



TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
**ANNUAL REPORT  
2020**



**WITH COMMITMENT AND RESILIENCE...  
OUR LEGACY MOVES FORWARD**





## ON THE COVER

A beloved professor finds that the familiar confines of his classroom are now a keyboard connection. From it emanates a constant percussion of pressed keys pounding out questions...and answers.

A tomato basks in the afternoon sunlight, awaiting an unseen dinner plate -- and perhaps a chance to stunt a growing appetite.

A poster is populated by people whose faces are masked. Their eyes burn brightly, affirming humanity and a commitment to a unifying theme...Be Well. Be Well. Be Well.

These are the images of our day, an historic period marked by a global health challenge, a search for answers, a need for help shared by all.

And through these representative images, Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) shares in those challenges. From transitioning to different class delivery systems that bring new ways to teach and learn...to finding new ways to share vital resources and services, the

University's mission is uninterrupted. The importance of commitment and resilience has never been more obvious.

And so, a professor adapts and reconnects. His classes are lifted up by the challenge and move forward.

And so, a tomato, once resting in TAMIU's Community Garden, joins produce in a shared harvest finding a new home at a local food bank sustaining hungry families.

And so, a poster created by TAMIU art students sharing their wish for all to Be Well makes its way to a frontline responder to enjoy at home or in office.

And so, professors teach. Staff provide services. Students become graduates. Graduates become alumni.

A 50-year-plus legacy moves forward. **We Go Beyond > Together.**



2020  
ANNUAL REPORT  
TEAM

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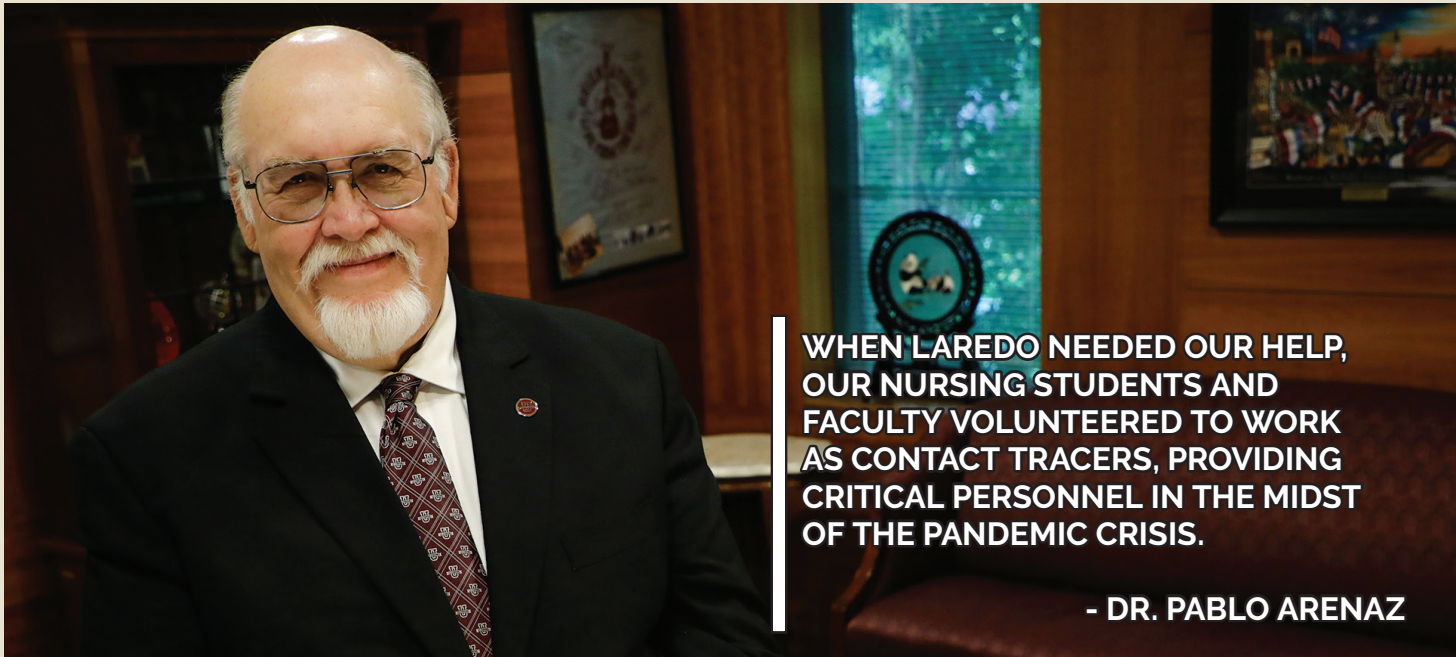
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STAY CONNECTED    



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**WHEN LAREDO NEEDED OUR HELP,  
OUR NURSING STUDENTS AND  
FACULTY VOLUNTEERED TO WORK  
AS CONTACT TRACERS, PROVIDING  
CRITICAL PERSONNEL IN THE MIDST  
OF THE PANDEMIC CRISIS.**

**- DR. PABLO ARENAZ**

### A TALE OF COMMITMENT AND RESILIENCE

I am borrowing liberally from Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. In the past year we have experienced the best of times and the (somewhat) worst of times. In the pages of this Report, you will see how Texas A&M International University, our students, faculty and staff, have been resilient in the face of adversity and more impressively, how they have continued to engage with peers, the University and the community. We truly have a caring and committed group of students, faculty and staff that we all can be proud of.

The 2019-2020 academic year was supposed to be a banner year for us—a year-long celebration of the 50th year of our founding as Texas A&I at Laredo and the 25th anniversary of our move to the northeast campus, the changing of our name to Texas A&M International University—and the creation of a four-year comprehensive University. We started the year with a bang—the dedication of our new state-of-the-art Academic Innovation Center. The AIC, as we call it, is a 118,000 sq. ft. classroom and laboratory building built for the 21st Century.

In October, we hosted the 50th Anniversary Presidential Awards Dinner where we honored Tony Sanchez, Jr., The Trustees of the Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust and the Killam Family for their commitment to the establishment and continued growth of TAMIU. We also created a new award, the *Innovador Award*, recognizing an individual who has impacted higher education in this region. Our first recipient, Senator Judith Zaffirini, was recognized at the December Commencement Ceremony. In February, The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents met at TAMIU as part of our Celebration. The last time the Regents met at TAMIU was in 2002.

Then COVID-19 disrupted our celebratory plans. However, the Alumni Association, along with our Assistant Director for Alumni Relations and her staff, pulled out the near impossible—a 50th Anniversary Virtual Alumni event, including honoring our first two Outstanding Alumni—Dr. Norma Cantú and Dr. Henry Cuéllar. We look forward to dedicating the Trailblazer Tower next fall as the final component of the 50th Anniversary Celebration.



Despite all the challenges we have had over the past eight months, I couldn't be happier with what we have accomplished as an institution. We graduated over 1,800 students this past year, the largest number in our history. This Fall, despite dire predictions, we enrolled over 8,525 students, again setting a record. We are well on our way to enrolling 10,000 students by 2025.

We initiated three new undergraduate degrees in September; a B.S. in Petroleum Engineering, a B.S. in Computer Engineering and a B.S. in Public Health. *U.S. News and World Report* again ranked us among the best in the West among regional universities and second in Texas. We are still among the most affordable schools in the country, ranking 5th among the 100 most affordable public universities. Great Value Colleges ranked TAMIU 5th in the nation as an institution with the highest return on investment (ROI) -- and we continue to be in the top 20 nationally for Upward Mobility. You will find these impressive rankings, as well as others, in this Report.

When Laredo needed our help, our nursing students and faculty volunteered to work as contact tracers, providing critical personnel in the midst of the Pandemic crisis. Our engineering students, along with Dr. Tariq Tashtoush, used our 3D printers to make needed N95 masks, face shields and aerosol boxes for first responders and hospital personnel. Students raised funds and solicited donations for our food pantry so TAMIU students who needed it would have access to a source of food. In addition, they shared the bounty of our Community Garden both on and off campus.

Between May and October, we gave out over \$3M in TAMIU CARES funds as well as emergency funds provided by The Texas A&M University System. Thoughtful donors also allowed some of their donations to be used to help students with emergency needs, an immeasurable gift to people in need. Over 60% of our faculty and staff increased their giving this year to help provide students with needed scholarship money.

Yes, we have been and continue to be engaged as a University, committed to this community and beyond. That is how we Go Beyond – Together. Someday very soon, all the trials and tribulations of what seems to be the worst of times will return to the best of times. Together, we are ready.



Dr. Pablo Arenaz  
TAMIU President

## TAMIU TOGETHER/ LAREDO TOGETHER

Like everyone, TAMIU has responded to the world's COVID-19 Pandemic to help ensure the safety and well-being of our students, faculty and staff. We've also reached out to help our community in its most distressing time of need.

**4,000+** COVID-19 Tests  
on Campus

**505** Face  
Shields

**Flu Shots Administered  
on Campus**

**400+**  
PPE Gowns

**5300** Pairs of  
Gloves  
on Campus

**500** Loaner  
Laptops  
for Students

**390+** Protective  
Plexiglass  
Dividers

**93+** Gallons of  
Hand Sanitizer

**54+** Gallons of  
Disinfecting Spray

**32** Hand  
Sanitizing  
Stations

**60+** Frontline protective masks,  
shields, aerosol boxes  
created by students

Services to Laredo  
Stroke Support Group  
by **53** Students

**2** Full Harvests  
of TAMIU Garden benefiting  
students, faculty, food banks

**119** A&M System  
Sampling Test Kits  
Provided to Laredo  
Health Department

**500** Student Artwork  
donated to Local  
Hospital Nurses

City of Laredo  
Contact Tracing Efforts  
Assistance by  
**409** Nursing Students

**6500** Service assistance hours  
generated by School of Nursing  
Students

**6000+** Campus signs and  
instructions on  
campus safety

THAT'S HOW WE GO BEYOND> TOGETHER



## DONORS

### TAMU 'READING THE GLOBE' STUDENTS AWARD \$5,000 IN 'GLOCAL' DONATIONS TO CHARITIES

Student advocates in TAMU's internationally recognized Reading the Globe program identified two charities to be recipients of 'glocal' award donations totaling \$5,000 this year.

**Dr. Conchita Hickey**, TAMU retired Dean Emerita and senior lecturer, said the students wanted to provide award donations that would have both global and local impact.

"Reading the Globe is a cornerstone program at the University. For the 12 years since its inception, students have travelled and visited 11+ countries. They frequently conduct fundraisers thereafter, building a fund that can be awarded in the future. Reflective of their global experience, they wanted to select a global charity. In recognition of their home and love of community, they also wanted a local charity to share in the award. Overarching both gifts is the 50th Anniversary of our international university and the opportunity to give in a way that recognizes both our international perspective and our pride of home... The combination is a 'glocal' gift," Dr. Hickey explained.

The charities splitting the "glocal" award were the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Sacred Heart Children's Home.

Reading the Globe provides freshmen students a common read text, frequently a memoir by an international writer. Students engage with the work, discussing it in seminars. The author often visits the campus to address the entire freshman class.

An essay competition follows with 15 Reading the Globe Ambassadors selected to travel to or near the common read's setting in a Study Abroad experience focused on helping them become responsible global citizens. It introduces narratives about events of the highest global importance.

Since its inception, more than 10,000 TAMU freshmen have engaged with Reading the Globe to have a transformative international experience. Over 170 Ambassadors have traveled to Cambodia, Chile, China, eastern Europe, Ghana, India, South Africa, Poland, Russia and, most recently, Brazil.



Reading the Globe students present one of their 'glocal' gifts to the Sacred Heart Children's Home. Front row from L to R: Dr. Hayley Kazen, Andrea Flores, Sister Maria Isidra Valdez, Sister Teresa Escamilla, Lourdes Marquez, Mary Joy Patricio and Dr. Conchita Hickey. Back row from L to R: Marcos Enriquez, Astrid Veliz, Mariana Ponce, Estefania Magallanes, Lesdy Posadas and Juan Manuel Sánchez.

**"READING THE GLOBE IS A  
CORNERSTONE PROGRAM AT  
THE UNIVERSITY."**

**- DR. CONCHITA HICKEY**



## TAMIU MEETS 50,000 SERVICE HOURS CHALLENGE, \$1.1M EQUIVALENCY

The COVID-19 Pandemic interrupted various on-campus activities this year, but despite this unprecedented obstacle, the TAMIU community delivered on its year-long, 50,000 Service Hours Challenge for the University's 50th Anniversary observance.

**Mayra Hernández**, TAMIU Student Conduct and Community Engagement director, said service hours by TAMIU students, faculty, staff and alumni this year also had a monetary equivalency impact of over \$1,100,000 on the community.

"We all have the ability to donate our time, share our talent and to provide opportunities to those in need," Hernández said, "Fostering a socially responsible student is the essence of developing a holistic global leader."

She continued, "By serving, TAMIU students learn the essence of community spirit and share the knowledge of creating a vibrant community. During challenging times, our students have not stopped giving back—that's who we are—individuals who care to make a difference."

A feature Service Hours Challenge event was Make a Difference Day in November 2019. It powered three different service activities: a mobile food-packing partnership with Feed My Starving Children, Juan Ramírez Park beautification initiatives with Keep Laredo Beautiful and Jamboozie Festival site preparations with Laredo Main Street.

Other efforts saw students assisting in a free health clinic to the community, giving presentations about oral health to children in K-5 grades, and serving food to the homeless. Other projects were directly linked to the community's response to the challenge of the Pandemic and ranged from protective shield creation, and community contact tracing to online interaction with stroke survivors of the Laredo Stroke Support Group.



November 2019



November 2019

**"FOSTERING A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE STUDENT IS THE ESSENCE OF DEVELOPING A HOLISTIC GLOBAL LEADER."**

**-MAYRA HERNÁNDEZ**

## DONORS

### MATIAS DE LLANO CHARITABLE TRUST'S TAMIU GIFT ELEVATES OUR COMMUNITY



Celebrating the De Llano Charitable Trust's generous gift are (L to R) Larry Norton, Trustee; Doug Howland, chairman of the Trust Committee; Dr. Pablo Arenaz, TAMIU president and Rudy Miles, Trustee.

This summer, the **Matias De Llano Charitable Trust**, administered by International Bank of Commerce, donated an additional \$300,000 to TAMIU as part of the Trust's mission to do more for the community of Laredo.

The Trust's generosity was celebrated with the dedication of a special plaque in the new Academic Innovation Center (AIC), home to planned offerings supported by the Trust's gift.

The donation from the Matias De Llano Charitable Trust benefits TAMIU's efforts to support students and Laredo residents. The Auditorium in the AIC is now named "The Matias de Llano Trust Auditorium."

It will serve as a public space for community presentations, lecture series, and other events leading to educational opportunities focused on elevating awareness, leadership and community engagement for students and citizen of South Texas.

Since 2004, the Trust has donated more than \$7.5 million to local organizations and schools. Year to date, 24% of Trust gifts have come to TAMIU.

Trust support has championed student scholarships, a Ph.D. Endowment for the A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business, the Engineering Program, the TAMIU-KLRN Studio, the Jackson Art Exhibit and the legacy gift of the Heritage Edition of *The St. John's Bible*.



## DUSTY'S FOOD PANTRY, STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM DONOR SUPPORT

This Fall, TAMIU students benefited from donations made to Dusty's Food Pantry, provided by Electric Transmission Texas (ETT) and the Laredo Daybreak Rotary Club.

The ETT contribution of \$1,000 was used to assist students who may be facing food insecurity by providing a temporary supplemental supply of non-perishable goods.

The Laredo Daybreak Rotary Club also provided a \$1,000 donation. Daybreak Rotary members completed several fundraising initiatives, including virtual fundraising opportunities.

"We know food insecurity for students is a real issue at campuses across the nation and TAMIU is no exception. Our members took up the cause and we're happy to be able to offer Dusty's Pantry our assistance," said **Liz Gomez**, Daybreak Rotary president.

**Tony Arce, Jr.**, Manager of External Affairs at AEP Texas and ETT representative, noted the impact of assisting students in need.

"It's important to support students as they experience the unique challenges brought on by the ongoing Pandemic," said Arce.

Similar sentiments were expressed by **Mariana Rodríguez**, Student Emergency Services coordinator.

"Food insecurity is a real issue that affects our student body. Through Dusty's Food Pantry, we can assist students and help them succeed," said Rodríguez.

Throughout the Spring 2020 semester, 231 students were able to access the pantry, resulting in over 2,142 items given to students in need. Over 70% of those students who used the food pantry were unemployed, and over 60% of Dusty's Food Pantry users are first-generation college students.

Learn more about these contributions at [go.tamiau.edu/arzo-ett](https://go.tamiau.edu/arzo-ett) and [go.tamiau.edu/arzo-daybreak](https://go.tamiau.edu/arzo-daybreak).

Throughout the Spring and Fall 2020 semester, additional safety measures were enacted including cleaning items before stocking them in the pantry and disinfecting the pantry after use.

Initially launched in 2017, Dusty's Food Pantry provides daily access to non-perishable goods. Members of the University community, including fellow students, faculty, staff and administration and the community at large regularly supply donations to help support the Pantry.

**"IT'S IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AS THEY EXPERIENCE THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES BROUGHT ON BY THE ONGOING PANDEMIC."**

**-TONY ARCE, JR.**



Present at the check presentation were (standing, L to R) Mariana Rodríguez, Tony Arce Jr., Dr. Pablo Arenaz, and Mayra Hernández.

# FACULTY

## TAMIU PROFESSOR RECEIVES ACCLAIM IN SOCIAL POST

As the Spring 2020 semester brought a flurry of changes for students and faculty members at TAMIU, one faculty member made a particularly profound impact in adapting his teaching content to an online platform.

A viral post uploaded to Facebook by History major **Oswaldo de León** gave an account of TAMIU Regents Professor **Dr. Jerry Thompson** and his efforts in creating a conducive teaching environment. This included coming to campus and teaching a course inside a classroom to help his students feel as though they were at the University. He'd ask for assistance from a member of the Office of Information Technology staff.

"He often mentions in class that although he doesn't know how to use technology, he goes to a classroom so we can learn," described de León.

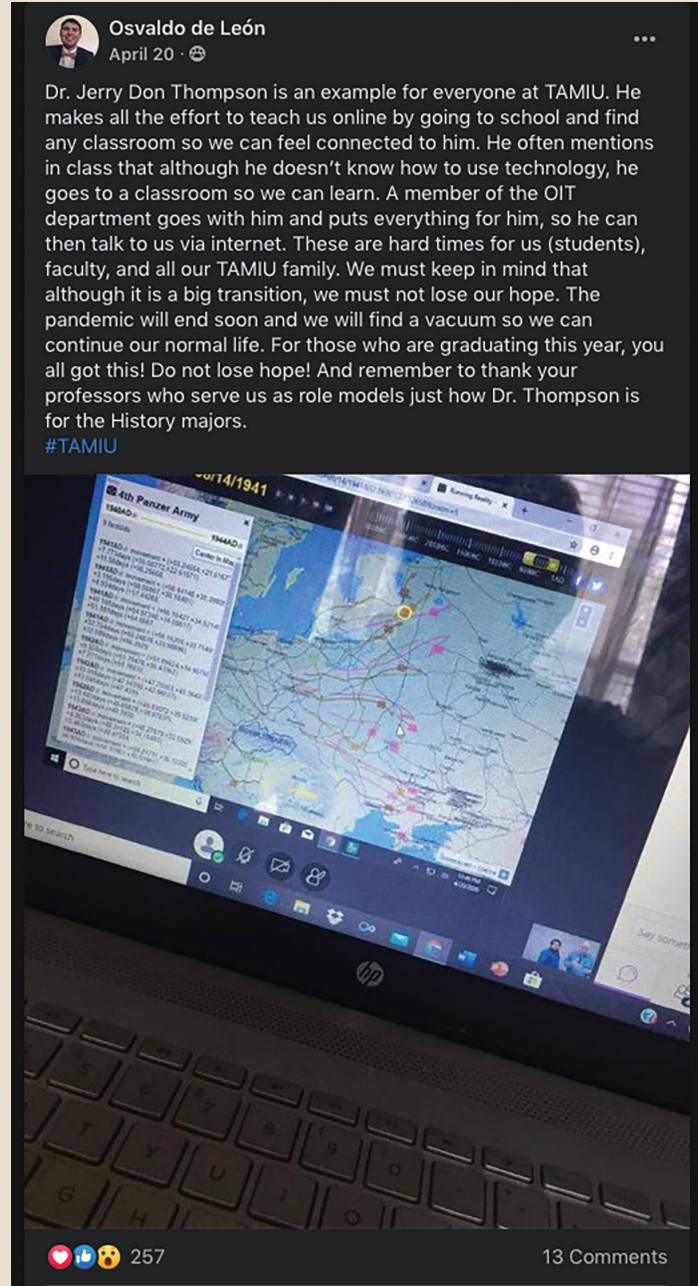
De León reiterated, "These are hard times for us students, faculty, and all our TAMIU family. We must keep in mind that although it is a big transition, we must not lose hope."

While the COVID-19 Pandemic brought dramatic changes to the way students and faculty completed the Spring 2020 semester, the efforts made by TAMIU faculty members should not go unacknowledged, explained de León.

"We have great professors at TAMIU who make all the effort so that students can learn and continue to feel safe," said de León.



Dr. Jerry Thompson







## TAMIU “BE WELL PROJECT” CREATES ARTWORK FOR LOCAL HEALTH CARE HEROES

This semester, TAMIU art students used their talents and creativity to support local healthcare heroes.

Dubbed the “Be Well Project,” TAMIU printmaking students, as well as ceramics and painting students, helped create artwork to donate to local healthcare workers. The project was organized by **Jesse Shaw**, **Josias Figueirido** and **Emily Bayless**, University assistant professors of Art, respectively, and was supported through the University’s “Act on Ideas” initiative.

A profound element of the “Be Well Project” included the efforts of eight Printmaking students who created over 200 printed posters for healthcare workers.

As one of the first assignments of the semester, the “Be Well Project” served as an opportunity for students to work collaboratively while acquainting themselves with silk screen printmaking techniques. This effort took some readjustment as students were socially distanced over multiple classrooms.

A substantial undertaking, the printed posters made use of masked selfie photos. At first, students used their selfies and translated them to halftone dots. After a campus-wide campaign for selfie requests

from University students, faculty and staff members, approximately 40 selfies were received.

“Using masked selfies helped affirm a message of solidarity between the University community and local healthcare workers in their continued support of using face masks and practicing social distancing,” explained Shaw.

Each printed poster used a grid template showcasing anywhere between four to 16 selfies per print. While initially aimed as a two-week project, students continued to create prints throughout the Fall semester, often volunteering their time outside of class to complete the posters.

The “Be Well Project” is only one of several initiatives taken on by the University’s Visual Arts department. Additional efforts included a virtual art exhibit showcased through Instagram, as well as a virtual artist talk that included a livestream and socially-distanced in-class viewing.

Learn more about the University’s Visual Arts Department and view their “Be Well” printed posters on Instagram at [www.instagram.com/tamiuvisualarts](http://www.instagram.com/tamiuvisualarts) and [www.instagram.com/tamiuprintmaking](http://www.instagram.com/tamiuprintmaking)

## TAMIU REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION, DIVERSITY AND EQUITY WITH ROBUST PROGRAMMING



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While 2020 presented unprecedented challenges, TAMIU has reaffirmed its enduring commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity through robust programming designed by the TAMIU Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (TIDE) Committee.

Charged by the Office of the Provost the Vice President for Academic Affairs, TIDE is committed to The Texas A&M University System's normative principles of inclusion, diversity and equity. It works to advance these principles through cross-cultural exploration, inter-cultural relationship-building, and mutual learning events and activities that celebrate the unity of people in a democratic environment.

The Dustdevil Diversity Spotlight Series serves as the anchor of a new and dedicated TAMIU Diversity and Inclusion website that features faculty, student and alumni stories.

Among featured faculty are:

**1. Dr. Marivic Torregosa**, Dean, TAMIU College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Originally from the Philippines, Dr. Torregosa's inspiration is compatriots who are excelling in the field of medicine, nursing, science and research.

**2. Dr. Adam Kozaczka**, TAMIU assistant professor of Humanities. Originally from the Syracuse, N.Y. area, Dr. Kozaczka researches crossovers between literature and the law. A Polish descendant, he grew up bilingual.

**3. Dr. Jared Dmello**, TAMIU assistant professor of Criminal Justice. Born in California, Dr. Dmello says the need for diversity, equity and inclusion is not restricted to universities, but applicable to society in general.

**4. Dr. Alfred Addo-Mensah**, TAMIU associate professor of Chemistry. Originally from Ghana, Dr. Addo-Mensah teaches and mentors students to prepare them for work and graduate school.

**5. Dr. Irma Cantú**, TAMIU associate professor of Spanish. Originally from Monterrey, Nuevo León, México, Dr. Cantú's greatest inspiration is Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a Mexican nun and poet who wrote the first document demanding education for women in 1691, publishing it in 1700.

**For more, visit the TAMIU Diversity and Inclusion site at [www.tamtu.edu/diversity](http://www.tamtu.edu/diversity)**



## 20 NEW FACULTY MEMBERS JOIN TAMIU THIS YEAR

TAMIU's vastly different Fall 2020 semester had something else different besides four course delivery modalities: 20 new faculty members leading the University's higher education mission.

TAMIU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs **Dr. Tom Mitchell** said the new faculty join the University's five Colleges and Schools from a variety of universities—most holding the highest or terminal degree in their field.

“We welcomed an impressive group of new faculty this Fall. They are the result of nationwide searches and we're eager for them to share their insight, guidance and research with our students. Over 90% hold the highest terminal degree in their discipline, bringing additional depth and expertise that continues to distinguish our students' learning experience here,” Dr. Mitchell said.

**Meet new faculty profiled in the immersive Mosaic TAMIU Project, here: [go.tamtu.edu/ar20-mosaic](https://go.tamtu.edu/ar20-mosaic)**



Dr. Tom Mitchell, TAMIU Provost

## FACULTY MEMBER LEADS STUDENTS IN PPE EFFORT TO HELP FIRST RESPONDERS

As the Pandemic's spread mandated keeping a social distance, TAMIU School of Engineering assistant professor **Dr. Tariq Tashtoush** and his students went the distance -- creating protective masks, shields and aerosol boxes for Laredo's frontline first responders.

The masks and shields were donated for use by ER doctors in the three Laredo hospitals and both City of Laredo and Webb County fire departments. The aerosol boxes, used to protect responders during intubation procedures, were presented to the Laredo Fire Department to be used by department paramedics and local hospitals.

TAMIU president Dr. Pablo Arenaz shared his pride for TAMIU School of Engineering students and their professor.

“The University is a proud part of this community and we are honored to be able to help with this response. We are TAMIU Together, we are Laredo Together. I'm particularly thankful to Dr. Tashtoush, who volunteered for this project and has shown remarkable leadership, providing his students with an unforgettable and valuable learning experience,” Dr. Arenaz said.

Dr. Tashtoush said he and his students were motivated by the need for personal protective equipment for first responders.

“We are thankful for the partnership and we were happy to be able to address this need. We want to help. We will never say no to being able to help our first responders and provide them with the protective edge they deserve,” he affirmed.



Engineering Students created the combined effort.

## TAMIU NAMES INAUGURAL ALUMNI RISING STAR AWARDS RECIPIENTS



Recipients of the inaugural TAMIU Alumni Rising Star Awards were recognized at the Virtual Alumni @ Home 50th Anniversary Celebration in September.

The new, competitive awards are made possible by the University's Alumni Association to recognize dynamic graduates who represent the University's five Colleges or Schools admirably.

The inaugural Rising Star Award recipients were:

- 1. Leslie D. Martínez**, BA, University College, Multidisciplinary Studies, '15, Registrar services specialist, TAMIU Office of the Registrar.
- 2. Joseph P. Byrd**, MA, College of Education, Educational Administration, '17, assistant principal, Honore Ligarde Elementary School.
- 3. Guillermo Heard**, MSN, Dr. F. M. Canseco School of Nursing and Health Sciences, '10, nurse practitioner; firefighter and former

deputy department chief of EMS, Laredo Fire Department. Heard was appointed Laredo's new Fire Chief in August.

**4. Eduardo Castillo, Jr.**, BA, College of Arts and Sciences, English, '14, U.S. Department of State Foreign Services Officer, Washington, D. C.

**5. Dr. Alejandro G. Barrera**, College of Arts and Sciences, Biology, '13, general dentist, Avenue 360 Health & Wellness, Houston.

**6. Alejandra Ávila**, BBA, A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business, Business Administration, '11, judicial law clerk, U.S. Courts for the Ninth Circuit, Arizona.

**Mary Treviño** ('72) and **Susan E. Nichols** ('88) co-chaired the Distinguished Alumni and College Awards, Alumni Golden Celebration Committee that determined Award recipients.



## TAMIU ALUM BEGINS FIRST RCA FULBRIGHT AWARD EXPERIENCE

TAMIU alum **Julio Obscura** ('14) has always had a knack for story-telling. So it's no surprise that his desire to tell stories using emerging technology was critical to his selection as a 2020 Fulbright Arts Award recipient.

Obscura earned a TAMIU degree in Communications and is the first TAMIU graduate selected for one of the world's most prestigious academic honors. He travelled to London this September to begin an 18-month graduate program in Digital Direction as the first Royal College of Art (RCA) "Fulbrighter." The RCA is regarded as the best art school in the world.

The former creative director and official photographer for Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said he has a focused vision for what his experience will yield.

"My desire is to create immersive experiences using emerging digital technologies to better inform and connect people in ways that have never been tried before. The goal of this work is to creatively address some of the most pressing problems facing the world today, including racism and climate change," he explained.



Julio Obscura in Washington, D. C.



Julio Obscura watches playback at a taping session with Speaker Pelosi.



Julio Obscura's last day at Speaker Pelosi's office.

## DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS CONNECT WITH ALUMNI @ HOME

Even at a virtual distance, TAMIU's Distinguished Alumni Award recipients were able to memorably reconnect with their Alma Mater via the Alumni @ Home virtual event this past September.

The 2020 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients were U.S. Congressman, 28th Congressional District, **Dr. Henry Cuéllar** ('82) and **Dr. Norma Elia Cantú** ('73), longtime LSU and TAMIU former faculty member and now Norene R. and T. Frank Murchison Endowed Professor in Humanities at Trinity University.

In a panel session moderated by host and alum **Jerry Garza** ('97), KGNS anchor, Drs. Cantú and Cuéllar both recalled the impact the University had on their lives and forecast their hopes for the future of TAMIU.

Cong. Cuéllar recalled the then-Laredo State University's faculty and the international perspective that infused the campus.



Dr. Henry Cuéllar



Dr. Norma E. Cantú

"I remember the international students from all over the world, the varied points of view and how much we all learned from each other and our professor...I've carried those diverse lessons forward with me into my businesses and the halls of Congress," he affirmed.

Dr. Cantú, visibly moved by the memories being shared, offered a personal observation.

"I can tell you that were it not for this University, I would not have the life I have today. This University made my life possible," she said.

Both say that TAMIU's future is bright and its growth certain.

Cong. Cuéllar praised the University's leadership in securing STEM and other critical funding support for students. Cantú agreed, but noted that the University's growth will also always offer an encouraging home for the arts and humanities.



## ALUMNI @ HOME BRINGS ON THE VIRTUAL FUN TIMES

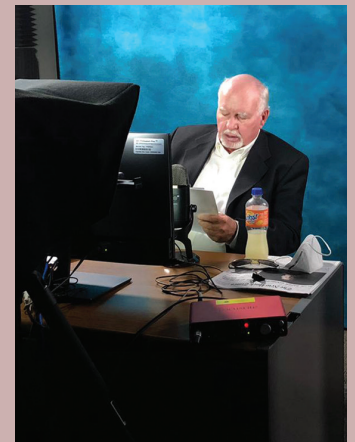
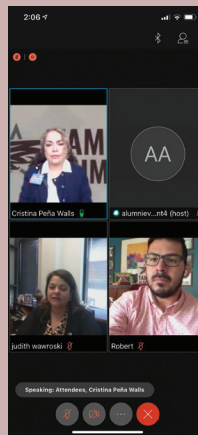
With a good amount of innovation, a dash of spirit and a liberal sprinkling of sweet memories, the Alumni Association's virtual offering, Alumni @ Home, served up an impressive menu of alumni fun.

"With the Pandemic, we transitioned to a virtual environment... but wanted to make sure we didn't take the 'home' out of that setting. Home is what a University is...that's why it's called our *alma mater*," said **Rosanne Palacios**, TAMU's vice president for Institutional Advancement, "In the end, we reaffirmed that the University is always home and always here. And we had fun too!"

There was 13 hours of dizzying array of fun, insightful and yes, even tasty options on board for the digital extravaganza.

Where else could one: hear from Distinguished Alumni Award recipients in a panel; learn how to make paella and TAMIU-themed cocktails; hear about the University's history from noted author **Dr. Jerry Thompson**; paint a South Texas landscape online with College deans; take a Yoga or HIIT class with alums; see a light show at the Trailblazers Tower; network with alumni professionals and rock out with a virtual concert by Little Sister.

"We were committed to finding a way to honor our shared history and reach out to our alumni around the world...and just around the corner. Fortunately, the University's technology capability is robust and made it possible to deliver a fun and meaningful experience worthy of our celebration," said **Mario Peña** ('78), Alumni @ Home Event Committee Chair.



## TAMIU COMMUNITY GARDEN REAPS PLENTIFUL HARVEST, DONATES TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Student Community Garden members maintain the Garden

This year, TAMIU's Service-Learning Center brought to fruition several community-wide harvest donation events, as well as a successful online giving campaign that sprouted some additional funds benefiting TAMIU's Community Garden.

This past Spring 2020 semester, students enrolled in the University Signature Course: Climate Change and Sustainability, worked together to plant 24 gardening beds containing cucumber, tomato, carrots, beets, zucchini, Swiss chard, peppers and herbs.

The harvested vegetables were distributed to the community during two drive-thru harvest pick-up events that dispersed over 150 bags of vegetables, and to students residing in the University's on-campus living communities.

Donations were also made to local non-profit organizations, including Bethany House, the South Texas Food Bank and residents at the Hamilton Hotel.

"The Community Garden serves as the catalyst for several important conversations and awareness of current social issues. It has been an extension of students' learning in the classroom about crucial subjects like climate change, environmental sustainability, food security, mental health, wellness, and community outreach," said **Dr. Marcela Uribe**, former Service-Learning Center director.

The Community Garden also launched a 24-hour online donation campaign to help purchase a shed to store equipment and materials used at the Garden. In total, the online donation drive raised \$2,651, with 100 individuals donating.

Initially established in 2016, TAMIU's Community Garden has served as a source of locally farmed produce for University students residing on campus.

**For more information on the Community Garden, visit [go.tamiau.edu/ar20-garden](http://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-garden)**



## TAMIU READING THE GLOBE PROGRAM HOSTS DRIVE-IN LECTURE FEATURING AUTHOR COLIN BRODERICK

TAMIU's Reading the Globe program annual lecture was presented a little differently this year.

A drive-in lecture, the first of its kind, was held Oct. 1 at the Senator Judith Zaffirini Student Success Center parking lot. The livestreamed lecture can be viewed at [go.tamiau.edu/ar20-broderick](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-broderick)

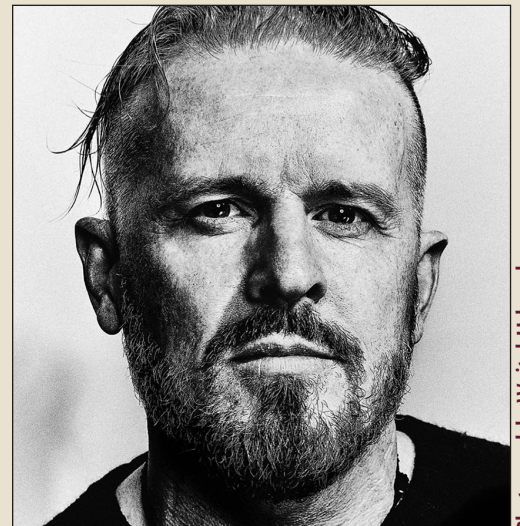
Guest lecturer was novelist **Colin Broderick**. His *"That's That: A Memoir,"* served as this year's University Common Read. In his memoir, Broderick unravels the first 20 years of his life growing up in Northern Ireland throughout the 1970s-80s. It is through this coming-of-age story that Broderick delivers a personal account of his life in a period of heightened tension and violence known historically as "The Troubles."

The drive-in lecture was one of many innovative ways University programming was modified to adjust to Centers for Diseases Control guidelines regarding social distancing and gathering. Other notable events included a day-long virtual Alumni Association celebration of the University's 50th Anniversary, virtual student Welcome Week activities, a drive-thru and distanced student-led Voter Registration drive, and multiple Facebook Live concerts and lectures.

The University's Reading the Globe program is funded in part by Humanities Texas, the State affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Students took advantage of the opportunity to gather even from a distance to enjoy the lecture.



Photograph by Wojtek Urbanek

## STUDENTS

### UNIVERSITY LIFE AWARDS TRANSITIONS TO VIRTUAL, LIVESTREAMED EVENT

While the COVID-19 Pandemic brought an abrupt end to planned campus-wide celebrations, the important achievements of TAMIU students were still celebrated at the 25th Annual University Life Awards.

Presented by the Office of Student Orientation, Leadership and Engagement (SOLE), the annual awards event was livestreamed via Facebook (available for re-watch at [go.tamiau.edu/ar20-awardsstream](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-awardsstream)).

The hour-and-a-half-long virtual event included a recap of the semester's events with congratulatory messages by **Dr. Pablo Arenaz**, University president; **Dr. Minita Ramírez**, vice president for Student Success, and **Dr. Nicholas Hudson**, SOLE director.

Various awards were given to students, student groups, faculty, staff and community members in honor of their dedication and achievements to furthering student success at the University.

"As we reflect on this year, it is important to not just remember this year as completely upending our lives. It is important to remember all of your successes and accomplishments. All of you worked hard and continue to work hard even in these very difficult sets of circumstances," said Dr. Hudson.

The virtual event highlighted the efforts of over 100 student organizations, which accounted for more than 3,800 involved students hosting 2,800 student organization events, Hudson noted. Throughout the virtual event, several reels were streamed showcasing student-led events and University-wide celebrations.

Awardees were also featured on social media with posts timed in tandem to the streamed video's award acknowledgements, in addition to a tagged "shout out" in the post comments. Over 6,000 minutes of video were viewed by over 3,700 people reached on Facebook and YouTube.



**Dr. Nicholas Hudson**  
Director, Student Orientation, Leadership and Engagement

The University Life Awards is one of several celebrations that transitioned to a virtual, social media-based platform. Other virtual events included the Emerging Leaders Celebration and the Greek Awards Ceremony.

**For more information on the University Life Awards, visit [go.tamiau.edu/ar20-lifeawards](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-lifeawards)**

**"IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER ALL OF YOUR SUCCESSES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS, ALL OF YOU WORKED HARD AND CONTINUE TO WORK HARD EVEN IN THESE VERY DIFFICULT SETS OF CIRCUMSTANCES."**

**-DR. NICHOLAS HUDSON**



## VIRTUAL MOSAIC WELCOMES STUDENTS HOME FOR FALL

*Mosaic (n.)*

*Something made up of different pieces, fitted together by design to form a unified composition.*

The crucial part above is “something made up of different pieces.” It’s a definition not lost on the world’s university campuses each Fall.

That’s when new students take their first steps on campus and returning students resume their journey. Each brings their difference to the whole, creating a unified composition.

At TAMU, each Fall’s student arrivals become part of a unified Dustdevil composition. Welcoming the members of that composi-

tion is the Welcome Week tradition created by the Office of Student Orientation, Leadership and Engagement (SOLE).

So with all the challenges of a Pandemic Fall, SOLE sought ways to digitally connect with Dustdevils through virtually and socially-distanced offerings.

Of all the activities, one powerfully affirmed a remarkable time in the University’s history. Students texted or tagged their photos to create a massive digital mosaic above the phrase “Welcome Back.” Hundreds of distinct images were woven together, each a part of a new, resilient, whole composition.

And so, the mosaic that is TAMU continues.





## DESPITE PANDEMIC CHALLENGE, TAMIU SETS ENROLLMENT RECORD

Forecasters had predicted Fall enrollments would plunge as colleges and universities guardedly reopened consistent with COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions. Indeed, most national enrollments dipped, on average 2.5%.

But at TAMIU, students, faculty and staff have driven an historic Fall enrollment—the highest to date, to 8,525 students. TAMIU president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** said he attributes the Fall gain to three factors.

“First, and foremost, an absolute full-campus commitment to making sure students could safely progress via four course deliveries flexible to student needs and Centers for Diseases Control, State, A&M System and City health guidance.

“Second, student resilience and faculty innovation. TAMIU students are laser-focused on realizing their educational goals. Faculty innovation in teaching, outreach and research supports students’ goals, making them attainable.

“Third, the University’s momentum and growth continued. We launched three new degree programs: Computer Engineering, Petroleum Engineering and Public Health.

“What this Fall 2020 enrollment affirms is that despite extraordinary challenges, our administration, faculty, staff and students have responded with a robust affirmation of and commitment to delivering our higher education legacy and mission,” he concluded.

Pre-Pandemic photo



## AT TAMIU STUDENTS TAKE CLASSES LED BY CONGRESSMAN CUÉLLAR



Pre-Pandemic photo

Students don’t often get to take a class led by a Congressman, but at TAMIU, they experienced just that this Fall.

**Congressman Henry Cuéllar** (’82), U.S. Representative for Texas’ 28th Congressional District, led a new hybrid course for undergraduate or graduate credit, titled, “Government Appropriations: Introduction to the United States Federal Budget.”

TAMIU president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** said he had long broached the possibility of Cong. Cuéllar teaching a course, but scheduling had been an expected challenge.

“Congressman Cuéllar has always been keen to join us for this sort of opportunity, but the challenges of scheduling and the life of a Congressman can be quite complex. We’re excited that we were able to secure him for this Fall semester. Clearly, there were additional challenges with our ongoing response to the Pandemic, but Cong. Cuéllar was committed to helping us to provide our students with remarkable insight. For a course about government appropriations, you can’t get a better source than the only Texas Democrat on the U.S. House Appropriations Committee. His superior educational attainments and decades of governmental experience certainly provided a positive role model for all students,” Dr. Arenaz said.

Course discussion points were grouped under a general umbrella asserting that the federal budget, comprised of spending and revenue of the federal government, takes a primary role in governance in a politically-charged environment.



## NEW DEANS LEADING TAMIU FORWARD



**Dr. Barbara Hong**

Two new Deans are helping to lead TAMIU forward with remarkable education, experiences and mission-focused vision.

**Dr. Marivic Torregosa** was named Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences in June.

**Dr. Barbara Hong** was named Dean of University College in July.

Dr. Torregosa said she is honored to take on the College's leadership and its commitment to advancing TAMIU's mission and response to local, regional and global health needs.

"My vision for the College of Nursing and Health Sciences is to continue to advance the University's mission. We want to expand enrollment of our current programs and offer more options for a Masters degrees in Nursing, Kinesiology, and Communication Disorders," she said.

Her Ph.D. in Nursing was earned at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her Masters of Science in Nursing was received from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi while her Bachelors of Science in Nursing was earned at the University of Bohol, Philippines.

Dr. Hong said her vision for University College is to communicate, collaborate and contribute with pivotal TAMIU units to empower students to timely complete their education.

"Our mission is to empower students to become competent, resilient, and self-determined, life-long learners," she said, "Utilizing collaborative academic and support programs, we aim to enhance the outcomes of every student through a 'Personal Empowerment Path' that fosters a learning community, critical-thinking, and global citizenship."

Her Ph.D. in Disability Studies was earned at Columbia University. Her Master of Philosophy in Education Leadership and Policy Administration, Master of Education in Instructional Practices for Diverse Learners and MA as a Learning Specialist for Diverse Learners were also earned at Columbia University. Her Bachelors of Science in Special Education was obtained at Brigham Young University in Hawaii.

## TAMIU ADDS THREE NEW DEGREE OFFERINGS IN ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

While both the Spring and Fall 2020 semesters brought significant changes to the University community, this year also brought the addition of three new degrees now available to students.

TAMIU's School of Engineering added a Bachelor of Science in Petroleum Engineering and a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering, while the College of Nursing and Health Sciences added a new Bachelor of Science in Public Health.

Approved through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the new Engineering degrees support bolstering the oil and gas industry, as well as providing options for individuals entering the tech industry.

"With the addition of these two new degrees, School of Engineering graduates will be able to secure employment in a wide range of settings, including business enterprises, manufacturing plants, state and local government agencies, health-care services and service orga-

nizations," said School of Engineering director **Dr. Guillermo Domínguez**.

The Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health focuses on educating students from diverse disciplines, cultures, and backgrounds in core public health knowledge areas, explained **Dr. Marivic Torregosa**, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

"With the international response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, no other time in our shared history has seen a greater need for public health professionals. We're honored to be able to continue its legacy of leadership in public health here," Dr. Torregosa said.



**Dr. Marivic Torregosa**

## TAMIU AWARDED \$1.6 MILLION IN NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION HSI FUNDING FOR STEM INITIATIVES



Pre-Pandemic photo

Hispanic, Low-Income students studying Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) at TAMIU have a strong champion in **Congressman Henry Cuéllar** ('82).

In June, Cong. Cuéllar announced \$1,649,197 in federal funds to TAMIU to help develop and expand Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics learning opportunities for Hispanic and Low-Income students in the region.

Funding was awarded through the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Hispanic-

Serving Institutions (HSI) grant program, established by Cong. Cuéllar in 2018.

Cong. Cuéllar said the program, dubbed "Building Capacity: An Undergraduate STEM-Enrichment Program in TX," helps create a new generation of creators, innovators and pioneers.

"Students in South Texas must be career-ready to meet the demands of our country's STEM industries," Cuéllar said, "This federal investment will be used to prepare students to graduate and work in critical STEM sectors such as energy, health care and medicine, cyber and information technologies, and national security... I want to thank TAMIU President Pablo Arenaz and the rest of his staff for their dedication to expanding educational opportunities for our students."

TAMIU president Dr. Pablo Arenaz called the program visionary and said it will drive brighter futures for TAMIU students.

"We are deeply appreciative of the leadership and partnership provided by Congressman Cuéllar in helping secure this generous NSF grant. We know that our students have tremendous capacity to succeed in STEM fields, and this visionary grant will provide them with ample opportunities to realize their full degree potential and advance their careers. In turn, their success will drive a brighter future for our community, state and country," Dr. Arenaz said.

## TAMIU ACCOLADES:

- U.S. *News and World Report's* 2020 Edition of its popular Best Colleges guide ranks TAMIU as the **second highest-ranked** Texas public university in its Best Regional Universities West category and the **highest-ranked** regional campus of the Texas A&M University System. It also ranked TAMIU among **Top Performers** on Social Mobility among Regional Universities West.

[go.tamiau.edu/ar20-usnews](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-usnews)

- Researchers with Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW) McCourt School of Public Policy have ranked TAMIU's Return on Investment (ROI) **among the highest** in the nation -- with graduates projected to earn \$1,006,000 more 40 years after graduation.

[go.tamiau.edu/ar20-roi](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-roi)

- TAMIU has been **ranked second** in the nation for having the lowest student debt, (on average \$3,477 in loans), and first lowest in Texas. The rankings are in a LendEDU study, the annual *Student Loan Debt by School by State Report*, which surveyed 475 colleges and universities.

[go.tamiau.edu/ar20-lendedu](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-lendedu)

- TAMIU **ranks 5th** in the nation among the 100 Most Affordable Public Schools with the Highest Return on Investment (ROI), according to ranking authority Great Value Colleges.

[go.tamiau.edu/ar20-gvc](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-gvc)

- TAMIU **ranks in the Top Ten** among 2020's Top Public Universities in Texas, according to online source, Niche.com. The ranking is based on rigorous analysis of academic, admissions, financial, and student life data from the U.S. Department of Education of over 500 public colleges and state universities.

[go.tamiau.edu/ar20-niche](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-niche)

- TAMIU earned a **top tier ranking** for its COVID-19 Pandemic response. The 2020 Educate to Career College ranking reviewed 1200 colleges, placing TAMIU in Tier I for a response that benefits and protects students, especially in terms of available online learning resources.

[go.tamiau.edu/ar20-etc](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-etc)



## A&M SYSTEM BOARD OF REGENTS TRAVEL HERE FOR QUARTERLY MEETING



In an historic visit in February, members of The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents held their quarterly meeting at TAMIU, where among other items, they approved a resolution honoring TAMIU's 50th Anniversary.

TAMIU president Dr. Pablo Arenaz noted the visit's significance.

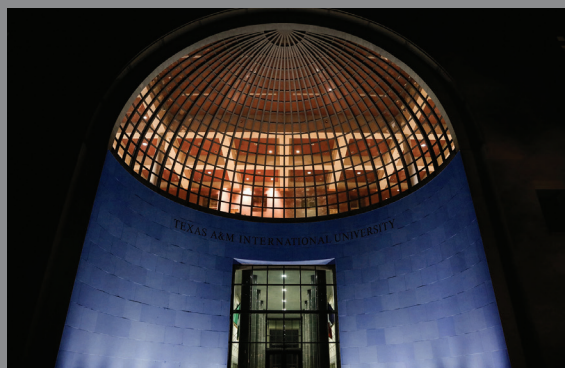
"The Regents' leadership and partnership has been critical to multiple TAMIU successes throughout our existence. The Regents have previously visited TAMIU in 1997 and 2002. We are especially excited to have welcomed them to our campus during our milestone 50th Anniversary," Dr. Arenaz said.

The 10-member Board is appointed by the Texas Governor and chaired by Elaine Mendoza.

The Regents oversee the administration and set policy direction for

the System's 11 universities and eight state agencies, a comprehensive health science center and the RELLIS campus. They ensure a quality undergraduate and graduate education experience for all students; promote academic research and technology to benefit the state of Texas and the nation; disseminate programs of the A&M System across the state through outreach and public service efforts, and support the state legislative and higher education leadership to position Texas at the forefront of higher education nationally.

The Texas A&M University System is one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation, with a budget of \$6.3 billion. The Texas A&M System educates more than 153,000 students and makes more than 22 million additional educational contacts through service and outreach programs each year.



Special University lighting is used strategically on campus to encourage awareness of critical issues including Autism and Breast Cancer.

## TAMIU GETS \$1.1M GRANT FROM TEXAS' HHSC

TAMIU is the recipient of a \$1,164,910 grant -- one of 53 statewide awarded by Texas' Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) Community Mental Health Grant Program supporting mental health services and projects.

TAMIU's competitive grant is a collaboration between its Student Counseling Services offices, Border Region Behavioral Health Center, and Serving Children and Adults in Need.

TAMIU president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** praised the collaboration and its potential to powerfully impact TAMIU students. **Dr. Marivic Torregosa**, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, is the Grant's principal investigator.

"We were honored to lead this collaborative effort that will help so many. Truly great universities must always provide students with the innovative support and resources they need to be well and succeed. This is such an effort and we are confident students' lives will be measurably bettered. We commend Dr. Torregosa on her commitment to this collaboration," Dr. Arenaz said.

Over \$45 million in funds were awarded statewide.

HHSC established the program to support communities providing and coordinating mental health treatment and services with transitional/supportive services for persons experiencing mental illness. Grant awardees match a portion of the state's grant award to demonstrate their commitment to addressing local mental health needs.

Pre-Pandemic photo



## SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI NAMED TO EDUCATION, HIGHER ED COMMITTEES



In March, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick appointed **Senator Judith Zaffirini** to the Senate Committees on Education and Higher Education. Her appointment came as Senator Kirk Watson announced his retirement in February, thus leaving his seat on both committees vacant.

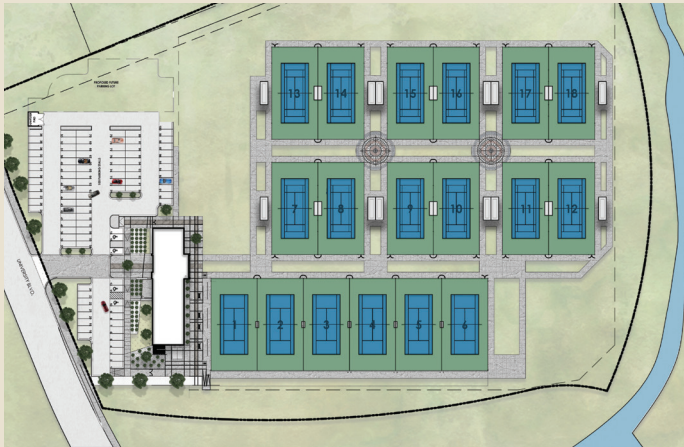
Senator Zaffirini, a longtime champion of higher education and particularly TAMIU, is the second highest-ranking senator in the Legislature. She has a 100% voting record along with a near-perfect attendance record. In a 33-year Texas Senate tenure, she's sponsored and passed 1,160 bills and 36 substantive resolutions.

The committee appointments are considered especially substantial as Senator Zaffirini will be the only Senator with experience as an educator, having taught at various education levels for 13 years, and bringing that insightful perspective to the committees.

At TAMIU, the Student Success Center, dedicated in 2012, bears her name. She is the inaugural recipient of the University's *Innovator Award*, launched in 2019. She was reelected to her 10th term, Nov. 3, 2020.



## CITY'S TENNIS COURT SCORES AT TAMIU



In 2021, Laredoans and TAMIU community members will be able to score a lot more than “love” on campus.

That’s because the campus will be in the “swing” of things and “scoring” with a whole new “racket”...the City of Laredo Tennis Center @ TAMIU will be a new addition to the TAMIU campus.

The 18-court Center includes a concession stand, collegiate and visitor locker rooms, public restrooms and a special viewing deck.

Able City, LLC is designing the Center.



Its construction was funded by the City's sales and use tax and authorized by The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents in 2016. It utilizes just over 12 acres on the campus' west side to the north of the University's Residential Learning Community.

In addition to expanded tennis courts for public use, the new City of Laredo Tennis Center @ TAMIU provides an opportunity for Dustdevil Athletics to add Men's and Women's Tennis to its sports roster in the future.

## TAMIU UNVEILS NEW CLASS RING



TAMIU's class ring will now look a little different on graduates' fingers... a new ring design bowed this October.

As befits our time, the new ring made its first appearance on social media and in an email message to all University alumni.

The design was developed by the TAMIU Ring Taskforce

of current students, campus administrators, community leaders, faculty and staff.

“The new University Ring encapsulates the spirit of TAMIU and alumni worldwide. It tells our graduates' story at TAMIU, bringing to life the bells of Trailblazers Tower, the splashing of the Acequia Fountain and our beloved campus wildlife. We hope that every time graduates look at their ring, they'll feel like they're back home,” said **Jackelyne Briseño** ('15) ('19), TAMIU assistant director of Alumni Relations.

You can put a ring on it with ringmaker Balfour at [alumni.tamui.edu/ringweek](http://alumni.tamui.edu/ringweek)

## PANDEMIC CAN'T STOP DUSTDEVIL ATHLETICS SUPPORT FOR VETERANS



Pre-Pandemic photo

The bad news is that the COVID-19 Pandemic forced the cancellation of last spring's planned VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) Post 9194 BBQ Party, offered in conjunction with TAMIU's home baseball and softball contests.

The good news is that the cancellation did not slow down the fundraising goal of the event, which provided a home for a deserving Laredo military Veteran.

Representatives from TAMIU Athletics, VFW Post 9194, Green Zone Housing and other civic organizations gathered at the L&F Distributors parking lot this summer to present keys to a shipping container home for United States Marine **Mark Nagele**.

TAMIU Athletics has sponsored a Military Appreciation BBQ benefiting various causes for several years and entered into a partnership with VFW Post 9194 in September 2019. The primary goal of the TAMIU Athletics - VFW partnership is to address the housing needs of Laredo's at-risk Veteran population through an annual BBQ fundraiser.

While the VFW has a long-term goal of establishing a Veterans Village in Laredo, projects like TAMIU's offer service-learning opportunities for student-athletes and the general student population.

**Dan Lathey**, TAMIU associate athletics director, said the VFW Partnership is unique and serves as a model for other colleges and universities to emulate.

"We have garnered a lot of momentum for our partnership with VFW over a short period of time," Lathey said, "We look forward to this partnership growing into a premier fundraiser and ongoing service-learning opportunity for all TAMIU students. I am constantly in touch with VFW Post 9194 Commander **Ricardo Quijano** and I am confident that TAMIU Athletics will play a huge role in Laredo's response to the issue of inadequate housing for our deserving Veterans population."

**L to R Front Row: Jaden González, Dan Lathey, Alejandro Martínez, U.S. Marine, and Lindsey Thorpe.**

**L to R, Back Row: Raúl Salgado Jr., Jaime Mendiola, and Mark Cook.**



## DUSTDEVIL ATHLETICS 2020: HIGHS AND LOWS

2019-2020 was the beginning of a new era for Dustdevil Athletics. The department experienced the highest of highs, with teams making the NCAA Tournament for the first time, and the lowest of lows, with multiple spring seasons cut short due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Dustdevils began the year by joining the Lone Star Conference, helping to make it one of the largest conferences in not only the NCAA Division II, but all three levels of the NCAA with 19 members.

The men's soccer team was the brightest light of the season as they achieved unprecedented success finishing with a 12-7-1 record and going 7-3 in their first season in the Lone Star Conference. TAMIU gained national attention as they cracked Top 10 national rankings for the first time since 2014. After entering the Lone Star Conference Tournament as the No. 3 seed, the Dustdevils made it all the way to the semifinals. Their complete season performance earned them a spot in the NCAA National Tournament for the first time in school history as they traveled to Azusa, CA and battled Colorado School of Mines in a hard fought 2-1 loss.

Things took a turn in the spring though, as men's and women's golf, baseball and softball all saw their promising seasons cut short by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Despite all the struggles of the 2019-2020 season, TAMIU's student-athletes were quite resilient and excelled in the classroom. The Dustdevils racked up accolades for their academic accomplishments with 96 student-athletes named to the Lone Star Conference Spring Honor Roll, 25 receiving Division 2 Athletic Directors Association Academic Achievement Awards and multiple student-athletes receiving regional and national academic awards.

Dustdevil Athletics also saw the addition of several new head coaches, welcoming **Jon Hussak** (Women's Soccer) and **Brittany Harry** (Volleyball) in January of 2020. **Rodney "Mac" McConnell** (Men's Basketball) joined TAMIU in March, and the Dustdevils added **Philip Middleton** (Baseball) in October.

**VIEW MORE AT GODUSTDEVILS.COM**

## DUSTDEVIL ATHLETIC ALUMS SHINE OFF THE PLAYING FIELD TOO

When the University first began in 1970, the notion of organized athletics on campus seemed a distant dream. Faculty members, students and administrators would occasionally field recreational teams in soccer or volleyball... or participate in charity benefits. International students were especially fond of soccer and helped encourage weekend rivalries.

Today, TAMIU athletics are a fully integrated part of the TAMIU experience. Student-athletes are a dynamic and familiar sight as they cross the campus in their branded team wear. Part of the Lone Star Conference, TAMIU is home to 11 sports.

Let's catch up with some Dustdevil Athletics alums and see how they've scored:



### Dr. Sarah Jenkins

Volleyball ('03 - '06)

Volleyball standout Dr. Sarah Jenkins is a high achiever and her unrelenting work ethic has carried her from TAMIU to serving as a Microbiologist with the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



### Raúl Quiñones

Men's Soccer ('04 - '08)

An award-winning and record-earning team captain, Raúl served a three-year enlistment in the U. S. Army, playing for Army and Armed forces teams. He's gone on to a career as a Border Patrol Agent.



### Greg Mulamba

Men's Soccer ('05 - '08)

Greg Mulamba and brother **Oliver** arrived in Laredo from South Africa in 2005 to begin collegiate soccer careers. Austin-based Greg owns his company, FalseNin9 Soccer Development. Oliver earned his Ph.D. at Texas Tech University and is Chief Technology Officer at AquaSmart Enterprises.

**Catch up with other Dustdevil Athletics Alums at:**  
**[go.tamtu.edu/ar20-catchingup](https://go.tamtu.edu/ar20-catchingup)**

### TAMIU-LBV LITERACY PARTNERSHIP LAUNCHES YOUTUBE CHANNEL SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S EARLY LITERACY

This Spring, the TAMIU-LBV Literacy Partnership launched its own early literacy channel on YouTube to support young children's early literacy activities at home or in virtual classrooms and more broadly provide learning resources for parents and teachers.

The TAMIU-LBV Literacy Partnership is a community engagement initiative of TAMIU, funded by the **Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust**.

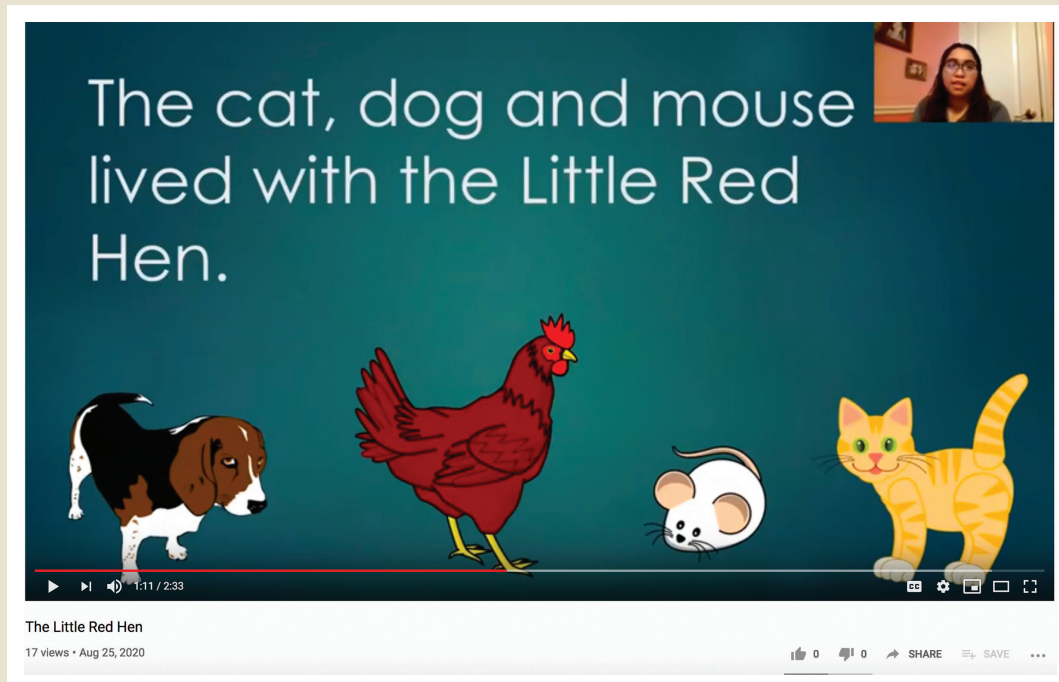
The channel is free and available to the public nationwide at: [go.tamiau.edu/ar20-lpyoutube](https://go.tamiau.edu/ar20-lpyoutube)

Uploaded with 100 instructional videos created by TAMIU-LBV Partnership tutors, the channel's fun, quick videos encourage greater comprehension of popular, read-aloud stories among children. They include higher-order questions, vivid pictures, and a writing opportunity, said **Dr. Xuesong Wang**, TAMIU associate professor of Education and TAMIU-LBV Partnership executive director.

The videos are also designed to aid teachers and families with Accelerated Reader (A.R.) programs, Dr. Wang noted.

"The TAMIU-LBV Partnership's YouTube channel provides rich resources for parents and teachers to support young children's early literacy activities at home or in virtual classrooms," she explained, "We strive for the success of struggling readers in South Texas, as well as those in other states."

The YouTube channel also provides educators with model lessons and information to enrich their early literacy instruction, Dr. Wang said.



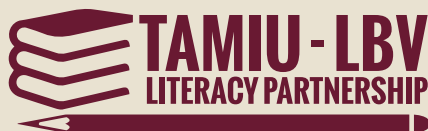
Geared towards kindergarten to second grade, teachers can watch model lessons of small group instruction and learn more about the intervention resources created by the Partnership.

Viewers can also find information about tutoring services, testimonies from Partnership campus administrators, and previous Partnership events.

Plans for the channel include expanding the instructional video library with more educational resources and literary activities.

The collaborative effort includes Laredo College, Laredo Independent School District, and United ISD. Together, the TAMIU-LBV Partnership has established a total of nine Literacy Centers at eight elementary schools to better promote grade-level reading in early elementary years.

Since 2015, using a research-based intervention model, the TAMIU-LBV Partnership has assisted thousands of struggling young readers. Some were 1.5 to 2 years behind their peers in terms of literacy development, but through these interventions these young students have closed the gap and improved literacy development measurably.





## TAMIU NURSING STUDENTS, LAREDO STROKE SUPPORT GROUP SHARE COVID-19 OUTREACH INITIATIVE

Knowing that someone is listening and cares is important to everyone. Communicating that care during the COVID-19 Pandemic response can be a real challenge.

That's why TAMIU's College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Dr. F. M. Canseco School of Nursing students wanted to help those Laredoans often more isolated than others: stroke survivors and caregivers. And by reaching out, students and their faculty tapped into a mutually fulfilling initiative that has warmed hearts and minds.

"Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the nursing program faced the challenge of needing a clinical site for the psychiatric mental health course. Our nursing professors approached the Laredo Stroke Support Group for a potential collaboration. We set up a platform for TAMIU students and faculty to communicate with Stroke Support Group members while maintaining social distancing," explained **Dr. Carol Gunnoe**, clinical assistant professor.

The entire class of 53 students was trained to interact with stroke survivors, using therapeutic communication techniques and active listening. They provided preventative health education and group activities such as exercise, art and a tennis class via Zoom.

**Eliseo Ceja**, Laredo Stroke Support Group executive director, appreciated the TAMIU collaboration.

"Since COVID-19 we have had to move most of our activities online. Stroke survivors are at high risk of falling ill...leaving a lot of them with the void of interacting with their friends. TAMIU nursing students

have definitely filled that void with their check-up calls, and for that, we are immensely grateful," Ceja observed.

One Laredo Stroke Support Group participant posted their experience with a TAMIU nursing student on social media, noting:

"I so look forward to her weekly calls as she checks in on me to make sure I'm ok, asks about any concerns I may have, my likes, my feelings, how I'm dealing with the things that overwhelm me or stress me out, and whatever else I want to talk about...God bless her always as I'm confident she will make a wonderful nurse one day, and I look forward to the day that I get to meet her face to face," they shared.

Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, **Dr. Marivic Torregosa** said innovative teaching approaches and collaborations help distinguish Nursing education at TAMIU.

"This initiative underscores the School of Nursing's resilience and creativity in finding meaningful clinical learning experiences for our students. It affirms that we continue to advance our mission while simultaneously addressing the needs of the community. Mental health and therapeutic communication with one another are much needed in these challenging times, and we're proud to be part of an important solution," Torregosa concluded.

**TAMIU College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Dr. F. M. Canseco School of Nursing students provided preventative health education and group activities, including a tennis class via Zoom.**



### STUDENT LETTERS CAST GLOW FOR HAMILTON SENIOR RESIDENTS

For many, the warmth emanated from a hand-written (or typed) letter still casts a glow unrivalled by any desktop, laptop or smartphone screen. It's a reminder that someone has invested time in creating a special, tangible moment that can be treasured again and again.

Creating those moments and reminding recipients of their importance and relevance was the foundation for TAMIU's 2020 Make a Difference Day, hosted by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement, together with the Student Government Association's Leaders Organizing Volunteering Events (L.O.V.E.) Committee.

TAMIU students gathered to create letters of encouragement for Hamilton Senior Community Apartment residents in downtown Laredo. Their hope was to build a bridge between students and residents and encourage connection, said **Bianay Ramírez**, L.O.V.E. Committee president.

"It is through events like these that students and the community have the opportunity to connect and build a stronger bond. Furthermore, TAMIU students have the opportunity to experience first-hand the difficulties that our community faces and partake in initiatives to help solve those difficulties," Ramírez explained.

Respectful of social distancing and masking, the students delivered their letters to the residents, who were clearly delighted with the special initiative, immediately opening the colorful letters and reading them.

This initiative marks the 11th observance of Make A Difference Day at TAMIU.



MPA alum Riazul Mia, Assistant City Manager from City of Laredo and Mariana Rodríguez, TAMIU SGA President participated.

### COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS STUDENTS HELP CHILDREN BATTLING CANCER



Dr. Melissa García

Knowing that another cares and cares for you can help sustain a person in the most challenging times.

Thirty-one TAMIU Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSDO) program students have decided they'll be that person and have helped create literacy and sensory-based activities for local children battling cancer.

**Dr. Melissa García**, TAMIU clinical associate professional in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and initiative organizer, shared the importance of these activities for the 31 CSDO students who participated.

"It is important for CSDO students to participate in community-based events as they promote academic growth, civic engagement, and personal enrichment. The donations were directly related to clinical academic learning experiences and therefore, enhance the quality of the students' learning," explained García.

The activities were distributed and appreciated by local children diagnosed with cancer and those undergoing treatment. A total of 14 children benefited from these literacy activities, and children could use them during out-of-town hospital and clinical visits while receiving medical care.

García said such community-oriented opportunities allow CSDO students to deepen their understanding of what they know, who they are, and their role in making their community a better place.

The activity was inspired and helps support the efforts of Smiles from Heaven, a local nonprofit organization that supports children fighting childhood cancer and their families.



## ART STUDENTS' 'BE WELL PROJECT' DONATES ART TO HOSPITAL NURSES

Frontline appreciation for local nurses took on a truly tangible and visual dimension this Fall as TAMIU College of Arts and Sciences' visual art students completed a series of paintings, screen prints and ceramics they donated to local nurses.

Dubbed the "Be Well Project," it was led collaboratively by **Jesse Shaw**, **Josias Figueirido** and **Emily Bayless**, assistant professors of Art, and supported by the University's Act on Ideas initiative.

A unique component of the "Be Well Project" was a poster initiative by printmaking students who compiled masked "selfie" photos submitted by students across the University. The photos were fused into a grid with the "Be Well" message printed on each poster.

**Dr. James Moyer**, associate professor of Music and Department of Fine and Performing Arts chair, helped initiate the project.

"I know first-hand the hours nurses put in during normal times... and are now working 12 to 15-hour shifts, risking themselves as they battle the Coronavirus. It seemed to me that we here at TAMIU could present an act of appreciation using the art students' skills. I talked with the faculty, and we began right away on the 'Be Well Project,'" explained Dr. Moyer.

The artwork was delivered in special outdoors and socially distanced and masked events at both Doctors Hospital and Laredo Medical Center.



Members of the Doctors Hospital administrative team welcomed the donations in a special outdoors, socially distanced and masked event Friday, Oct. 2. The artwork was delivered by Dr. James Moyer and Jesse Shaw.

# ANNUAL GIVING 2019-2020

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## WHY I GIVE: ALFREDO G. PÉREZ, '89, '09

*“Para unos hay otros,”* for some there are others, was a phrase I remember my paternal grandmother frequently use.

She used this phrase when referring to descriptors of people's relative levels of ability, stature, power etc. For instance, for someone who was very smart there was someone smarter. For someone who was very fast, very lucky, or very poor there is someone faster, luckier, poorer and so on. In relative descriptive terms, for everyone there are always others with more attributes of that same description.



Alfredo G. Pérez, monthly donor since 2010

I recall times attending college (Laredo State University/TAMIU) and walking the halls wondering how I would be able to afford my next classes and books. Through the help of others, I received scholarships and as a result of both financial help and determination, I was able to attain my degree and earn a well-compensated position with the school district. I always wanted to “pay it forward” and return a little something to someone who was following and tracing my footsteps. As I rose within the ranks within district and became more financially able, I began to donate alongside those who were already helping and making a difference by making college/TAMIU affordable and possible for students to attend. I donate to the University with the hope that those receiving the help one day also become donors for others as they become financially able. I am one of those *“otros”* my grandmother spoke about. However, I have taken my grandmother's phrase to a different level. One from simply describing people's attributes to now helping provide a small difference to some. Besides the University being in my own “backyard,” these are my reasons for donating to this wonderful opportunity-making University. *“Para unos hay otros.”*

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TAMIU's Walk of Fame is located on the south end of the native stone water fountain that graces the plaza in the center of campus. Purchase of the inscribed bricks is great way for students, organizations, parents, alumni, and community supporters to be part of a permanent tribute that supports TAMIU.

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 Nohely J. Flores  
 Roxzanne Fuentes  
 Ingrid M. Gamboa  
 Alma N. Garcia  
 Derek W. Garcia  
 Graciela Garcia  
 Kiara Garcia  
 Priscilla Garcia  
 Stephanie Garcia  
 Theodore J. Garcia, III  
 Vanessa A. Garcia  
 Vanessa D. Garcia  
 Ana I. Garza  
 Dalia Garza  
 Glenda Y. Garza  
 Joselyn Garza  
 Kevin J. Garza  
 Kevin M. Garza  
 Diana I. Gasca  
 Adriana Gascon  
 Alexandra Gomez  
 Anna L. Gomez  
 Gloria C. Gomez  
 Alejandra Gonzalez  
 Alejandro J. Gonzalez  
 Alexandria Gonzalez  
 Ariel A. Gonzalez Jr.  
 Carla I. Gonzalez  
 Gabriela Gonzalez  
 Lizbet M. Gonzalez  
 Lorena V. Gonzalez  
 Luz G. Gonzalez  
 Maria C. Gonzalez  
 Maria F. Gonzalez  
 Melissa Gonzalez  
 Priscilla V. Gonzalez  
 Rebecca V. Gonzalez  
 Rolando Gonzalez  
 Valeria Gonzalez  
 Valeria F. Gonzalez  
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 Angela J. Gutierrez

Elise R. Gutierrez  
 Kimberly Gutierrez  
 Luis Gutierrez  
 Natalie Gutierrez  
 Consuelo L. Guzman  
 Ricardo E. Guzman Jr.  
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 Shelby A. Hale  
 Alexis M. Hernandez  
 Amber L. Hernandez  
 Aranza Y. Hernandez  
 Jessica J. Hernandez  
 Melissa S. Hernandez  
 Rene A. Herrera  
 Robert Hinestroza  
 Sanjuanita Hinojosa  
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 Mary K. Kroll  
 Daniella M. Lara  
 Alexandra Leal  
 Joseph D. Leal  
 Norma A. Leza  
 Margarita Liendo  
 Abigail Lopez  
 Bianca M. Lopez  
 Lizzeth Lopez  
 Miguel A. Lopez  
 Priscilla Lozano  
 Iris Lugo  
 Javier Lujan  
 Lourdes M. Luna  
 Rachel R. Luna  
 Alejandra Martinez  
 Amanda R. Martinez  
 Austin C. Martinez  
 Beatriz A. Martinez  
 Giovanni Martinez  
 Kristina A. Martinez  
 Michael Martinez  
 Monica O. Martinez  
 Valeria N. Martinez  
 Noel F. Medrano, III  
 Alyssa F. Mendive  
 Beatriz Mendez  
 Elsa P. Mireles  
 Yolanda R. Molina  
 Diana Monsivais  
 Mellissa I. Moreno  
 Nathalie C. Moya  
 Adriana Muniz  
 Elise Munoz  
 Maryana Orduna  
 Andres Orozco  
 Jose R. Orozco  
 Rogelio Ortiz, Jr.  
 Jesus E. Padilla  
 Keanna F. Panko  
 Victor Patino, Jr.  
 Amanda C. Pena  
 Claudia J. Pena-Estrada  
 Nydia Y. Perales  
 Graciela Perez  
 Javier Perez, Jr.  
 Justin R. Perez  
 Kassandra D. Perez  
 Ruben Perez, III  
 My-Hanh T. Phan  
 Belinda Posadas  
 Jaqueline M. Preciado

Cintha Quezada  
 Ricardo D. J. Quiroz, Jr.  
 Jacob M. Ramirez  
 Adriana G. Ramos  
 Hector M. Ramos, Jr.  
 Idalia M. Ramos  
 Ernest D. Rangel  
 Gilberto S. Rangel  
 Maria L. Rangel  
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 Juan S. Reyes  
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 Velia A. Reyes  
 Jessica Riojas  
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 Hayde J. Rios  
 Jennifer J. Rios  
 Roxany R. Rivera  
 Ahilyn H. Robles  
 William Rodriguez Alcala  
 Alejandra I. Rodriguez  
 Angelica T. Rodriguez  
 Jennifer M. Rodriguez  
 Jesus E. Rodriguez

Mayra A. Rodriguez  
 Noemi Rodriguez  
 Ulysses Rodriguez  
 Matthew R. Rosales  
 Pamela A. Rosas  
 Jorge A. Ruiz  
 Megann Ruiz  
 Alejandra Y. Saenz  
 Angel J. Saenz  
 Genesis L. Salinas  
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 Brenda E. Sanchez  
 Leslie R. Sanchez  
 Lesslie I. Sanchez  
 Erika M. Sanchez Perez  
 Raul Sanchez  
 Viviana Sanchez  
 Lucia Santa Anna  
 Monica Segura  
 Victor E. Silva  
 Phyllis E. Smith  
 Sheyla S. Soldevilla  
 Araceli L. Solis  
 Stephanie Solis

Virginia E. Solis  
 Jessica Taboada  
 Ricardo Tanguma, Jr.  
 Esmeralda Y. Tijerina  
 Veronica Tijerina  
 Yulissa Tiznado  
 Andrea Trevino  
 Erick G. Trevino  
 Lizzandra Trevino  
 Deosdady E. Valencia  
 Yelitza L. Vasquez  
 Maria D. J. Vazquez  
 Brenda R. Vega  
 Teresa A. Vela  
 Vanessa A. Vela  
 Julieanne M. Vidaurri  
 Maricela Vidaurri  
 Diana Vielma  
 Flor C. Villarreal  
 Cinthya A. Villarreal Tellez  
 Javier A. Villegas  
 Summer A. Woodson  
 Erik A. Zamarripa  
 Francisco E. Zamora

## WHY I GIVE: JESSICA PALACIOS, '04

I started working at TAMIU in October 2001 and transferred to the System Offices in March 2016 (there was one year I was gone from TAMIU, and then returned so it was not continuous). In total, I worked for TAMIU approximately 15 years.

I graduated with my BBA from TAMIU in December 2003.


Why do I still give? I learned at an early age from my parents and late grandparents that it is our social responsibility to give back to the community that has given so much to us. Growing up, the importance of education was a continuous reminder that having the opportunity to get an education meant that we would open up a world of opportunities for ourselves. The ability to give back to my *alma mater* means I have the ability to touch somebody's life in a way that I wouldn't be able to otherwise. Every dollar donated is a stepping stone for another student to fulfill their dreams!



**Jessica Palacios and Lola,  
 monthly donors since 2004**


## BY THE NUMBERS

**8,525**  
**Students Enrolled This Fall**

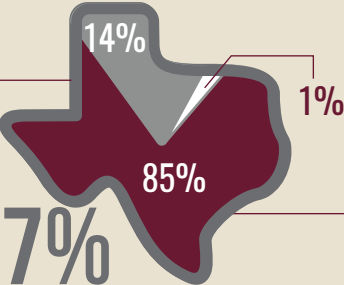


**38%**   **62%**

**65%** Undergraduate Students Full-time students  
**19%** Part-time students  
**5%** Graduate Students Full-time students  
**11%** Part-time students

 Oldest student  
68 Years Old  
 Youngest student  
13 Years Old

 Average student age:  
Undergraduate 21.25  
Graduate 32  
Doctoral 38

  
**97%**  
**Students are from Texas**

Undergraduate Enrollment Residency:  
**85%** Laredo  
**14%** Other Texas cities  
**1%** Non-Texas



**30 Countries**  
Represented In  
student population





**64%** Students  
identify as  
First-Generation



**OVER 114**

Texas High Schools Represented  
in Freshman class



**226**

Full-time  
Faculty  
Members

**2,489**



Fall  
Classes



**\$72,056,558**  
Money Awarded  
in Financial Aid

## **TOP 3** Undergraduate majors:

- Nursing
- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice

## **TOP 3** Graduate majors:

- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice
- Curriculum & Instruction

### SIGNS OF THE TIMES

1. A Call to Resilience  
**TAMIU TOGETHER**

2. A Call to Legacy  
**TAMIU BACK TOGETHER**

3. A Call to Recovery  
**GO BEYOND>TOGETHER**



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GO **BEYOND** > TOGETHER