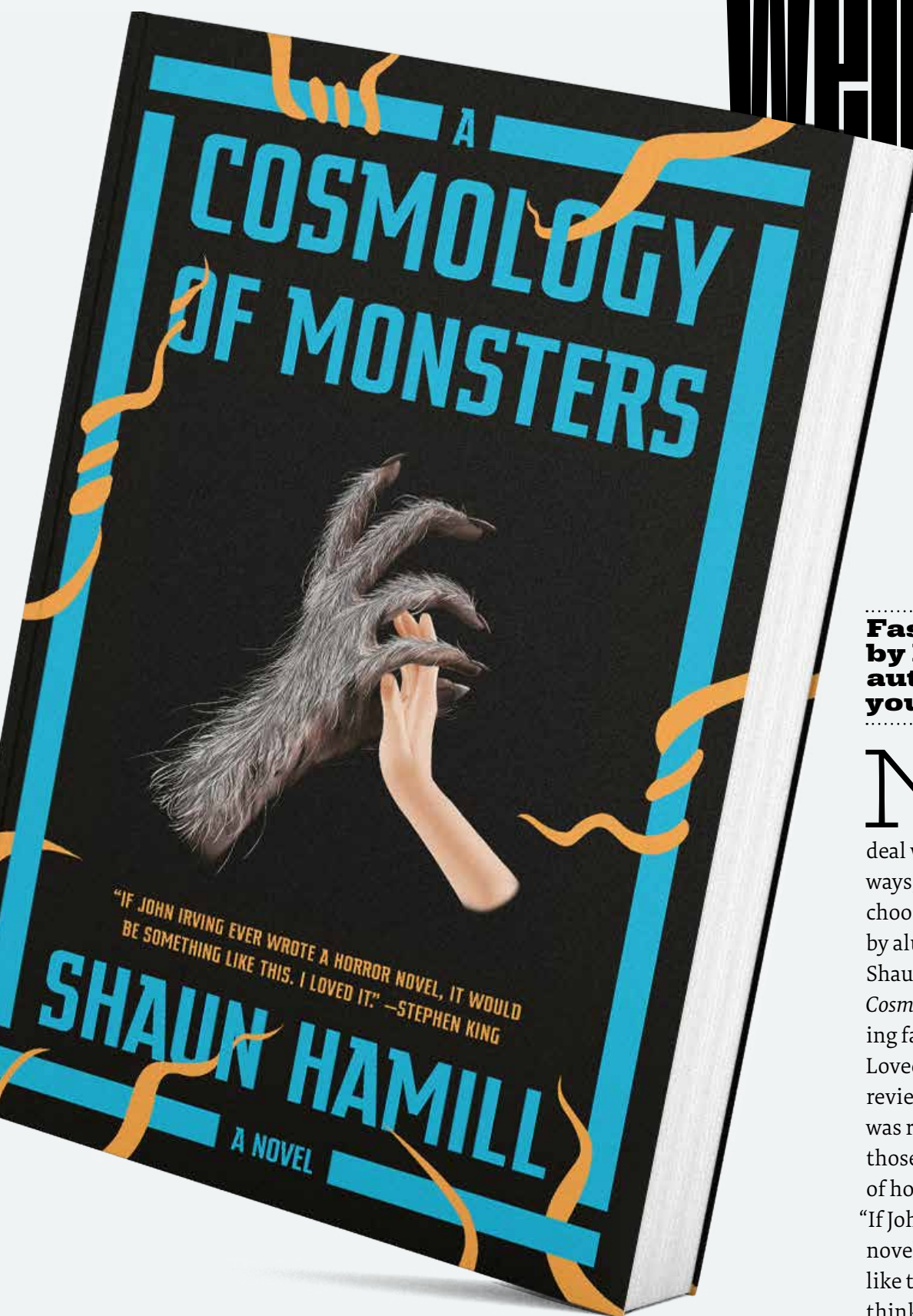
In addition, there are other marginalized groups at risk for detrimental

isolation, including prisoners, immigrants, and other overlooked populations.

Faculty members in UTA's College of Nursing and Health Innovation expose students to other cultures and points of view to instill empathy and help them recognize the warning signs of social isolation.

"To put it simply, we are not meant to be isolated," Dr. Daniel says. "Social networks are imperative in a healthy society. When it comes to tackling the effects of social isolation as a modern-day challenge, a tighter, more cohesive society with greater diversity of age, race, and culture is a win for everyone."

"To put it simply, we are not meant to be isolated. Social networks are imperative in a healthy society."



Well Read



Shaun Hamill
(’08 BA, English)

“Although I grew up loving horror, I didn’t think of myself as a horror writer for a long time. It wasn’t until I decided to incorporate horror elements into my fiction that I wrote something interesting and unique.”

Fascinating books by Maverick authors to fill your library

NOAH TURNER AND his family see monsters. While they deal with them in different ways, Noah is the only one who chooses to let them in. Written by alumnus and Arlington native Shaun Hamill (’08 BA, English), *A Cosmology of Monsters* is a sprawling family tale infused with a Lovecraftian horror that had reviewers raving when the novel was released last year. Among those reviewers was the master of horror himself, Stephen King. “If John Irving ever wrote a horror novel, it would be something like this,” he said. “I loved it, and I think you will, too.”

Let’s start with the praise. How does it feel to have approval like that coming at you?

The short answer is that it didn’t feel like a ton of accolades in the moment. A few weeks ago, however, one of my editors showed me some ad copy that cherry-picked all the best quotes from every professional review or write-up the book received. It was the first time I’d seen them all together like that, and that was a powerful experience. So much praise—from so many artists and critics I admire—all in one place recontextualized the book’s reception for me.

The Washington Post called the opening line of your book “the most compelling opening sentence of the year.” Opening lines can be the bane of a writer’s existence! It seems like they either come together like magic, or they’re labored over again and again.

What was the process of writing that sentence like for you?

The opening sentence was definitely a “magic” moment. It came to me while I was daydreaming in my early 20s, and I spent 10 years waiting for the rest of the story to follow. I wish I could craft a sentence that good on command. I’d never have trouble writing anything again.

Have you always wanted to be a writer?

I always wanted to be a storyteller, but the ambition took a few different shapes over the years. What I eventually realized was that writing the stories was my favorite part of any creative endeavor, and after that, I focused on the craft of fiction. Although I grew up loving horror, I didn’t think of myself as a horror writer for a long time. It wasn’t until I decided to incorporate horror elements into my fiction that I wrote something interesting and unique. Now

that I’m here, though, I’m happy to wear the label of horror writer.

How did UTA help shape you as a writer?

UTA has a wonderful English Department and a terrific creative writing program as well. I got a solid grounding in the classics from my academic studies and learned a lot about the world of MFAs and modern literary fiction from my creative writing classes, especially my Advanced Fiction class with Laura Kopchick.

What’s coming up next for you?

I’m working on a couple of novels and a TV pilot. Hopefully, I’ll be able to talk about at least one of those things in a more official capacity soon!

MAV ROUNDUP

Safely travel from DALLAS TO HOUSTON in just...

BULLET TO THE TOP

Student wins top film award in the state

A video created by sophomore broadcast major Cecillia Nguyen won a statewide competition sponsored by the company proposing a high-speed passenger rail system to connect Dallas and Houston. Several other films created by UTA students were finalists in the competition.

Nguyen’s entry, *Nguyener*, explores the benefits of a high-speed train for Texas. The video features some of the plusses with fast-paced graphics and iconic scenes throughout Texas. The film won in the category of animation excellence.

“When I found out that I won the competition in my class, I was so happy to be around the people who supported me and gave me confidence throughout the process,” says Nguyen.

Texas Central put out a call for university students in Texas along the train’s proposed route to produce original 30- to 90-second films answering the question, “What travel pain points will be eased by the Texas high-speed train?”

Of the eight films that were named finalists in the competition, six came from UTA. As a prize for her winning submission, Nguyen will receive \$5,000, and UTA’s Department of Communication will receive \$2,000.

“I think this contest was a great opportunity for my students to challenge themselves and explore what the bullet train has to offer Texas,” says LaDonna Aiken, broadcast specialist at UTA and Nguyen’s faculty advisor.



FROM LEFT: College of Business Dean Harry Dombroski, Sam Mahrouq, and Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams

BUSINESS LABORATORY

Students get hands-on finance experience

Sam Mahrouq ('91 BA, Journalism) discovered his calling in the business world by purchasing a vehicle and shipping it to his brother overseas. Selling the car for more than it cost to purchase and export, Mahrouq had an epiphany: Why not pursue the car business? Since then, he has owned and operated multiple car sales operations.

Mahrouq and his family have been living the American dream for more than 25 years and are now providing opportunities for students at UTA to pursue their own dreams. The Sam Mahrouq Financial Markets Lab was born from his unique experiences that demonstrated to him the need for hands-on, practical training—the kind that sets UTA's business students apart.

Students in the lab, which is equipped with Bloomberg terminals, have the rare opportunity to watch, in real time, the concepts they learn in textbooks as they shape trends in the financial markets. It is a place of invention, where students explore and create firsthand knowledge of finance best practices.

"The lab is essential in providing Bloomberg terminals, which enhances learning as it provides a real-world environment for the students," says Thomas Thompson, clinical associate professor of finance and real estate. "Having Bloomberg certification will provide a leg up for student placement."



BEHIND THE MUSIC

New degree gives students music industry knowledge

After working as a musician, producer, composer, and arranger to some of the most well-known artists in the nation, Assistant Professor Jamar Jones is now giving an insider's look at the music industry to students working toward one of UTA's new degrees—a BA in Music Industry Studies.

The degree includes not only core courses in music, but also classroom work that focuses on the business and production side of the industry, including record label studio management, digital music technology, accounting, and even law.

"The music industry is growing, and it's ripe with career opportunities and pathways," says Dan Cavanagh, chair of the Department of Music. "Having a de-

gree in music industry studies is a career boost and more attractive than simply receiving a business degree and then working in the industry."

The Music Department's Studio 301 is UTA's on-campus recording studio and features the latest recording tools and technology. Jones anticipates graduates will have the know-how to manage artists, run record labels, and produce albums—just as he has done for many famous performers, including Patti LaBelle, Jamie Foxx, and Jill Scott.

"Students should feel like being at UTA is just like walking into a studio in L.A. or New York or Nashville," says Jones. "I want to put UTA on the map as a place that educates and trains music industry professionals."

Chat

with **Deanna Johnston** ('92 BA, Finance)
Chief Information Officer, Shiseido Americas

ON THE ROAD to success, there are often many paths from which to choose. Fortunately, Deanna Johnston had the help of The University of Texas at Arlington and its strong Greek community to aid her way. After graduating from high school, Johnston was excited to begin the next chapter in her life, though she didn't have a clear career goal in mind.

When one of her close friends announced she was planning to attend UTA, Johnston decided to join her.

Though initially unsure of what she wanted to study, she knew the importance of community and soon found one to call her own at UTA. She and her friend decided to "rush" a sorority in the fall of 1988.

"Bid Day my freshman year when I joined Delta Delta Delta is among my favorite UTA memories," says Johnston, who is now chief information officer at Shiseido Americas, a subsidiary of the Tokyo-based, global cosmetics company Shiseido. "The Greek system was a strong, instant community that enriched my experience in countless ways and made UTA feel like home."

It was thanks to that community and her time as a UTA Ambassador that Johnston began to feel more integrated at UTA and learned valuable lessons about friendship, leadership, and teamwork. And it was through a connection in the Greek community that she received her first internship and started on her career path.

More than 25 years later, with a litany of impressive titles on her resume, Johnston still utilizes lessons she learned during her time studying finance in UTA's College of Business.

"I am actually surprised at how many fundamentals I still leverage on a daily basis," she says. "I veered somewhat away from my degree in finance, but those essentials apply to almost any business leadership role."

Johnston's education isn't the only aspect of her time at UTA that endures; her sorority sisters remain among her closest friends.

"Last year we had a nostalgic reunion weekend in Fort Worth with over 35 alumni," Johnston says. "Many of us are still very close."





PERFECT HARMONY

A capella group honored UTA's A Cappella Choir—the University's premier choral ensemble—was one of only 12 choirs across the country invited to perform at the National Collegiate Choral Organization's 2019 national conference.

Karen Kenaston-French, director of choral activities and associate professor of music, conducted the performance. "I'm incredibly proud of our students," she says. "They have a lot of pride in the choir and work extremely hard."

The A Cappella Choir is made up mostly of undergraduate and graduate vocal music majors and was selected from a recorded audition submitted anonymously.

Dan Cavanagh, Department of Music chair, called the invitation to sing at the 8th biennial conference "a tremendous recognition of the work that Dr. Kenaston-French and our vocal colleagues are doing with our students."

Previously, the 48-voice choir performed at the 2019 and 2014 Texas Music Educators Association convention, the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) national convention in 2015, and the 2016 ACDA Southwestern Division Conference. The choir performed with Mick Jagger and the rest of the Rolling Stones in Arlington in 2016. Other honors include appearances with the Manhattan Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, and the Texas Ballet Theatre.

Campus Buzz

Our online celebration of the Class of 2020

Congratulations, Class of 2020!
@ / @RUCKEROY



GRACIAS A DIOS. All I have to say is there were countless late nights, many tech weeks, a handful of opening nights, countless tears shed, a whole bunch of learning experiences and of course many new friends and a slew of memories made. Thank you Maverick Theatre company for making these years of my life one for the books.
@ / @KARLALINNEAg6



Bachelor of Science in Biology with a Minor in Biochemistry. We're halfway there, y'all, four more years to go! Progress to Doctor Status: ████████████████████ 50%
@ / @DANIELG3_14



I have been blessed throughout my journey by friends and family, which has culminated in this: a master's in education. Although these are unprecedented times, our resilience and ability to achieve and overcome is our legacy!
@ / @ATAYLORKAMARA1



Our #ForeverMaverick celebrates during a drive-by graduation party! Well done, Chris!
@ / @BARBARAGRIFFITHMOFFETT



It's commencement day! We should have all been walking the stage today, but at least we are alumni now!
@ / @ERICA.J.LEWIS

Gallery

Holly D. Gray
Photographer
and sculptor

FOR ANY ARTIST, the act of creation is intensely personal—it’s the process of making personal experiences and perspectives tangible. For Holly D. Gray (’06 BFA, Photography; ’19 MFA, Inter-media Studies), that act took on a new meaning when she became the mother of a medically fragile child.

“The repetitive acts of labor and fragile time spent as a female caregiver have become a large part of my thought process,” she says. “My role as a woman and the gendered assumptions that culminate with this identity are a constant influence on my artistic work.”

After being away from formal education for over a decade, Gray found at UTA supportive faculty and a community of artists and creators that helped her kick-start a consistent artistic practice devoted to research and dedicated studio production. She had her first solo exhibition in 2018 and has been pleased with the direction and importance of her work since.

“I am very encouraged to inform and educate viewers on the objects, processes, and themes within my art practice,” Gray says. “I am proud of these interactions because they ultimately lead to important conversations about women’s issues, disabilities, health care access, and basic human rights.”



LIGHT IN NURTURE (LEFT)
For this collection of abstract images, Gray photographed the daily waste material from medically fragile children. “The context of this imagery was developed while considering the role of emotional labor for women,” she says.

52 WEEKS (ABOVE)
A sculptural installation, 52 Weeks was created as a memorial to a year of Gray’s personal experience as a female caregiver. The 52 organic forms are each made from one week’s worth of detritus that comes from the care of the artist’s disabled daughter.

MAV ROUNDUP



DYNAMIC TRAINING

New program to boost special education teaching

UTA master’s students studying social work or special education now have the opportunity to train for both, thanks to a new project to improve services for special-needs children from early childhood through high school graduation.

Combining social work with special education training is important, says Ambra Green (pictured above), principal investigator and assistant professor of special education, because special education teachers and social workers frequently offer overlapping student services but may not know how to complement one another.

“This is a big deal for the state of Texas because it impacts students with disabilities in the midst of statewide efforts to improve their services,” Dr. Green says. “Our work is both for them and their families.”

The project will create an interdisciplinary master’s-level personnel preparation cohort. It is supported through a five-year, \$1.08 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs. Collaborating with Green on the project are co-investigators Jandel Crutchfield, assistant professor of social work, and John Romig, assistant professor of education.

“We want UTA to be a leader in these fields,” Green says. “This grant will not only prepare professionals, but also change the trajectory of students with disabilities.”

CHAMPIONSHIP
SEASONS HALTED

Movin' Mavs' seasons ended by COVID-19

When asked to pinpoint a personal team highlight in the 2019-20 Movin' Mavs season, Antoine Gray doesn't hesitate. "Any time one of our rookies got their first collegiate baskets," he says. "We'd all go crazy on the bench."

In an undefeated intercollegiate season like the one the Movin' Mavs had this year, the players would have plenty of athletic highlights to choose from when asked. But rather than recall high-scoring games or personal moments of glory, again and again, the players choose highlights that exemplify the spirit of the close-knit team.

"It's all about the way we clicked," says Clarence McCarthy-Grogan. "We knew we had the right squad to be successful this season."

The word "successful" almost doesn't do the season justice. The team finished with an overall record of 22 wins and only one loss, going undefeated (14-0) in National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) Intercollegiate Division games. It was their first undefeated regular season in 15 years, and they were poised to compete for a title as they prepared for the championship tournament.

And then the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in the United States. Before the team had time to process what was happening, the NWBA canceled the tournament, and the Movin' Mavs' record season came to an abrupt halt.

"Of course, it was the right decision not to host the tournament," says Coach Doug Garner. "But it really leaves a hole in the season. It has been a feeling of loss instead of a celebration of success."

The Lady Movin' Mavs, too, struggled with the unexpected and sudden end to their 2019-20 season. The team was second in their division going into nationals—a huge accomplishment for a team in a transition year after graduating several seniors.

"Everyone had counted us out for the season because we lost so many players," says Darlene Hunter, a social work graduate student. "But we worked really hard and were peaking right when we needed to. The team was ready to give it all we had to bring a championship back to UTA."

Not having the opportunity to do that has left the team in the same place as the men's team: trying to find closure on a season destined for greatness.

"The whole world is dealing with the abrupt loss of a lot of things right now, so I know we aren't in this alone," Hunter

says. "While this season didn't finish as we had hoped, I still have a lot to be grateful for. We made a lifetime of memories."

From his home back in Australia, McCarthy-Grogan is also finding his peace with the way the season ended.

"We can only focus on what we can control," he says. "COVID-19 can't

touch how much work we put into the season. It can't take away how much fun we had. And we will come back much stronger next year."

Gray, who is working to finish his master's degree in social work this summer, agrees.

"COVID-19 can't take away how dominant we were throughout the season. It can't take away our cohesiveness or our unity. And it can't take away our bond."

"COVID-19 can't touch how much work we put into the season. It can't take away how much fun we had. And we will come back much stronger next year."

SIBLING DUO ON THE DIAMOND

Brother and sister athletes join the Maverick family

Growing up in Mansfield, Reagan and Trevor Hukill's sibling bond strengthened as they became united in their efforts on the baseball diamond. Now that bond is even stronger since they joined the Maverick family.

"I tell everybody all the time that I feel like I've won the lottery because honestly, I did," says their mother, Melodie Hukill.

On the advice of UTA head baseball coach Darin Thomas, Trevor began his collegiate career at Vernon Junior College. There, the left-handed pitcher struck out 60 batters across 69 innings while grooming himself into the talent the Mavs' coaching staff believed he could be. While he was plagued with injuries in his first season at UTA, Trevor expects to pick things back up in fall 2020.

"Trevor is a team guy who puts our baseball program first," says Associate Head Coach Jon Wentz. "He cares and has worked to overcome a lot of adversity as a player in his short time here at UTA."

Reagan also has a team-first mindset. In the 25 games the softball team managed to play this season, the freshman excelled with a .305 batting average and a 1.000 fielding percentage across 24 starts in the outfield.

"Reagan is a fantastic person to have in this program," says head softball Coach Peejay Brun. "She's a talented outfielder with a consistent swing. The one thing that stands out about her is her ability to make people smile. She just has the personality that makes you feel like everything is going to be OK."

Luckily for the Hukill parents, if everything eventually goes back to normal after social distancing orders lift, they should have at least two more years of being able to cheer on their children.

"They chose to go to UTA because the programs are amazing," says Melodie. "The coaches are amazing. The players are amazing. They truly have found their own home there."



SERVING OTHERS

After recovering from COVID-19, tennis athlete makes an impact

As a member of UTA's men's tennis team, junior marketing major Eduard Simo had seen his fair share of volunteer work while serving on the Student Athlete Advisory Committee at UTA. Since returning to his home country of Spain, however, he's taken his community service up a notch.

Upon returning home to Barcelona after COVID-19 closed the UTA campus, Simo first had to overcome coronavirus, which his family caught just days before his arrival.

He and his family quarantined themselves for 14 days. Once the period passed and his symptoms subsided, he was ready to make a difference.

Through Health Warriors, an initiative started by a close friend of his, Simo is helping to provide health care workers with support and encouragement through the donation of prepared meals. As of early May, Health Warriors had donated 6,325 servings of food to 64 different organizations, including hospitals, prisons, and police and fire stations.

"It's very gratifying for me because you go to these hospitals that are overloaded with so many people," says Simo. "We go there and bring big boxes of food and they are just so happy. They all start clapping. Every single doctor comes out and says thank you. They're doing like 12-hour turns, so it's the least we could do for them."



FIRST-EVER RECOGNITION

Women's golfer earns Sun Belt honors

Kate Tran is the first player in the short history of the UT Arlington women's golf program to be named Sun Belt Conference Golfer of the Week, league officials announced in March. The UTA women's golf program played its inaugural season in 2017-18.

The award covers a period in which the Mavericks competed in one event, the Kiawah Island Classic in early March. Teeing it up against the largest field in collegiate golf, she tied for third place out of 264 competitors.

Entering the tournament, Tran had four under-par rounds in 84 career rounds; at the Kiawah event, she had three such rounds in three opportunities.

Tran tied for the tournament lead in par-5 scoring at -6 and tied for the 5th-

best par-4 scoring average in the field at -1. The Arlington Martin High product was the lone player in the field to convert two eagles as she rolled in one each of the first two rounds.

Tran aided in UTA's 891 total for the week as the Mavs finished in 11th place out of 53 teams. That 891 three-round total is the 2nd-best of the season and 2nd-lowest in program history, bested only by an 883 (+19) performance this past fall at Arkansas State's Lady Red Wolves Classic.

Teeing it up against the largest field in collegiate golf, [Kate Tran] tied for third place out of 264 competitors.



SEASON INTERRUPTED

Maverick baseball cut short after best start in nearly 20 years

There was plenty of optimism heading into a new season of Maverick baseball, and the team certainly did not disappoint, posting a stellar start. But four weeks into play, the season was called thanks to COVID-19.

Though the season ended abruptly, it wasn't without some memorable and even monumental moments. The Mavericks finished with a 12-4 record through 16 games—the team's best start since 2001.

BY THE NUMBERS

The team ERA of 2.42 was among the best in the nation.

With 6.33 hits allowed per nine innings, the Mavericks led the Sun Belt and ranked 14th in the NCAA.

3 shutouts in 16 games played.

Wyatt Divis was one of the top relievers in the nation, with a 0.00 ERA in 16 innings pitched.

The team finished with the 20th hardest strength of schedule. The Mavericks played a ranked team on every Tuesday of the season (DBU—twice, TCU, Oklahoma).





Student-Powered **DISCOVERY**

The **\$117 million research** enterprise at UTA is filled with preeminent researchers solving some of the world's most pressing problems. **Students are playing an integral role** in their discoveries, gaining experience that has impact far beyond the laboratory.

BY DANA JENNINGS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NATHAN HACKETT

Popular culture has often shown us that important, game-changing research centers on a pivotal “aha” moment, where a lone scientist hunched over a microscope in a laboratory looks up with excitement to share an incredible discovery. But the reality is most often quite different.

The research that impacts and transforms the world we live in takes years of diligent effort and teams of people contributing their time and expertise to keep the process moving toward answers to grand questions.

At UTA, faculty take and welcome with open arms undergraduate and graduate students into this process, allowing them to hone their research prowess in leading laboratories, gain invaluable experience, and play a vital role in the research mission of the University.

“Many students are intimidated by research, especially as undergraduates,” says Marco Brotto, the George W. and Hazel M. Jay Endowed Professor in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation. “But if their eyes are opened to what is taking place around them, they might have an interest sparked. Then, once they get a taste of conducting research and making a discovery, they’re addicted.”

Creating Lifelong Learners

Serving as living proof of Dr. Brotto’s philosophy for engaging students in research is Matthew Fiedler, a

junior exercise science student and research assistant in Brotto’s laboratory.

Fiedler connected with the research community at UTA just four weeks into his freshman year and was hooked from the start, saying now that he’d love to spend the remainder of his working life doing research.

His time in laboratories on the UTA campus set the stage for him to earn a position as a summer research course assistant at the prestigious Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL). Highly adept in imaging techniques, Fiedler will help professors in the classroom and with hands-on microscopy lessons. MBL attracts esteemed pre- and postdoctoral trainees, and Fiedler will be leading them as an undergraduate with two years left to complete his bachelor’s degree.

For Fiedler, his passion for research does look a bit like what we see in the movies.

“As I look through the microscope and find something, there are a few moments in which I’m the only one who knows what has been unlocked beneath that lens,” he says. “It’s an incredible feeling.”



While the opportunity at MBL is an unparalleled one for Fiedler to hone his skills in teaching technical research concepts, Brotto looks forward to the intangibles Fiedler will bring back to Arlington.

"I hope Matthew spends this summer engaging in work that sparks a long-term academic career and starts his journey to becoming an independent investigator," Brotto says. "Should he raise and harness a passion for something this summer, whether it's a concept or technique, it will serve to advance our lab as a whole when he returns."

Win-Win

Faculty are most often regarded as the experts, but what students bring to a lab environment can be just as impactful as decades of experience, says recent UTA alumna Arisa Towns.

Towns graduated in December 2019 with a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology. She worked in the lab of Alison Ravenscraft, assistant professor of biology, in her senior year.

"Students play a bigger role in research than most people could ever fathom," Towns says. "Many people are well acquainted with standard research papers, but they don't realize that some of the research methods are often executed or even created by students."

Towns believes research also contributes critical value to the academic mission of UTA.

"UTA prides itself on the research conducted on campus, and rightfully so," she says. "The findings of

laboratories often make it into the classroom setting as an important means to providing students with a visual understanding of what their core curriculum is centered on."

Brotto echoes this, saying the sharing of UTA research in a classroom setting can help make it seem less daunting and more tangible, potentially inspiring more students to get involved.

While students benefit from engaging in research, many faculty members note that they do as well.

In the pursuit of answers to grand research questions within his laboratory, Mark Pellegrino, assistant professor of biology, utilizes the individual interests of students.

"The students in my lab each have their own independent research project that supports an overall research question that my lab studies," Dr. Pellegrino says. "Even though each student works independently on their own project, their findings often support one another to help solve a bigger question. My students provide important intellectual contributions to the project by critically appraising their data and interpreting the significance of their findings."

Kytai Nguyen, professor of bioengineering, credits the students in her lab with much of its success.

"My students are the main power in my lab," Dr. Nguyen says. "As a result of their hard work, our group has gained various research and education awards and published several peer-reviewed articles since I came to UTA in 2005."

"The students play an important role in our research mission," she continues. "Their ideas and results from their own experiments lend tremendous value."

Beyond the Lab

At the UTA Research Institute (UTARI)—the research and development unit of the University specializing in applying cutting-edge technologies to real-world engineering problems—student involvement is not any less vital.

UTARI brings on over 50 undergraduate and graduate students each semester, with many continuing from semester to semester and working with the same research teams.

"Our mission is to perform research and development that links discovery, development, and technology commercialization to technology-based economic development that benefits society," says Eileen Clements, director of research at UTARI. "The students are involved in research that directly relates to this mission and play a role in executing grants and contracts with federal and state agencies and industry partners and in moving research and development through the pipeline."

Dr. Clements says she sees many success stories, as a number of students who served as research assistants at UTARI have been hired as full-time employees after graduation, while many others credit their experience at

UTARI with success in their job hunt.

"All of our research activities are addressing real-world problems, and in many cases are connected to business partners," she says. "The students are often being asked to work on projects that have real deadlines, budgets, and deliverables attached to them. Having this kind of research assistant experience can really make the difference in getting the job."

Pellegrino also emphasizes that experience in a

also to help me understand the reasoning behind them. Her guidance helped me fully grasp research practices and helped me start my career. I felt confident going into interviews because I knew I was well-versed in relevant topics thanks to my amazing lab professor."

Fiedler emphasizes the importance of students discussing their interests with their instructors. He credits getting connected with the network of faculty on campus early on in his studies with the success he is



Left: Kytai Nguyen guides students in her laboratory. **Right:** Student researchers at UTARI help develop tangible products, like the REHEAL glove pictured here.

laboratory as a student can make a world of difference in a student's preparedness for life after graduation, whether that life involves research or not.

"If a student thinks they are interested in pursuing a career in research, then starting early during their undergraduate studies is a definite advantage," Pellegrino says. "But laboratory experience also helps students learn critical organizational skills that can be applied to any career."

Towns says her time in Dr. Ravenscraft's lab provided her with more experience than she could have ever imagined and credits the enthusiasm for research and mentorship of her faculty leader with her landing a job in a petroleum laboratory shortly after graduation.

"I will always be grateful for Dr. Ravenscraft and her patience with me as I learned the lab processes," Towns says. "She took time to not only correct my mistakes, but

experiencing now.

Towns agrees, praising the connectivity of faculty on campus.

"The process of getting involved in a lab on campus is easier and less daunting than I anticipated," she says. "The students and faculty at UTA are so very helpful. Even if they can't provide you with the information you are seeking, they will always point you in the right direction."

For students interested in research, UTA's Office of Undergraduate Research offers a number of formalized undergraduate research programs and professional development opportunities to engage students in the scholastic process and help them discover their passion.

Towns' advice for students considering getting involved in research? "Go for it."

"Research not only provides you with great experience that will benefit you in your quest for jobs after graduation, but it also provides you with the opportunity to be a part of the best feature of UTA," she says. "My involvement in research at UTA has provided me with even more gratitude for my alma mater." **UTA**

"The students play an important role in our research mission. Their ideas and results from their own experiments lend tremendous value."



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a bright yellow blazer over a white lace top and a black skirt, is walking towards the camera on a wide, paved walkway. To her right is a modern building with large glass windows and concrete steps. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

A DEGREE THAT *Makes a Difference*

**A liberal arts
degree provides
the foundation
for successful
careers in
health care,
journalism,
entertainment,
and more.**

BY DEVYNN CASE

In today's increasingly global world, employers are beginning to place more value on a liberal arts education, which provides graduates with a dynamic, far-reaching knowledge base.

A recent report on employment, skills, and workforce strategy from the World Economic Forum found that 80% of employers agreed that all students need a strong foundation in both liberal arts and sciences. And a report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities noted that employers felt that candidates with broad learning were most prepared for long-term career success.

Elisabeth Cawthon, dean of UTA's College of Liberal Arts (COLA), says that COLA students start with classroom experiences that allow them to engage in critical, interdisciplinary thinking. They also learn effective communication, benefit from internships, and find support from involved, connected faculty—all excellent workforce preparation.

"A degree in the liberal arts can educate future leaders and expansive thinkers who are comfortable in many fields," says Dr. Cawthon. "It prepares students for creative, worthwhile, and beneficial careers."

JUANA PALMIERI

'19 BFA, Broadcast
Communication
Multimedia Digital
Journalist

Juana Palmieri became interested in a news career in her early twenties and immediately decided to attend UT Arlington. She credits her time at UTA with teaching her the value of hard work.

"UT Arlington was a great experience," she says. "I was able to experience different forms of journalism, such as *The Shorthorn* and *UTA News en Español*. I also interned with Proyecto U."

Palmieri was part of the Hispanic Media Initiative (HMI), a program in UTA's Department of Communication that focuses on the advancement of Hispanic media education, journalism, and research; addresses urgent needs found in the media industry; and secures the

continued development of a world-class education at UTA.

UT Arlington's HMI program is one of the best in the country, producing broadcast journalism professionals in all areas of the field. The program has a 100% graduation and job placement rate, highlighting the demand from industry for UTA-trained graduates.

HMI has produced a broad network of alumni working in some of the largest markets in the United States and internationally. Proyecto U, established in 2014, is one of the few programs in the country that gives students real-time, experiential learning opportunities in broadcast journalism.

Palmieri, currently the only digital producer at Univision Dallas, understands that a career in communication is a big responsibility.

"I want to continue to create content both digitally and for television," she says. "It's an important way to inform our community, and seeing my work published online is very rewarding. Every improvement that I make motivates me to continue to do better in my profession."

Julian Rodriguez, lecturer in the Department of Communication and faculty advisor for HMI, advocates that a liberal arts education is no different from the STEM disciplines.

"Liberal arts and STEM fields complement and improve each other by creating a holistic, multidisciplinary environment in which professionals arm themselves with the ability to see, understand, and interpret the world," he says. "We live in a world that has never been more connected, yet these omnipresent communication channels are flooded with unclear or, worse, misleading messages. A liberal arts education provides a solid foundation that facilitates understanding of the human condition."

*"UT Arlington was a great experience. I was able to experience different forms of journalism, such as *The Shorthorn* and *UTA News en Español*. I also interned with Proyecto U."*



KEVIN BACH

'17 BFA, Theatre Performance

Actor

Kevin Bach used to lie to his parents, saying he was studying at the library when in fact he was rehearsing for local plays.

"I didn't want them to know, but a mom always knows when her kid is lying," says Bach. "My parents had always hoped that this acting thing would be just a hobby for me."

His parents were not alone in their skepticism. Images of artists hustling,

trying to find work, and worrying about where their next paycheck will come from are common. This was especially true for Bach's parents, who cringed at the idea of their son moving to Los Angeles at age 18 to become an actor without a degree.

"They said, 'At least get a degree first before you go,' to which I replied, 'Only if you let me major in theater,'" he says. "The entertainment industry is one of the most competitive fields out there, but I feel like I'm living my dream. I get to collaborate with other actors to tell a story. It doesn't get any better than that. Eventually my parents have come to terms with my passion and career, and I am so incredibly grateful for their support."

Bach, who has acting credits on the TV shows *Blue Bloods* and *Gotham* as well as roles in several short films, is also grateful for support he received from his dedicated professors throughout his time at UTA. He says they introduced him to real-world practice from his first day of classes in his freshman year.

"Our programs emulate industry practice and aesthetics," says Ann Healy, theatre arts associate professor. "Students interact with professionals working in the industry as well as participate in masterclasses, workshops, and internships. A liberal arts education helps students develop a strong sense of responsibility and transferable practical skills, such as communication and analytical problem-solving abilities."

The program's production company, Maverick Theatre Company, immerses students in theatrical production work alongside classes in dramatic literature, theater history, and playwriting. Students gain hands-on experience in all aspects of theater and have opportunities to direct, stage manage, and design and perform on stage.

Bach says attending UT Arlington gave him a strong foundation in his craft.

"My degree has given me a leg up on my competition," he says. "Getting to hear insights from UTA faculty members and their experiences about being in L.A. and New York really prepared me for a career once I graduated. They had so much knowledge to share with me. I couldn't help but to be a sponge and absorb as much as I could."

"My degree has given me a leg up on my competition. Getting to hear insights from UTA faculty members and their experiences about being in L.A. and New York really prepared me for a career once I graduated."

"Having patients learn your name and say thank you or 'Dios la bendiga' [God bless you] is such an amazing feeling. I am grateful for the education decisions that brought me here."

JACQUELINE DELGADO-MARTÍNEZ

('19 BA Political Science, BA Spanish for Translation and Interpreting)

Medical Interpreter

Jacqueline Delgado-Martínez always knew she wanted to give back to her community, so she began her collegiate career at a community college with the intention of becoming a nurse. But now, as a medical interpreter at a public health hospital in North Texas, she's there for the community in a way she never imagined.

"Something that we do as medical interpreters is speak in the first person, as if we were the patients," Delgado-Martínez says. "That can be very affecting at times. But I still love my job. I love being there for patients and their families."

She recalls the passion that her UT Arlington professors showed, inspir-

ing her to work hard to finish her degree—teachers like Alicia Rita Rueda-Acedo, associate professor of Spanish and director of the Spanish Translation and Interpreting Program.

"I teach translation and interpreting in three areas, including health care," says Dr. Rueda-Acedo. "It's vital to provide students with assignments that replicate the types of activities they would encounter working as translators and interpreters in the real world."

In support of COLA's mission to vitalize student learning not only with research and creativity, but also with professional experiences, Rueda-Acedo has established several collaborative partnerships with local nonprofit and for-profit organizations that provide services to the underprivileged Hispanic community.

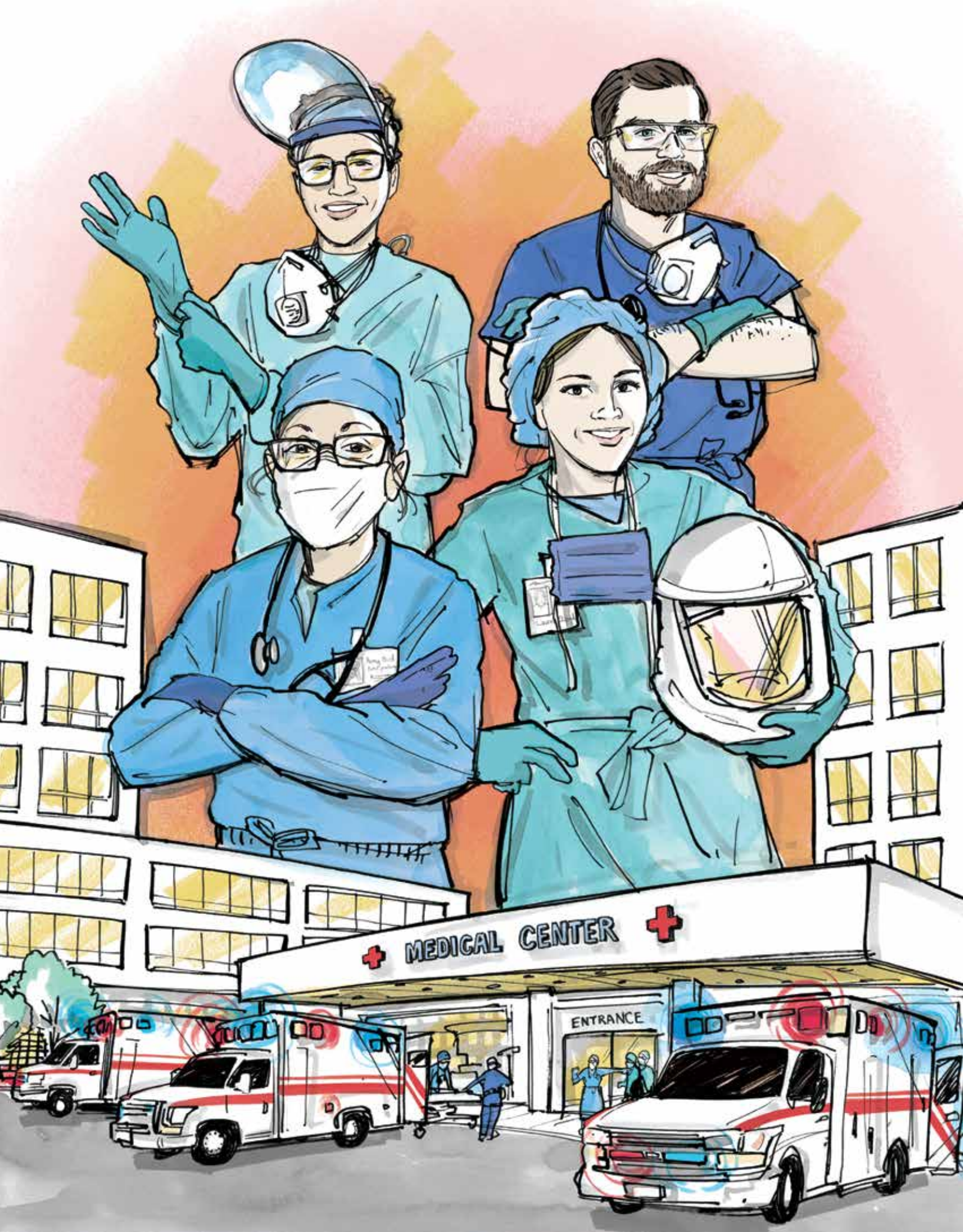
One partnership is Stories to Our Children, a program led by the Arlington Public Library. Through this initiative, underserved parents, many of them

immigrants, are empowered to write, refine, and illustrate their life stories for their children. In turn, their children learn their family histories and the value of preserving them. Delgado-Martínez helped translate several of those stories—which are archived at the library—into English.

"Her generosity and professionalism allow the whole Arlington community to have access to these stories," says Rueda-Acedo. "Translating these stories and making them available evokes sympathy, discussion, and a feeling of belonging. It gives voice to the voiceless."

Delgado-Martínez is proud of her choice in coming to UTA. She credits her wide-ranging liberal arts education with preparing her for a demanding career and the capacity to see others' viewpoints while assessing her own.

"Having patients learn your name and say thank you or 'Dios la bendiga' [God bless you] is such an amazing feeling," she says. "I am grateful for the education decisions that brought me here." **UTA**



CARE THROUGH CRISIS

Maverick
alumni
take on
COVID-19

ILLUSTRATIONS BY BRETT AFFRONTI

UTA IS A Community That Cares—and that remains especially true for our students and alumni who bring their skills, compassion, and hard work out into the world. Across Texas and beyond, thousands of Mavericks have stepped up during the COVID-19 response to show how we improve communities, especially in times of great need. Here are just a few of their stories.

ELISABETH BERGLUND NURSE

After her capstone work in the College of Nursing and Health Innovation in April, Elisabeth Berglund ('20 BSN) saw a post on social media from a group called the Special Operations Medic Coalition. They were looking for medical personnel to staff a converted indoor football facility in New York City known as The Bubble, a site that can treat up to 280 COVID-19 patients with staffing by military and civilian health care personnel.

"It was a call to action," Berglund says. "My dad encouraged me: 'This country needs help, and this is what you're trained for,' he told me. I prayed about it and decided to apply."

After her arrival, Berglund and other volunteers received personal protective gear, a rigorous orientation, and their new assignments of caring for patients cleared from more critical floors in a nearby hospital.

"It's truly a team effort, and it is very rewarding to see our patients get better and go home to their loved ones," says Berglund, who served as a paramedic. "I feel UTA prepared

me for this experience and for what's to come in my nursing career. I am grateful for my professors, my family, my faith, and for the opportunity to help people heal."

AMY BIRD NURSE PRACTITIONER

As a nurse practitioner at Texas Pulmonary and Critical Consultants, Amy Bird ('03 BSN, '09 MSN) is used to treating patients with severe breathing difficulties. But COVID-19 has added complexity to her daily life.

"We're the gatekeepers of COVID testing—we identify who gets tested and who doesn't," she says. "Because of that, the hospital staff nurses and respiratory therapists are relying on us to keep them safe by identifying COVID-positive patients quickly. It's a lot of pressure."

On the home front, the longtime nurse's husband and children moved out during the beginning of the COVID response to mitigate the risks of her job. They kept in touch with calls and video chats before they developed a plan to bring the family back together.

"When you have a patient who has beaten the odds and they're definitely on their way home, that makes everything worth it," she says. "One life is worth everything."

COLTEN PHILPOTT EMERGENCY MEDICINE RESIDENT

For Colten Philpott ('14 BS, Biology; '15 MHA; '16 MBA), his sister, and their mother—all alumni of UTA—COVID-19 isn't their first brush with a deadly viral outbreak.

Dr. Philpott's mother, Tamara Holt ('96 MSN), a nurse practitioner, and his sister, Twila Green ('13 BSN), an ICU nurse, were working at Texas Health Presbyterian in Dallas in 2014 when the hospital had a patient with Ebola. They both still work there, while Dr. Philpott is a first-year emergency resident at JPS Health Network in Fort Worth.

"This isn't our first rodeo when it comes to crazy viruses that make the world catch on fire," he says.

At JPS, Philpott credits the medical staff for being nimble and adjusting to new challenges at Tarrant County's

largest safety-net hospital and one of the area's primary testing sites for COVID-19. From reshaping the emergency room to providing enhanced training for using respirators, JPS physicians have helped train him to provide care for affected patients in a safe environment.

"It's been an incredible medical education," he said. "It's the best of both worlds in that first-year residents are getting to see and help COVID patients, but under the care and

supervision of our attending physicians."

UTA was a great place, he says, for a pre-med student.

"It's everything you want academically. UTA has a strong biology program and is well-respected in Texas during the medical school application cycle. Our med school dean at Texas Tech says he gets three or four Mavericks every year that he is really proud of."

LAURA ELIZONDO ICU NURSE

Laura Elizondo ('05 BSN) is a registered nurse for Baylor Scott & White, where she has worked as a floating ICU nurse for the last 15 years. While the hospitals she serves all saw an increase in COVID-19 patients over the first several weeks of the outbreak, her job, she says, has remained the same.

"Gowning up and doing contact precaution is not new to nursing," says Elizondo, who lives in Arlington. "I feel safe and secure because of the protective steps that are in place."

The hardest thing so far is that the protective precautions create a literal barrier between her and her patients.

"To care for a patient, touch is a very big thing," Elizondo says. "Our time in the room can be very impersonal when you're trying to talk through a mask and limit the time you're in there. It distances the patients from you."

Elizondo is, above all, grateful for the job she still loves.

"My job is very fulfilling," she says. "I'm thankful that I'm still needed—that I still get to work and take care of people."

COURTNEY KINNEAR ER CHARGE NURSE

Courtney Kinnear ('16 BSN, '19 MSN) is an emergency room registered nurse at Texas Health Presbyterian of Rockwall, where she also serves as charge nurse. Part of her job is assigning nurses to patients in a nine-bed ER that sees about 60-80 patients a day.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, her day-to-day role has changed. The hospital has reorganized its emergency room, added negative pressure rooms, and taken over a seven-room pre-op area to use as a respiratory hallway.

"The hardest part is the unknown," says Kinnear, who lives in Royse City. "We don't know when it's going to hit our area, how hard it will be, or how long it will last. When this first hit our country, it was hard watching the brave nurses, doctors, and the physician assistants and nurse practitioners I work with have so much anxiety and fear of what was to happen."

Kinnear says encouragement from the community is bringing her the most joy right now.

"The amount of support people are showing for health care workers is amazing," she says. "The nursing profession seems to have renewed respect from the community."

JOCELYN ZEE CRITICAL CARE PHYSICIAN

Jocelyn Zee ('04 BS, Microbiology) spends 12-hour shifts attending to critically ill patients, some of them diagnosed with COVID-19, in the intensive care unit at JPS Health Network in Fort Worth.



To her, the risks to her personal health from exposure to contagious patients are inherent to her role and responsibilities as a critical care physician.

"I don't give my health a second thought when I'm at home," Dr. Zee says. "Faith is a huge part of my being, and with faith comes personal responsibility."

The pandemic has changed some of Zee's routines at the hospital. She now wears enhanced personal protective equipment, including powered air purifying respirators that she jokes make her and her colleagues look like cone heads or storm troopers. She also wears two and sometimes three or even four pairs of gloves at a time.

She says she's grateful that JPS leadership provides its workers with appropriate protection and is inspired by the bravery and fortitude of her patients.

"I really feel for our patients," she says. "This whole experience has been surreal. It's not business as usual."

Zee, the daughter and sister of Mavericks, enrolled at UTA in 2000 when she was 13, finishing her undergraduate degree at an age when most students are just beginning college.

"All my UTA memories are extremely fond," says the 2016 UTA Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. "So many professors were instrumental in my development and learning. I have total love and appreciation for my education at UTA."

SARAH VAN LEUVEN NURSE

For Sarah Van Leuven, a master's student in the online family nurse practitioner program, the toughest part about working as a nurse right now is seeing her coronavirus-positive patients so sick and alone.

Van Leuven lives in Fallbrook, California, and works as a nurse in the COVID unit at a San Diego hospital. New hospital regulations prohibit patients from receiving visitors, part of an effort to limit the spread of the virus.

"You see these really sick people who are all alone," she says. "As much as we are there for them and care for them, we are no substitute for somebody's family or loved one."

Van Leuven enrolled in UTA's online master's program in 2019, attracted by its flexibility, high-quality reputation, and affordable tuition. Becoming a nurse practitioner, she says, will give her the opportunity to earn more money and enjoy a more routine work schedule. The online classes—along with regular study sessions via video conference with one of her classmates—have helped Van Leuven maintain a sense of normalcy during the pandemic.

"I'd never had this feeling of being part of something that is bigger than myself," she says. "I really feel like I am making an impact when I go to work." **UTA**

"When you have a patient who has beaten the odds and they're definitely on their way home, that makes everything worth it."

—AMY BIRD

When we needed it most,
the Maverick community
was here for us. Thank you
so much for your support.

To those who have supported UTA students
through gifts to the Emergency Assistance
Fund and other efforts: Thank You. We are
forever grateful for your assistance.

THANK YOU

To make a gift to the Emergency Assistance Fund,
visit giving.uta.edu/give.

CLASS OF 1968

All the latest professional updates from our talented alumni all over the world.

1968

Jim R. McClellan (BA, Political Science; '70 MA, History) was awarded the first fellowship of Dundee and Angus College of Scotland. He also was conferred an honorary Doctor of Education degree from Abertay University of Dundee, Scotland, in 2019. He is a professor of history and the dean of liberal arts at Northern Virginia Community College. He received the UTA Distinguished Alumni Award in 1997.

Robinson Transformed Baseball—And America; Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll: The Rise of America's 1960s Counterculture; and 1968: The Rise and Fall of the New American Revolution.

Richard Dickey (BA, History) has retired after a 30-year career as a research librarian, having worked at the University of North Texas, *The Dallas Morning News*, the Library of Congress, and the executive branch of the federal government.

1972

Betsy Price (BS, Biology) received the Great Women of Texas 2019 Legend Award from the *Fort Worth Business Press*. A UTA Distinguished Alumna, Price is the longest-serving mayor in Fort Worth history.

1981

Carol Brown (BS, Sociology) received the Great Women of Texas 2019 Legend Award from the *Fort Worth Business Press*. She is CEO of Como Lions Heart, a nonprofit organization that supports the programs of the Como Community Center and the Como community of Tarrant County.

1977

Robert C. Cottrell (MA, History) had two books published this year: *All-American Rebels: The American Left from the Wobblies to #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, and the Resistance* and a reissue of his book *Izzy: A Biography of I.F. Stone*. He is a professor emeritus of history and American studies at California State University, Chico, where he taught from 1984-2018. His other recent books include *Two Pioneers: How Hank Greenberg and Jackie*

Cynthia Franklin (MSSW, Clinical Social Work; '89 PhD, Clinical Social Work) was named one of the 100 most influential contemporary social work faculty in 2019 by the *Journal of Social Service Research*. She is the associate dean for doctoral education at the UT Austin School of Social Work and is the Stiernberg/Spencer Family Professor in Mental Health. She was named a UTA Distinguished Alumna in 2003.

1983

Paul M. Sawyer (BS, Geology) retired from teaching after a varied career that took him around the world. He has worked with oil field equipment and as an assistant arborist, a property tax consultant, and an environmental and property inspector. He was also chair of the STEM programs at Harmony Science Academy and a science teacher at Sunset High School, both in Dallas.

1985

Kathryn Collins (BS, Industrial Engineering) is senior vice president and chief human resources officer for Entergy Corporation. She began her career as an industrial engineer with Texas In-



struments before moving to human resources. She also worked at JCPenney, RealPage, Trinity Industries, and Arcosa.

1988

Lee Mulcahy (BA, French; '01 PhD, Humanities) exhibited paintings at Redstone, Colorado's 24th annual community show and Art Basel Miami. His gallery and studio are in Aspen, Colorado.

Donna Rutter (BBA, Accounting) received the Great Women of Texas 2019 Legend Award from the *Fort Worth Business Press*. She is the executive director of indirect tax services, state and local tax, for EY Financial Services.

Mike Rhyner ('81 BA, Radio/Television/Film) retired in 2019. He co-founded The Ticket, North Texas' first all-sports radio station, in 1994 and was a mainstay on its popular program *The Hardline* for 26 years. He was named to ESPN's list of Sports Radio Personalities of the Year in 1997, 1998, and 2003 and was inducted into the Texas Radio Hall of Fame in 2014 and the Dallas Press Club Legends in 2016. Rhyner was named a Distinguished Alumnus of UTA in 2017.

1989

Clifford Welch (MArch, Architecture and Environmental Design) has earned Fellow of the American Institute of Architects status. He is a principal at Welch | Hall architects and a past president of the Dallas Architectural Foundation. He has taught graduate-level design at UTA.

1990

Rodney Anderson (BBA, Real Estate) served three terms in the Texas Legislature and is now the Dallas County Republican Party chairman. He is executive vice president and national agency manager of Alliant National Title Insurance Company.

“UTA gave me a great background for continuing my education in dental school. Today, I practice in Arlington and am president of the Texas Dental Association. UTA is where this all started.”

—CHARLES MILLER, ('77 BS, BIOLOGY) Partner and Pediatric Dentist at Dentistry for Children

1991

Tom Fox (BA, Photography) was named a Pulitzer Prize finalist for his breaking news photography of a masked gunman outside a federal courthouse in downtown Dallas in June 2019. Fox is a senior visual journalist at *The Dallas Morning News*.

1993

Colleen Norton (BM, Music) retired in May 2019 after 26 years of teaching elementary music. She taught at Arlington, Grand Prairie, Mansfield, and Crowley school districts. She volunteers with Code Blue and Citizens on Patrol for the Fort Worth Police Department and Code Rangers for Fort Worth's Code Compliance Office. She participated in the Fort Worth Citizens Fire Academy and the Tarrant County Citizens Prosecutors Academy. Norton also has a jewelry business.

1994

Katrina McGhee (MBA, Marketing) joined the American Heart Association's nationwide leadership team as executive vice president of marketing and communications. She will operate from the association's national center in Dallas, Texas.

Jo Trizila (BFA, Theatre Performance) was reappointed as a city of Dallas cultural affairs commissioner for District 12. She is founder and chief executive officer of Dallas-based TrizCom Public Relations and Pitch PR. She also serves on the board of directors for Heroes for Children and the advisory board of Taylor's Gift, both nonprofit organizations.

2000

Dora Zapata (BBA, International Business), vice president of corporate philanthropy and community relations at Wells Fargo, received the Community Advocate Award at the 13th annual Minority Business Leaders Awards presented by the *Dallas Business Journal*. She is a member of UTA's President's Hispanic Advisory Council.

2001

Nikola Olić (BS, Computer Science Engineering), a software designer, showcased his photography at Afterimage Gallery in Dallas' Uptown neighborhood.

Emily Williams (MLA) was named chair of the city of Dallas Landmark Commission.

2006

Carolyn Ansley (MEd, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies) was named principal of the Daniel Ninth Grade Campus in Aledo, Texas.

2007

Bradley Ford (MCRP) was named city manager for the city of Waco.

Tracie Palmer (BBA, Management), president of Bounty Minerals, was profiled in a March 2020 *Fort Worth Magazine* story highlighting women in leadership positions in Fort Worth.

2008

Jonathan Cranz (BS, Management Information Systems) and **Christopher Katri** (MBA, Finance) were named to *Fort Worth Business Press'* annual "Forty Under Forty" list. Cranz is a partner at Kelly Hart & Hallman LLP. Katri is senior vice president and senior credit officer at Southside Bank.

“UTA is a great institution. Working on my PhD in the College of Engineering was well worth the long nights!”

—MAURICE CAVITT ('13 PHD, INDUSTRIAL, MANUFACTURING, AND SYSTEMS ENGINEERING) Director of Product Development at Walmart

2010

Victor Tomanek (BS, Architecture) is the project manager for design and construction at Tishman Speyer and is a development partner for the company's luxury retirement housing projects in Brooklyn.

2011

Rebecca Vice (MPA) is assistant city manager for the city of Allen. Vice joined the city manager's office in 2013 and later served as organizational development and employee engagement administrator.

2012

Ricardo Leon (BS, Architecture) displayed works at Enclaves, a reception hosted by the AIA Dallas Latinos in Architecture.

MaryAnn Means-Dufrene (MPA; MS, Human Resource Management), a partner in Collective Growth, was profiled in a *Fort Worth Magazine* story in March 2020 highlighting women in leadership positions in Fort Worth.

FILL US IN
You never call. You don't write. We miss you! Email us at classnotes@uta.edu and let us know what is keeping you so busy.

2014

Elizabeth Bailey (BSN) is a clinical supervisor for the observation/COVID-19 unit at Anne Arundel Medical Center in Annapolis, Maryland. A Naval Academy graduate, she is a former Navy helicopter pilot.

Molly Sandlin (MBA, Management) received the Great Women of Texas 2019 Legend Award from the *Fort Worth Business Press*. She is the founder and president of CAET Project Management Consultants LLC.

David Shilson (MPA) was selected as police chief for the city of Frisco. He has 20 years of law enforcement experience, including 17 years with the Frisco Police Department.

2015

Jimena Fraga (BA, Broadcasting), a producer for KXTX Tele-mundo39, was part of the team that won a Lone Star Emmy in the Morning/Daytime Newscast category.

2016

Zoranna Jones (PhD, Public and Urban Administration) has been appointed as assistant dean for TCU's School of Interdisciplinary Studies.

Ana Larranaga (BS, Architecture) displayed works at Enclaves, a reception hosted by the AIA Dallas Latinos in Architecture. Larranaga received the Public Favorite Award.

2017

Maria Martinez (MPA) is the director of neighborhood services for the city of Mesquite. She directs departments for environmental code, neighborhood vitality, housing and community services, and animal services.

Wanda Jean Streepey (MEd, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies) recently received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. An educator for 13 years, she teaches seventh-grade accelerated mathematics and serves on the instructional leadership team at Highland Park Middle School.

"I leverage lessons I learned at UTA every day."

— RHONDA SWANSON ('83 BA, '90 MA, ENGLISH)
Project Manager at Boeing Distribution

2018

Jehova Azucena (BA, Broadcasting) and **Nathalie Palacios** (BA, Broadcasting) received National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Lone Star Chapter Awards for work they did while students in UTA's Hispanic Media Initiative.

Maria Contreras (MARCH) displayed works at Enclaves, a reception hosted by the AIA Dallas Latinos in Architecture.

Myriam Igoufe (PhD, Urban Planning and Public Policy) is the Dallas Housing Authority vice president of policy development and research. She led the UTA-generated North Texas Regional Housing Assessment analysis, which included 21 cities and housing authorities across the area.



2019

Juan Correa (BA, Broadcasting) and **Juana Palmieri** (BA, Broadcasting) received National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Lone Star Chapter Awards for work they did as students in UTA's Hispanic Media Initiative.

Faith Geiger (BSW) was profiled in a March 2020 *Fort Worth Magazine* story highlighting women in leadership positions in Fort Worth. Geiger, founder of Collective Growth, is pursuing master's degrees in social work and business administration.

Ángel Martínez ('83 BA, Physical Education) was inducted into the Texas Tennis Coaches Hall of Fame. Hired in 2014, he re-established the men's and women's tennis programs at Texas Wesleyan University, where he serves as head coach. Martínez has 31 years of coaching experience at the high school level, including 15 years at Grapevine High School and Cedar Hill High School. His high school coaching record of 638-105 includes one state, 19 district, and two area championships.

Mark Harcrow (BS, Criminology and Criminal Justice) was named police chief for the Palestine, Texas, Police Department.

2020

David Rettig (EMBA, International Business) was named to *Fort Worth Business Press'* annual "Forty Under Forty" list. He is mayor of Northlake, Texas, and director of accounting services at Fidelity Investments.

Planning FORWARD in 2020

During this time of uncertainty, we want to say thank you for your partnership. Thanks to you, The University of Texas at Arlington's mission continues.



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Congress recently passed the CARES Act to encourage giving and reduce your tax liability. If you are thinking about making a gift in 2020, you could benefit from the following tax provisions:

- 1. Take a special tax deduction for gifts up to \$300 (Non-Itemizers)
- 2. Deduct 100% of your annual income (Itemizers)

If you have any questions about philanthropic planning topics, please contact Kurt Bartley, CAP®, senior director for gift & estate planning at UTA, at kurt.bartley@uta.edu or 817-272-9387.

IN MEMORIAM



Serena with her husband, Tom Connelly

Serena Simmons Connelly

('95 MSSW), 50, April 22, Dallas.

A dear friend and supporter of UTA, Serena Simmons Connelly was known for her compassion and determination to help those in need. She dedicated her life to uplifting the most vulnerable in our communities, including HIV/AIDS patients, refugees, and torture survivors in Dallas. Connelly also established the Human Rights Initiative of North Texas, and after joining her family's organization, the Harold Simmons Foundation, she shaped much of its outreach over the years.

Connelly was also a lifelong supporter of UTA. In the early 2000s, the Harold Simmons Foundation donated \$1.1 million to the School of Social Work's Innovative Community Academic Partnership. The funds supported critical research into racial and ethnic disparities in mental health and the study of family violence. She also served on the school's Advisory Council and was a member of the President's Advisory Board.

She served on many other boards, including the Texas Women's Foundation, the Dallas Zoo, the Texas Muslim Women's Foundation, and more. She was recognized as the 2001 Social Worker of the Year from the Dallas chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and as a UTA Distinguished Alumna in 2014.

ALUMNI

1940s

Gilbert Randolph Hay Sr.

('47 AS, Electrical Engineering) 99, Nov. 16, Dallas, Texas.

1960s

Stan Ballou

('60 BS, Electrical Engineering) 80, March 31, Prosper, Texas.

Robert "Bob" Hester Jr.

('61 BA, History) 79, April 15, Arlington, Texas.

J.T. Molder

('61 BS, Electrical Engineering) 87, Nov. 4, Benbrook, Texas.

E.E. "Bud" Treadaway

('64 BBA) 77, Feb. 11, Houston, Texas.

Jim Quinton Bradford

('65 BA, History) 76, Dec. 23, Ruidoso, New Mexico.

James "Jim" Fox

('65 BBA) 77, Feb. 18, Arlington, Texas.

Don Hager

('67 BBA) 78, Feb. 12, Avoca, Texas.

Roy Lee Gilmore

('69 BBA) 72, Dec. 8, New Boston, Texas.

1970s

Kathleen Meyer Kidd

('70 BA, Psychology) 71, Jan. 3, Oakton, Virginia.

William Edward "Eddie" Cameron

('72 BBA) 70, Jan. 27, Arlington, Texas.

John Donald Drawneck

('72 BBA, Accounting) 90, Feb. 17, Bonham, Texas.

Herbert Allan Ruiz

('72 BBA, Accounting) 74, March 12, Dallas, Texas.

Earl Albert Gallatin

('74 MBA) 81, April 19, Colleyville, Texas.

Marjorie Maring Mitchell

('74 BA, Sociology) 76, Nov. 12, Arlington, Texas.

Donald Eugene Westerheide

('74 MBA) 83, Dec. 8, Fort Worth, Texas.

Richard Herrera

('75 BS, Criminal Justice) 69, Dec. 30, Fort Worth, Texas.

Yvette Therese Victoria Agnew

('79 BA, '82 MA, Foreign Languages) 91, Jan. 22, Fort Worth, Texas.

Robert "Bob" Boykin

('68 BS, Mathematics) 73, Jan. 23, Arlington, Texas. He was the voice of Big Tex, the 55-foot-tall cowboy at the State Fair of Texas, from 2013 to 2019. Boykin worked at Lockheed Martin for 40 years designing military aircraft like the Stealth bomber and the F-16.

1980s

Ernest "Ernie" Ruff

('80 BS, Mechanical Engineering) 63, Dec. 13, Humble, Texas.

Joyce Eileen Daugherty Coologhan

('82 BS, Geophysics) 62, Dec. 28, Mesquite, Texas.

Charles Milton Alexander

('83 MA, History) 60, Feb. 21, Wylie, Texas.

Janet Lill Caero

('83 MS, Psychology) 87, Jan. 26, Fort Worth, Texas.

Arden "Buddy" Fritz

('83 BA, Economics) 63, Jan. 29, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Zoe Hill

('83 BBA, Accounting) 81, Feb. 23, Weatherford, Texas.

Carol Ann Hamberlin Lee

('83 MS, Biology) 70, April 14, Fort Worth, Texas.

John Grayson Cocharo

('85 MS, Computer Science) 67, Jan. 26, Arlington, Texas.

Winborn Emmert

('88 MS, Social Work) 67, Oct. 18, Austin, Texas.

Mark Adrian Grimes

('88 BA, Sociology) 61, Jan. 27, Alpine, Texas.

1990s

Shirley Ann Dekle Pavliska Uzzell

('94 BSN) 75, Dec. 27, Austin, Texas.

Robert "Bob" David Bocell Jr.

('98 BA, Political Science) 71, March 24, Grand Prairie, Texas.

Sean Brian Headlee

('99 BA, Marketing) 44, Nov. 5, Arlington, Texas.

2000s

Whitney Kongevick

('03 BA, Speech) 41, April 28, Euless, Texas.

Brandon David Renfrow

('04 MArch) 40, Oct. 28, Grapevine, Texas.

2010s

Wendy Michelle Underwood-Raspaud

('11 BSN) 43, Oct. 22, Lewisville, Texas.

Amy Marie Duncan

('12 BA, Public Relations) 32, Jan. 2, Hurst, Texas.

Mary Godfrey Scott

('14 BSN) 70, March 17, Denton, Texas.

Joseph "Joe Pat" Bohanon

('96 BS, '97 MS, Social Work) 65, Feb. 18, Oktaha, Oklahoma.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribe member formed UTA's Native American Student Association in 1994. He taught at a number of colleges, including Bacone College in Muskogee, Oklahoma, where he was chair of American Indian Studies. Bohanon was also president of Pawnee Nation College.

John Abruzzo

('11 BSN) 63, April 2, Seaford, New York. He worked as a nurse at Huntington Hospital on Long Island, one of the largest hospital networks in New York. He died from COVID-19 early in the pandemic.

FACULTY & STAFF

Mike Daley

81, Jan. 27, Bellingham, Washington. A veteran of the U.S. Army and the Peace Corps, he taught in the School of Social Work in the 1970s.

Hubert Jackson "Jack" Davis

84, Nov. 9, Arlington, Texas. A longtime UTA athletics supporter, he served as director of the Maverick Club booster program in the 1990s and 2000s. He established three UTA athletic scholarships.

Paul Glasser

90, April 8, Riverdale, New York. While dean of the School of Social Work from 1978-88, Dr. Glasser added doctoral and bachelor degree programs, increased faculty numbers and diversity, and broadened community-university partnerships.

Arvis Burl Henderson

75, Nov. 18, San Angelo, Texas. From 1996 to 2000, he served as vice provost for computing and information technology. He retired in 2004.

Curtis Wayne Perrymore

53, Dec. 9, Plano, Texas. He was a police officer at UTA from 1991 to 1999.

Jerry L. Rodnitzky

84, April 25, Arlington, Texas. A professor of American history for 50 years, he helped establish the Women's Studies Program and served as its inaugural director. In 2018, he was named a professor emeritus.



The Explainer

All the World's a Stage

Social robots ease human isolation

BY JULIENNE GREER
Assistant
Professor in the
Department of
Theatre Arts

THE WORD “ROBOT” was originally conceived for the play *R.U.R., Rossum's Universal Robots* (1920) by Czech playwright Karel Čapek. In that play, in perhaps a foreshadowing of our uneasy relationship with technology, robots overthrow their human overlords. Hollywood has continued the tradition of framing human-robot relationships as fraught.

However, the front-line approach to human-robot collaboration in 2020 is a far different story from the version presented by Hollywood. At UTA, social robots are used for social good. Through purposeful and rigorous research from diverse disciplines such as liberal arts, theater arts, social work, engineering, nursing, and psychology, among many others, robots are programmed with theatrical authenticity to help address significant human problems.

Applying theater methodologies to artificial intelligence and social robotics creates trust and a potentially strong emotional interaction for the human. This is

accomplished using theater techniques that humanize the design, behavior, and relational connection of the robot. Social awareness and empathetic response in robotics platforms are key. Theater performance is built on engagement, empathy, emotion, embodiment, and communication through a human-human model. I translate the human-human model to a human-robot model, creating a uniquely authentic experience of emotion.

The social robots of the Emotional Robotics Living Lab at UTA are programmed to perform for their audience much the same way a human actor rehearses and performs in a play. It is my expertise to create the human-robot framework as truthfully and honestly as its traditional theater model. Performance methodology, sensory data work, live field study, and relational narratives are examined to create a unique experience of emotion.

Current research work includes developing an enhanced Shakespeare-acting robot, examining prospective memory and exercise goals in older adults, providing resilience through original narratives for young adults and their caretakers, and tackling social isolation and loneliness in humans. All the research is interdisciplinary and seeks to solve problems that one perspective alone does not provide.

As we work through the complexities of COVID-19, it is clear that social robots may be able to connect arts and humanities-driven content to humans at a time when human contact is not possible—and in doing so, help reduce the stress of social isolation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Julianne A. Greer is an interdisciplinary scholar and artist working at the emerging intersection of theatre and social robotics. As director of the Emotional Robotics Living Lab at UTA, her primary focus is human-robot interaction in order to “humanize” social robots to the nuances and subtleties of human behavior and performance for use in interdisciplinary research. She is a passionate advocate for undergraduate and graduate research for a future that may not have even been conceived of yet, but will most certainly impact our lives and how technology and the arts collaborate.



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Look Back

Four-Year Fervor

A decade of campaigning for two-year Arlington State College (ASC) to become a four-year institution ended in 1959 when Texas Gov. Price Daniel signed legislation making it official. When news reached campus, spontaneous celebration broke out. ASC cheerleaders Charla Blount (left) and Jerry Carter (right), along with Ken Priksyl, were among the revelers.

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