



RENU KHATOR • CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

UH System Board of Regents Meeting • May 2017

University of Houston System Achievements

Congratulations, 2017 Graduates!

A total of 15,613 degrees have been awarded by the four UH System universities:

- 8,690 from the University of Houston (5,193 at spring commencement)
- 2,748 from UH-Clear Lake (1,371 spring commencement)
- 3,177 from UH-Downtown (1,406 spring commencement)
- 998 from UH-Victoria (460 spring commencement)

By way of comparison, in 2008 we awarded a total of 11,702 degrees.

University of Houston Achievements

Small Business Boot Camp in Third Ward

To meet our goal of creating 25 new area businesses during the next five years, the Bauer College of Business SURE™ (Stimulating Urban Renewal through Entrepreneurship) program, founded by **Saleha Khumawala**, Robert Grinaker Professor of Accounting graduated 112 new entrepreneurs in April – 32 from Third Ward – received certificates from Mayor **Sylvester Turner**, Regent **Paula Mendoza**, and former Board chair **Beth Robertson**.

U.S. News Rankings Reflect Continuing Success

- The UH Law Center's Healthcare Law and Intellectual Property Law programs are No. 3 and No. 8, respectively, in the country. This marks the tenth consecutive year these programs have been ranked in the top 10 among the nation's law schools.
- UHLC's Part-time Law program continued as No. 6 for the second year in a row. This program has placed in the top 20 every year since this category began in 2009.
- In addition, the Cullen College of Engineering's Chemical Engineering, which was ranked No. 38, has been in the top 40 for the past decade. And the Petroleum Engineering program has risen to No. 12 in the country.

Two Major Grants to Faculty

- **Ezemenari Obasi**, associate professor and associate dean of research in the College of Education, and **Dan O'Connor**, professor and chair of the Department of Health and Human Performance, have received a three-year, \$2 million United Health Foundation grant to jumpstart a long-term, sustainable effort for preventing and treating obesity, type 2 diabetes and, eventually, other ailments faced by people in underserved communities.
- The BRAIN Center (Building Reliable Advances and Innovation in Neurotechnology), launched a \$1.5 million grant from the National Science Foundation, led by researchers from UH and Arizona State University to speed technologies to market. **Jose Luis Contreras-Vidal**, professor of electrical and computer engineering, will represent UH in the project, which includes several hospital systems.

National Student Recognition

- **Zachary Turpin**, a UH Department of English doctoral candidate, landed a prestigious national fellowship with the Library of Congress after discovering a Walt Whitman novel lost for 165 years. Turpin has also been offered a position as an associate professor in American Literature at the University of Idaho.
- **Khanh 'Kate' Nguyen**, a second-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Mathematics, was awarded a competitive National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. This fellowship, which is open to graduate students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines, is highly selective, with more than 13,000 applications received for 2,000 awards
- UH's Geoscience Student Team won the Imperial Barrel Award World Championship, beating 190 other student teams in the process. Team members included **Eric Lunn**, the team captain and a Ph.D. student in geology, **Walter Reed**, an M.S. student in geophysics, **Delaney Robinson**, a Ph.D. student in geology, **Leiser Silva**, an M.S. student in geology and **Andrew Steier**, an M.S. student in geology.

Big Wins for Cougar Teams

These past few months have seen exciting developments in UH athletics, among them:

- The Men's Track and Field program became the American Athletic Conference Outdoor Champion for the second-consecutive season. The team also claimed its third consecutive American Conference Indoor Championship in February.
- Head Swimming and Diving Coach **Ryan Wochomurka** led his student-athletes to the American Athletic Conference championship – the first conference win in the program's 42-year history. As an added bonus, he was selected AAC 2017 Coach of the Year.
- **Michael Perras**, captured the 2017 American Athletic Conference Championships individual golf title in April. With his impressive performance, Perras became the first player in Houston history to win an NCAA regional title and a conference tournament championship.

UH-Clear Lake Achievements

Software Engineering Grad Program Ranked Number 4 in the Nation

UHCL's online Software Engineering graduate degree program has been ranked number 4 in the nation by BestColleges.com. UHCL is one of only two Texas universities listed in the Top 10 ranking. UHCL's Master of Science in Software Engineering program was one of the first software engineering programs founded in the United States, and the university has been awarding degrees in the subject for more than 20 years.

Council Renews Accreditation of UHCL's Social Work Program

The national association that holds social work education to the highest possible standards has reaccredited UHCL's Social Work program for another eight-year cycle. This is the third time that the Council on Social Work Education has affirmed UHCL's Bachelor of Social Work degree program.

UHCL Stocks Library for Habitat for Reading Project

UHCL's Habitat for Reading Project created a library of children's books in the newest Habitat for Humanity home in Pasadena. Habitat for Reading is a UHCL initiative to build home libraries for the children of families receiving Habitat for Humanity houses. The initiative was begun in 2016 by **Sheila Baker**, College of Education assistant professor of Literacy, Language and Library Science. In addition, UHCL students develop books with supporting activities and videos of students modeling read-aloud strategies that promote parent and child reading time.

UH-Downtown Achievements

Record Fundraising Gift Sets Pace at UHD

UHD is enjoying a historic fundraising year. Houstonian **Marilyn Davies** provided the university with its largest gift to date – \$10 million – to name the Marilyn Davies College of Business. And recently, the Greater Texas Foundation awarded UHD a \$1.44 million grant supporting the scholarship and retention programs for students entering the university from Texas Early College High Schools.

UHD Focusing on Community Issues

UHD faculty and students are engaged in projects addressing a number of community issues. Criminal justice professor **Rebecca Pfeffer** is collaborating with the Houston Police Department on a research project focused on human trafficking in the city. Her colleague **Judith Harris** also has been active in our city. Her students are currently assisting former prison inmates as they reenter society and the workforce.

Three Notable Honors to UHD

Members of UHD's alumni, faculty and student body have been recognized with prestigious honors and awards recently. Alumnus **Ali Rizvi**, who earned a bachelor's in marketing at UHD, recently received a Pulitzer Prize in journalism for his work with McClatchy. Rizvi participated in an investigative story on a tax scandal involving politicians and dictators. **Trevor Hale**, associate professor in the Marilyn Davies College of Business, was awarded his fifth Office of Naval Research Senior Faculty Fellowship. And student **Eisha Khan** earned the prestigious Newman Civic Fellowship from Campus Compact and praised as one of 273 problem solvers in the nation.

UH-Victoria Achievements

UHV Receives Federal Grant to Renovate Town Plaza Mall

The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Association awarded a \$1 million matching grant to UHV for the renovation of a portion of the former Town Plaza Mall in Victoria. UHV is about to acquire part of the property to house university offices, labs and space for community development initiatives. The grant will be used to renovate the portion of the building that will house community and business development activities. It will be the new home for the UHV Regional Center for Economic Development and Entrepreneurship, which provides a regional hub for small business resources and promotes community engagement and partnerships throughout the area.

Groundbreaking Launches Work on University Commons Building

About 150 community and UHV leaders attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the university's new University Commons, a building that will combine UHV's first student center with a 21st century library. Construction on the three story, 75,000-square-foot building is slated for completion in summer 2018. A food court, coffee bar, Barnes & Noble bookstore, study spaces, video game area and multi-purpose room for up to 250 people will be located on the first floor. The second floor will house UHV Student Life & Services, student organization offices and a learning commons, or modern library. The third floor will have library books, meeting rooms and a deck with outdoor seating.

Second Year of International Festival Features Public Participation

The UHV International Festival attracted more than 300 students, faculty, staff and community members for an evening featuring food, cultural displays, dances, a flag parade and a fashion show. This was the festival's second year, and the first time the free event was open to the public. The event was organized by the UHV International Programs Office and sponsored by the Victoria Northside Rotary Club and UHV Student Life & Services.