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# Salud Y Saludos: The E-News of the College of Health Sciences

College of Health Sciences

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**College of Health Sciences**

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

# Salud y Saludos

The E-News of the College of Health Sciences

Salud y Saludos

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## In the News

[Inside UTEP's new digs El Paso Inc. gets first tour of College of Health Sciences](#)

## Calendar of events

**May 14 at 3:30pm**

CHS Pre-  
Commencement and  
Hooding Ceremony  
Magoffin Auditorium

**May 14, 2011**

[UTEP Commencement](#)

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## From the Dean's Desk



shortage professions.

As the summer semester draws closer, the College of Health Sciences is busier than ever. This is an exciting time for new beginnings. First, we have a combined total of over 70 new graduate students starting in the [Doctor of Physical Therapy](#), [Master of Occupational Therapy](#) and [Master of Social Work programs](#). These entering students begin their respective programs in cohorts in mid- May. Most of these students have worked for years to prepare for this opportunity and we welcome them with anticipation of the many great accomplishments to come as they enter their preparation for careers in these high

And this summer we are also going global in a big way! UTEP Students and faculty are also preparing to undertake international summer research experiences in four different Latin American countries. Students will travel as part of the [Minority Health International Research Training program](#) to Ecuador, Costa Rica and Chile for research experiences with international mentors during June, July and August. The twelve program participants were selected from a competitive pool of over 40 applicants for this unique program, which features an intensive research training course and a 6 to 10-week paid summer research experience in global health research. The students must be fluent in Spanish and represent a number of UTEP academic programs, including social work, clinical laboratory sciences, public health, nursing, psychology, microbiology, chemistry, and other biomedical and behavioral sciences. UTEP faculty members Dr. Meg Weigel, Dr. Rodrigo Armijos, Dr. Oralia Loza, Dr. Maria Duarte ([Department of Public Health Sciences](#)) and Dr. Eva Moya ([Department of Social Work](#)) will serve as faculty in the program, providing student mentorship and assisting Assistant Dean for Community and International Programs, Letty Paez, and international mentors with site development and UTEP liaisons for research project development. Program Assistant Melissa Parker handles the travel arrangements and countless details to get these students ready for their international adventure. For many of these students, this is their first international trip. The Minority Health and Health Disparities International Research Training (MHIRT) program is funded by a grant from the National Center on Minority Health & Health Disparities (NCMHD), a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

And that's not all! In early August, a team of graduate students in the rehabilitation sciences will travel to Antigua, Guatemala with faculty members Dr. Celia Pechak ([Physical Therapy](#)), Dr. Eugenia Gonzalez ([Occupational Therapy](#)) and Dr. Connie Summers ([Speech Language Pathology](#)) and Assistant Dean, Letty Paez, in a unique week-long Global Health service learning course. The UTEP team members will assist children with disabilities who live in a residential care facility with adaptations that will enhance their mobility and function. While in Guatemala, the team will also advance developing partnerships with several universities that offer academic programs

April 2011

in the rehabilitation professions in Guatemala.

Wherever your travels take you this summer, please be safe and look for someone in a UTEP shirt! You just might find us there.

## 2011 Honors Convocation

### Ana Matos Wins UTEP Distinguished Achievement Award



At the [University Honors Convocation](#), Ms. Ana V. Matos was awarded the Distinguished Achievement Award for Service to Students. Ms. Matos is the Technology Implementation Manager for the College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing. Because of the breadth of the ten professional disciplines that are included in these academic units, a wide array of technology and software is used. Ms. Matos is skillfully able to employ the technologies used for research and learning in health professions education. Ms. Matos also represents the College of Health Sciences and the School of Nursing in campus-wide technology strategies and projects. She is the first point of contact for all

computer, printer and telephone related issues. She provides support for all the multimedia classrooms in the CHS building.

She leads a staff of information technology (IT) professionals who manage college systems, solve IT problems, install and update equipment, troubleshoot, and prepare elaborate documents and materials for our teaching and research. She also oversees the [Independent Learning Center](#) - a multipurpose classroom, training facility and computer center that serves as the hub of learning for the College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing. She has kept us well ahead of the curve in utilizing the internet and online services and programs such as *mSpace*, *Wiki*, *Blackboard* and *Elluminate*.

Ms. Matos has been employed at UTEP for 13 years. She began as Administrative Secretary for the Family Nurse Practitioner Program and with continued investment of her time and energy earned the Bachelor of Science in Management/Computer Information Systems. Throughout her service at UTEP, she has exemplified the highest standard in customer service for students, faculty and staff. She not only meets client IT needs, she anticipates their future needs and offers workshops and consultation on upcoming programs, technologies and utilities.

Ms. Matos achieved a key leadership role in the College of Health Sciences and School of Nursing when she was named Technology Implementation Manager. Although she supervises a staff of computer experts, she herself is also available to meet with students and faculty on an individual basis. During the roll out of new software or platforms like *Digital Measures*, Ms. Matos has supported system users with extensive training and technical support services. She regularly helps college leadership on long term planning for technology and played a key role in ensuring that the new College of Health Sciences/ School Nursing Building will be state of the art in information technology. She has made herself available to solve IT issues on evenings and weekends for people working on deadlines.

Ana is a great member of the UTEP Family. As a manager, colleague, and employee, she reflects the best of UTEP.

## Community Update

### [UTEP Social Work Expands Focus to Native Americans](#)

By Laura L. Acosta

Bernadette Dominguez is the first social work student from The University of Texas at El Paso to participate in a new internship that will help her become

culturally sensitive to the daily challenges that face Native Americans.

Dominguez will complete her nine-month assignment with the Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso in May.

She has shadowed the tribe's three social workers, goes on home visits and transports clients. Along the way, she has become acquainted with the tribe's laws and with the community that she said has made her feel at home.

"UTEP's social work program focuses on the (U.S.-Mexico) border, but with the Tiguas it gives (students) a different opportunity to focus on the tribe because a lot of people are not familiar with it and its culture," said Dominguez, who expects to receive her bachelor's degree in social work this spring. "It's growing pretty rapidly and I think that all social workers who plan to stay (in El Paso) should know about the Native American culture."

This past February, [Mark Lusk, Ed.D.](#), professor and chair of UTEP's [Department of Social Work](#), and Ysleta del Sur Gov. Frank Paiz formally signed an agreement that will provide internship opportunities to students in the College of Health Sciences' Department of Social Work. Four students from the University's social work programs will gain valuable experience by working with the Tigua's social services division where they will provide assistance to the Tigua community.

"Within the Hispanic population (in El Paso), there's a great deal of variety," said Lusk. "A key population is the Tigua nation, which represents a distinctly different population than we find in other parts of the (U.S.-Mexico) border. As a result we're giving students a chance to work with a population that they've never worked with before."

The Tigua tribe is a U.S. federally recognized Native American tribe and sovereign nation. As such, the tribe is responsible for its own affairs without interference from the government. The tribe's social workers address the critical needs that affect tribal members by working with families on Indian Child Welfare cases, the elderly, troubled youth, drug addiction, barriers to education and economic development and the Tigua tribal court. Social workers also deal with cultural and spiritual issues that go beyond the law, said Chris Gomez, pueblo councilman and Empowerment Department director.

"In order for our social workers to be able to advocate for our population, our needs and our services, it's important for them to know what the tribe is about and the unique challenges facing our people," Gomez said.

Rosario E. Olivera, deputy director of the pueblo's Health and Human Services, said that UTEP students have the opportunity to intern in several areas. They can work on policy and procedure development and program creation or they can intern in the different areas of social services that include child, adult and elder welfare. Students also can work with youth and adults in substance abuse programs or with the Tribal court.

"Normally when you have a placement, you focus on one area of social work but because we are in one community, (the interns) are able to tap into all these different areas at the same time," Olivera said. "So for someone who is not sure which pathway they want to go, this is a good opportunity not only to work with the native population but to experience different areas of social work."

Virginia Perez, a tribal member who has been working as one of the tribe's social workers for three years thinks the experience has provided Dominguez, the UTEP student, with a good opportunity to understand the tribe's people, culture and needs.

"Even though we are all here in El Paso, we are still on the reservation. So she's been able to see the differences with us and the outside communities. It's a good learning opportunity that will benefit the tribe and the student."



## Research Activities



**Dr. Paula Ford**, Assistant Professor in the [Department of Public Health Sciences](#), received funding from NIH-NHLBI for **\$448,500** to conduct her research entitled: "*Geographic and Multilevel Influences of Neighborhood and School Environments on the Development of Obesity Among Schoolchildren in a Border Community.*" The overall aim of her study is to examine geographic and multilevel influences of neighborhood and school environments on the development of obesity among 24,000 primarily Hispanic (80%), low-income school children (ages 6-9) in El Paso, TX. The results obtained from this study will provide important insight on the modifiable factors within the neighborhood and school

environment that contribute to obesity risk and development and will be used to develop project proposals for multilevel interventions that address childhood obesity, particularly among Hispanic children within a border community context.

## Student Profiles



The manuscript entitled "Neighborhood deprivation, neighborhood acculturation and the retail food environment in a US-Mexico border urban area" by **T.M. Anchondo** and **P.B. Ford** has been accepted for publication by the [Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition](#). The goal of the research was to examine the influence of neighborhood deprivation and acculturation on food environments in a US-Mexico border urban area.

The results we obtained in this study suggest that while neighborhood deprivation is a critical determinant for supermarket availability, the level of neighborhood acculturation is a more influential determinant for grocery store and specialty store availability. This finding has important implications because store availability likely influences dietary acculturation paths among recent immigrants.

## Program Highlights

***April is National Occupational Therapy Month!***

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY HELPS INDIVIDUALS  
LIVE LIFE TO ITS FULLEST**

Occupational therapy enables people of all ages live life to its fullest by helping them promote health, prevent or live better with injury, illness, or disability. It is a practice deeply rooted in science and is evidence-based, meaning that the plan designed for each individual is supported by data, experience, and "best practices" that have been developed and proven over time.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants focus on "doing" whatever occupations or activities are meaningful to the individual. It is occupational therapy's purpose to get beyond problems to the solutions that assure living life to its fullest. These solutions may be adaptations for how to do a task, changes to the surroundings, or helping individuals to alter their own behaviors.

When working with an occupational therapy practitioner, strategies and modifications are customized for each individual to resolve problems, improve function, and support everyday living activities. The goal is to maximize potential. Through these therapeutic approaches, occupational therapy helps individuals design their lives, develop needed skills, adjust their environments (e.g., home, school, or work) and build health-promoting habits and routines that will allow them to thrive.

By taking the full picture into account—a person's psychological, physical, emotional, and social makeup as well as their environment—occupational therapy assists clients to do the following:

- Achieve goals
- Function at the highest possible level
- Concentrate on what matters most to them
- Maintain or rebuild their independence
- Participate in daily activities that they need or want to do.

**Founded in 1917, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA)** represents the interests and concerns of more than 140,000 occupational therapists, assistants and students nationwide. The Association educates the public and advances the profession of occupational therapy by providing resources, setting standards including accreditations and serving as an advocate to improve health care. Based in Bethesda, Md., AOTA's major programs and activities are directed toward promoting the professional development of its members and assuring consumer access to quality services so patients can maximize their individual potential. For more information, go to [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org).

The [UTEP Occupational Therapy](#) program is 13 years old. It enrolled its first class as a cooperative program with the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in 1991. Transfer of administrative control of the program transferred from UTMB to UTEP in 1997. The program moved from a bachelor's level program to an entry-level master's level program in 2005. UTEP currently offers the Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) program, which can be completed in about 2 ½ years. The program typically graduates 12-18 students a year. UTEP MOT graduates typically secure employment in hospitals, outpatient rehabilitation clinics, skilled nursing facilities, public schools, early intervention agencies, pediatric clinics, and mental health hospitals, clinics and agencies. OT was recently ranked as one of the "150 Best Recession-Proof Jobs" (JIST, 2008) and was named to [U.S. News & World Report's "Best 50 Careers in 2011" list](#). The Bureau of Labor Standards estimated the median annual income for occupational therapists to be \$70,680 a year in 2009.

The [UTEP Master of Occupational Therapy](#) program recently underwent a very successful site visit for re-accreditation with reviewers from the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). After careful review of the program's self-study, on-site materials, and interviews with administrators, faculty and students in the program, ACOTE awarded the program with continued accreditation for a period of no less than 7 years!

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#### [NATIONAL MEDICAL LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS WEEK](#)

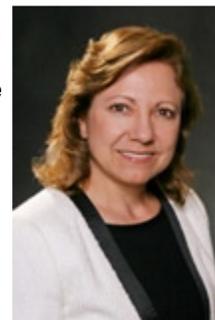
Class of 2012 students and [CLS faculty](#) met at the El Paso County Court House to present a proclamation for recognition and approval to this body. Dr. Torres, Program Director requested that medical services provided by El Paso Medical Laboratory Professionals be acknowledged in recognition of National

Medical Laboratory Professionals national celebration. She informed Commissioners and the public that Clinical Laboratory Scientists are qualified to perform analytical tests to help doctors in the prevention, monitoring, diagnosis and treatment of disease. Dr. Torres also stated that these professionals save countless lives each day thru quality medical testing and exceptional patient care. The Honorable Judge Veronica Escobar and Commissioners present proclaimed National Medical Laboratory Professionals Week in El Paso from the during April 24-30, 2011.



## Faculty Corner

[Dr. Maria Duarte-Gardea](#), Professor and Department Chair for the [Department of Public Health Sciences](#) at the College of Health Sciences has been reappointed by Governor Rick Perry and confirmed by The Texas Senate to serve at the Texas Diabetes Council. The council addresses problems concerning individuals who suffer from diabetes and supports initiatives that are presented to the Texas Legislature on legislation that needs to be passed in order to improve and maintain a system that provides quality diabetes education to individuals with diabetes and to ensure that the professionals who are treating them are also up to date on diabetes treatment and patient education. The council includes a licensed physician, registered nurse, registered and licensed dietitian, a person with experience in public health policy, three consumer members, and four members from the general public; five state agencies are represented in the Council. Dr. Duarte-Gardea has held the dietitian position at the Council and has been participating in its quarterly meetings since 2006, she strongly supports initiatives that are presented at Texas Legislature on policy changes needed to develop and maintain a statewide system of quality education services for people with diabetes and health care professionals who offer diabetes treatment and education.



Congratulations to Drs. [Dorgo](#), Robinson, and Bader on their 2009 article published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (JAANP)*. According to the publisher's data, this was the 2nd most cited article in *JAANP* from 2009 in the year 2010. Citations accrue for 2 years towards the journal impact factor, so this article will continue to be counted through 2011. We separate the counts by publication year because the older articles have a longer time to accrue citations. Review articles are usually the most highly cited, which was the case for us last year, but your research article on a peer-mentored older adult fitness program is up there at number two.

## Community Affairs Committee

by Margie E. Padilla, PharmD



The CHS Community Affairs Committee had their first meeting with identified key members from the community on April 14, 2011. New committee members included: Janet Aguilar, Immediate Past Chair of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Vice President of Wellsfargo Insurance Company; Adina Evans, Speech-Language Pathologist with YISD and UTEP alumni; Joe Gomez, 2006 UTEP Gold Nugget Honoree (Liberal Arts); Jane V. Jones, Advocacy Coordinator with VOLAR Center for Independent Living; Michael Kelly, Senior Program Officer with the Paso del Norte Health Foundation; Melissa Martinez, Senior Editor with the El Paso Times; Marissa Monroy, Reporter with KVIA- ABC 7 and Alberto Lopez, Assistant VP for Institutional Advancement at UTEP. This collaboration with the identified community members was in efforts to build community linkages, create visibility and awareness of the health sciences, and reconnect with UTEP CHS Alumni. New members expressed their excitement in working and establishing a relationship with the College of Health Sciences and UTEP. Their ideas and thoughts aligned with the mission and charges of this committee. We look forward in working with our new members and establishing growing relationships. This committee worked all year in establishing this new relationship with the community. We commend all our members for a job well done. We are thankful for your time and commitment in advancing the mission of CHS.

## Alumni News & Leadership

### USA Cycling announces the hiring of new BMX coach

[USA Cycling](#) is pleased to announce the hiring of Performance Driven, led by James Herrera, to lead all elite and U23 BMX training camps as well as international team events under BMX Program Director Mike King.



Herrera, who embarks on his second stint with USA Cycling's BMX program, will utilize the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Calif., making use of the campus Supercross BMX track. In 2006, he joined USA Cycling's BMX program as a coaching consultant to help prepare cyclists for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, when the team earned a silver and two bronze medals.

"I am absolutely thrilled to take on this role for our national team," Herrera said. "I've been involved with the program since 2006, but am looking forward to taking things to the next level, and building upon the strong foundation and success the team displayed at the Beijing games. I strongly believe my education, experience, and existing connection with our athletes will greatly add to our goal of maintaining US dominance in the sport of BMX."

Herrera is the owner of Performance Driven, which offers coaching to professional and amateur athletes, specifically cyclists of all levels. He also offers fitness advice, team building and leadership training as a consultant, lead trainer and adjunct faculty member at the Center for Creative Leadership.

"Performance Driven and James will be a strong addition to our BMX program. James' impressive background in exercise physiology and psychology was a key factor as well as his numerous certifications in sports nutrition and strength

conditioning," King said. "James will play a key role in helping develop our soon to be launched BMX coaching program and he will also oversee our private coaches during training camps held at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista."

Herrera received a Bachelor's degree in psychology and Master's degrees in exercise physiology and psychology in 2000 from [the University of Texas-El Paso](#).

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