



## **RENU KHATOR • CHANCELLOR'S REPORT**

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UH System Board of Regents Meeting • November 2017

## University of Houston System Achievements

### Search Committee for UH-Victoria President Announced

The UH System has announced the members of a search committee charged with finding the next president of the University of Houston-Victoria, with a goal of having a new president on campus for the fall 2018 semester. The committee will be chaired by Regent **Roger Welder** and **Dona Cornell**, UH System vice chancellor for legal affairs and general counsel. President **Vic Morgan** announced his retirement and departure from UHV this spring after taking the reins as interim president in 2014. Morgan served on a year-to-year contract, extended three times during his tenure, and will remain in office until fall 2018. The committee includes representatives from the UHV student body, faculty and staff, as well as the Victoria community.

### Fundraising Campaign Is a Remarkable Grassroots Effort

The system-wide “Here, We Go” \$1 billion campaign, which was launched in January, stands at \$784,183,433. At the time of the launching, the campaign had \$684 million in hand, and has raised over \$100 million since then. We have been fortunate to receive many large gifts, but at its core, the campaign has been a remarkable grassroots effort. So far, 163,182 donors have made gifts, with over 84% (137,423) giving amounts under \$1,000. Each and every gift is precious, as it is a vote of confidence in the direction and potential of the four UH System universities.

### More than 500 Works Included in UH System Public Art Tours

In an effort to showcase the UH System public art collection, which includes more than 500 works by local, regional, national and international artists, regularly scheduled tours of the collection started in October. The one-hour tours, guided by artists, professors and curators, are free and open to the public. Those interested may RSVP online at [eventbrite.com/e/uh-public-art-tour-tickets-38551589843/](https://eventbrite.com/e/uh-public-art-tour-tickets-38551589843/). A schedule may be found on the UH System Public Art webpage at [uh.edu/uh-collection/news-events/](http://uh.edu/uh-collection/news-events/). Upcoming tours are set for Dec. 1, Jan. 5, Feb. 2 and Mar. 2 at UH, and Apr. 6 and May 4 at UH-Downtown.

## University of Houston Achievements

### Faculty and Staff Contribute to “Here, We Go” Campaign

Under the leadership of Drs. **Tina Reyes** and **Michael Olivas**, faculty and staff have pledged \$1,741,361 million toward the UH portion of the system-wide “Here, We Go” fundraising campaign’s goal of \$1 billion by 2020, reflecting a 32.2% participation rate among UH employees.

### National Academy Members at Forefront of Research

Two members of the National Academy of Engineering who joined UH just last year are already making their mark on campus.

- **Andrea Prosperetti**, Distinguished Professor of Mechanical Engineering, will lead a new Institute for Data Science that will initially focus on four areas of applied research – cyber and physical security,

drug development and discovery, sustainable communities and infrastructure, and accessible and personalized healthcare.

- **Ganesh Thakur**, Distinguished Professor of Petroleum Engineering, will direct a team of researchers in a \$1.4 million partnership with Oil India Limited to study the feasibility of using carbon dioxide captured from petrochemical plants to boost oil recovery in a field in the Indian state of Assam.

In related news, **S. M. Farouq Ali**, a member of the National Academy of Engineering, has joined UH, bringing the number of National Academy members on campus to 19. Ali earned a Ph.D. in petroleum and natural gas engineering from Penn State, and comes to us from the University of Calgary.

### UH and Two Colleges Are Repeat Award Winners

The University of Houston, the College of Nursing and the UH Law Center have been honored with the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award for the second year in a row. The HEED awards, presented by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, are the only national honor recognizing U.S. colleges and universities that demonstrate an outstanding commitment to diversity and inclusion.

### Major Research Awards Received Recently

Several UH researchers received large research awards during the past few weeks. They are:

- **Jack M. Fletcher** and **David J. Francis**, both of whom hold the title of Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished University Chair in the Department of Psychology, have received an \$8.5 million grant from the National Institutes of Health for the continuation of research at the Texas Center for Learning Disabilities.
- **Michael Harold**, chairman of the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, has received \$2.1 million from the U.S. Department of Energy to find new catalytic materials that will allow automakers to build vehicles that operate more efficiently while retaining the ability to produce cleaner emissions.
- **Richard Willson**, Huffington-Woestemeyer Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, has received a \$1.4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, to develop and home test kit for kidney nephritis in patients who have systemic lupus erythematosus. The test will use a smartphone to take photos of the sample test and a custom smartphone app to read the results.

### What Is New in H-Town from the Department of Athletics?

Good news keeps coming out of the Department of Athletics this semester. Just to name a few success stories:

- The privately funded \$20 million Football Indoor Practice Facility was completed.
- Football became bowl-eligible for the fifth consecutive year, a streak that is second only in the American Athletic Conference to Navy's six-year streak.
- The department attained an NCAA Graduate Success Rate of 69 percent, marking a 6 percent improvement over the last three years. The Tennis program led the way with a 100 percent graduation rate.

## Hospitality Students Creating New Restaurant Concepts

Students from the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management ran a series of pop-up, or temporary, restaurants called Pop-Up Barron's this semester for the college's capstone class project. They served up creative cuisine at location near the college. Teams of students created menus, set budgets, and developed marketing programs. Profits went back to the college, while the real-world experience gained by the students will last a lifetime. Pop-up restaurants are a cost-effective way for young hospitality professionals to display their culinary skills while courting investors and attention before opening a brick and mortar restaurant or other concept.

## UH-Clear Lake Achievements

### UHCL Advances in Rankings Among Regional Universities

UHCL advanced 11 places in U.S. News & World Report's 2018 Best Colleges rankings, tying with two other institutions for 63rd among 659 colleges and universities on the Best Regional Universities in the West list. UHCL debuted in the 2016 listings at 81st, which marked the university's first full year as a four-year university. UHCL also tied for 16th place in Top Public Schools, tied for 33rd in Best Colleges for Veterans, ranked 49th in Best Value Schools, and tied for 147th in Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs. In national rankings of more than 1,200 online programs surveyed by the publication, UHCL tied for 75th among 141 schools in Best Online Graduate Business Programs (Excluding MBA) and tied for 109th among 255 schools in Best Online MBA programs.

### Microbiologist Continues Research into Post-Harvey Effects

A UHCL microbiologist is studying the ecological damage caused by Hurricane Harvey thanks to "rapid response" funding from the National Science Foundation. Assistant Professor of Microbiology **Michael LaMontagne** received nearly \$24,000 to investigate the health risk associated with floodwaters. Before, during and after the storm, LaMontagne and students collected samples from six locations in the Clear Lake watershed. The grant will allow them to determine the microbial communities in floodwaters and also evaluate heavy metals, salinity, dissolved oxygen and nutrients in the waterways to gauge the recovery of Clear Lake to pre-storm conditions.

### University Supporters Assist Students after Storm

Returning to class and work after Harvey proved difficult to many UHCL students, faculty and staff, so UHCL supporters sprang into action providing close to \$50,000 in the form of funds, gift cards, loans and more to provide assistance. After the creation of a Hawk Emergency Fund, 167 donors contributed to it bringing the total, when added to university funding, in excess of \$36,000. Since its creation, 55 students have received more than \$27,000. In addition, an Emergency Loan program distributed in excess of \$9,400 to 14 students. Barnes & Noble provided \$50 gift cards totaling \$2,200. To date, 22 students benefited from the cards with more requests still being received. During a "Hawks Helping Hawks" event, student organizations collected canned goods, clothing and school supplies from the university community.

## UH-Downtown Achievements

### “Invest in Blue” Event Launches Fundraising Campaign

UHD recently hosted “Invest in Blue,” a week of events dedicated to the institution’s successes and vision for the future. Featured events included UHD President **Juan Sánchez Muñoz**’s first Report to the Community, the unveiling of new signage for the Marilyn Davies College of Business, and the announcement of the UHD “Here, We Go” \$25 million capital campaign. Special guests included Mayor **Sylvester Turner**, former UHD Interim **President Michael A. Olivas** and UHD benefactor **Marilyn Davies**.

### UHD Signs MOU to Collaborate with Universities in Mexico

The university hosted a collaboration signing ceremony with The Honorable **Héctor Escobar Salazar**, Secretary of Education for Tamaulipas, Mexico, and UHD President **Juan Sánchez Muñoz**. This Memorandum of Understanding will explore educational and cultural opportunities, and facilitate the development of activities, programs and partnerships of mutual academic and cultural benefit between UHD and public/private universities in the state of Tamaulipas.

### Student Research Helps City in Harvey Aftermath; Discovers New Species in Honduras

Students from the College of Sciences and Technology have undertaken new research opportunities, helping the city in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey and discovering a new species of mammals from Honduras.

- Led by **Poonam Gulati** and **Maria Gabriella Bowden**, both associate professors of microbiology, UHD students assisted with a research initiative to help the City of Houston Health Department with an analysis of city waterways following Harvey. Their efforts will continue as students replicate the city’s sampling procedures with duplicate samples gathered for further research in UHD’s laboratories.
- More than 90 students played a large role in discovering two new species of shrews from Honduras, working with **Amy Baird**, assistant professor of biology, in her genetics laboratory and research lab. Sections of Baird’s lab each tested 30 DNA samples to confirm consistent results. Students gained experience in a research process which resulted in an entirely new set of questions for scientists related to evolution and biodiversity of these animals.

## UH-Victoria Achievements

### UHV Makes Progress on Ben Wilson Street Project

UHV is moving ahead on a project to make Ben Wilson Street in front of the university safer for students to cross after the Victoria City Council voted unanimously in favor of it. UHV officials, city council members and Victoria City Manager **Charmelle Garrett** worked for nearly two years on the project. The end result will be a more attractive entryway to the campus, allowing students to safely cross Ben Wilson to get to a new student center and library under construction. Other buildings planned at that location are Smith Hall, a new residence hall, and other facilities. In appreciation of their support of UHV and the community, council members and Garrett were presented with UHV’s Community Partnership Award at the President’s Annual Report and Excellence Awards event.

### Men's Soccer Captures First Conference Regular Season Title

The UHV men's soccer team won its first Red River Athletic Conference regular season title and advanced to the conference championships. The Jaguars finished the regular season at 9-2-2 and 7-1-2 in conference. UHV added men's and women's soccer and men's and women's golf teams to its athletics program in 2010.

### University Launches UHV "Here, We Go" Campaign with Large Donation

UHV announced the public launch of its UHV Here, We Go fundraising campaign with the announcement of an \$839,775 lead gift from the M.G. and Lillie A. Johnson Foundation. The announcement was made during the UHV President's Annual Report & Excellence Awards event. The goal is to raise \$12 million by 2020. Also at the event, **Ke'Andre Green**, a UHV senior from Killeen double majoring in accounting and healthcare administration, was presented with the Student Leadership Award, and former Victoria Mayor **Will Armstrong** and his wife, **Linda**, were presented with the People Who Make a Difference Award.