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There are many ways to measure a university's success. One of them is enrollment.

In fall 2006, the University of Texas at El Paso registered its largest fall enrollment ever – 19,842 students. That's just one of the significant milestones we've achieved. Here are some other numbers that show UTEP's remarkable progress in the past year.

- 5 consecutive years of record-breaking fall enrollment
- 14 doctoral degrees offered at UTEP, including the chemistry Ph.D. as approved by the Higher Education Coordinating Board in November 2006
- 200,000 sparkling lights displayed on campus during the annual Season of Lights, Dec. 3 – Jan. 6
- 590 entering freshmen taking advantage of the UTEP Promise, a new financial plan that covers tuition and fees for students with family incomes of $25,000 or less
- 106 entering students participating in the Guaranteed Tuition Plan, locking in tuition costs for four years
- $41.6 million in financial aid awarded to students in the fall 2006 semester
- 60% of all students received loans, grants, scholarships or other kinds of financial aid in fall 2006
- #4 UTEP's rank among all Texas public universities in total federal research spending
- 40 or more UTEP graduates work at NASA, including astronaut John "Danny" Olivas, who's scheduled for a space shuttle mission in spring 2007
- #1 UTEP's rank in the nation for its graduate engineering program for Hispanics by Hispanic Business magazine
- 1,600 candidates for degrees in winter 2006 commencement
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The perfect pair of athletic shoes can make you feel like you’re walking on air. But the wrong pair can hurt more than your feet.

Two UTEP kinesiology professors are researching how different athletic shoes absorb shock to one’s body – from the toes to the head – when walking or running.

Professors Veni Kong and Darla Smith and student researchers are collaborating with El Paso-based athletic shoe company Spira to develop ways to help consumers, especially athletes, find the shoe that’ll last longest and best reduce the wear and tear on their bodies.

“We will also look at how the wrong pair of shoes can influence the way you walk or run,” says Kong. “Our long-term goal is to develop a simple scientific method that will find the right shoes for an individual.”

The researchers are also evaluating the cushion durability of Spira shoes compared to other brands. Spira provided about 100 pairs of shoes for the two studies and is funding the salaries of two student research assistants.
The research at UTEP’s Stanley E. Fulton Biomechanics and Motor Behavior Laboratory is among several projects designed to develop ways to prevent sports-related injuries. Built in 2002, the laboratory allows researchers to study the mechanics of bodies and the forces exerted by muscles and gravity on the skeleton.

“I’ve gotten so much experience, and I’ve been able to learn a lot about biomechanics,” says kinesiology graduate student Norma Candelaria, who hopes to pursue a career in exercise science.

For the first study, participants spent a couple of hours walking and running barefoot over a force plate. They walked and ran over the plate while wearing three different types of Spira shoes: one designed for stability, another for extra cushioning, and the last for light weight. The plate measured the force acting on the foot as it hit the ground.

Some 30 marble-size reflective markers were placed on key points of the participants’ bodies, including their knees, elbows, toes, hips and heads. As they walked past the force plate, a motion analysis system known as VICON produced a three-dimensional computer simulation of their movement. The force exerted on the force plate and the reaction force exerted on the body were collected and programmed into a database, which can then predict how a body will react with different shoes.

“Eventually the data (might) allow an individual to walk into a store, do a quick test, and find the perfect shoe for them,” Kong says.

Unlike traditional shoes, which have midsoles made primarily of foam, rubber or polymer, Spira shoes have springs in the heel and forefoot. The technology, known as WaveSpring, returns up to 96 percent of the energy exerted by each step, Spira officials say.

The results, which will be published in early 2007, may impact the future of shoe design.

“We are looking at how the degradation of shoes influences the running pattern and the force acting on the body,” says Kong. “The results may have some implication for shoe design and making guidelines on how long a pair of shoes can last.”

For more information about UTEP’s Stanley E. Fulton Biomechanics and Motor Behavior Laboratory, visit http://research.utep.edu/uhprc and click on “The Lab.”
The 2005-06 year at UTEP was eventful, fast-paced, productive—even glorious! However, the most apt characterization of the past year may be teamwork. Time after time, the UTEP team was called upon to step up to new challenges, and time and again, we showed that more than 4,000 staff and faculty members and nearly 20,000 students can come together as one.

UTEP’s very special teamwork was evident when “Glory Road,” the feature film about our NCAA basketball championship in 1966, was released by Disney Studios. As soon as we learned of the anticipated date of “Glory Road’s” release, the UTEP team mobilized, ideas crystallized, plans developed, and the fun began.

We hosted a special screening of the film in late November 2005, with the 1966 team members and the actors who portrayed them in attendance. We had a Hollywood premiere party and our very own walk down the red–er, orange–carpet. We celebrated the unveiling of the 1966 team’s special Wheaties box. UTEP fans from across the El Paso community joined us for a giant pep rally in Memorial Gym, the site of the 1966 team’s home games. Our new friends from Hollywood joined all of us and the 1966 players for the festivities. Then we moved outside to Baltimore Street, which we renamed Glory Road.

**Changing the face of higher education**

The movie offered us huge national visibility, and a rare opportunity to communicate UTEP’s message to audiences that we would never otherwise have been able to reach. Our first priority was to ensure that everyone who saw “Glory Road” understood that the Texas Western College depicted in the movie is today the University of Texas at El Paso.

Second, we wanted to communicate our pride in being the institution that successfully changed the face of college athletics in 1966 by starting five black players for the first time in the history of the NCAA championship game.

And, finally, we wanted to proclaim proudly that today, UTEP is changing the face of higher education by creating opportunities for Hispanics who have been underrepresented on U.S. university campuses. Thanks to “Glory Road” and our success in leveraging the opportunities it offered, UTEP’s presence on the national radar screen has definitely grown larger.

UTEP’s success in achieving its important mission to help change the face of U.S. higher education is both an exciting opportunity for recognition and a major leadership responsibility. There are few U.S. universities that are as well-positioned to demonstrate that the goals of access and excellence, which many in higher education have viewed as incompatible, can be achieved simultaneously and successfully.

During the past year, this UTEP commitment to access and excellence was once again subjected to external review in conjunction with our re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

The first step in the SACS re-accreditation...
process was to complete a self-study report to assess institutional compliance with 80 standards. A second major requirement for SACS accreditation was the development of the Quality Enhancement Plan. UTEP saw this as an opportunity to continue developing our vertically integrated strategy to enhance student success. Building on our preK-16 partnerships, first-year experience and student engagement programs, we turned our attention toward the quality and efficiency of students’ experience between the end of their first year of UTEP enrollment and degree completion, or what we now refer to as the “middle years.”

**Success in the middle years**

All of us recognize that the undergraduate experience for most students at UTEP and other public universities in urban settings is very different from that on more affluent and traditional college campuses with which we may be compared. Although national rankings continue to ignore such differences, UTEP has received considerable acclaim for our pioneering work in tackling the cutting-edge issues in U.S. higher education.

With our new Student Success in the Middle Years initiative, we are taking on another major state and national challenge: the low degree completion and extended time-to-degree rates of students on campuses like UTEP.

Our data reveal that many UTEP students succeed eventually, but they often spend a very long time achieving their graduation goals. The challenge for us is to understand better those factors that accelerate progress toward degree completion and those that impede it. Everyone worked together, worked hard, and achieved a highly positive immediate outcome: the SACS Visiting Committee responded enthusiastically to UTEP’s Student Success plan, referring to it as “ambitious” and “exciting.”

Similar teamwork occurs every day across the campus.

Everyday teamwork at UTEP derives from the clear vision and mission to which we have all made a commitment. We are here to serve as a resource to this region, creating educational opportunities for those who come to us with their dreams and aspirations, and fostering their success. Recently, we have adopted “validation” as an underlying theme of our Student Success initiative.

We understand that for first-generation students such as those served by UTEP, engagement is an important but not sufficient condition for success. These students’ success also appears to be heavily contingent on our individual and collective validation of them and their potential to succeed.

**Access and excellence**

Student success starts with access, and recognizing that more than 80 percent of UTEP’s students reside in El Paso County, the university has worked closely with colleagues at El Paso Community College and in school districts in the region to raise the level of their educational aspirations and their academic preparation.

Access also involves understanding and accommodating the needs of students whose educational aspirations are often accompanied by personal and employment obligations that shape how—and how quickly—they can achieve them. Many UTEP faculty and staff members strive to identify those special needs and respond creatively to them.

One such program that was launched during the past year is the bachelor’s degree in multidisciplinary studies. This more flexible degree program attracts students who seek a more general undergraduate experience, and it is especially appealing to individuals who were not able to finish their bachelor’s degrees on their initial timetables. More than 300 students have already enrolled, and the first BMS degrees were awarded in August to 34 graduates, who ranged in age from 22 to 60.

**The role of research**

UTEP’s growing research agenda also plays a critical role in fostering a climate of academic excellence on the campus. We’re strengthening research infrastructure, streamlining policies and procedures, and providing greater support to faculty and staff members in both pre- and post-award
processes. Work is also underway to expand technology transfer activity and strengthen our research capacity in border security and defense systems, thereby enabling UTEP to serve as an even more valuable asset in this region’s efforts to move toward higher-end economic development.

During the past year, 223 grants were awarded to UTEP faculty and staff for a total of more than $42 million in new research funding, a 9 percent increase over the previous year. Annual research expenditures grew 8 percent with a total value of $199 million, a 44 percent increase over the previous year. No. 1 among all programs in the region’s efforts to move toward higher-end economic development.

During the past year, 223 grants were awarded to UTEP faculty and staff for a total of more than $42 million in new research funding, a 9 percent increase over the previous year. Annual research expenditures grew 8 percent with a total value of $199 million, a 44 percent increase over the previous year. And as a promising sign of continued growth in research funding, more than 400 proposals were submitted this past year with a total value of $199 million, a 44 percent increase over the year before.

National recognition for quality has come to a number of UTEP programs as well. For the second year, Hispanic Business magazine ranked UTEP’s graduate engineering program No. 1 among all programs in the U.S. for Hispanics. The Model Institution for Excellence program received both a Star Award from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and a national Excelencia in Education Award for its successful efforts to increase the number of minority students who graduate with degrees in science, technology, engineering and math.

Graduate program development continues to be a priority at UTEP. We granted 32 doctoral degrees, the largest number ever, including the first three history Ph.D.s. The Higher Education Coordinating Board recently approved our Ph.D. in chemistry program. Several new graduate programs are in the approval pipeline, including an innovative master’s degree in forensic science in collaboration with the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez, and doctoral programs in computational science and in teaching, learning and culture.

Breaking records

At the undergraduate level, UTEP granted 2,083 degrees during the past year, the largest number ever. This is very good news for the graduates themselves, whose lives will be more productive and satisfying as a result of their educational preparation. It’s also good news for the Paso del Norte region, whose economy and quality of life will benefit from the presence of an increasing number of residents with university degrees, and for Texas as UTEP contributes significantly to its “Closing the Gaps” goals.

And these graduation trends are likely to continue because of the student success initiatives that are being implemented and because UTEP enrollment also continues to grow. Total enrollment of 19,842 this fall represents an all-time high for UTEP and an increase of 3 percent over last year. Graduate enrollment exceeded 3,000 students this year; 397 of them are enrolled in doctoral programs, a 6.5 percent increase over last year.

Enrollment growth is a strong sign of progress, especially in a historically underserved region such as this.

We are particularly pleased that recent tuition increases have not adversely affected students’ decisions to pursue their educational aspirations at UTEP. As the Texas Legislature’s support for higher education has declined, all public universities have had no other option but to raise tuition to be able to continue offering quality educational opportunities to a fast-growing population. Tuition increase proposals at UTEP, where students are far less affluent than their peers on other campuses in the state, require careful deliberation and close consultation with students. A major focus was how best to ensure that students had access to and were well aware of all possible sources of financial support, and several new plans were devised to meet specific student needs.

Research highlights

- A $4 million grant from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences brings together researchers from geology, civil engineering, electrical and computer engineering, and the Center for Environmental Resource Management, as well as colleagues at the University of New Mexico Health Science Center, to study air quality and its possible links to the incidence of asthma along the border.
- Researchers affiliated with UTEP’s Center for Transportation Infrastructure Systems have received 17 awards totaling more than $1.7 million to study transportation and traffic modeling, intelligent transportation systems, binational models for mass evacuation, pavement performance and transportation infrastructure management.
- Researchers in the School of Nursing and the College of Health Sciences are studying the prevention of diabetes in obese Hispanic adolescents; ascertaining the effect of promotoras on clinical outcomes for chronic diseases; and studying the impact of nutritional supplementation on Hispanic patients.
- The Center for Inter-American and Border Studies and the Department of Sociology are collaborating on a study of oral contraceptive use on the border, and another on border identities and access to health care.

In numbers

Special events
- 500,000 patrons attended more than 800 special events at UTEP during the past year
- 287,394 fans filled the Sun Bowl to set a record attendance for season home attendance at Miner football games
- 47,899 fans on average attended home football games, ranking us first in Conference USA in the 2005 season

Enrollment and degrees
- 2,083 undergraduate degrees awarded last year – the largest number ever
- 19,842 students enrolled in fall 2006 – the fifth consecutive record fall enrollment
- 397 doctoral students enrolled this fall – a 6.5 percent increase over last fall enrollment

One team, one goal

- For the second year in a row, the Miner football team was ranked in the top 25 nationally and played in a post-season bowl game.
- The men’s basketball team posted 21 victories and made its third straight post-season tournament appearance.
- The men’s track and field team captured Conference USA indoor and outdoor titles and was ranked second in the nation during the season.
- The women’s soccer team won 20 games and, for the first time in its history, went to the NCAA Tournament and defeated UT Austin in the first-round game.
The promise ahead

Looking forward, the new academic year holds immense promise.

We expect enrollment to continue to grow in all colleges and at all levels. New degree programs, especially at the graduate level, will be authorized and implemented. Several new and newly configured facilities will be completed, including the new Bioscience Research Building, the first half of the new parking garage, and the conversion of the former academic services building into an Advising and Testing Center.

We will continue our efforts to broaden access to higher education in this historically underserved region, and continue to be one of the major contributors to the State’s “Closing the Gaps” participation goal.

We will continue to implement the valuable recommendations contained in UTEP 2014, the report of UTEP’s Centennial Commission which was released last year, and draw on them as we update our strategic planning document.

One of the most energizing activities during the coming year will be planning the expenditure of the $124 million in capital funds provided by the Legislature and UT System. After many years of resource limitations to support facilities upgrades in science and engineering, we now have the funding to undertake a complete transformation of core research and instructional laboratory facilities in the heart of the UTEP campus.

The coming year will also find us working hard to increase research productivity and funding as we continue to pursue the stretch goals included in the Washington Advisory Group Report.

In development, planning will begin for a major fund-raising campaign in conjunction with our approaching centennial celebration in 2014. We will once again turn for participation and support from our many alumni and friends in this region and elsewhere.

Finally, we are going to focus considerable attention on UTEP’s role in regional economic development. This is the next strategic step in achieving our vision of UTEP as a catalyst for raising the educational level of this entire region. We recognize that the impact of our successful efforts to raise educational aspirations and achievement in the El Paso area cannot be transformative unless we also create new opportunities for our graduates to pursue locally the careers for which we have prepared them.

We know that not all UTEP graduates want to remain in El Paso after completing their degrees and that others, including health care professionals and teachers, already have competitive career options in this region. However, many other alumni, especially in engineering and science, have far too few options to pursue their careers here. We hope to change their career horizons in El Paso by serving as an economic development asset and partner to those who are working to attract major corporations to this region.

We have lots of exciting work to do and many major opportunities before us, and we are increasingly comfortable in taking big, bold steps to achieve our ambitious goals. UTEP is a different university today than it was 20 years ago because we have not hesitated to set high expectations for ourselves – and never faltered in working as hard as we can to meet them.

Record investment

A $124 million investment, the largest construction and renovation initiative in UTEP’s history, will transform science and engineering facilities. The funds come from Tuition Revenue Bonds from the Texas Legislature to construct a new science/engineering teaching and research laboratory building, and Permanent University Fund bonds from the UT System to reconfigure and renovate the science and engineering core facilities.

Grants and Awards

- A $1.7 million grant from the National Science Foundation will help UTEP work with the El Paso school district transform the cognitive level of learning in middle school classrooms and engage student interest in science and engineering careers.
- The College of Education secured three major grants from the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number and quality of pre-college teachers in such high-demand areas as mathematics, science, bilingual and special education.
- The College of Science received one of only 50 grants awarded to leading research universities by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to build bold instructional and research programs in biosciences.
- The Health Resources and Services Administration supported an accelerated Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing.
- Computer Science secured $2 million from the National Science Foundation to increase the number of Hispanic faculty members in computer science and promote competitive education and research programs at Hispanic-serving institutions like UTEP.

Student needs

- An accelerated instructional format was developed by faculty in Criminal Justice, in a joint venture with Professional and Continuing Education, to respond to the needs of their more than 700 majors, many of whom are already employed in law enforcement and related agencies in this region.
- The Institute for Policy and Economic Development created an innovative master’s degree in Leadership Studies taught at Fort Bliss.
- The Department of Communication’s Sam Donaldson Center responded creatively to a proposed partnership with El Diario newspaper to offer its staff a customized master’s degree program in border journalism.

Construction highlights

- The 1,700-space parking garage will triple the number of vehicles to be accommodated on that site; the first phase is expected to open in spring 2007.
- The Engineering building addition came closer to completion last year, thanks to a generous gift from engineering alumnus Steve Palko.
- Progress continued on the new Bioscience Research Building, which we expect to complete later this academic year.
- The UTEP Police Department moved into its new headquarters in the Facilities Services Complex and Phase II of the Kelly Hall renovation was completed.
by Laura S. Ruelas

Elvia Botello and Vickie Grousniick were not average college students.

They juggled family, jobs and college, taking long and winding paths to graduation.

"I worked on my degree for six years. It was difficult, but I knew what the rewards and benefits were going to be at the end of the day," says Botello, a 29-year-old mother of two young children.

Botello and Grousniick, 39, are non-traditional students. For decades, traditional college students attended full time right after high school. Most were male and Anglo.

At UTEP, however, non-traditional is typical: Nearly 73 percent of students are Hispanic; 40 percent attend part time; and 56 percent are female. In fall 2006, nearly 14 percent of undergraduate students were over the age of 30, and many raised families and held jobs while completing their studies.

How UTEP is changing the face of higher education is evident during commencement ceremonies. UTEP President Diana Natalicio asks graduates to rise if they raised children (or grandchildren) or worked while pursuing their degrees. Many do. Still more stand when the president recognizes those who are the first in their families to earn a degree.

Standing proud, Botello and Grousniick were among this winter's estimated 1,600 graduates. The women say their families – and the university – helped them achieve their goals by supporting them throughout their college years.

Botello attended El Paso Community College for four years before enrolling at UTEP in 2001. In 2004, just one course away from completing her degree, she faced financial difficulties and didn't re-enroll. She worked as a manager for a teleservices company for two years.
But it was an incoming call in summer 2006 that sold her on returning to UTEP. She was contacted by UTEP’s Welcome Back Miner Campaign, which helps former students in good academic standing return to school.

“I was motivated to complete my degree, and (they) gave me that extra push. They gave me an opportunity,” says Botello, who earned a bachelor’s in psychology with a minor in business administration and now plans to work toward her master’s.

The campaign provides former students with information regarding their academic status, registration information, financial aid options and course requirements.

“This is a very personalized approach. We want to know what these students need from us in order to return and earn their degree,” says Gary Edens, assistant vice provost for Undergraduate Studies and director of UTEP’s Student Success Programs.

Launched two years ago, the campaign has reached out to several hundred students through mail and phone calls.

“I don’t feel like I’m leaving UTEP. It feels more like I’m just moving over and making room for future generations.”

“We understand that sometimes issues come up and students have to tend to other important matters, but we want them to know that we always welcome them back,” says Edens.

For other non-traditional students like Grousnick, a welcome and friendly environment, coupled with flexible courses and supportive faculty and staff at the university, is key to success.

“The way this community supports, celebrates and embodies the university was a factor that attracted us to El Paso,” says Grousnick, who moved to El Paso from Colorado three years ago with her husband, a local minister.

“My husband is my cheerleader, and my kids see me working toward my goals. I hope I’m setting a good example,” she says.

Grousnick received her bachelor’s in organizational communication with a minor in sociology and was selected as the College of Liberal Arts’ student marshal for commencement. She hopes to return to UTEP and enroll in the Alternative Teacher Certification Program.

The new graduate looks forward to her future.

“I don’t feel like I’m leaving UTEP,” she says. “It feels more like I’m just moving over and making room for future generations.”

The road ahead

by Laura S. Ruelas

Though they’ve taken different roads in life, Hortencia Sandoval and Aldo Aguirre share a passion for teaching others.

A paraprofessional at Del Valle High School, Sandoval recently passed her state exam for teacher certification in Special Education. Aguirre, a soldier stationed at Fort Bliss, volunteers to teach senior citizens English.

The two UTEP seniors are among the university’s many non-traditional students whose unique life stories and personal obligations often impact how quickly they can complete their studies.

Born in Carichi, Chihuahua, Mexico, Sandoval is the youngest of 11 siblings. At 15, she and her mother immigrated to the United States to join the rest of their family already living in California.

She will be the first in her family to earn a college degree.

“My mom has been my biggest supporter. I spend every day at UTEP, and I’m doing whatever I have to do to pass my classes,” says the 33-year-old Sandoval, a single mother of two girls.

Before moving to El Paso in 1998, Sandoval earned her associate degree in San Diego. She spent five years out of school before enrolling at UTEP in the spring of 2002.

She says she’s grateful for the support she’s received at the university.

“I’ve met good, caring professors and classmates who encourage me and help keep me going. I consider many of them friends,” says Sandoval, who will graduate in spring 2007 with a bachelor’s in Interdisciplinary Studies.

Like many students who balance work, school and families, Sandoval relies on her family for support — and the extra push when it’s needed.

The 28-year-old Aguirre, who is married and has a 1-year-old son, relies on his family and the military for support.

“My military experiences have helped me tackle some issues that have been presented in some of my classes. They’ve taught me to be open to learning new ideas,” says Aguirre, who started classes at UTEP in fall 2005.

He has been working toward his degree since joining the Army 10 years ago.

“I’ve been taking night classes, online courses and even took courses during my year stationed in Iraq,” says Aguirre, who grew up in Fabens, just east of El Paso.

On track to earn a bachelor’s in Chicano studies in spring 2007, Aguirre says he’s glad this journey is nearing an end.

“One semester left to go,” he says. “It’s pretty exciting.”

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Miner on a Mission

UTEP grad-turned astronaut ready to launch

by David Peregrino

Photo courtesy of NASA
"If I can do it, you can do it."

For a few days, NASA astronaut and UTEP grad John “Danny” Olivas came home, taking a break from rigorous training in shuttle simulators and a deep swimming pool that simulates the weightlessness of space.

Instantly recognizable in his sky blue NASA flight jacket, Olivas spent his time in El Paso speaking to students and participating in Homecoming activities honoring him as one of UTEP’s 2006 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients. Throughout his visit, Olivas remained humble about his accomplishments and offered words of inspiration to the countless admirers who proudly shook his hand or asked for an autograph.

“I am an astronaut, but I am just like you,” Olivas told some 1,400 students at Burges High School who packed the Mustangs gym. “If I can do it, you can do it.”

Olivas graduated from Burges in 1984 and from UTEP in 1989.

“It’s really cool. It is a great example for us, knowing that someone from Burges is a NASA astronaut,” Burges senior Diana Payne says.

Scheduled for his first space flight aboard the shuttle Atlantis in March 2007, Olivas also gave a presentation about space exploration to a room full of UTEP students, faculty and staff.

With a PowerPoint presentation playing on the room’s big screen, Olivas spoke about the challenges of traveling to each planet in the solar system.

“NASA really likes this target here,” he says, an image of Mars displaying on the screen and his enthusiasm for space exploration becoming more and more evident. “Mars ... the Big Kahuna.”

In and around El Paso, it’s Olivas who is the Big Kahuna. He’ll be part of the mission STS-117 crew that will work on the International Space Station, contributing to the science of space exploration that continues to make headlines.

And though he’s going to travel hundreds of miles into space, he’ll take a little piece of his alma mater with him: an orange flag emblazoned with the UTEP logo.

For more information about Olivas and his mission, visit www.utep.edu/dannyolivas
It began 30 years ago as Hotel Dieu School of Nursing in a pink, three-story building with classrooms and dormitories and managed by the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

Today, the University of Texas at El Paso’s School of Nursing is nationally recognized for its contributions to diversifying the nursing field and producing quality health care workers that are helping address the region’s nursing shortage.

“I am proud of our contributions to the health of the people of West Texas and Southern New Mexico,” says School of Nursing Dean Robert Anders, Ph.D. “We plan to continue to meet the region’s needs for registered nurses who can provide care and understand the population.”

With bachelor’s and master’s programs that enroll more than 1,000 students a year, the school is ranked among the top four in the nation in graduating Hispanics by the Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education magazine.

“We are at the forefront of nursing education by offering innovative programs enhanced by simulation technology, rich clinical experiences, research projects addressing Hispanic health disparities, and international educational opportunities,” Anders says.

The school recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, revisiting its past and planning for the future.

“The Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul had a vision of creating a school to nurture and grow,” Anders says. “If those sisters are looking down on us now, they would be proud to see all that we’ve accomplished.”

Now the fourth largest undergraduate nursing program in Texas, UTEP’s School of Nursing is recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for its excellence in educating nursing faculty.

Four nursing faculty members have been recognized by NurseWeek magazine for their contributions as highly regarded researchers and as Hispanic doctoral-level nurse educators: Nelda Martinez, Gloria E. Lopez-McKee, Josefina Lujan and Maria A. Amaya. NurseWeek reports that few institutions
have more Hispanic doctoral-level nurse educators on their faculty.

In addition to enlisting distinguished educators, the school has increased its research, enrollment, and simulation-training technology, and has set its goal on becoming the nation’s premier Hispanic-serving school of nursing.

“We still have a lot of work to be done, but our future looks wonderful. We’re going to produce more students that are better prepared and culturally competent,” says Lujan, assistant nursing professor and UTEP alumna. “We’re going to be the fertile field that will produce expert Hispanic health care providers.”

Nursing instructor Julieta Castañeda, who graduated from the Hotel Dieu School of Nursing in 1965 and later earned her master’s degree at UTEP, says the school’s next big step is to obtain a doctoral program in nursing practice.

“Having a doctoral program would be wonderful, because some people are homebodies, like me,” Castañeda says. “If there was a doctoral program here, I would apply, because I want to stay and serve El Paso.”

Online: www.academics.utep.edu/nursing
Chemistry program a star

The chemistry program at UTEP this fall has received seals of approval for both an undergraduate program and a new doctoral program from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The Coordinating Board approved the Ph.D. in chemistry, UTEP’s 14th doctoral degree. The program will prepare professional chemists for careers in industry and in teaching and research at the university level.

Also this fall, the department’s innovative Chemistry Peer Leader Program, credited with improving student success in science, mathematics and engineering, was honored with a 2006 Star Award by the Coordinating Board.

Introduced in 2000 to the first-semester general chemistry curriculum, the program’s key element is the Two Plus Two Workshop, which replaces one hour of weekly classroom lectures with two hours of small-group workshops guided by advanced science, engineering or mathematics students designated as Peer Leaders.

Research, business complex opens

UTEP’s Paso del Norte Research and Business Development Complex held an official ribbon-cutting ceremony for its recently renovated facility.

Formerly a student dorm complex known as Kelly Hall, the complex brings together several UTEP economic development organizations and expanded research facilities under one roof.

The six-story building houses, among others, the Center for Entrepreneurial Development, Advancement Research and Support; the Regional Geospatial Service Center; the Center for Defense Systems Research; and the Institute for Policy and Economic Development.

The renovation was funded by a $3.2 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration and $1.5 million from university funds.

Engineering accolades

UTEP’s College of Engineering has been recognized by two leading national organizations.

The college has received the 2006 ABET President’s Award for Diversity and the National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering Rising Star Award.

The NACME award recognizes the achievements of universities that are contributing to increased diversity in engineering, science and technology.

The national accrediting organization for university science and technology programs, ABET, this year recognized three organizations or individuals that have demonstrated extraordinary success in achieving diversity in technology fields.

Over the past decade, the college has developed a number of initiatives under the umbrella of the National Science Foundation’s Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE) program to better serve students from a population that is largely Hispanic and often the first in their family to pursue a university degree.

Enrollment breaks records

For the fifth consecutive year, UTEP reported a record fall enrollment: 19,842 — a 3 percent increase over last fall.

This fall, UTEP also welcomed its largest class ever of first-time freshmen: 2,559 — a 7.7 percent increase. The number of first-time freshmen enrolling at UTEP has grown 58 percent over the past decade. Graduate programs also saw an overall 2.8 percent enrollment growth this semester over last fall, and the number of doctoral students increased by 6.5 percent.
Rolling Stones rock Sun Bowl

Fans, young and old, were treated to blazing fireworks and classic hits by the greatest rock 'n' roll band, the Rolling Stones, at UTEP’s Sun Bowl in October.

The Stones’ “A Bigger Bang” tour energized a crowd of nearly 40,000 people before a 92-foot-tall stage, which dwarfed the Sun Bowl and met the peaks of surrounding mountains.

Mick Jagger captivated the audience with his unique brand of dancing to beloved songs such as “Paint It Black,” “Brown Sugar,” “Satisfaction” and “Sympathy for the Devil.” Fans were further overjoyed when the band played a special rendition of the Marty Robbins classic, “El Paso.”

The Dave Matthews Band opened the show. The band performed their chart-topping hits, featuring a unique mix of guitars, fiddles and saxophones. During the Stones set, Matthews provided back-up vocals for Jagger’s “Let it Bleed.”

Happy birthday, IPED

The Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED) at the University of Texas at El Paso, the region’s leading think-tank for policy and business development research, is celebrating its 10-year anniversary.

“We’ve taken university-level research capabilities and merged them with the evolving needs of the public and private sectors,” says Dennis Soden, director of IPED. “In the years coming, we plan to expand UTEP’s ability to provide more multifaceted research services throughout the Southwest and binational region.”

During the past decade, IPED has partnered with many public agencies and private businesses — including the Regional Economic Development Corporation, Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce and Fort Bliss — to conduct economic development-related research and attract investment opportunities to the region.

IPED also oversees UTEP’s Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Leadership Studies (MLS) programs. These graduate-level programs prepare students to take on leadership roles in business and government.

Miners head east

Stocking up on Miner gear and buying tickets for sports and entertainment events just got a whole lot easier for fans on El Paso’s East Side.

The UTEP Miners Store, operated by the University Bookstore and University Ticket Center, opened this fall at 1452 N. Zaragoza at Don Haskins Drive. Store hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

The store sells UTEP apparel, souvenirs and a new line of Nike-brand clothing.

For more information, call 915/747-5594 or visit www.utepbookstore.com.

Learning about Hispanic consumers

Dozens of top advertising professionals from New York to Texas gathered at UTEP for the “Emerging Faces in Hispanic Advertising” conference in October.

The conference was hosted by the UTEP Department of Communication, in cooperation with its Sam Donaldson Center for Communication Studies. The event gave students, executives and educators an opportunity to mingle and share ideas on how to appeal to one of the nation’s fastest-growing populations.

Guest speakers addressed how traditions are at the root of Hispanic consumers’ decision-making process. Whether they’re first- or third-generation, Latinos are multidimensional shoppers, balancing their parents’ and grandparents’ culture with today’s American culture.

Conference topics included panel discussions on Hispanic voters, Hispanic youths and Hispanic women as consumers.
Keck Center opens doors to 3D innovation

The W.M. Keck Center for 3D Innovation at UTEP’s College of Engineering held a grand opening celebration in November following a significant renovation and expansion over the past year.

One of the most unique facilities of its kind in the world, the Keck Center houses 16 commercial rapid-prototyping machines used for a broad range of activities, from tissue engineering and biomedical modeling to micro electronics fabrication and advanced materials research.

Rapid-prototyping allows researchers to take a computer-aided design of an object and precisely build up layers of material to quickly create a three-dimensional model or mold, including anatomical models to aid surgeons and medical researchers. Researchers at the Keck Center can also create bio-active “scaffolds” for tissue engineering that give cells a place to live and grow.

The renovation and expansion has taken the center from 1,500 square feet to 6,100 square feet of floor space and to more than $4 million of investment in research infrastructure.

“The laboratory is already nationally and internationally recognized for its outstanding research and capabilities,” says Keck Center Director Dr. Ryan Wicker. Rapid-prototyping technology offers so many research possibilities, “you are only limited by your imagination,” Wicker says.

The ribbon cutting-ceremony featured the unlocking of a lock and chain made from rapid-prototyping equipment.

Originally named the W.M. Keck Border Biomedical Manufacturing and Engineering Laboratory, the Keck Center was established in 2001 with a $1 million grant from the W. M. Keck Foundation.

For more information about the Keck Center, visit www.utep.edu/wmkeck.

Leading the way in border, security research

UTEP is laying the foundation necessary to become the leading center of research in border security, immigration and policy studies, international border studies, and U.S.-Mexico business and economics.

Here’s how:

• Brig. Gen. (ret.) Jose Riojas has joined the university as vice president for Strategic Initiatives. Riojas will plan and implement research opportunities in the areas of border security and defense systems, as well as promote and develop the university as an increasingly important asset in regional economic development.

• UTEP has joined eight other research universities to form the Southwest Border Security Consortium, which will develop solutions to issues affecting the U.S.-Mexico border region. Consortium members include UTEP, Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, New Mexico Tech, the University of New Mexico, San Diego State University, Texas A&M Engineering and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

• UTEP is one of just six universities nationwide to receive a grant from the Director of National Intelligence to create an Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence. The $500,000 grant will be used to develop courses to prepare students for careers in the intelligence field, such as in foreign languages, regional politics and policy, and geographic information systems (GIS). The University could receive renewals of up to $2 million.

• UTEP has been awarded $1 million to establish a Center for Defense Systems Research by the Department of Defense. Researchers at the center will study defense systems and border issues.

UTEP is already conducting research key to national defense and security, including infrastructure risk and analysis; facial recognition; biodefense; geographic information systems, and nano- and micro-manufacturing.

For more information, visit www.utep.edu/research.

UTEP News Online

For more UTEP news and information, visit Horizons Online News at www.utep.edu/horizons.
UTEP thanks seniors for great memories

After two consecutive trips to bowl games, the expectations were high for Mike Price’s team this season. Unfortunately, injuries and other setbacks dogged the Miners, who finished 5-7 and 3-5 in Conference USA.

Samoei is an All-American again

Junior Stephen Samoei was honored as an All-American for the second year in a row after placing 13th out of 250 runners at the NCAA Cross Country Championship in Terre Haute, Ind. in November. Samoei ran the 10k distance in 31:15.5. The Miner men’s cross country team finished the season ranked 20th nationally.

Another winning season

The Miner soccer team followed last year’s 20-win campaign with another stellar season, finishing 15-6. Freshman Anoop Josan, who led Conference USA with 14 assists, was named to the league’s all-conference second team. Also honored was Tameka Sumter, who joined Josan on the conference’s all-freshman team. Sumter led the league with 13 goals.

Though the season had its share of disappointments, Miner fans turned out for the final game to say farewell to 27 seniors and thank them for many great football memories over the past years. Among them are Jordan Palmer, who leaves as UTEP’s career passing and total offense leader, and all-time leading receiver Johnnie Lee Higgins, who was named an All-American by the American Football Coaches Association.

Season gets rolling

Miner basketball is back.

Led by new head coach Tony Barbee, the men’s team is working on getting consistent performances from several transfer players.

The young and relatively inexperienced Miner men are beginning to click as a team and are building a reputation as ferocious defenders. High-scoring sophomore Stefon Jackson, nicknamed DJ, for “Draining Jumpers,” is stepping up in an important leadership role for his team.

Keitha Adams’ women’s team was off to a 6-1 start at press time, its best start since the 1998-99 campaign. Players to watch this season include junior starting point guard Shalana Taylor, who holds UTEP’s assist record, and high-scoring freshman Jareica Hughes.

For more news and information about UTEP athletics, visit www.utepathletics.com
Claudia Sotelo reminds her seventh- and eighth-grade students that getting good grades and pursuing a college education can be cool.

"Remember, they’ll call you ‘nerd’ today, but tomorrow they’ll call you ‘boss,’” the UTEP senior tells her students at Ysleta Middle School, where she works as a college-preparation tutor.

Like some of the middle schoolers she tutors, Sotelo had doubts about whether she would make it through college. One of her biggest fears? Not being able to pay for her education.

“My freshman year, I received a grant. But the next summer I was scared about how I was going to pay for school,” says the 21-year-old Sotelo, who is pursuing a bachelor’s in early childhood education. “I had always heard people talk about how scholarships had helped them get through school, so I applied for several.”

Her efforts paid off. Sotelo received a $3,000 scholarship from the El Paso Empowerment Zone Corporation. She is among 71 UTEP students who have received the El Paso Empowerment Zone Scholarship Program award since 2003.

Overall, the program has provided more than $1.8 million in scholarships to 455 undergraduate and graduate students who attend Texas and New Mexico universities, colleges or vocational schools. The scholarship is awarded to those who live within El Paso County’s six empowerment zones.

Created with federal funding in 1999, the El Paso Empowerment Zone Corporation is an economic development initiative designed to revitalize underserved communities with public funds and tax incentives.

The initiative strives to entice private investment and encourage businesses and organizations to serve zone communities.

Some 50,000 people reside in El Paso’s six zones.

“We invest in people. We want to improve the quality of life and employment opportunities for empowerment zone residents,” says Phyllis Rawley, El Paso Empowerment Zone Corporation executive director.

Only about 1 percent of empowerment zone residents complete their college degree, she says.

The scholarship program aims to increase the number of college graduates from the empowerment zones, Rawley says.

“Many of the students we’re supporting are heading to law school, medical school, or becoming engineers and scientists,” she says. “These are great kids. They just need an opportunity.”

UTEP freshman and pre-medical student Abraham Perez counts himself among the students who’ve been given that chance to succeed.

“It’s an honor to receive this scholarship,” says Perez, who graduated from El Paso High School in May 2006. “You can’t cut it in life anymore with just a high school degree. If you want a better life, you have to have a college degree.”

El Paso Empowerment Zone Corporation Chairman Luis T. Sanchez agrees. He says the corporation’s scholarship program encourages students not only to pursue a bachelor’s degree, but also to continue onto graduate school.

“I also came from an empowerment zone, but back then they were known as barrios,” says Sanchez, a 1973 UTEP grad who now serves as president of APEX Roofing Co. “Education was my ticket out of San Antonio’s South Side.”

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The *Gift* of Empowerment

by Laura Cruz

Claudia Sotelo reminds her seventh- and eighth-grade students that getting good grades and pursuing a college education can be cool. "Remember, they'll call you 'nerd' today, but tomorrow they'll call you 'boss,'" the UTEP senior tells her students at Ysleta Middle School, where she works as a college-preparation tutor.

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Alumni Association unveils new logo
Notice something a little different?
You’re not the only one – alumni from all over have been commenting on the Alumni Association’s new logo. Look for a new line of UTEP alumni apparel at the University Bookstore!
And if you’re a member of the UTEP Alumni Association, be sure to ask for your discount! To learn more about all the special benefits and opportunities that come with membership, visit www.ia.utep.edu/alumni

Distinguished Alumni nominations
Do you know an outstanding College of Mines, Texas Western or UTEP graduate?
UTEP and the Alumni Association are accepting nominations for the Distinguished Alumni and Gold Nugget Awards, honoring graduates who have excelled in their community and profession.
For more information, or a nomination form, contact the UTEP Alumni Relations office at 915-747-8600 or visit us online at www.ia.utep.edu/alumni

Top Ten Seniors
Calling all UTEP seniors!
The UTEP Alumni Association is now accepting applications for the Top Ten Seniors Award.
To be eligible for this prestigious honor, students must have a 3.0 GPA or better and be involved in campus and community life. For next year’s honors, you should graduate in December 2006 or May or summer of 2007.
Please visit or call the UTEP Alumni Relations office at 915-747-8600, or go online for the application at www.ia.utep.edu/alumni

Miners on the Move
Will Ewing
Will Ewing is an International Space Station Communications and Tracking Flight Controller at the Johnson Space Center. The 1999 UTEP graduate earned his degree in electrical engineering and says he’s living out his dream.

What’s it like having your dream job?
I always enjoyed watching shuttle launches and space documentaries as a kid, but I didn’t ever think that working in the space industry was an option. I am thankful that it worked out the way it did. It would be near impossible to find anything as enjoyable as the job I do today. It’s not for everyone, but when I can wake up every morning for the last seven years and still love my job, I consider myself lucky.

What’s the biggest rush that comes with working at NASA?
Knowing that there are only a small handful of people around the world that do what I do. Every time I sit “on console” in Mission Control and send commands to the International Space Station, I’m reminded that I am part of the team responsible for the safety and well-being of the orbiting vehicle and the crew on board. On a daily basis, I have the opportunity to teach astronauts, command a vehicle orbiting the earth, travel abroad to make agreements with different space agencies and help plan the future of manned space flight. Not bad for a UTEP graduate!

How do you think UTEP contributed to your success?
It helped me understand my strengths and weaknesses, allowed me to meet special people whom I consider great friends and provided the educational environment to help me understand how to adapt to the different events I encounter in my career.

Those lessons have clearly paid off for you.
What would you say to students considering UTEP for college?
UTEP graduates are just as smart, talented, and hard-working as graduates from any other school in the nation. UTEP may not be as well-known as MIT or Duke, but I’ve worked alongside people who’ve graduated from all different universities, and I’ve never felt or shown that I couldn’t perform as well or better than them. I’ve been able to do jobs that many of them wish they had the chance to perform.

What do you miss about El Paso?
Of course we miss our family and friends the most, but the food is a very close second. We travel to El Paso three or four times a year and are always pre-planning which restaurants we will be going to and putting in requests to our mothers about what foods we’d like them to cook.

Wanted: Mentors
Are you looking for a new way to serve your alma mater?
Then consider becoming an Alumni Mentor. Career Services’ new Alumni Resource Network Mentor Program provides alumni and students with your valuable insight and advice about your career or degree field.
You can help guide students to make wise, informed choices about their own career aspirations.
All you need to do is give a little of your time. Your time is valuable, but so is your experience!
Contact the UTEP Career Services office at 915-747-5640, or visit www.utep.edu/careers and click on “Alumni” to learn more about how you can become an Alumni Mentor.

More Miners at NASA
As 1998 UTEP grad John “Danny” Olivas prepares for his flight into space in spring 2007, we also recognize the many more alumni who are part of the nation’s space program. In the previous issue of NOVA Quarterly, we published the names of some UTEP alumni now working at NASA. Below are some more:
Sarah L. Murray (BSEE ’87) is chief of the Electrical System Branch at Johnson Space Center. Words of wisdom: “Always do your best at everything no matter how insignificant it may seem. Someone will be watching.”
Roger Gomez (BSEE ’95) is a Communications and Tracking officer and flight controller for the International Space Station. Words of wisdom: “Do not give up on your dreams.”
David J. Shindo (BSMME ’02) is a materials engineer. Key to success: “Make a list of attainable goals for yourself, both short and long term.”
Gilberto Lopez (BSEE ’89) is a bioastronautics contract lead for Bastion Technologies Inc. Words of wisdom: “Focus on activities that you truly enjoy and for which you have a talent that applies.”
Kenneth Lambert (B.S.Ed, B.S. Composite Science ’78) is a non metallic-manufacturing supervisor. Words of wisdom: “Success is much easier when you enjoy your profession.”
Douglas Davidson (BSMME ’89) is an Extravehicular Mobility Unit (EMU) engineer. Words of wisdom: “Anything in life is possible. Don’t wait for someone to hand it to you.”
For more information about Olivas and other Miners at NASA, including photo galleries, visit www.utep.edu/dannyolivas
'40s
Margaret B. “Mardee” de Wetter (B.A. ’43, M.A. ’46) is the author of “Incognito: An Affair of Honor,” an account of Gustav Heinrich Johann de Rosenthal, the only Estonian known to have taken part in the American Revolutionary War. De Wetter lives in El Paso.

'50s
Rodolpho “Rudy” Valle (B.A. ’56), a dentist in Brownsville, Texas, was honored by the Brownsville City Commission for his years of service to the community. He established a program to provide free dental care to residents.

'60s
Pat Reynolds (B.S.Ed. ’59), who served as principal of Oak Creek Elementary School in the Spring (Texas) Independent School District for 24 years, was honored for her service to the district, which renamed Oak Creek the Pat Reynolds Elementary School.

'70s
Stephen Stafford (B.S.M.E.T. ’70) received the Piper Award for Outstanding Teaching from the Minnie Stevens Piper Foundation. The award recognizes Texas college and university professors for superior teaching. Stafford, who lives in El Paso, is interim dean of UTEP’s College of Engineering.

'80s
Ricardo Barraza Jr. (B.A. ’81), owner of Italian Imports in El Paso, is a member of the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. He was appointed by President Bush to a two-year term that expires in May 2007.

'90s
Cesar “Danny” Castillo (B.S.Met. E. ’88) is vice president of research and design at MSD Ignition, an El Paso-based manufacturer of performance ignition systems.

'00s
Alejandra Rivas (B.A. ’02) graduated summa cum laude from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts in Las Vegas.

Ray Leal (B.A. ’01) is the director of public relations for the El Paso Chamber of Commerce. He also is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers Inc., and operates Curtain Call Productions with his wife, Cristen.

'75
Rev. Michael E. McKenzie (B.A. ’75) is past department chaplain for the American Legion, Department of Nevada. McKenzie lives in Las Vegas.

Robert M. Muñoz (B.S. ’77) is Odessa Links’ Community Partner of the Year. Odessa Links is a service organization in Odessa, Texas, that provides health, human services, education, recreation and arts information to residents. Muñoz’s award recognizes his collaborative efforts as the dean of workforce, distance and continuing education at Odessa College to improve the quality of life in the city.

Víctor Arias Jr. (B.B.A. ’78) is co-managing partner of Heidrick & Struggles International Inc.’s Diversity Services Practice in the Americas. Heidrick & Struggles is an executive search and leadership consulting firm. Arias, UTEP’s 2000 Gold Nugget recipient for the College of Business Administration, resides in Dallas.

Sammy Luksiewicz (B.A. ’93) is director of communications for Michigan International Speedway, in Brooklyn, Mich.

Cristen Susong (B.A. ’94) teaches American history and directs musicals at the Garrison Forest School in Owings Hills, Md. Susong also operates Curtain Call Productions with her husband, Scott, and is pursuing a master’s in contemporary communications at the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. She lives in Baltimore.

Scott Susong (B.A. ’95) is director of theater at Roland Park Country School in Baltimore. He also is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers Inc., and operates Curtain Call Productions with his wife, Cristen.

Antonio “Tony” Cordova (B.S. ’97), UTEP’s trainer for men’s basketball, was named Pacific Coast League 2006 Trainer of the Year.

Antoine “Tony” Hajjar (B.S. ’98) plays the drums for El Paso-based rock band Sparta. The band’s new album is “Threes.” Sparta also scored a 17-minute film, “Eme Nakia,” which was co-written by Hajjar. The film premiered in El Paso on Sept. 21.

Armando Romero Jr. (B.A. ’99, M.Ed. ’03) is head baseball coach at Burges High School in El Paso.

Alfredo Martinez (B.S. ’77) is a financial professional with Davenport, Iowa.

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Susan “Susie” Quintana (B.B.A. ’04) is a Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellow. The fellowship program of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation supports students preparing to enter the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service. Quintana is currently pursuing a master’s degree in international relations at St. Mary’s University in San Antonio.

In Memoriam

Julia Lou “Judy” Lance Knight (B.A. ’59) San Francisco; Apr. 11, 2006.

We understand the importance of a healthy environment. Our refinery uses state-of-the-art equipment and highly skilled personnel to produce the energy we need, and to do so in a way that safeguards our air, our water, and our neighborhoods. That’s just part of being a good neighbor. Because at Western Refining, we believe actions speak louder than words.

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