CoBA Scholars Inducted into Beta Gamma Sigma

A total of 46 CoBA scholars were inducted into the business honor society, Beta Gamma Sigma in March. Additionally, two faculty members, Dr. Kai Koong and Dr. Marie Mora were also inducted as members.

The international honor society is dedicated to ‘recognizing business excellence’ and exists only at schools accredited by AACSB International. Membership is for a lifetime. Currently, there are 468 university chapters world-wide.

Ph.D.
Sindy Chapa

MBA
Henry Leonard Miller
Paul Derek Wesley Burchfield

SENIORS
Cindy Alanis
Lily Ayimah-Gyamfi
Jose Balmori
Andres Rodrigo Bello
Karen Cabrera
Ruby Chantell Campuzano
Debra Diane Carranza
Hector A. Cornejo
Violeta Davila
Cole F. Denckla
My Lan Do

Aaron Eduardo Escobar
Alejandra Fabre
Jennifer Denise Garza
Vanessa Janette Garza
Maria Dolores Herrera
Fabiola Jacuinde
Robert Killins
Perla C. Limas
Jesus Angel Lopez
Sandra Lujan
Maria Mata
Stephanie Miller
Amparo Moran
Merlen Patricia Munoz
Ailene Perez-Comple
Maria Guadalupe Pina
David Quevedo
Concepcion Ramirez-Gonzalez
Edda Reyna
Michelle Rojas

Sergio Rojas
Hiram Romero
Thomas C. Rudolph
Marta A. Salinas
Deanna E. Schneyer
Vanessa Yvette Tanguma
Billie Jo Walker

JUNIORS
Obed Garcia
Belinda Garza-Silva
Felicia A. Orozco
Leslie Parra
Gabriela Rivera

FACULTY
Dr. Kai Koong
Dr. Marie Mora
Insurance Council of Texas Presents Scholarships

Five well-deserving CoBA students each received a $2,000 scholarship from Mark Hanna of the Insurance Council of Texas (ICT) at a reception in their honor on March 26. The students: Cole R. Denckla, Michael A. Escamilla, Christian Gallegos, Jazmin Ochoa and Sergio Rojas, are all finance majors and received the scholarships because of their academic achievement and future professional interest in the insurance industry,” said Professor of Finance Dr. Cynthia Brown.

In addition, the ICT provided $4,400 for programmatic support including sending students to attend an ICT-related conference that will be held this summer in Austin. This is the second year ICT has provided scholarship and programmatic support for UTPA’s insurance program. According to their Web site, “the Insurance Council of Texas is a multi-purpose, non-profit trade association of property and casualty insurers writing business in Texas.”

Pagán Interviewed on National News

If you were watching the CBS Evening News on March 3, you would have seen CoBA’s health economics expert Dr. José Pagán. Pagán was interviewed by CBS News national correspondent Byron Pitts for a story about the cost of healthcare in the United States and the plans of Presidential candidates Senators Barak Obama and Hillary Clinton to address the issue.

During the CBS News story that profiled consumers who cross the border to Mexico for more affordable healthcare, Pagán said, “If you’re mandating or obliging people to purchase a policy that they cannot afford, it’s not going to work in an area like this. People will always have the option of going to Mexico to get healthcare.” Pagán is a professor of economics and the director of the Institute for Population Health Policy.

Dr. José A. Pagán

Visit http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/03/03/eveningnews/main3901852.shtml#ccmm to see the entire story.

Turn Technotrash into Cash!

Used up electronic storage devices, such as CDs, are known as technotrash and are a source of environmental clutter—unless—new ways are found to turn ordinary CDs into products that have added value.

CoBA is challenging UTPA student teams to think “Business Outside the Box” and use their imagination to find new ways to use old or scratched music, computer, or unused recordable CDs.

To participate, just form a team, get an idea, demonstration the new product on video and submit the video to YouTube at http://youtube.com/my_videos_upload.

Videos will be judged for originality, most value created, social responsibility and daring ideas. The four finalists will be screened during the Leadership Week Movie Night, April 17th and the Grand Prize winner of $500 will be chosen by the audience. For details, visit http://coba.utpa.edu/brainstorm2008.
Observing Others Before Buying

Consumers may observe the purchases of other consumers before making their own purchases, according to recent research. For example, some consumers look at the number of cars in a restaurant’s parking lot when deciding where to eat or look at the number of already-rented movies when deciding which movie to rent.

While many factors affect the tendency to observe other consumers when purchasing, the research identified the following consumer characteristics as important: aversion to risk, feelings of brand choice overload, consumer self-confidence and the propensity to conform to group norms. The results should help retailers in understanding consumer purchase behavior and in merchandising.

The research, conducted by Dr. Penny Simpson, Dr. Judy Siguaw, Dean of the Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management, Singapore and John Cadogan, of Loughborough University, England, appeared recently in the European Journal of Marketing.

Area Teachers Go to School on Personal Finance

Alberto Dávila, the Neuhaus Professor and chair of the Economics and Finance department, conducted a workshop for 28 Region One teachers on February 18. The workshop provided the area teachers with an overview of economic and personal finance concepts and related the concepts to information available on the Internet.

During the event, discussions and hands-on activities were used to explore topics such as the fastest-growing occupations, budgeting, credit, and The Millionaire Game. “The teachers learned a lot about personal finance and about activities to help them teach these concepts to their students,” said Dávila, “and we had fun, too.”

Doctoral Student to Present at Conference

Besides the typical factors of cost, quality, time and flexibility, emotional capability and product innovativeness should affect mass customization capability, according to management doctoral student, Anant Deshpande. Deshpande has developed a model detailing his views determined from an extensive review of prior research.

He will present his work, titled "Learning, Manufacturing Technologies, Mass Customization and Competitive Capabilities" at the Academy of Management Conference in Anaheim, California in August.
Internship Round Table Discussion Series

CoBA Students who recently completed internships with major companies gathered for a Roundtable Discussion Series event where they shared experiences and advice with other students.

Each of the six panelists emphasized two primary points. First, an internship is crucial in transitioning from a student to a professional. Second, to get an internship, students should carefully monitor opportunities through Career Services, the HESTEC Career Expo and professional networking initiatives.

The Roundtable Discussion Series is sponsored by the Hispanic Business Student Association (HBSA) and the Office of Career Services.

The Internship Stories CIS student, Michael Rodriguez interned with Tyson Foods over the summer. The company was so pleased with his work that they awarded him a $4,000 scholarship and asked him to continue the internship throughout the semester virtually. This ‘virtual internship’ is the first known internship program of its kind anywhere in the world.

Debra Basaldua is a finance student who completed a co-op in Human Resources with the Toyota Motor Manufacturing Plant in San Antonio. Since completing the co-op, Debra has helped build a closer relationship with Toyota and UTPA by helping to organize the HESTEC Toyota Networking Social and helping recruit other UTPA students to the HESTEC career expo. Debra has been asked to return to Toyota for Summer 2008.

CoBA management student, Ricardo Escalera, has extended his Summer 2008 internship as a School of Retail Leadership Management Intern for H-E-B. Ricardo is currently assigned to the Rio Grande Valley Regional Corporate Office in Edinburg, TX.

HBSA president and accounting student, Estela Guerrero, lived in Washington D.C. for her internship with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) as a government analyst intern. Estella will be graduating in May and has accepted an offer to work in the Big 4 accounting firm of Ernst &Young LLP in Houston.

IB major, Alyssa Pena, shared her unique experiences interning. After completing several concurrent enrollment college courses in high school, this 19 year-old decided to internships to gain valuable work experience. During the summer, she interned for Ford Motor Company in Orlando, FL in the marketing department and this spring she is interning locally with C.H. Robinson Worldwide. In summer 2008, Alyssa will be heading to General Mills to work as a business management associate intern.

Many students would pay to have the dream internship that Omar Alanis, CoBA marketing major, had last summer. Omar was a marketing intern for the “Americans Team,” the Dallas Cowboy Football Training Camp in San Antonio. Omar returned to UTPA in the Fall and has a marketing internship with the RGV Vipers.
Houston, we have an HBSA

Nine officers and members of the Hispanic Business Student Association (HBSA) at UTPA attended the National Hispanic Business Association’s (NHBA’s) 2008 Southern Regional Collegiate Symposium on March 29 at the University of St. Thomas in Houston.

The symposium, sponsored by Goldman Sachs & Company, included workshops on Professional Networking, Leadership and Wall Street. A session on Corporate Sponsorships at the Chapter level was presented by the University of Houston’s HBSA chapter. This session featured a panel of experts from the international CPA firm GLO CPAs.

The workshops provided opportunities to network with other southern HBSA chapters and gave much useful information ranging from finding the right career path to having a successful HBSA chapter.

The HBSA group also visited one of the Big Four accounting firms, Ernst & Young, and New York Life.

Robots Are Subject of Recent Research

From robotic dogs to lawn mowers to surgery, robots are increasingly used in interactions with humans. So do humans care about how human the robots appear? In a recent study by CoBA marketing doctoral students Ade Segun Oyedele and Soonkwan Hong and their marketing professor, Dr. Michael Minor, people are indifferent to humanness of robots if they might touch them.

The people surveyed in their study were more concerned with the humanness of the robot’s appearance, however, if they were expected to live with it, communicate with it or see it in a movie. The authors said, “our results should help robot designers to better design robots with humanoid features in ways that will gain human acceptance in varying application settings (e.g., home, office etc.)."

Zhou Finds Firm Cross-listing Effects

Cross-listed Chinese firms have lower information asymmetry risk, lower cost of capital and higher firm value in domestic markets than do non-cross-listed firms, according to recent research. The research was conducted by CoBA accounting professor, Dr. Haiyan Zhou and her colleague Dr. Sami and was recently published in the *Journal of International Financial Management and Accounting*.

According to Zhou, the research is the first to examine the effects of cross-listing on information asymmetry risk. The authors expected to see an effect “Because cross-listed firms are subject to increased disclosure requirements, increased regulatory scrutiny and increased legal liability.”

Zhou also presented results of other research with Sami at the 2008 International Accounting Section Midyear Conference of American Accounting Association in February, and has had two other papers, also coauthored with Sami, accepted for publication. One article “Do Auditing Standards Improve Information Environment of Public Companies? Evidence from an Emerging Market” has been accepted for publication in the *International Journal of Accounting* and the other, “Response to Discussion on Do Auditing Standards Improve Information Environment of Public Companies? Evidence from an Emerging Market” will appear in the *International Journal of Accounting*.

Practice Makes Perfect: Business Students Participate in Mock Interview Days

“It’s a mistake not to prepare before an interview, no matter how knowledgeable and qualified you are for the opportunity. I have learned this lesson from a past experience,” said management major, Edna Thatcher.

Edna and 29 other CoBA students participated in mock interviews conducted by UTPA career specialists together with H-E-B recruiters, Monica Pena and Dora Trejo.

These recruiters were instrumental in explaining to students the importance of interview preparation and in providing sample questions and interview tips.

To participate, students signed up for an interview time and submitted a job description from a potential employer. The interview questions for each student were then matched with their preferred employer and job preference.

The career specialists provided students with feedback about their interviewing strengths and areas of improvement after the interview. “Since the mock interview, I signed up to interview for the Dollar General District Management Internship. I was offered and accepted the opportunity. The Mock Interview process has given me the confidence and practice necessary to succeed,” said Thatcher.

The Office of Career Services encourages all students to prepare before their interview. Call (956) 381-2243 to set up a meeting with a Career Services.