

UTRGV : Robert C. Vackar College of
Business & Entrepreneurship

NEWSLETTER

Volume 4 Issue 2 - December 2021

GIVE TO RCVCUBE

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

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Center for Border Economic Studies

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

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



Dear RCVCUBE Family:

Over the last few weeks our team prepared and submitted our college's five-year self-study report for AACSB International maintenance of accreditation. RCVCUBE is one of under 1,000 global business schools to earn AACSB accreditation for upholding high quality standard for programs that improve business practice through a commitment to strategic management, learner success, thought leadership, and societal impact.

In preparing our report, we took pride in reflecting on the growth and positive impact of the college over the last five years. We saw a common theme in reporting our activities and achievements – we positively impact business and society through our innovation and engagement. Our faculty thought leaders shape the practice of business through their research and new knowledge creation. Our Innovation and Entrepreneurship team facilitates new business creation and economic development. Our faculty exemplars actively engage campus and community to create positive outcomes through successful learning experiences.

The stories in the current newsletter highlight the same theme. I hope that you will also take much pride in the positive impact of RCVCUBE. And may your holiday season be peaceful and joyous.

Go Vaqueros!

Lance Nail, Ph.D.
Dean and Distinguished University Professor
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STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

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[RCVCOBE in the Press](#)

RCVCOBE Students Take First Place in Restaurant Competition



RCVCOBE students **Andrea Garza**, **Paulina Martinez** and **Abelardo Villarreal** representing the Hospitality and Tourism Management Program earned first place in the “Restaurant of the Future” competition held November 8-10 in Las Vegas, NV. Their restaurant concept, “Wonder,” was an immersive, multisensory culinary experience using augmented and virtual reality technology.

“Dining is a new experience on its own, and we wanted to take that and further develop it,” said Garza, a junior majoring in finance. “We wanted to combine technology, something that is constantly changing, with dining out. In our plan, the theme would constantly change every five weeks, preparing the food to match the theme and to keep customers engaged and wanting to come back.”

“I was very impressed with our team’s work ethic and team spirit, and how they fearlessly went up against some real powerhouse universities,” said faculty advisor **Chef Marcel Fortuin**. “It was an honor to be their adviser and coach.”

“In addition to student learning and success, one of the primary reasons for taking our students to these national events is to showcase our emerging program through our

outstanding student ambassadors,” said **A.J. Singh**, founding director of the UTRGV Hospitality and Tourism Program. [Read more](#)

SBAA Societal Impact Award



RCVCOBE student organization **Enactus** received the 2021 Southern Business Administration Association (SBAA) Societal Impact Award. The award recognizes Enactus' outreach efforts and its positive impact on our community. Enactus faculty advisor **Maria Leonard** received the award on behalf of Enactus.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Faculty Research Spotlight

Economic crises, corporate scandals, and evidence of market inefficiencies have made corporate social responsibility (CSR) a topical issue in recent years. CSR can help firms build moral



capital among stakeholders and reduce the impacts of adverse shocks including shareholder litigation. A recent study published in the *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, a leading finance journal, by RCVCOBE finance professor **Dr.**

Nam H. Nguyen and his coauthors examines the relation between shareholder litigation and corporate social responsibility. Exploiting exogenous changes in shareholder litigation rights following the staggered adoption of universal demand laws by U.S. states and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals' ruling on securities class action lawsuits, they show that weaker shareholder litigation rights lead to lower CSR scores. Moreover, the negative relation between UD laws and CSR is stronger for firms that face a higher threat of shareholder litigation ex ante, for financially unconstrained firms, and for firms and managers that are likely to be more concerned about reputation. Their findings suggest that firms engage in CSR activities partly to reduce shareholder litigation risk ex ante and mitigate its consequences ex post.

Faculty Awards and Honors



Dr. Jorge Vidal and **Prof. Maria Leonard** continued to expand their financial literacy efforts targeting UTRGV students thanks to several grants received to advance this initiative. In fall 2021, 423 students enrolled in a Blackboard course designed and delivered completely online by Profs.

Vidal and Leonard, along with students from student organizations ALPFA and Enactus. The students who participated in this course studied materials that include budgeting and savings, affective credit management, major life purchases, fraud avoidance, insurance education, and principles of investment. Participants who submitted a video explaining how this program helped them improve their financial wellbeing are currently being evaluated by a panel of experts to select the top three video submissions. This is an ongoing effort that will continue in the spring of 2022 and will include information sessions by subject matter experts and a financial education summit in April 2022.

RCVCOBE seeks to foster economic development in the region by creating and growing a solid entrepreneurial ecosystem serving our campuses and the community. Assistant Professor of

Practice **Dr. Sylvia Robles** supports this mission with the Adopt a Startup program in her service-learning Entrepreneurship courses. The proposal “Demonstrating Positive Social Impact through the Humane-Innovation-Sustainable (HIS) Model: Adopt a Startup Model” was selected to present at the 2021 Southern Business

Administration Association (SBAA) Conference. This Quintuple Helix model marries an experiential entrepreneurial education with sustainability goals that improve society through creating more successful businesses and economic development through innovation. During the session, Dr. Robles described the layout of her Adopt A Startup program, how entrepreneurs were chosen to participate, the student activities, and the outcomes expected and realized from the program adopted by over 60 local entrepreneurs, with the majority being female entrepreneurs of color. She shared with the audience how to create a similar program at their institutions as she did at the most recent International Council of Small Business World Congress Womenpreneurs session in Paris. In addition, Dr. Robles virtually presented the “Adaptive Humane-Innovation-Sustainable-based Entrepreneurship (HIS-E) Program: An example of Resiliency and Community Engagement despite Covid-19” at the 2021 Texas Regional Alliance for Campus Sustainability (TRACS) Virtual Summit: Hope for the Future.



EVENTS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Center for Innovation and Commercialization Wraps a Productive Fall Semester



The **Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC)** had a very busy fall semester beginning October 22nd with a 3 Day Startup (3DS) weekend. This 72-hour learning-by-doing workshop taught entrepreneurial skills to individuals with diverse backgrounds in an extreme hands-on environment. Next up was the Big Idea Competition where 15 finalists, consisting of students, faculty, and community members, pitched their business ideas in an exciting “shark tank-like” experience. Three of the winners are now competing in a Blackstone LaunchPad Ideas Competition at the national level. The Pitch Academy, a four-day intensive workshop was held November 15th -18th. This workshop assisted founders in better understanding the challenges of pitching their company and raising capital. The week ended with the companies pitching to a roomful of seasoned investors and members of the Rio Grande Valley Angel Network. On November 12th , the Rafael Munguia Business Plan Competition opened with an information session. Twenty thousand dollars will be awarded to winners in late April 2022. On December 7, the inaugural iVenture Cohort pitched to a panel of judges after participating in a seven-week-long ideation program following the Wendy Kennedy methodology, "So What? Who Cares? Why You?" a program that helps aspiring entrepreneurs develop their ideas. And to cap it off, the CIC launched its Blackboard LaunchPad (BLP) student ambassador program. Four students will promote CIC programs and create awareness on both Edinburg and Brownsville campuses. The CIC helps entrepreneurs from ideation through commercialization. For more information on upcoming business competitions, programming, and resources, visit <https://www.utrgv.edu/cic/> or call (956) 665-3917.

Thanksgiving (Cansgiving) Drive



The Thanksgiving Drive is an initiative created by RCVCOBE student organization **Enactus** in 2015, under the mentoring of faculty advisor **Maria Leonard**, as a way to connect and understand community needs. Through fundraising efforts and several partnerships and collaborations with RGV businesses and non-profits, our Enactus chapter has grown our efforts to reach 1600 families in need this year, up from 400 the year before. These families received full turkey meals, which were delivered by Enactus students and volunteers at 12 different locations across Hidalgo and Cameron Counties. RCVCOBE student organization **CEO** and faculty advisor **Sylvia Robles** also volunteered to deliver the turkeys in Brownsville.

SOAR Program



Thanks to a grant from the UTRGV Office of Sustainability, **Enactus** students are mentoring young men and women on the autism spectrum from Team Mario, a McAllen based nonprofit dedicated to the development of such individuals. Enactus partners with the Workforce Solutions of the Rio Grande Valley to put our participants through a career readiness and sustainable living practices curriculum with the goal of providing jobs and/or internships to all participants who complete the program. Some mentors are also RCVCOBE students members of AMA. This is the second consecutive year for this initiative by Enactus students.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Lorena Hernandez, Master of Accountancy, '20 and BBA in Accountancy, was named one of the 2021 Rising Stars by the Texas Society of CPAs. Lorena is the Cameron County Auditor and an adjunct faculty member at RCVCOBE. She previously held positions as the CFO of the Port of Brownsville, Auditor for the UT System Administration, and Director of Finance at the Port of Brownsville. [Read more](#)