



The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
ROBERT C. VACKAR COLLEGE OF
BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

NEWSLETTER

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New CBEST Issue

“Where have the criminals gone? Negative crime growth in South Texas” [Download PDF here](#)

Do you, someone you know, or a program deserve recognition in the VCOBE newsletter? Or do you need help publicizing your event? Email us at cobe.media@utrgv.edu with

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



Greetings Colleagues,

I just came out of a meeting with Michael Minor and one of his PhD students is doing research in neuroscience and was reminded again of the many fascinating things that are going on around UTRGV and VCoBE. Which also reminds me that in spite of my brief service here, it has been long enough to realize that I will miss the College and the great people I have been able to work with as I depart.

I will be moving on for a good reason and that is, of course, that we have a new [and permanent] dean coming in August.

Dr. Lance Nail is joining us from San Diego State University, but he is an old Texas hand, having worked with Dr. Guy Bailey, our president, and Dr. Kelly Scrivner, our development VP, at Texas Tech in years past. Personally, during the interviews here on campus, I was particularly impressed with Dr. Nail’s understanding of our strengths and opportunities. It was obvious that he had studied the University and the College quite thoroughly, and every conversation I observed reflected the depth of his preparation and a level of competence that only comes from long experience and thoughtful reflection.

Dr. Nail brings energy, poise, and deep knowledge to the leadership task here. Please join all of us in welcoming Dr. Nail to the Valley!

Wesley Balda, Ph.D.

Interim Dean, Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship

the subject line "VCOBE Newsletter Content."

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[VCOBE In the Press](#)

NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

Master of Science in Business Analytics



The Department of Information Systems will launch an [accelerated online Master of Science \(MS\) in Business Analytics](#) in Fall 2019 Module I. Through the program, students will become proficient in data acquisition, preparation and storage, visualization, and analysis using cutting-edge techniques such as data mining, machine learning, text mining, social media analytics, big data, optimization and enterprise analytics. Students will also obtain hands-on experience with the latest data analytics software and tools such as R, Python and Tableau. The degree is 100% online and students can finish in as few as 12 months. As the first of its kind at UTRGV, the MS in Business Analytics prepares our students for the fast growing profession of data analytics.

MBA Concentrations in Accounting, Entrepreneurship and Marketing

The MBA Program will launch three new concentrations in Accounting, Entrepreneurship, and Marketing in fall 2019. Each concentration offers elective courses that provide students with the opportunity to gain more in-depth knowledge in a discipline of their choice. For more information, please contact **Dr. Akinloye Akindayomi** (MBA Program Director) at akinloye.akinlayomi@utrgv.edu or (956)665-7842.

Graduate Certificate in International Sustainability Management

The Department of International Business and Entrepreneurship will launch an [online graduate certificate in International Sustainability Management](#) in fall 2019. The certificate consists of four graduate courses in international business and sustainability management and will be offered 100% online. According to **Dr. Edith Galy**, Associate Professor of International Business and Entrepreneurship who spearheaded the certificate, "sustainability has now become key for all modern enterprises and it involves a global challenge." The certificate helps managers acquire knowledge and tools on how to develop sustainability programs not only within their companies, but within a competitive global market.



FACULTY HIGHLIGHT

ABDC A Journal Publication

Guo, C., Kulviwat, S., Zhu, J., Wang, Y. J. (2019). Competing in an Emerging Market: Antecedents and Consequences of Market Orientation and the Role of Environmental Factors. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 27, 248-267.



STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

STUDENT AWARDS

VCOBE international students **Sharon Valencia Torres** (BBA in Economics and Finance) and **Gisela Saldana** (MBA) received the 2019-2020 Good Neighbor Scholarship from the Texas higher Education Coordinating Board. They will receive tuition waiver for a full academic year (including summer sessions) and will only be responsible for institutional fees.

Alejandra Hernandez, VCOBE student in International Business and Entrepreneurship and CEO Brownsville President, received the 2019 UTRGV Student Leader of the Year award during the Student Leader Recognition Ceremony. **Dr. Sylvia Robles**, Lecturer of International Business and Entrepreneurship, was nominated for the Advisor of the Year award.



Tony NK Lynch, a third year PhD candidate in Management focusing on Operations and Supply Chain Management, placed second in UTRGV's inaugural Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition. The second place award was \$500.



UTRGV Athletics honored two VCOBE students at V Awards. Congratulations to **Abraham Chirchir** (School of Accountancy), two-time Male Student-Athlete of the Year, and **Ragni Steen Kundsén** (International Business), Co-Female Student-Athlete of the Year!



VCOBE PhD Program honored its 2019 Excellence Awards recipients including doctoral students **Jacob Almaguer** (Marketing), **Gerardo Miranda** (Management), **Daniel Treku** (Information Systems), and **Jian Xu** (Finance). All recipients are making headway in their programs with multiple research presentations at top academic conferences in their disciplines and/or journal publications. **Dr. Penny Simpson** (Marketing) received the Doctoral Faculty Excellence Award for her excellence in research and mentoring of doctoral

students.

STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

The School of Accountancy's student organization **the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA)** was recognized as UTRGV's 2019 Organization of the Year and awarded the Fostering Leadership Award at the student leader recognition ceremony on

April 26, 2019.



More than 50 MBA Association (MBAa) members, alumni and VCOBE faculty and staff gathered on May 2, 2019 to honor MBAa graduates and officially establish an alumni network. Five graduating MBA students were awarded regalia based on their achievement in the program and active participation in the club. Pictured from the left to right, **Catalina Cantu**, **Stephanie Villalon**, **Jacob Martinez**, **Indira Arias**, Jayshree Bhat (guest speaker), and **Claudia Ramirez**. **Dr. Akinloye Akindayome**, MBA Program Director, highlighted the importance of an event like this in the community, while guest speaker **Jayshree Bhat** gave a memorable speech regarding MBA values. Bhat served as MBAa President in 2004-2005 and is now the Assistant to the Vice President for Professional Education & Workforce Development at UTRGV, therefore holds the MBAa close to her heart. This event was a milestone for the UTRGV MBAa, as they honored some of their members and brought alumni from all over the state together. If you or someone you know is a UTRGV/UTB/UTPA MBA alumni, please make sure to connect through LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12204235/>. For more information about upcoming MBAa events, please contact the association at mbaa.utrgv@gmail.com.



STUDENT CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Governor's Small Business Conference



Students from **Dr. Sylvia Robles**'s course "Foundation of Entrepreneurship" from Weslaco and Brownsville attended the 2019 Governor's Small Business Conference and had the

chance to network and learn, and meet the Secretary of the State David Whitley. Dr. Robles was interviewed and participated as a panelist in two breakout sessions.

Annual Undergraduate Research Conference at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

Students from the **Economics Society** attended the 13th Annual Undergraduate Research Conference on April 12th at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. During the conference they had an opportunity to network with students from other universities and to attend presentations in economics and finance.



EVENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Second Cybersecurity Boot Camp

The **Associate of Information Technology Professionals (AITP)** student organization and faculty sponsor **Dr. Jerald Hughes** are proud to have successfully offered our second Cybersecurity Boot Camp to local high school students. High schools of PSJA ISD participated in a 4-day boot camp, Tuesday May 28 through Friday May 31, learning fundamental skills in securing devices and systems against malicious attacks. Students studied ethical issues, performed a variety of hands-on exercises on lab machines configured by AITP for cybersecurity learning, conducted a debate, and competed against one another in a final comprehensive demonstration of skills. Special thanks to **Ms. Yolanda Garcia** of PSJA ISD for helping us bring this exciting opportunity to her students!

Business Plan Presentations



In collaboration with Senior Design I/CECS, students in **Dr. Sylvia Robles's** Foundations of Entrepreneurship course presented their business plans in Weslaco and Brownsville. The events were supported by the NSF I-Corps grant, Women's Business Center Rio Grande Valley and the UTRGV Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center. A panel of judges evaluated the presentations. The "Blue Water" and "Rio Energy Bar" business plans were

selected as the winners and each received a free six-month incubation service at the UTRGV Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Center (ECC).



Dr. Penny Simpson's Retirement Celebration

VCOBE celebrated **Dr. Penny Simpson's** retirement and recognized her impact on VCOBE and UTRGV on May 8. Dr. Simpson joined UTRGV's legacy institution UTPA in 2003. She has not only been a prolific researcher of high quality publications but also served various leadership roles at both UTPA and UTRGV including the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Interim Director of the School of Accountancy and Director of the Business and Tourism Research Center (BTRC). Under her leadership, UTPA launched the accelerated online MBA program. As the Interim Director for the School of Accountancy, she led the development of the accelerated online Master of Accountancy program and the PhD concentration in accounting. Dr. Simpson also conducts the annual South Padre Island (SPI) study in collaboration with the SPI Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Winter Texans Survey.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

UTRGV legacy alumna **Mercy Renteria** now applies the business acumen she developed in the BBA program in her own production company Undebel Flamenco



and her oil and gas consulting company
Reca Petroleum Solutions. [Read more](#)



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