

**UTRGV** : Robert C. Vackar College of  
Business & Entrepreneurship

# NEWSLETTER

**Volume 4 Issue 4 - June 2022**

**GIVE TO RCVCOBE**

**MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN**

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## Center for Border Economic Studies

[Click here](#) to read the Spring 2022 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 the subject line "RCVCOBE



Dear RCVCOBE Family:

Wow. Just, wow! A more articulate introduction is warranted for this newsletter, but the simple expression of awe sums up this dean's reflection of all the great things taking place in RCVCOBE. It's fitting that the first story in the newsletter is a summary of the college's inaugural recognition of excellence ceremony. With so many faculty, staff, students, and alumni performing feats of excellence for the college, we instituted a formal recognition of their efforts and outcomes. RCVCOBE faculty continue to demonstrate excellence as teacher-scholars serving as thought leaders in their fields and award-winning master teachers transferring their knowledge to the next generation of business leaders. The staff strive for excellence in ensuring the success of our students and faculty. Our students continue to define engagement as they win more national awards. And our alumni carry their excellence forward as award-winning faculty at other institutions. Please enjoy reading about the many sources of excellence and pride shared by the RCVCOBE Family!

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

## RCVCOBE Excellence Awards

RCVCOBE hosted its inaugural Excellence Awards for students, faculty, and staff on May 12, 2022. Congratulations to the following recipients for their outstanding achievements and contribution to RCVCOBE, UTRGV and our community!

Newsletter Content."

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[RCVCOBE in the Press](#)

## Student Excellence Awards

- Ph.D. student: **Bright Frimpong**
- Master's student: **Jennifer Milczewski**
- Undergraduate students: **Aylin Madrigal Ramos** and **Job Martinez**
- Student organization - Community engagement: **ENACTUS**
- Student organization - Professional development: **Beta Alpha Psi**

## Faculty Excellence Awards

- Teaching - Tenured: **Marvin Glen Lovett**
- Teaching - Tenure-track: **Xuan Wang**
- Teaching - Non-tenure track: **Jorge Vidal**
- Research - Tenured: **Michael Abebe**
- Research - Tenure-track: **Incheol Kim**
- Service - Institutional and Academic: **Bin Wang**
- Service - Public Engagement: **Sylvia Robles**
- Societal impact: **Maria Leonard**

## Staff Excellence Awards

- Top performance: **Shay Nelson**
- Outstanding team player: **Magdalena Martinez** and **Shay Nelson**

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

### ENACTUS RCV chapter received ENACTUS Jack Shewmaker Spirit Award



RCVCOBE student organization **ENACTUS** received the Jack Shewmaker Spirit award at the ENACTUS USA Expo in April 2022. The Jack Shewmaker Spirit award is given to only one organization each year to recognize their exemplary performance in demonstrating

the spirit and values of ENACTUS. Under the mentoring of faculty advisor **Maria Leonard**, RCVCOBE ENACTUS has been actively involved in our community with activities such as Thanksgiving food drive, SOAR project helping local young adults with autism, and providing financial literacy education.

### **Beta Alpha Psi named UTRGV New Student Organization of the Year**



RRCVCOBE student organization **Beta Alpha Psi** received UTRGV's New Student Organization of the Year award in May 2022. Congratulations to the student officers, members and their faculty advisors for this achievement!



## Hospitality and Tourism Management Students Learn from Industry Leaders

The Spring 2022 semester was productive for Hospitality and Tourism Management students as they had several opportunities to interact, network and learn from Hospitality Industry leaders at various forums.

**Americas Lodging Investment Summit (January 23-26)**, held at the JW Marriott, LA live in Los Angeles from January 23-26, exposed students to over 2000 top level decision makers in the world of hotel finance, investments and real estate. The students worked at the event and participated in various educational and networking events. As noted by the students participating in the event the primary benefits included meeting students from other leading hospitality schools, understanding various career choices in the investment and financial aspects of the lodging industry, a realistic view of the prospects for the industry in the coming years, and how industry adapts and recovers from crisis situations.



**Young Hoteliers Summit (March 7-9)**, organized by Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne, invited two UTRGV students to participate in the international event hosted in Switzerland (online this year). YHS benefits both students and professionals by creating interactions between hospitality students from 80 different countries and exposing them to various industry sessions including working on a realistic, unique team project. Students receive feedback on their solutions from industry mentors.

**Castell@College Women's Leadership program (March 1)**: Once again UTRGV students were invited to participate in Castell's College program. Hosted, in the introductory Hospitality class by Professor Massey Munoz, Castell this year brought in four women leaders in the Hospitality Industry to talk about hospitality careers and what it takes to succeed in the industry. The session provided students an opportunity to talk to these industry leaders one on one in break out sessions.



**Asian Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) (April 12-15):** AAHOA represents nearly 20,000 hoteliers across the U.S., and more than 34,000 member-owned hotels with more than 1 million employees represent a significant part of the U.S. economy. Our students attended this year's Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland and had the opportunity to learn from industry leaders, network and gain a better understanding of a significant part of the Lodging Industry.



## Ph.D. Program Awards and Placements

### PhD Student and Faculty Excellence Awards

- Research - Information systems: **Bright Frimpong**
- Research - Finance: **Theophilus Osah**
- Research - Management: **Shuaijun Zhang**
- Research - Marketing: **Ross Murray**
- Teaching: **Jian Xu**
- Faculty: **Siamak Javadi**

### PhD Student Placements

- **Lorena Garcia:** Assistant Professor, University of Northern Colorado
- **Sasawan Heingraj:** Assistant Professor, Winston-Salem State University
- **Joseph Manga:** Assistant Professor, Abilene Christian University,
- **Ross Murray:** Assistant Professor and Director of the Professional Sales Program, University of Charleston (West Virginia)
- **Daniel Treku:** Assistant Professor, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

**Jian Xu:** Assistant Professor, Fort Hays State University

- **Ash Zareian:** Faculty Specialist in the Management, Marketing, & Entrepreneurship Department, The University of Scranton

## FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

### Faculty Research Spotlight



Human resource (HR) practices are potent in shaping workplace social relationships, which play a vital role in employees' well-being. Compared to formal work relationships like supervisor-subordinate or coworker relationships, workplace friendship—a form of voluntary and informal relationship at work—receives less attention regarding its role in affecting employees' well-being. In a recent article published in a leading management journal, *Human Resource Management*,

RCVCOBE professor **Dr. Yejun Zhang** find that high-commitment work systems (HCWS), which consist of a bundle of HR practices that emphasize nurturing psychological links (e.g., commitment and attachment) between employees and the organization, can facilitate the formation of workplace friendship through creating shared goals and maintaining the homogeneity of employees within the organization. Workplace friendship will in turn enhance employees' well-being because in a friendship relationship, instrumental and emotional support is provided to one another, and task- and person-related needs are met. Moreover, this indirect link between HR systems and employee well-being through workplace friendship is stronger when the job tasks require more interdependence among the employees. This research highlights the importance of informal work relationships in conveying the intended positive effect of HR systems on employees' well-being and provides guidance for HR managers on how to enhance the benefits of HCWS.

### Faculty Awards and Honors



**Dr. Hale Kaynak**, Professor of Operations Management, and her coauthors and UTRGV Ph.D. program alumni **Muratcan Erkul** and **Subhajit Chakraborty**, received the 2022 American Society for Quality Control (ASQ) Gryna Award for their research entitled "The strategic value of servitization: A quality management perspective" published in the *Quality Management Journal* in 2021. The Gryna award recognizes a research article published in the previous year that "has made the largest single contribution to the extension of understanding and knowledge of the philosophy, principles, or methods of quality management." [Click here](#) to read more about this award.



**Dr. Giorgio Gotti**, Director and Professor of the School of Accountancy, received the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants (TXCPA) Outstanding Accounting Educator Award for the Large College/University category. Dr. Gotti was selected for this great honor from among hundreds of eligible faculty members across the state.

**Dr. Sylvia Robles**, RCVCOBE Assistant Professor of Practice in International Business and Entrepreneurship, received the 2022 UTRGV Faculty Excellence Award in Sustainability Education. In addition, she was nominated by UTRGV for the Regents' Outstanding Teaching Award. Dr. Robles has been innovative in teaching using the adopt-a-startup model and in integrating sustainability education in her instruction.







**Dr. AJ Singh**, director and professor of the Hospitality and Tourism Management program, presented as a panelist at the West Federation CHRIE conference in February 2022. Dr. Singh discussed curriculum, internship and career opportunities for hospitality graduates in the healthcare sector.

RCVCOBE ENACTUS faculty advisor **Maria Leonard** was recognized as the 2022 Faculty Advisor of the Year by UTRGV Center for Student Involvement. Maria has mentored ENACTUS to serve our RGV community and received multiple national recognitions from ENACTUS USA, AACSB, and the Southern Business Administration Association.



### ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



**Dr. Ngoc Cindy Pham**, Ph.D. in Business Administration with a concentration in marketing, '18, received the 2022 Outstanding Faculty Service award at the City University of New York-Brooklyn College.