



TEXAS A&M INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Reset. Restart. Renew.



ANNUAL REPORT 2022

AROUND CAMPUS



TIME FOR A RESET

We came back cautiously, but purposefully. Masks remained recommended, but spirits were free, and optimistic. A campus came back to life. The Reset had begun.

Coffee brewing, days starting. Smiles in sunshine. Conversations with old and new friends. Formulas scribbled on boards. Lectures calling all to explore anew. The crack of a book's spine opening on Killam Library tables. Deer grazing in a morning's fog.

Sports in full play with boisterous cheering. Dancers bounding across the stage. The sounds of music from hallways and concert halls. Gallery walls hung brightly with art. A holiday tree shining bright again.

TIME FOR A RESET.



IN THIS EDITION



3



5



6



13



16



17



19



24



32

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



ON DELIVERING THE AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE AND EXCEPTIONAL

Many people think of higher education in terms of flagship and research universities or community and junior colleges. However, these categories do not capture the true mission of the majority of our state's public universities. Texas A&M International University is a comprehensive regional university. Our mission provides higher education opportunities to the people of South Texas, and we have been very successful in our over 52 years of existence.

Our mantra for this year is that we are **Affordable, Accessible, and Exceptional**. There is no question that we are leaders in the A&M System in all three areas and we have had a significant impact on Laredo and the region.

Affordability: We have striven to make a University education affordable, yet maintain the quality of our academic programs, many of which have achieved regional and national recognition. We have the second lowest tuition and fees of any South Texas school and the **6th** lowest tuition of any public institution in the State. Our student debt is also low. At slightly over \$19,000, we are more than \$6,000 below the State average, and are ranked the third lowest in the State.

How have we done this? Two years ago, we changed our Dusty Promise so that any entering student who qualifies for the program and whose family income is \$100,000 or less pays no tuition and fees. And because of the generosity of our donors, many students receive

scholarships that help defray their costs. After a successful pilot, we launched BooksIncluded this Fall, which significantly reduces textbook costs for students.

We have received many accolades related to our affordability. We were ranked **4th** in *Washington Monthly Magazine's* "Best Bang for the Buck" for Southern Colleges and the highest ranked University in Texas. *Great Value Colleges* ranked us **5th** in nation among the 100 Most Affordable Public Schools with the Highest Return on Investment (ROI) and we were ranked as the Least Expensive Public College/University in Texas by Student Loan Hero, a Lending Tree company. This is how we ensure Affordability.

Accessibility: We proudly serve the residents of this region. Over 85% of our students come from Webb County and 97% from Texas. An incredible 96% of our undergraduate population identifies as Hispanic, which makes us the institution with the highest percentage of Hispanics in the country. Serving this community and the surrounding region community is our strength.

Our graduation rate, at 55.3%, is within 5% of the statewide average, which is remarkable considering that nearly 80% of our graduates are defined as economically disadvantaged. With over 55% of our students the first in their family to attend a University, their enrollment and graduation serves as a catalyst for change for generations to come in this region.

How are we so successful academically? We engage in intrusive advising as well as enhanced tutoring and supplemental instruction that help struggling students. We are also cognizant of students' well-being and have programs for mental health, food insecurity and emergency expenses. These programs address students' physiological and psychological needs and allow them to better focus on academic pursuits.

In 2018, we initiated the Closer than Ever program focused on recapturing stop-outs who have been out of school for at least a year and have 60 or more credit hours. To date, over 77% of those who have returned to TAMIU have either graduated or remain in school.

We are growing, admitting high quality students, many considered at-risk by the State... and we are doing an excellent job of retaining them. Our efforts have resulted in our graduation rates being among the best in the A&M System and in Texas. This is how we ensure Accessibility.

Exceptional: We continue to rank among the top institutions in the county for enhanced graduate income mobility, and are the top institution in Texas when measuring return on investment (ROI). Over 72% of our graduates are gainfully employed within a year of graduating – 5% above the State average for universities.

TAMIU was ranked **8th** among the 38 Public Universities in Texas by Niche, based on the quality of our academic programs. In addition, several of our academic programs have been recognized for their quality. Among these, our Nursing Program was ranked **6th** among the Top 100 Best Affordable Nursing College Programs in the nation and the Bachelor of Criminal Justice program ranked **17th** among the 50 Best Bachelor of Criminal Justice degree programs. These are just a couple of examples of our quality degree programs, and how we remain Exceptional.

In this Annual Report, you will find other examples of how Texas A&M International University, our students, our faculty and staff, and our alumni have contributed to these successes and to ensuring that TAMIU remains Affordable, Accessible and Exceptional. We are grateful to the communities that partner with us to ensure this success. I want to thank all of you – our friends and donors, for helping us make TAMIU an institution of remarkable distinction.



Dr. Pablo Arenaz
TAMIU President

LET'S TALK IMPACT!

TAMIU's Economic Impact on Webb County Tops

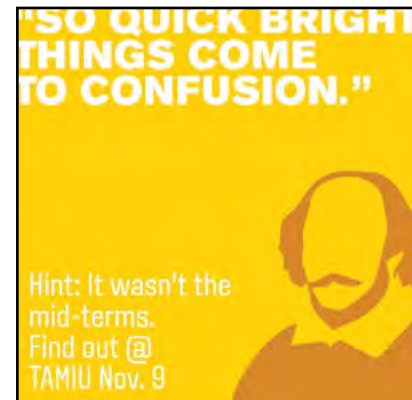
\$356 MILLION.

Find out more in our
Economic Impact Analysis
Report at: go.tamiau.edu/eia
Or scan QR Code:



UNIVERSITY NEWS

DIGITAL OUTREACH EFFORTS AT TAMIU REACH MILESTONE +1M SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



In an age ruled by hashtags, video views, and comments, TAMIU is truly making its mark on the digital landscape.

This year's digital marketing efforts reached a milestone of well over 1 million social media followers through the University's primary social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

This was made possible through both organic and paid digital campaign efforts. Campaign efforts were crafted in-house, with artwork and content handled internally. The multi-channel digital campaign content ranged from program and event promotion to amplifying registration efforts.

Additional components include sharing campus, student, and faculty accomplishments through various interactive means. These accomplishments were shared through various formats including well over 500+ social media posts ranging from in-feed and Stories posts, Reels, Tweets, LinkedIn updates, YouTube videos, and other

social media-based opportunities.

Video, a vital component of the digital media experience, has garnered 129 hours watched on YouTube and over 10,000 minutes viewed on Facebook and Instagram. In total, both social media channels have resulted in over 36,000 views of video-related content.

"In addition to our traditional outreach means, we're going where our audiences live: on social platforms that encourage community and help to affirm and reaffirm an affinity with the University. Our in-house social media manager, **Christine Rojas**, does a remarkable job in sharing the University's story through compelling engagements," said TAMIU PR director **Steve Harmon**.

You can follow the University's story on social media @txamiu on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

VALERIE NARANJO JOINS TAMIU ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM



This Fall, TAMIU welcomed internationally recognized percussionist **Valerie Naranjo** to its Artist-in-Residence program.

Naranjo, a globally acclaimed, award-winning percussionist,

is a longtime member of NBC's *Saturday Night Live* band and performs in Broadway's *The Lion King*. She's recorded with several well-known musical acts including David Byrne, the Philip Glass Ensemble, and Tori Amos.

She remains a groundbreaking artist, breaking both the boundaries of her genre and gender after becoming the first woman to perform on the *gyil*, (a West African marimba-like instrument) and the first-place prize winner in Ghana's Kobine Festival of Traditional Music.

Dr. James Moyer, chair of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, noted the impact of TAMIU's Artist-in-Residence Program.

"Bringing Valerie Naranjo, a world-class percussionist, for four weeks throughout the year will also have a significant impact on not just music, but art, dance, and theatre students," said Moyer.

A native of Los Angeles, Naranjo was born to Native American parents who supported her budding interest in music. An avid performer, Naranjo has created her own ensemble and has recorded 10 albums under her name.

The University's Artist-in-Residence program began in Spring 2022 and is made possible through the College of Arts and Sciences.

Subsequent visits are scheduled for Jan. 29 – Feb. 22, 2023, and March 10 – 13, 2023. During these sessions, Naranjo will present and perform with music ensembles. She will also teach activities and classes. A clinic for high school music students and a concert are also planned.

THE POWER OF WEB: HUBS RULE AT TAMIU



A family of helpful, web-based information hubs are helping TAMIU students connect with and access valuable campus resources.

These dedicated web hubs focus on student experiences such as degree exploration, registration, special campus programs, and University news. They expedite access to content by centralizing answers. The Future Dustdevil Hub, go.tamiau.edu/dustdevilhub, offers a range of digital resources for prospective students, parents, and high school counselors. Also included is guidance and information focused on actionable steps. Digital-based elements include an interactive viewbook, Counselor's Interactive Guide, detailed College, and School digital brochures, and a direct link to local and regional University representatives.

The Registration Hub, tamiau.edu/reghub, offers insight into registration with content, guides, and resources specific to undergraduate and graduate students. The site was designed in concert with undergraduate and graduate advisors to shine a light on the registration process by developing awareness, addressing issues like advising and holds, and including a dynamic FAQ with contacts.

Finally, the TAMIU News Hub, go.tamiau.edu/newshub, brings together all the University's news and information resources in a central location. Included is current campus news with focused news channels, an active calendar, social media aggregator, links to specialty information and archives, the week's edition of the Trailblazer, the University's online news bulletin, the Annual Report, an Economic Impact Report and official social media channels.

This year, the Hubs have generated over 10,000 pageviews, with online audiences spending between 1:19 – 1:49 minutes per pageview.

"The power of our web, for current and potential students, is formidable," said TAMIU web director **Ana Vargas**, "...coupled with our outreach efforts on social platforms, the hubs have proven measurably useful for our audiences, and provide them with expedited content access."

UNIVERSITY REMEMBERS

FALLEN LEADERS DRS. COWART, BALL



Dr. Billy F. Cowart, the inaugural president of the former Texas A&I University at Laredo, now Texas A&M International University, passed away at age 89 in Temple, TX on December 25, 2021 following a brief illness.

Cowart's pivotal role in guiding the University's growth and success was recognized by The Texas A&M University System Regents in 2002 with the naming of Dr. Billy F. Cowart Hall on campus.

After leaving Laredo, Cowart accepted a position as Provost of Western Oregon State College and served as Interim President for one year prior to retiring in 1995.

TAMIU president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** said Dr. Cowart's hand in the University's story was beyond historical, and his campus model duplicated across the state and nation.

"Dr. Cowart truly planted the seed for the 300-acre campus and expansive mission we enjoy today. He began to build this University from within a small study carrel at then-Laredo Junior College. He developed an innovative hybrid, the upper-level senior institution, embraced by others seeking to bring higher education to their communities. His strategic use of community engagement, which we follow today, helped the University to create and implement programs that advanced our community and region. We will be forever indebted to his leadership and vision that helped create the remarkable campus reality we see today," Dr. Arenaz said.

Dr. Cowart was preceded in death by his beloved wife Janet. They enjoyed 65 wonderful years together. He is also preceded by sisters Merle and Beth, brothers Ray and T. W., and parents Tom and Gladys Cowart.

Surviving him are son Rick Cowart and wife, Nickie of The Dalles, OR, three sisters, Wanda Juneke (Al) of Hendersonville, NC, Nena Mayo of Spring, TX, and Donna Beth Thompson (Jim) of Kaufman, TX as well as four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



Earlier that same month, **Dr. Rex H. Ball**, a former key TAMIU faculty member, and administrator, passed away at age 78 in New Mexico on December 8, 2021.

Dr. Ball was a professor of History at TAMIU and had the distinction of being one of the founding faculty members

at its predecessor, the Texas A&I University Center at Laredo, as well as Laredo State University and TAMIU.

His service to the University was broad, and he rose from the rank of assistant professor of History in 1970 to professor of History in 1979. He also served as coordinator of the Division of Program Development and Continuing Education from 1972-1977, administrative assistant to the President and chief development officer from 1980-1985, and vice president for Administration and University Relations from 1985-1987.

His service set in place standards that still inform key University functions, including advancement, public relations, marketing, and community engagement.

Fittingly, he ended his educational career by delivering a memorable Commencement Address at TAMIU's Fall 2012 Commencement Exercises. Thereafter, he and his beloved wife Betty retired to the mountains of New Mexico.

He is survived by Betty and daughter Kristen.



Frank Staggs (seated) receives the University's 2022 Innovador Award, recognizing an individual or organization making a lasting impact on education, particularly higher education, in Laredo and the South Texas region. The Award was presented at the Fall Convocation this October. Read more on page 18.



University Police officers welcomed new Chief of Police **Cordelia G. Pérez**, the sole female police chief in the 11-campus Texas A&M University System, and one of a few female police chiefs in the System's history.



PYLON, LONG A TAMIU BEACON, NOW SIGNALS NEW FUTURE

The Texas A&M International University Entrance Pylon, a long-familiar campus fixture capped by an iconic globe, has served as a welcoming beacon to TAMIU for the past 27 years. It has marked our past and now signals our future.

In partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation and the City of Laredo, this area now becomes part of Laredo's dynamic growth with the conversion of Loop 20 into Laredo's second interstate highway, IH-69 West.

The University is proud to help lead this catalytic change.

Elements of the pylon are being retained and will become part of the campus' continued experience, welcoming new generations to TAMIU.

UNIVERSITY NEWS

NSF, DE RESEARCH GRANTS BRING \$3.5 MILLION TO TAMIU



Grants totaling \$3.5 million that target scientific research and increasing the number and quality of well-prepared Hispanic students completing TAMIU undergraduate degrees were awarded this October.

The first grant, for \$500,902 over three years, is from the National Science Foundation (NSF) as part of its Building Research Capacity of New Faculty in Biology (BRC-BIO) Grant, and is awarded to principal investigator **Dr. Ruvini U. Pathirana**, TAMIU assistant professor of Microbiology in the College of Arts and Sciences, department of Biology and Chemistry.

Dr. Pathirana's research is focused on select fungi and has the potential to help identify drug targets that control human and plant disease-causing fungal growth.

The second grant, for \$2.9 million over an anticipated five-year period, is from the U.S. Department of Education's Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program. It was awarded to principal investigator **Dr. Alfredo Ramírez, Jr.**, interim director and superintendent of TAMIU's Julieta & Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies.

The grant supports a Title V initiative, the TAMIU Advanced Recovery and Data Analysis (ARDA) program. ARDA targets providing a supportive learning environment that meets students' holistic needs.

TAMIU, UT HEALTH HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP EXPANDS PUBLIC HEALTH STUDY

Public Health study opportunities at TAMIU have expanded thanks to an innovative partnership with the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Biomedical Informatics (UTHealth Houston SBMI).

The partnership is focused on the delivery of the Development of Informatics Accelerated Learning in Laredo (DIAL) program. DIAL provides TAMIU students the opportunity to complete a 4+1 graduate certificate and accelerated Master's program with UTHealth Houston. At completion, students graduate with a Bachelor's degree from TAMIU and a graduate certificate from UTHealth Houston. The program is housed in TAMIU's College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

Biomedical Informatics is a dynamic field with rich employment opportunities, organizers observed.

"It's a growing field that optimizes the use of information in healthcare with employment opportunities in pharmacies, hospitals, insurance companies, and more. The 4+1 program graduates have the opportunity to continue their coursework with UTHealth Houston SBMI and earn their master's in Biomedical Informatics in just one year," said TAMIU assistant professor of Public Health **Dr. Cindy Lynn Salazar-Collier**.

The School of Biomedical Informatics is one of six schools within UTHealth Houston, and the only academic Biomedical Informatics program in Texas. It's also the only free-standing school among 70 related programs in the nation, and one of the largest globally.



The number of students majoring in TAMIU's Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health has quadrupled since its Fall 2020 launch.

LISD, TAMIU TEAM TO MOTIVATE FUTURE TEACHERS

The Laredo Independent School District (LISD) and TAMIU have joined forces to address the current teacher shortage in the State by hosting a Future Teachers of LISD Seminar this Fall.

The seminar was an innovative way to increase interest and awareness among LISD seventh and eighth grade students to pursue a Career, Technical, Education (CTE) future teacher pathway and increase the number of teacher candidates prepared to enter the profession as early as possible.

Over 100 students from Lamar, Christen, Cigarroa, and Memorial Middle School visited the TAMIU campus and were able to network with TAMIU College of Education faculty. TAMIU will follow these students throughout high school to keep them interested and involved in the Education/Teaching career pathway.



Texas A&M University System **Chancellor John Sharp** congratulates **Dr. Lola Norris**, Associate Professor of Spanish, on her Chancellor's Academy of Teacher Educators (CATE) Award presented in College Station.

TAMIU'S ECONOMIC IMPACT IS MEASURED...AND IT'S IMPRESSIVE

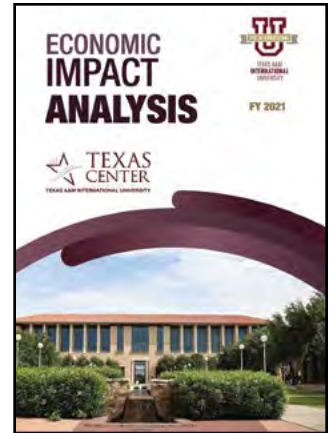
Universities are a vital part of their communities, impacting local, regional, and State economies.

TAMIU produces value in many ways: it plays a crucial role in helping students increase their employability and achieve their potential, facilitates new research and innovation development generating new opportunities for the region, and equips students with the education, training, and skills they need to have fulfilling and prosperous careers.

The TAMIU A.R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business, Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development has produced an Economic Impact Analysis Report to evaluate TAMIU's impact on the Webb County economy. The Report shows TAMIU generates a \$365M impact on Webb County, said author **Dr. Daniel Covarrubias**, director of the Sanchez School's Texas Center.

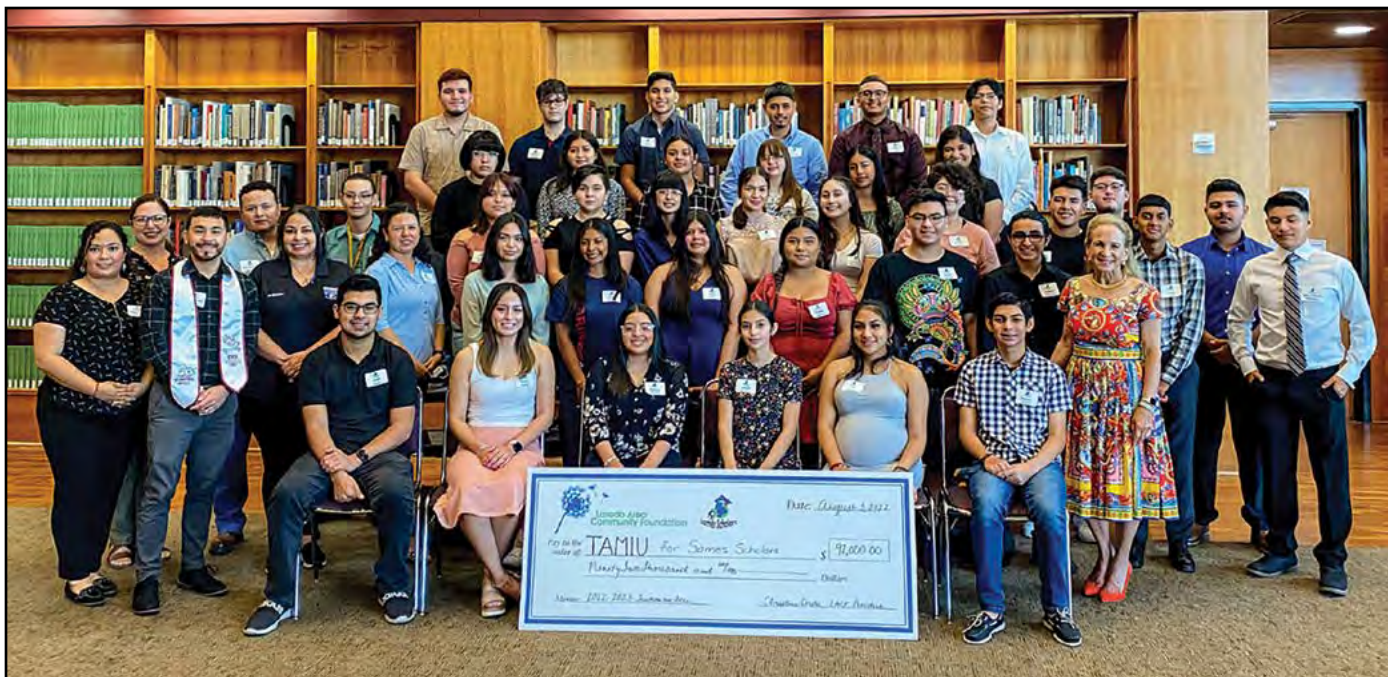


"TAMIU helps local businesses by boosting regional expenditures and creating human capital as a consistent stream of highly skilled and trained graduates. TAMIU improves its students' quality of life, increasing their lifetime earnings and enabling them to better realize their full potential. Finally, TAMIU benefits society in Webb County by creating a more prosperous economy and generating an improved lifestyle for its graduates," Dr. Covarrubias observed.



Read the TAMIU Economic Impact Analysis at go.tamtu.edu/eia

UNIVERSITY DONORS



2022 SAMES SCHOLARS COHORT INTRODUCED AT ANNUAL ORIENTATION

The newest high school Sames Scholars cohort was introduced this summer at a gathering at TAMIU.

The Sames Scholars Program is a college-bound mentorship program that pairs high school students with TAMIU faculty mentors throughout their high school experience. Upon high school graduation, it offers students a four-year scholarship to TAMIU including tuition, books, and fees.

Founders **Hank and Elizabeth Sames** are celebrating the 20th year of their unique scholarship program providing funds, mentors, and support for first-generation and high-risk college-bound high school students. The Sames Scholars program, founded in 2002, pairs United Independent School District high school students with TAMIU faculty.

Program mentors meet with the students on their high school campus monthly to help keep them on track

2022 Sames Scholars were introduced at a gathering at TAMIU. Accompanying the students was Sames Scholars Program Founder Elizabeth Sames, second row, right.

for graduating, planning for college, and encouraging the students to strive for excellence. The students are chosen in their freshman year in high school. If they meet all criteria during high school, the students receive a TAMIU four-year scholarship totaling \$16,000.

The newly-introduced high school cohort and their respective high schools included: **Cynthia Mata** and **Julia Paredes** - United South High School; **Amberly Herrera** - United High School; **Diego Hernández** and **Marco Antonio Rodríguez**; Alexander High School - **Jorge A. Jaime**, **Julieta Castañeda** and **Yadhira Téllez** - Lyndon Baines Johnson High School.

To date, 80 students have graduated from college with a total of over \$1.8M in program funds provided. The mentorship program currently has 44 students enrolled in high school and college.

WATSON RETROSPECTIVE AT TAMIU AFFIRMS ART OF GIVING

An exuberant retrospective collection demonstrating the late Laredo artist **Julie Shaifer Watson's** love for Texas and México is exhibited in the Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library Gallery.

It's the latest affirmation of the Watson family's art of giving.

"The Watsons have long championed art here at the University, through donations that have buoyed the creation of the Helen Richter Watson Gallery, ongoing student scholarships, teaching resources, and peer artists' art collections. We're thrilled to have Julie Watson's retrospective join that family history here," said **Rosanne Palacios**, TAMIU's vice president for Institutional Advancement.

TAMIU president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** said the University is indeed honored to host the 16-work collection.

"This legacy collection of Watson's work is the largest retrospective of her work since her 2008 passing. These

massive canvases feature her brilliant use of bold colors to capture the Texas borderland and coast and México. We are truly honored to share them once again with our University community, and the community at large," said Dr. Arenaz.

Watson's distinctive, ebullient style earned her multiple awards throughout her lifetime. Her works remain aggressively sought after and grace art lovers' collections, homes, and businesses everywhere.

A descendant of Laredo founders Don Tomás Sánchez and John Z. Leyendecker, she created and enjoyed a life as colorful as her acclaimed paintings.

Palacios noted the retrospective continues the Watson legacy at TAMIU.

"It's truly a legacy of giving, loving, and living. And through this art, it just keeps giving and giving," Palacios said.

Members of the Watson extended family helped inaugurate the Watson Retrospective Collection.



UNIVERSITY DONORS



L to R, University partner Guillermo “Memo” Benavides, joins Dr. Gulick, TAMIU Planetarium director Peter Davis and TAMIU president Dr. Pablo Arenaz.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE DINOSAURS? FASCINATING LECTURE OFFERS ANSWER

Just what caused the extinction of the dinosaurs?

That fascinating question was at the center of a lecture dedicated to the effects of the Chicxulub Asteroid’s impact on México’s Yucatan Peninsula.

The free lecture, “Asteroid Impact: The Chicxulub Asteroid and the Death of the Dinosaurs,” by **Dr. Sean Gulick**, co-chair of the Jackson School of Geosciences at the University of Texas at Austin, proved popular with students and community members.

It was offered through the generous support of longtime University partner **Guillermo “Memo” Benavides**.

Dr. Gulick shared research completed during a sea expedition in 2016, where his team drilled and collected various core samples found on the rim of the Chicxulub Crater. The collected samples revealed previously unknown details of what occurred 66 million years ago during the asteroid’s impact ...including drastic changes to the Earth’s climate that ultimately led to the extinction of the dinosaurs.

The lecture was organized through the combined efforts of TAMIU’s College of Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the Lamar Bruni Vergara Planetarium. **Visit the Planetarium online at:** <https://www.tamtu.edu/planetarium/index.shtml>



Dr. Gulick’s fascinating lecture drew from his decades of research on the role of catastrophism in the geologic record. In fascinating detail, he revisited an asteroid’s impact on Earth that occurred 66 million years ago...and led to climate changes that heralded the extinction of dinosaurs.

MEDLINE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP ENGINEERING FUTURES FOR TAMIU STUDENTS

TAMIU School of Engineering and Medline, the largest privately-held medical products distributor and manufacturer in North America, have partnered on an internship program providing hands-on workplace experiences and recruitment opportunities for students.

TAMIU Systems Engineering students can obtain internship positions at Medline's state-of-the-art surgical procedure trays manufacturing facility in Laredo.

The partnership grew from several meetings **Dr. Mahmoud T. Khasawneh**, director for the School of Engineering, had with corporate and regional Medline representatives.

"TAMIU's Systems Engineering program is at the forefront of providing work-ready graduates. The Medline internship program is a testament to our continued commitment to that. Our interdisciplinary degree plan exposes students to coursework and research in industrial engineering, electrical and computer

engineering, and mechanical engineering," Dr. Khasawneh said.

Kavita Idnani-Ramos ('04), Medline's Laredo Human Resources Manager, affirmed TAMIU students' versatility, noting School alumni quickly learn new processes and concepts and immediately contribute to company success.

"TAMIU's engineering program equips their students to succeed in the workplace," said Idnani-Ramos, "Our partnership provides students the benefit of gaining work experience with an industry-leading company... and we also get to show why a career at Medline is so rewarding."

TAMIU's Systems Engineering program is ABET-accredited and was established in 2009. Graduates see prestigious job and graduate school placement in Fortune 500 companies and leading universities respectively.



TAMIU's School of Engineering and Medline, the largest privately-held medical products distributor and manufacturer in North America, have partnered to launch an internship program. Celebrating the new initiative are, left to right, Dr. Tom Mitchell, TAMIU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs; Dr. Mahmoud T. Khasawneh, director of the School of Engineering; Dr. Claudia San Miguel, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Kavita Idnani-Ramos, Medline's Laredo human resources manager; Dr. Pablo Arenaz, TAMIU president; Armando Vasquez, Medline manufacturing director, and Gustavo Demara, Medline manufacturing support manager.

UNIVERSITY FACULTY

TAMIU BORDER LIT DELIVERS 100 STUDENT-AUTHORED BOOKS TO TAMIU-LBV LITERACY PARTNERSHIP

Famed author Garrison Keillor once said, “A book is a gift you can open again and again.”

In April, a group of TAMIU students delivered 100 gift children’s books they authored to be opened by students of the TAMIU-Lamar Bruni Vergara Literacy Partnership (TAMIU-LBV).

The TAMIU students are part of TAMIU Border Lit, comprised of current students and alumni of the College of Arts and Sciences’ Multicultural Children’s Literature course promoting representation of border communities in children’s literature.

The collaborative service-learning project was started in Fall 2020 by **Dr. Kaitlyn M. Culliton**, TAMIU assistant professor of English, to support both early literacy acquisition and celebrate the border. It was initially inspired by the legacy of late TAMIU faculty member **Dr. Francis “Panchita” Rhodes**, who was committed to educating future leaders about children’s literature.

“Students enrolled in the Multicultural Children’s Literature course for Fall and Spring semesters each wrote a children’s book to support early literacy acquisition in the Laredo community. These 100 books were donated to the TAMIU-LBV Literacy Partnership. Partnership tutors will use them to tutor students in the community. They largely focus on border culture, diversity and inclusion, and family and identity. Together, we want to encourage literacy in young readers by increasing access to children’s works that authentically represent the Laredo community,” Dr. Culliton explained.

TAMIU students wrote, illustrated, and published original picture books that engage with their community and reflect their experiences.

TAMIU Border Lit students and alumni gather to share their gift of children’s books with the TAMIU-Lamar Bruni Vergara Literacy Partnership.



NEW FACULTY@TAMIU

A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business

Dr. Mohammed Fuad

Assistant Professor of Management

Dr. Michele K. Nigliazzo

Instructional Assistant Professor of Business Law

Dr. Richard Rodríguez

Instructional Assistant Professor of Transportation & International Trade

Dr. Shiyu Yang

Assistant Professor of Management

Dr. Rafael A. Zago

Assistant Professor of Economics

College of Arts and Sciences

Dr. Aniruddha Acharya

Visiting Assistant Professor of Biology

Dr. Huseyin Cinoglu

Associate Professor of Criminal Justice

Dr. Rachel B. Griffis

Assistant Professor of English

Dr. Jihoon Jeong

Visiting Assistant Professor of Public Administration

Dr. Ying Thaviphoke

Visiting Assistant Professor of Systems Engineering

Dr. Debbie Elekis

Associate Professor of English & Humanities Chair

Dr. Zhiyang Li

Assistant Professor of Engineering

Dr. Amanda R. Muñoz

Assistant Professor of Biology

Dr. Bakhita Al Salman

Visiting Assistant Professor of Computer Engineering

College of Education

Dr. Lauren May

Assistant Professor of Curriculum & Instruction

Dr. Brian S. Mills

Visiting Assistant Professor of School Counseling

College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Olinda Domínguez

Clinical Assistant Professor

Mónica Garza

Clinical Assistant Professor

Dr. Jessica Peña

Visiting Lecturer of Public Health

Amy Guerra

Clinical Assistant Professor

University College

Verónica Juárez

Visiting Lecturer

Killam Library

Dr. Mayra E. Bonet

Assistant Librarian

Research & Assessment

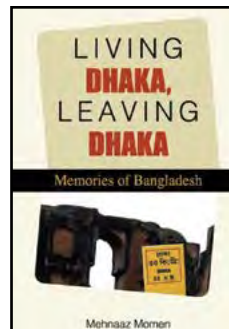
Dr. Chao Chen

Assistant Librarian/ Online Learning Librarian

Eva A. Hernández

Assistant Librarian/Catalog Librarian

DR. MOMEN, DR. CARDONA-LÓPEZ CELEBRATE BOOK PUBLICATIONS



This year, two TAMIU faculty members celebrated the book publications.

Dr. Mehnaaz Momen, associate professor of Public Administration, published her book titled, “Living Dhaka, Leaving Dhaka: Memories of Bangladesh” (Razia Rahman, 2022).

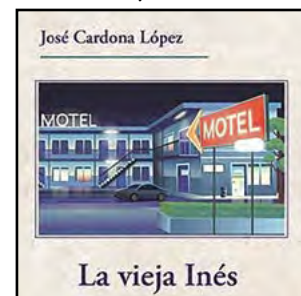
Also, **Dr. José Cardona-López**, Regents Professor of Spanish American Literature, published his book in Spanish titled, “La vieja Inés: (Todo sobre el caso Torres Villquirán) (Ediciones Eón, 2022),” translated as “The Old Inés: (Everything about the Torres Villquirán Case).”

Dr. Momen’s “Living Dhaka, Leaving Dhaka” explores the story of a girl growing up in Bangladesh during the turbulent post-liberation period. This was a time of enormous transition, as the country went through various social experiments ranging from socialism to capitalism, secularism to religious fundamentalism, and class hierarchy to upward mobility. It brings to life an increasingly forgotten perspective about what it feels like to grow up as a girl in a traditional society.

Dr. Cardona’s “La vieja Inés” is a short novel, or *nouvelle*, and dives into the oppressive and absurd Torres Villquirán case in a serious and at the same, comical manner.

The book offers a satire against a society that favors killings. It is a mockery against expressions of power, which for its rigor and effectiveness, is based on the ambiguous and curly language that is usually present in its laws.

Books authored by TAMIU faculty, dating back to the founding of the University in 1970, can be searched and found at a dedicated site for Faculty Authored Books on the Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library website.



UNIVERSITY FACULTY



'GET PHIT' SUMMER BOOTCAMP HIGHLIGHTS PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATICS

Some 50 students from TAMIU and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley spent time this summer learning more about public health informatics during the GET PHIT Summer Bootcamp held at TAMIU.

Some 50 students from TAMIU and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley spent time learning about public health informatics during the “GET PHIT Summer Bootcamp.”

Known as the Gaining Equity in Training for Public Health Informatics and Technology (GET PHIT), the two-week camp took place in July at TAMIU.

The GET PHIT Summer Bootcamp focused on understanding how data collection for public health research, the characteristics of typical datasets utilized for public health informatics, commonly used sources of secondary data in public health, and standards and technologies used for data analysis.

Students also prepared a conference-style poster and a 10-minute presentation delivered to peers and local community health leaders.

Top-performing students qualified for paid internships with various health agencies, including the City of

Laredo Health Department, Gateway Community Health, Mercy Ministries, PILLAR, and SCAN.

This summer's winning group for the data-driven presentation were Samira García, Alejandro Luna, Jr., Patricia Martínez, Samantha Molina, and Lisa Rodríguez.

The Summer Bootcamp featured the support of **Dr. Cindy L. Salazar-Collier**, TAMIU assistant professor of Public Health; **Dr. Susan Fenton** of UTHealth-Houston; **Dr. Virginia Berndt**, TAMIU assistant professor of Sociology, and **Dr. John Kilburn**, TAMIU associate vice president for Research and Sponsored Projects and professor of Sociology.

The GET PHIT Consortium aims to train 1,400 students predominantly from underrepresented groups and 500 public health, clinic, and academic professionals while placing 400 students in internships.

Additional information on the Summer Bootcamp is available at <https://www.uth.edu/get-phit/>

PROFILES IN RESEARCH VIDEO SERIES FEATURES UNIVERSITY FACULTY EFFORTS

This Fall, TAMIU launched a dynamic, compelling video series highlighting the research efforts of University faculty members.

Dubbed “Profiles in Research,” each video includes a brief interview with a University faculty member who discusses their current research endeavors. The ongoing video series has released two episodes thus far.



Dr. Cindy Lynn Salazar-Collier

The first segment features **Dr. Cindy Lynn Salazar-Collier**, assistant professor of Public Health in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and can be seen at <https://go.tamtu.edu/profiles-collier>. During the video, Collier discusses her experience with data informatics, her work as a social epidemiologist, and the prevention and management of disease prevention.

“Research opportunities are important to TAMIU students, not only to improve their career trajectory and to increase the odds of getting them a good job, but it’s also instrumental and monumental to the field of public health,” said Dr. Salazar-Collier.

The second segment features **Dr. Arthur D. Soto-Vásquez**, assistant professor of Communication in the College of Arts and Sciences and is available at <https://go.tamtu.edu/profiles-sotovasquez>.

Throughout the video, Soto-Vásquez discusses his research as a communication scholar, particularly emphasizing social media, political disinformation, and health communication.

“When students sometimes hear ‘research,’ they get a little scared, or maybe they have a nervous experience thinking about research papers they had to write in college, but research in Communication is really what you want to make of it,” said Dr. Soto-Vásquez.

To view additional video content, visit our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/txamtu



Dr. Arthur D. Soto-Vásquez

TAMIU NAMES FACULTY, COMMUNITY RECIPIENTS AT AWARD CONVOCATION

TAMIU provost and vice president for Academic Affairs, **Dr. Tom Mitchell** presented 2022 Awards to University faculty.



President

Dr. Pablo Arenaz presented the Senator Judith Zaffrini Leadership Medal Award, the Innovator Award, and the University’s annual State of the University.

Receiving the University’s Instructional Technology Excellence Award was **Dr. Cynthia Piña** of the College of Education.

The Outstanding Teacher Award was presented to **Dr. Lina De la Garza** of the A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business.

The Distinguished Scholar Award was received by **Dr. Yong Chen** of the Sanchez School of Business.

The Distinguished Teacher Award was presented to **Dr. Marvin Bennett** of the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Engineering.

The University’s Innovator Award was created in 2019 to recognize an individual or organization making a lasting impact on education in Laredo and the South Texas region.

This year’s Awardee was **Frank Staggs**, a longtime champion of education, students, and teachers. A retired educator, businessman, and rancher, he is most proud of his and late wife Julieta Farias Staggs’s “favorite place,” The Julieta and Frank Staggs Academy of International and STEM Studies, an innovative, University-level high school located on the TAMIU campus.

The Senator Judith Zaffrini Award for Scholarship and Leadership was presented to **Dr. Peter Haruna** of the College of Arts & Sciences faculty, and director of the Masters of Public Administration program.

Dr. Haruna’s scholarship and leadership are legendary and his impact on his adopted hometown has been significant.

TAMIU STUDENTS

TAMIU OFFERS FIRST-EVER 'THE HUMAN LIBRARY'



What if the “book” you checked out of your library lived and breathed? What if it spoke to you and shared its story? This surreal scenario may sound like science fiction, but at TAMIU, it was very real...and very human.

It was all part of University College’s first-ever presentation this Spring of “The Human Library” in the Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library’s Great Room. The innovative event was a first for Laredo and made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Texas.

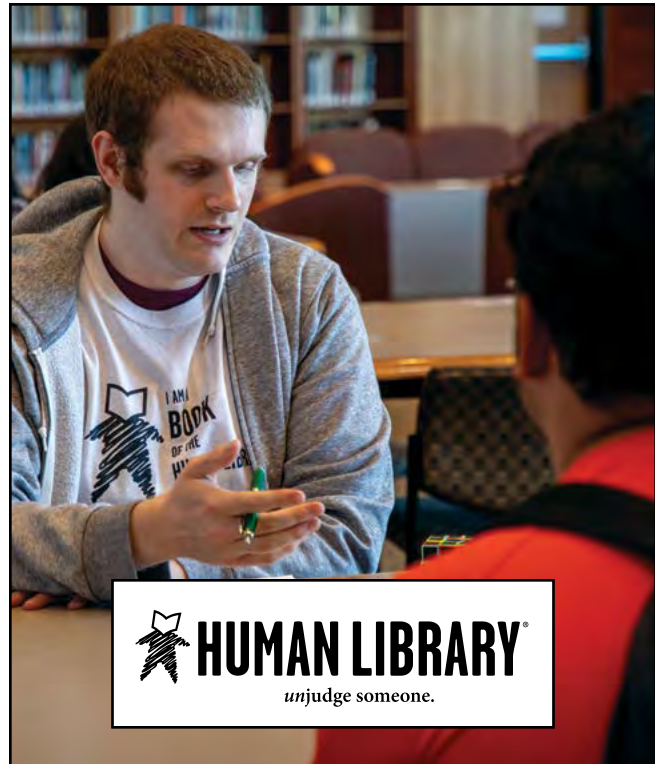
Founded in Copenhagen, Denmark in 2000, The Human Library® is an international not-for-profit learning platform dedicated to hosting personal conversations to challenge stigma and stereotypes. It uses a library analogy that lends people instead of books -- and encourages all to ‘unjudge someone.’

Organizer **Dr. Hayley Kazen**, TAMIU University College assistant professional, said Human Books represent marginalized communities, providing first-hand awareness and insight challenging prejudice and stereotype.

“Students identified and trained individuals to represent a broad spectrum of the human experience. Visitors, or readers, came to The Human Library to select a Human Book and engage in a timed one-on-one conversation,” Dr. Kazen explained, “represented were addiction, disabilities, ethnicity, family relations, gender/sexuality, health, ideology, lifestyle, occupation, religion, and social status.”

Kazen said the experience filled all with great optimism, especially given the current world climate.

“We live in challenging times where prejudice and stereotypes lead many to unfairly judge a book by its cover. Our shared hope is that we can all be ‘open books’ for such experiences,” she concluded.



DANCERS HELP SIGNAL TAMIU'S RETURN TO PERFORMANCE SPACE

The artistry, energy, innovation and sheer physicality of dance took to the stage this year at TAMIU, with student, faculty and guest performances that dazzled audiences of all ages.

The gift of this artistry helped signal TAMIU's return to the performance space. Guest performers often provided Master classes and student workshops.

Among highlights from the College of Arts and Sciences, department of Fine and Performing Arts were:

In February, **Tim Rubel** Human Shakes and TAMIU Dance students presented "The Culture of Love/ La Cultura del Amor." Detailed storytelling, expertly crafted choreography and spoken text/dance performances creatively examined equity levels between LGBTQ+ communities in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Laredo/Nuevo Laredo border. The performances reflected research by Rubel, TAMIU assistant professor of Dance, with community members in San Francisco and the border region.

In March, Ballet Nepantla, a New York City-based affiliate of the Edinburg Dance Theatre, explored the strength and resilience of women during revolutionary México with its production, "Valentina." Ballet Nepantla tells stories of struggles and triumph while exploring the spaces between love and hate, hope and despair.

In April, the renowned Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) marked its third return to TAMIU with its bold

and acclaimed creative blend of modern jazz and African spiritual dance. Founded in 1976, DBDT is the oldest continuously operating professional dance company in



Dallas. Dancers performed a mixed repertory of modern, jazz, ethnic and spiritual works by nationally and internationally-known choreographers.

In October, Ballet Nepantla returned to TAMIU with a celebration and commemoration of ancestral heritage and Día de Muertos with *Mística*. The new work paid homage to Afro and Hispanic roots as it transported audience members into the afterlife.

For more on TAMIU Fine and Performing Arts, visit www.tamiau.edu/coas/. An Events Hotline at 956.326.3044 also provides recorded updates.

TAMIU STUDENTS

TAMIU COLLEGIATE GAMERS PARTICIPATE IN LIVESTREAM AT TRAUTMANN ELEMENTARY

TAMIU esports athletes met this Fall with students at United Independent School District's Trautmann Elementary School through a live-streamed video session where they discussed their experiences as collegiate gamers.

Members of the University's esports team also discussed the importance of reading and writing skills and how those skills can translate to potential college admission opportunities... and perhaps even a future as a collegiate esports gamer.

University students attending the livestream included Valorant esports coach **Joseph Caminita**, League of Legends esports coach **Celeste Herrera**, Rocket League esports coach **Ethan García**, and Call of Duty esports coach **Eric Rodríguez**.

University students were also able to chat with elementary school students about their experiences as collegiate gamers.

Offered through the University's Rec Sports, the esports program currently competes through the National Association of Collegiate Esports, which is the primary organization for college esports and includes 120 member institutions across the country. The University's esports teams have competed under several gaming titles, including Apex, Call of Duty, FIFA, League of Legends, Minecraft, Mortal Kombat, Rocket League and more.

The University's esports team is also active on Twitch. View past streams by visiting <https://www.twitch.tv/tamiuesports>.

Learn more about TAMIU esports by visiting <https://go.tamiu.edu/esports>

TAMIU is also home to Laredo's only NCAA Division Sports program with Dustdevils competing in 11 men's and women's sports.

From left to right: Ivan Cano, TAMIU assistant director, Rec Sports, joins Esport Athletes Celeste Herrera, Joseph Caminita, Cristobal Cardenas, and Ethan García.





TAFE STUDENTS SCORE AT NATIONAL COMPETITION

TAMIU TAFE team members who participated in the 2022 Educators Rising Conference included, left to right: Elda Guzmán, Jossette Aali Flores, Katherine Aleman, Haziel Mota, Vanessa Lynn Almaraz (Co-Advisor), Raquel Giselle Rodríguez, Crystal Beltrán, Daisy Fuentes, Reyhitza Marquez and Amy Lee Campos.

There were no lazy, hazy days of summer for a group of TAMIU College of Education students who instead advanced to a national competition, emerging as victors in four competition categories.

Members of TAMIU's Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) traveled to Washington, D.C. to compete in the 2022 Educators Rising Conference. They headed to the national competition after their success at the Texas TAFE State Competition in March, upon winning the Annual Area One TAFE Conference in December 2021.

Educators Rising National Competitions are performance-based competitive events where aspiring educators demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and leadership in education. The competitions are rooted in the Educators Rising Standards and closely align with the Educators Rising Academy Curriculum.

Of TAMIU TAFE's 50 members, 10 attended the Conference, placing in all categories entered. They were

accompanied by **Vanessa Almaraz**, TAMIU TAFE co-advisor. **Dr. Seth Sampson**, College of Education assistant professor of School Counseling, is the advisor.

Categories, prizes awarded and student winners are as follows:

Researching Learning Challenges, First Place: **Katherine Aleman**, **Amy Lee Campos**, and **Raquel Giselle Rodríguez**.

Project Visualize Service, First Place: **Haziel Mota** and **Crystal Beltrán**.

Children's Literature K-3 and Higher Education: **Jossette Aali Flores** and **Karina Leal**, First Place; **Reyhitza Marquez** and **Daisy Fuentes**, Second Place.

Educators Rising Moment: **Amy Lee Campos**, First Place; **Raquel Giselle Rodríguez**, Third Place.

With their victories in Washington, D.C., the students are already preparing for next year's conference and competition scheduled in Orlando, FL.

UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

A YEAR THAT PREVIEWS BRIGHT FUTURE FOR DUSTDEVILS ATHLETICS



In the 2021-22 TAMIU athletics season, the programs gave the University, students, and Dustdevils nation fans a glimpse into the bright future of the programs.

Beginning in the Fall, Men's Soccer compiled a record of 6-10-1, and brought home four All-Lone Star Conference Awards, as well as **Kristian Colaci's** being named to the D2CCA's First Team in the South-Central Region.

Women's Soccer saw a record of 3-14-1, but earned an All-LSC selection and an Academic All-Conference Award.

Cross Country Women's saw **Beverlyne Kipchumba** earn All-Conference Honors as the women placed third as a team



in the LSC Championship, while on the men's side, the team placed fifth. The women also earned a USTFCCCA All-Academic Team Award.

In the Winter, Basketball took the stage and on the men's side, TAMIU finished with a record of 13-14 overall and 5-11 in the LSC, winning the most games in a season since 2016-17. The men had the best start in program history last season, opening 6-0 and earned a South-Central Region ranking for multiple weeks. Also, two players, **Greg Bowie II** and **La-Quiem Walker**, earned All-LSC honors.

On the women's side, TAMIU also had a program best start of 6-0, while earning its way to the postseason. The Dustdevils finished the year 18-11 overall and 8-8 in the LSC, while earning the program's first postseason victory since joining NCAA Division II -- and set a program best 13-2 record at home. **Rai Brown** earned First Team All-LSC honors, while two others, **Evelyn Quiroz** and **Clara Fernández**, earned All-LSC nods.

In the Spring, softball battled through injuries to come just one game shy of making the Conference tournament, while baseball had one of its best seasons in nearly a decade, also coming just one game away from earning a spot in the LSC Tournament.

Golfer **Mauricio Figueroa** made program and Conference history as he won the LSC Individual Championship at the LSC Championships, shooting a Conference record -16 over three rounds. On the women's side, the team went on to finish fourth in the LSC Championship, third in the NCAA Division II West Regional and earned a spot in the NCAA Division II National Championship Tournament.

Academically, 77 student-athletes earned LSC Commissioner's Honor Roll recognition in the Fall, a number that jumped to 89 student-athletes on the LSC Spring Commissioner's Honor Roll list. **Learn more about Dustdevil Athletics at <https://godustdevils.com> and follow @TAMIUAthletics on social.**



UNIVERSITY OUTREACH

'DISCOVER TAMIU' HELPS FORGE CAMPUS RETURN, RESET

As TAMIU carefully began its return to a full on-campus experience this year, one of its signature events, Discover TAMIU 2022, helped forge that cautious return.

The eighth offering of the free, family-friendly event celebrated the excitement and discovery the University makes possible daily. Student clubs, faculty and staff worked together to present a fun day of exploration. Hundreds of attendees accepted the invitation, bringing friends and family to enjoy a day full of fun, educational activities.

As before, Discover TAMIU followed five distinct Pathways that attendees of all ages could enjoy. Through the Artistic Avenue Pathway, participants explored activities dedicated to art, dance and music. Within the Spirited Speedway Pathway, individuals could learn about campus life and Dustdevil traditions.

Traveling the International U Pathway, families shared in the humanities, culture and social sciences. The Business Boulevard Pathway focused on the role of business in the world. The final Pathway, 'Scientific Journey,' encouraged participants to learn more about the impact of science and STEM.

Event activities offered something for everyone. Highlights included free showings at the Lamar Bruni Vergara Planetarium, activities on fire safety, the ever-popular Make Your Own Piggy Bank craft activity, a D.I.Y. lava lamp, and much more.

Music and dance sequences were shared by the TAMIU Ballet Folkórico, TAMIU Spirit Cheer and Dance, with music including a Percussion, a Brass concert, a Single Reed Ensemble concerts, and more.

The Ninth Annual Discover TAMIU will return to campus this April, 2023.



TAMIU DELIVERS 13TH ANNUAL 'THE BIG EVENT'



Over 450 TAMIU students, faculty, staff, and alumni rolled-up their sleeves for The Big Event, the University's annual service event that took place this past March.

Now in its 13th year, The Big Event combined efforts of volunteers working together to provide community service.

Continuing the impactful work completed during the University's Fall 2021 "Make A Difference Day" volunteer event, this year's The Big Event returned to the Las Palmas Trail Park and the Tres Laredos Park. Volunteers focused on gathering palm fronds and clean-up efforts at the Trail. In the Park, they handled trash pickup and repainting fixtures.

University president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** applauded the volunteer efforts of the TAMIU community.

"Our hats are off to the 453 students, faculty, staff, and alumni who participated in our annual community service event. It was exciting to help kick off the event and see so many TAMIU students and community members participate," Arenaz said.

The Big Event is organized through the Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement, in partnership with the Student Government Association. Community partners included the City of Laredo, Councilmember Alyssa Cigarroa, Keep Laredo Beautiful, and the Rio Grande International Study Center.

The Big Event initially began at Texas A&M

University in College Station in 1982. Embraced in 2009 by the TAMIU community, The Big Event is one of the University's largest service initiatives. The University's other service event, "Make A Difference Day," occurs in the Fall.



A video highlighting The Big Event '22 is at <https://go.tamiau.edu/thebigevent-video22>

UNIVERSITY OUTREACH

PARTNERSHIP TAMIU: AN ALLIANCE FOR GOOD AFFIRMS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This year, nine local community-serving agencies signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) affirming their commitment to Partnership TAMIU: An Alliance for Good.

Signing community agencies included Altus Hospice, Catholic Charities Diocese of Laredo, Casa de Misericordia, Diocese of Laredo, Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas, Laredo Main Street, Mercy Ministries of Laredo, Next Gen America and Voz de Niños.

Signature partners sign three-year MOAs with TAMIU for exclusive collaborative efforts. The agreements establish service opportunities that assist the agencies while enhancing student learning.

These established partnerships affirm the University's commitment to serving and improving its local community, and distinguish the TAMIU student experience, noted **Mayra Hernández**, TAMIU Student Conduct and Community Engagement director.

"The greatest gift we can give others is our time. Through community engagement, we share valuable time with each other while strengthening the quality of life in our community. Our mission is to develop

life-long advocates and stewards to continue the mission of going beyond and truly making a difference in our community," said Hernández.

Launched in Fall 2014, Partnership TAMIU: An Alliance for Good is a nomination-based community engagement agreement enhancing existing relationships between TAMIU and external agencies.

These efforts help community partners meet their mission and goals, promote the exchange of resources between the University and community agencies, and affirm a commitment to social responsibility by addressing issues of public concern.



A total of nine local agencies signed MOA's with TAMIU as part of Partnership TAMIU: Alliance for Good. Pictured in the photo are TAMIU representatives and agency leaders.

TAMIU CPM PROGRAM HELPING ADVANCE CITY OF LAREDO



TAMIU President Dr. Pablo Arenaz (far left), and Dr. Peter Haruna, back, right, TAMIU MPA Program director, join the inaugural class of the 2022 CPM Program.

The continued enhancement of public servants' skills and knowledge for a dynamically growing community is being addressed with TAMIU's delivery of a new Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program.

The first CPM cohort is composed of 15 City of Laredo department directors and is tightly focused on areas of municipal management and administration.

The CPM program is a nationally-accredited program offered by TAMIU's Master of Public Administration Program through the Office of Continuing Education. It's the culmination of years of collaboration between Texas State University (TSU), TAMIU, and the City of Laredo, said **Dr. Peter Haruna**, TAMIU MPA program director.

"The CPM program opens doors to practitioners who desire skill and knowledge enhancement without seeking a full-scale graduate degree," Dr. Haruna explained, "The first cohort will graduate in January 2023. This is a win-win for all of our stakeholders: City of Laredo, TAMIU,

Texas State University, and the entire CPM program community."

The program's seven tracks cover personnel administration, communication, productivity and program evaluation, managing for quality, budgeting and finance, information technology, and a capstone practicum. Program delivery is based mainly on case study analysis and reflections on municipal best practices.

Programs like this advance TAMIU's Strategic Plan by promoting strategic partnerships with the immediate community and other institutions, and also by cost-effectively facilitating skill and knowledge sharing, Haruna noted.

"Our special gratitude goes to core CPM program faculty from TAMIU and TSU, who have willingly agreed to participate and deliver the CPM courses," Haruna said.

DR. CARLOS RAMOS GOMEZ-REJÓN ('04)



Carlos has been selected for the 2022 Brookings LEGIS Congressional Fellowship. A Laredo native, he earned his Bachelors of Arts with a Major in Biology from TAMU. Carlos also holds a law degree from The University of Texas School of Law, and a doctorate in public health from The University of Texas School of Public Health. During his Congressional Fellowship, he is working in the U.S. Senate supporting the development of federal health laws. After the Fellowship, he will return to The MITRE Corporation as a Health Policy Analyst to provide thought leadership to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services agencies. He also teaches graduate public health courses with the New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

VIRGILIO BARRERA ('11)



Virgilio is the current Director of Government Public Affairs at Holcim US. He oversees federal and state legislative and regulatory issues for Holcim US, the world's largest building material

manufacturer. He also helps lead the company's response to public affairs issues and media oversight inquiries. He earned his Bachelors of Arts in Political Science from TAMU in 2011 and has worked for nearly 15 years on all aspects of legislative and regulatory processes.

DR. RAÚL RAMOS ('14)



Raúl is a Neuroscientist studying how psychedelics impact touch perception at the cellular level at Brandeis University. His dissertation research focused on understanding how different forms of synaptic plastic cooperates with the brain to govern memory formation. He received his BA in Psychology from TAMU and his Ph.D. from Brandeis University. This year, he visited TAMU, making a point to engage with TAMU students, a Biology Seminar class, and with student members of TAMU's Tri-Beta Biological Honor Society and American Medical Student Association to talk about careers in science.

DR. VANESSA GARZA CLARK ('04, '11)



Dr. Vanessa Garza Clark is currently the chair of Our Lady of the Lake University's Computer Information Systems and Security department. She has worked in the industry for many years and has vast experience working for CPA firms. She teaches various courses, including Database, Systems Analysis & Design, Accounting Information Systems, and Analytics. Of TAMU Clark says, "TAMU was a time of personal and professional growth for me. The work, research, and experience I gained at TAMU prepared me to have a fulfilling career in academia."

ANGEL G. RAMOS ('11)



Laredo Independent School District has appointed Angel Ramos the new principal at the Vidal M. Treviño School of Communications and Fine Arts. With 21 years of educational experience, Ramos has previously served the District as an Assistant Principal for J.W. Nixon High School. Angel earned his

Master of Science in Education Administration from TAMIU in 2011. Of TAMIU, he says, "The professors at TAMIU were supportive in all aspects and they not only sympathized, but also empathized because they themselves had real field knowledge in their content area. TAMIU provided the resources to ensure that all administration students would prove to be successful in the future."

SERGIO PÉREZ ('14)



Sergio Pérez has been featured in qsr magazine.com as one of their 35 young leaders to watch. As Bojangles' senior director of omnichannel, Sergio has constructed a digital experience that gives customers multiple ways to engage and order through a device. In 2021, he and his team rolled out

a new mobile app and website to support order ahead pickup functions. Sergio earned his Bachelor of Arts in Communications from TAMIU. Of his time at TAMIU, he recalls, "TAMIU was a transformational experience. From going to Dusty Camp to walking across the stage in a cap and gown, the University gave me lifelong lessons, learnings, and friendships that enabled me to become a marketing executive in corporate America...It became an opportunity to chase the American Dream."

AARON SALAZAR ('03)

Laredo's United Independent School District (UISD) has recently named Interim Chief of Police Aaron Salazar to Chief of Police. During his 29 years as a UISD employee, he has been part of the UISD Police Department for 24 years, holding positions including police officer, gang investigator, lieutenant and captain

of field operations. Aaron earned his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology from



TAMIU. He also holds a Master Peace Officer License through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement and is a TCOLE certified instructor in various areas including Patrol Rifle, Firearms, O.C. Spray and Crisis Intervention Training.

DAVID CANALES ('89, '94)



David R. Canales has been named as the new Associate Superintendent of Human Resources for United Independent School District. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education and a Master of Science in Education with a Mid-Management Certificate from TAMIU, in addition to a Master

of Education from Texas A&M University. "I truly appreciate the opportunity the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees have given me, and I look forward to working with the community and employees of the District," Canales said.

DIANA SAYAVEDRA ('98)



Diana Sayavedra is the first permanent woman and Latina superintendent of El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) in its more than 140-year history. Sayavedra started her teaching career 30 years ago in Laredo, where she grew up. She has served in different leadership roles in education

throughout the state, including a stint as interim superintendent of Fort Bend ISD. Sayavedra received a Bachelor of Arts in English and Physical Science from The University of Texas at Austin, and a Master of Science in Education Administration from TAMIU.

TAMIU ALUMNI

TAMIU ALUMNA HEADS TO SUPREME COURT



The nation's highest court welcomed a TAMIU alumna this summer. **Alejandra Ávila** ('11) was selected for a prestigious judicial law clerk post for Justice Sonia Sotomayor.

Ávila ('11) is the first TAMIU graduate to clerk on the nation's highest court and, as

many TAMIU students, the first in her family to pursue post-secondary education in the United States. A John B. Alexander High School distinguished graduate, she earned a full academic scholarship as a President's Scholar in TAMIU's Honors Program.

She graduated *summa cum laude* as a Distinguished Student Scholar, receiving her undergraduate degree in Business Administration from the A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business. She earned her law degree from The University of Texas School of Law.

While at TAMIU she studied abroad in China and France, was a member of the Dustdevil Women's Soccer Team, and was active in student organizations and volunteer activities, including Student Government, and the Harvard World Model United Nations.

TAMIU president **Dr. Pablo Arenaz** lauded Ávila's historic accomplishment.

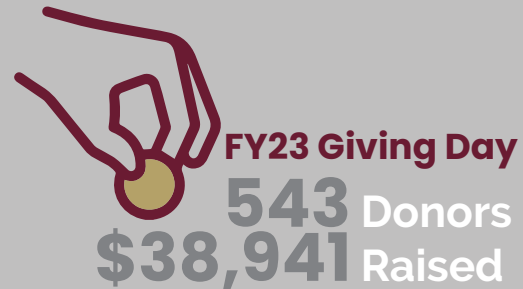
"Alejandra had stunning academic and distinguished leadership and service experiences here at TAMIU, and challenged herself to truly 'Go Beyond.' We take enormous pride in her accomplishments and commend her commitment, visionary excellence, and persistence. Alejandra provides all students here, in our community, our region, our State, and beyond with a clear role model that 'sí, se puede,' " Dr. Arenaz said.

Ávila is the oldest daughter of Jorge and Silvia Ávila of Laredo.

GIVING DAY

Giving Day, TAMIU's annual fundraising campaign, harnessed the power of student philanthropy and its local and global alumni community to support student-centered initiatives. Through real-time, online challenges, donors amplified their gift-giving and became Giving Day advocates.

This year's largest donation recipient was the University's Student Nursing Association, which earned the support of 275 donors. Giving Day took place Tuesday, November 15 - Wednesday, November 16, 2022.



TAMIU ALUMNA STUDIES AT CORNELL FOR MPH



Mariana López, a TAMIU May 2022 Public Health honors graduate, feels she's found her calling. TAMIU helped her explore new directions in Public Health, setting a new path for her...including moving on to a graduate program in Public Health at Cornell University.

An informative email from TAMIU's College of Nursing and Health Sciences helped a student and now TAMIU alum chart a new academic and career path.

Mariana López ('22) knew she wanted to study at TAMIU and envisioned a Kinesiology major, medical school and becoming a neurosurgeon.

"I got this email about a new program in Public Health. I did some research and found out that Public Health is very broad. You could choose from infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases, mental health, communicable diseases, and more. You would be helping millions of people...which could be very rewarding. The next day I called my advisor about changing my degree to Public Health," she recalled.

Now a Public Health honors graduate, this Fall she began a Master's degree in Public Health with a concentration in Infectious Disease Epidemiology at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY.

She credits her TAMIU preparation and praised the outstanding faculty support she received.

"Dr. Cindy Salazar-Collier was outstanding...responding to our sometimes very late emails or many emails in a single day. She always wanted to help her students -- even with those courses she didn't teach," she observed.

Dr. Salazar-Collier, TAMIU assistant professor of Public Health, said she's sure López will Go Beyond.

"Mariana was a pleasure to have in my class. She is highly motivated and dedicated to her studies. She was extraordinarily committed to performing at a high standard in her coursework, and I am so excited to see the professional she will become in the field of public health," Salazar-Collier said.

ANNUAL GIVING 2021-22

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 Frank Vida
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 Margarita '72 and Jose A. Villarreal '73
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 Wholesome Builds
 Brianna J. Ybanez

* Denotes deceased

A PENNY IS FOR MORE THAN THOUGHTS

This year, TAMIU students are proud to have raised over \$4,137 through the annual Penny Wars Campaign to benefit Dusty's Food Pantry, an on-campus answer to student food insecurity.

Food insecurity is often considered an invisible epidemic on college campuses, with research noting a staggering 30 percent of all college students experience food insecurity during their college experience.

The A. R. Sanchez, Jr. School of Business was the winner of this year's Penny Wars Campaign.

Penny Wars is an innovative fundraiser first established in 2015 by the Student Philanthropy Council, which since its inception has created and built a \$50K scholarship endowment.

Penny Wars encourages students to donate spare change in support of a specific campus area or program in a friendly competition between TAMIU Colleges and Schools.

Since its launch, Penny Wars has raised over \$18,000 for scholarships and programs...and that's how pennies are for much more than thoughts!



FACULTY AND STAFF GIVING 2021-22

President's Circle (\$25,000 +)

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Enrique E. Botello '12

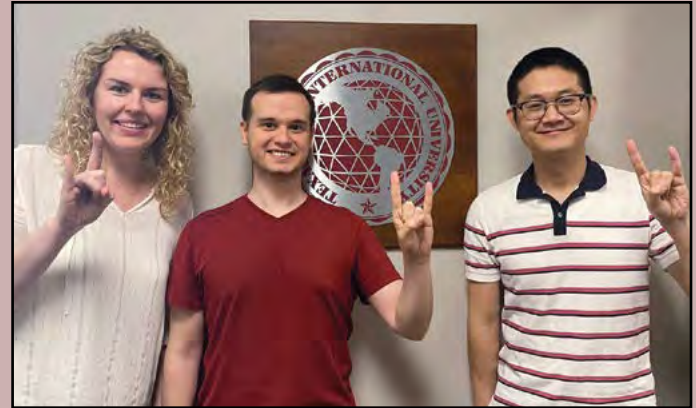
TAMIU student **Daniel Tovar, Jr.**, a senior Mathematics major and Creative Writing minor, recently earned the top award in a statewide writing competition. Tovar's nonfiction piece, "The End?" was the winning entry in the Texas Association of Creative Writing Teachers' undergraduate nonfiction category. The piece, told through a third-person perspective, is an opportunity for Tovar to express himself, he emphasized. "I really enjoy being able to use the genre to express a part of my more vulnerable self. You could do that with every form of the genre, but it's with nonfiction where you're really putting readers into your shoes and allowing them to see almost every part of you," Tovar explained.



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 Yezmin D. Salazar
 Naiely M. Saldana '08, '13
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 Robert P. Yeatts
 Dr. Anwen Yin
 Georgina Zamudio '09
 Dr. Yan Zhao

**Denotes deceased*



In April 2022, TAMIU Ph.D. program graduates returned to attend the 26th Annual Western Hemispheric Trade Conference at TAMIU. From left to right: **Drs. Doreen Hanke**, McNeese State University; **Albi Alikaj**, Jacksonville State University; and **Wei Ning**, Jacksonville State University.



Family members joined to celebrate the creation of the **Virginia Ramón Becerra and Florentino Cantú Vargas** Endowed Scholarship. Left to right are **Julio C. Cantú**, retired Martin High School educator; **Geraldina Arredondo**, director of the Dennis D. Cantú Early College High School; **Dr. Norma E. Cantú**, Norine R. and T. Frank Murchison Distinguished Professor of the Humanities at Trinity University; **Dr. Elsa C. Ruiz**, mathematics educator, University of Texas-San Antonio and **Dr. Pablo Arenaz**, TAMIU president.

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(\$50,000 +)

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Doris* and Isaac Epstein
Excelencia in Education
Farm Credit Bank of Texas
Ford Motor Company
Yolanda* and Albert E.* Friedman
The Honorable Anna Galo and The Honorable John Galo
Emilia Rodriguez Garcia *
Alfonso Gomez-Rejon
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Javier A. Zapata *

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Candy and Conrado M. Hein, Jr. '78
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 Dr. Jana Pisani and Dr. Michael Pisani
 Lupita Ramirez and the VSAL Genealogical Society
 Raj K. and Raj P. Seekri
 Jo Emma P. and Edward L. Sherfey, Jr.
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 Summerlee Foundation
 The Honorable Aldo Tatangelo* and Alice Tatangelo*
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 Trellis Company
 VOS-MITA
 Winn Exploration Company
 Josephine* and Fernando* Zuniga, Jr. and Family
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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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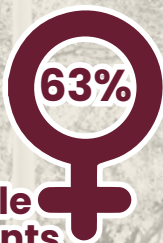
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BY THE NUMBERS

8,434



Students
Enrolled
This Fall



63%

Female
students



37%

Male
students



Youngest
student
13 Years Old



Oldest
student
77 Years
Old



Average student age:
Undergraduate 21
Graduate 33
Doctoral 39

TOP 3 Undergraduate majors:

- Nursing
- Biology
- Criminal Justice

TOP 3 Graduate majors:

- Business Administration
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Criminal Justice



68%

Students
identify as
First-Generation




18 Countries
Represented In
Fall 2022 Graduation



69,914
Student
Community
Service Hours
= \$1,533,695



242 Full-time
Faculty
Members



OVER 80
Texas High Schools
Represented in
Freshman class



1,624
Fall
Classes
Offered



\$73,311,599
Money Awarded
in Financial Aid

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