

# UTRGV TM : Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship

# NEWSLETTER

**Volume 4 Issue 1 - October 2021**

**GIVE TO RCVCOBE**

**MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN**

## IN THIS ISSUE

[Message from the Dean](#)  
[RCVCOBE Rankings](#)  
[UTRGV Tuition Advantage](#)  
[Student Spotlights](#)  
[Faculty Highlights](#)  
[Engagement](#)  
[Alumni Spotlights](#)

## Center for Border Economic Studies

[Click here](#) to read the Fall 2021  
Border Business Briefs issue.

Do you, someone you know, or  
a program deserve recognition  
in the RCVCOBE newsletter? Or  
do you need help publicizing  
your event? Email us at  
[cobe.media@utrgv.edu](mailto:cobe.media@utrgv.edu) with



Dear RCVCOBE Family:

Greetings from South Texas! It has been great to see our students on campus again. While we remain committed to the safety of our stakeholders, it has been energizing seeing that special interaction of students, faculty, and staff on campus this fall. As you will see in this issue of the RCVCOBE newsletter, the college continued to deliver on its mission despite the pandemic. Our students continued to excel as they prepared to become the future leaders of business, higher education, and society. Our faculty further grew their presence as thought leaders in business and agents of positive change in the community. And we all came together to show our positive impact on society. This terrible pandemic has had a disastrous effect on the world and we are ready for it to be a very bad memory. But, this pandemic has also proven the commitment and perseverance of the RCVCOBE family that makes me proud to serve as the dean.

V's Up!

Lance Nail, Ph.D.  
Dean and Distinguished University Professor  
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship

## RCVCOBE RANKINGS

### RCVCOBE Among Least Expensive Colleges in the U.S.

According to the latest data from the [Wall Street Journal](#), UTRGV is the 11th least

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[RCVCOBE in the Press](#)

expensive college in the U.S. and 2nd least expensive in Texas, with an average net price of \$4,654. [UniversityHQ.com](#) recently ranked RCVCOBE #11 among Top 100 Most Affordable Business Colleges. The RCVCOBE BBA in Finance was ranked #5 among [Top 100 Best Affordable Finance Programs](#). With tuition one of the lowest in the country, RCVCOBE offers a high return on investment and social mobility. [Click here](#) to learn more about RCVCOBE BBA programs.

## UTRGV Tuition Advantage

### UTRGV Expands Tuition Advantage Program to Eligible Students with Family Income of \$100,000 or less

Beginning Fall 2022, UTRGV's Tuition Advantage Program, open to all in-state undergraduate students who meet the program's requirements, will cover cost of tuition and mandatory fees for eligible students with a family income of \$100,000 or less. Tuition Advantage's \$100,000 family income threshold is the largest of any free-tuition program in the state and is believed to be the largest in the nation. President Guy Bailey said this expansion is another example of the UTRGV's commitment to providing a high-quality education at an affordable price. [Click here](#) to learn more about this program.

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

### RCVCOBE Student Receives Texas Business Hall of Fame Award



**Alejandra Jimenez**, RCVCOBE MS in Business Analytics student and BBA alumnus, received the prestigious Texas Business Hall of Fame [2021 James and Kathleen Collins & Vantage Bank Future Texas Business Legend Award](#). While a BBA student at RCVCOBE, Alejandra participated in the Adopt-a-Startup program under the mentorship of **Dr. Sylvia Robles**, where students adopt a real startup business and assist local entrepreneurs and the business community by creating a sustainable business model. The program inspired her to create her crafting business - A&J Custom Creations. She also works as a full-time administrative assistant at H-E-B. [Read more](#)

### RCVCOBE Undergraduate Student Placed First in National Competition

**Job Martinez**, RCVCOBE BBA in Management student, received first place in the Reverse Pitch Competition during the 2021 Enactus USA Summer Leadership Series.

### Archer Fellows



RCVCOBE BBA in Finance students **Jay Salinas** (above left) and **Diego Salas** (above right) were selected for the competitive Archer Fellowship and are spending the Fall semester in Washington D.C. as part of this program.

### PhD Student Awards



RCVCOBE PhD candidate in marketing **Ross Murray** (faculty advisor: **Dr. Xiaojing Sheng**) was selected a fellow of the 2021 Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) Doctoral Consortium. In addition, Ross was selected as one of ten doctoral students by the American Marketing Association (AMA) Higher Education Special Interest Group (SIG) to receive a [2021 doctoral student grant](#).

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

### Faculty Research Spotlight



Building a diverse and inclusive workplace is becoming more important than ever. Unfortunately, not all businesses are equipped to combat workplace discrimination. A recent study published in *Human Relations*, a leading academic business journal, by **Dr. Michael Abebe**, Professor of Management, and Dr. Hazel Dadanlar, Visiting Assistant Professor of Management at Ohio University and UTRGV Ph.D. in Business Administration, '21, shows that having a diverse senior leadership team is an important factor that helps reduce cases of discrimination in the workplace. According to this study, women and racial minority business leaders are more likely to empathize with and advocate for underrepresented groups in the workplace given their own career experiences. In their study of 452 large U.S. corporations from 2010-2015, the authors observed that companies that have a higher proportion of women and minority directors on their boards as well as those that are led by female CEOs experience significantly less incidents of large-scale discrimination lawsuits. Additionally, their findings suggest that companies should go beyond just symbolic (“token”) appointments and push to appoint a “critical mass” of two or more women directors on their boards if they are serious about combating discriminatory workplace. Overall, their study reminds us that creating a companywide diverse and inclusive workplace begins at the top. After all, the organization is a reflection of its leaders.

### Faculty Awards and Honors

**Dr. Michael Minor**, Professor of Marketing, has been awarded the [Celebrating 20 Years of Academy of International Business Insights: Outstanding Article Awards](#) for his research entitled "Changing the Face of International Business Education: The X-Culture Project."



**Dr. Jorge Vidal**, Lecturer III of Finance, and **Maria Leonard**, Assistant Professor of Practice of Management, received a financial literacy grant from State Farm for the third consecutive year. The grant will be used to help UTRGV students to better understand personal financial management such as budgeting, money

management, investing, and insurance.



**Dr. Sylvia Robles**, Assistant Professor of Practice of International Business and Entrepreneurship, was recognized as a 2021 Affordability Advocate by the UTRGV Library. With the Affordable Textbook Adoption grant she received in Fall 2020, Dr. Robles redesigned MGMT 3361 Principles of Management with open-source text Principles of Management OpenStax and a 35-hour service-learning (SL) project "Management Report." By transitioning her course to affordable learning materials, she helped 49 students save approximately \$10,780 in just one semester.

## EVENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Innovation and Entrepreneurship

RCVCOBE **Department of International Business and Entrepreneurship (IBE)** and the **Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC)** have hosted multiple events on innovation and entrepreneurship. Their Big Idea Competition in spring 2021 received more than 60 applications. The grand prize was \$5,000 Sponsored by Rafael Munguia, the Neuhaus Endowed Chair and Blackstone LaunchPad. The nine finalists selected have continued to work with the college to build their plans through multiple avenues.



The Rafael Munguia Business Plan Competition with prize monies of \$27,000 was also sponsored by Rafael Munguia, the Neuhaus Endowed Chair and Blackstone Launchpad. Several of the finalists from among 42 applicants received indications of interest in outside venture financing. Faculty members from engineering Xiaoqian Fang and Isaac Choutapalli won the \$10k grand prize.

Over the summer, the IBE department and the CIC organized and conducted an I-Corps regional training with six community and faculty/student teams. All the faculty teams were selected to apply to the national training program.

### SOAR Program

Through a collaboration with the UTRGV office of sustainability, Team Mario, and the Texas Workforce Solutions, RCVCOBE student organization **Enactus** worked with 13 young adults with the autism spectrum disorder, took them through a curriculum of soft skills and sustainable living practices throughout the spring semester, which culminated with all 13 participants getting paid summer internships with companies around the RGV.

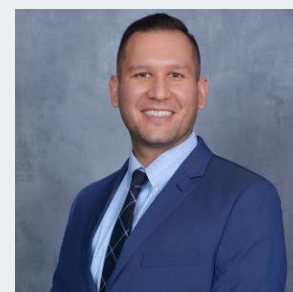
### Better Business Bureau Competition Judges



The South Texas Better Business Bureau annually recognizes area businesses who strive to excel in business through ethical business practices with its Mary G. Moad Ethics Awards. The RCVCOBE Department of Marketing supports this effort by serving as judges for the competition. In 2021, **Reto Felix, Peter Magnusson, Marvin Lovett, Arturo Vasquez, and Suwakitti Amornpan** (above from left to right) served as judges.

### Collaborations with UTRGV School of Medicine

**Michael Flores**, Lecturer of Marketing, used his professional expertise to develop promotional materials for two important UTRGV School of Medicine projects: 1) a congenital syphilis awareness campaign; and 2) a group-centered parenting initiative designed to ameliorate disparities in pediatric health in the RGV through a concentrated group care model.



### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS



**Dr. Daphne Wang**, Ph.D. in Business Administration with a concentration in finance, '15, was named the Walker/Wells Fargo Endowed Chair of Finance and Associate Professor at Jacksonville University.



**Dr. Ngoc Cindy Pham**, Ph.D. in Business Administration with a concentration in marketing, '18 and Assistant Professor of Marketing at the City University of New York-Brooklyn College, found the perfect way to combine her two passions - fashion and international business - and took four Brooklyn College students to the 2021 New York Fashion Week runway on September 8. Students obtained real world experience in producing the show. During the show, she also helped fundraise for Haiti Hurricane victims and was featured by the [LIVID Magazine](#).