

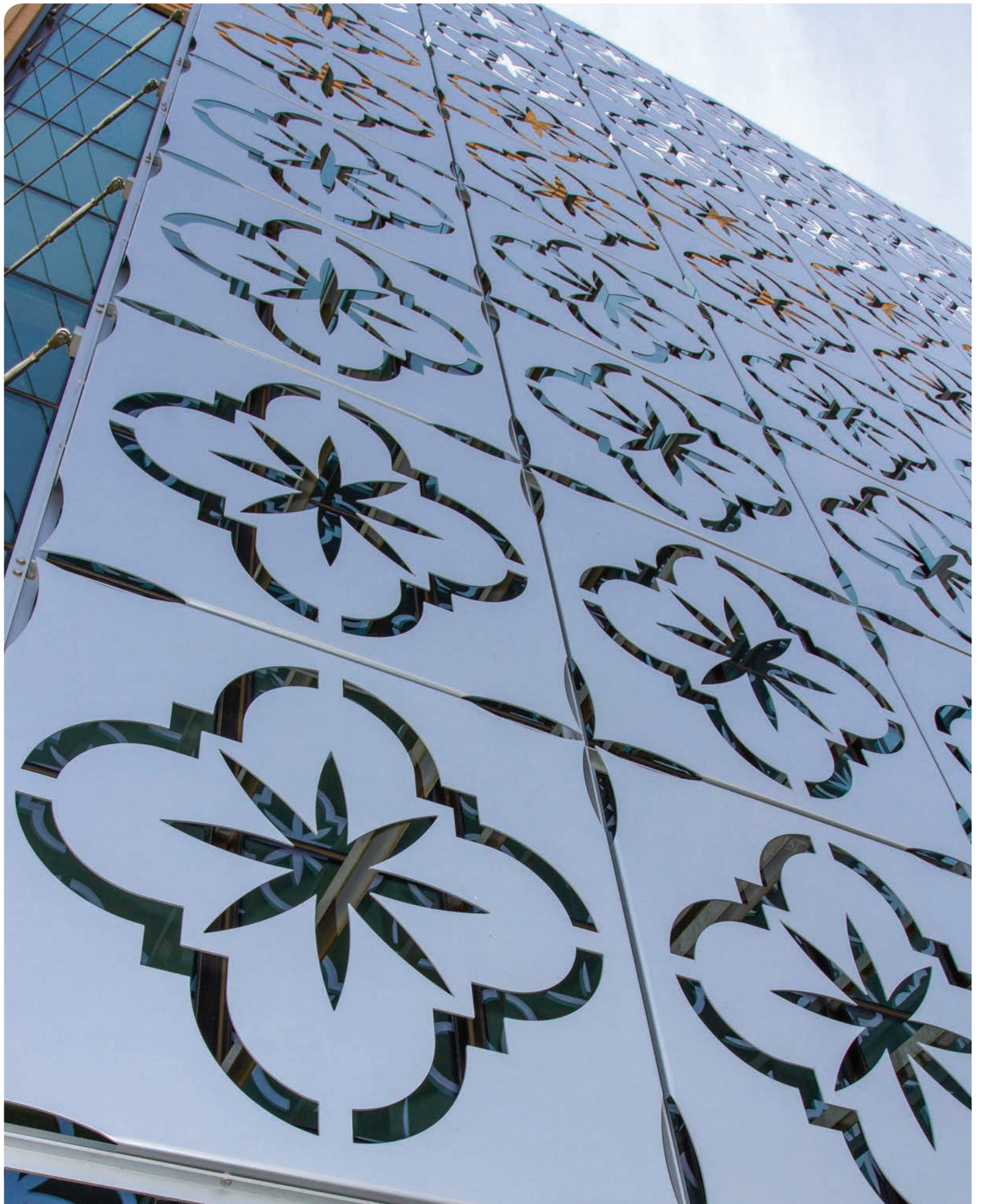
SPRING 2025

¡ADELANTE!

THE MAGAZINE OF TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY—SAN ANTONIO



A BRIGHT FUTURE
A look at what's on the horizon





4 A BRIGHT FUTURE

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It is my distinct honor to share our latest edition of ¡ADELANTE!, which highlights Texas A&M University-San Antonio's incredible progress and shines a bright light on the future we have before us. A future full of incredible promise for our students, with new facilities, affordable childcare options, new academic offerings and a transformative community space in the form of a student union, is all on our horizon.

Our students reflect our South San Antonio community, and we are proud to offer them unique and inspirational opportunities that will shape their future. This semester, we were honored to host U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor for our 2025 Distinguished Lecture Series, a once-in-a-lifetime event for our students. She reminded us of the power we have, our shared experience through education and that our students can truly achieve anything they believe is possible.

We see this every day across our University as our students excel in their academic journey. Our students in the Ready to Work program are a paramount example of this, as they get hands-on experience that prepares them to launch successful careers that align with their aspirations.

Our faculty are also pushing the boundaries of the known and unknown, delving into emerging technology and the world of artificial intelligence. The breadth of academic fields working on AI research at A&M-San Antonio and the collaboration across our campus to ensure our students are prepared to ethically use and understand AI are extraordinary.

Every day, I hear from students, family members and our community about the impact we are making in our region. We are meeting high-demand workforce needs in fields like cybersecurity, pre-health and education. We are seeing active and engaged alumni contributing to programs that shaped their personal and professional lives. We are building and growing our Jaguar Athletics programs.

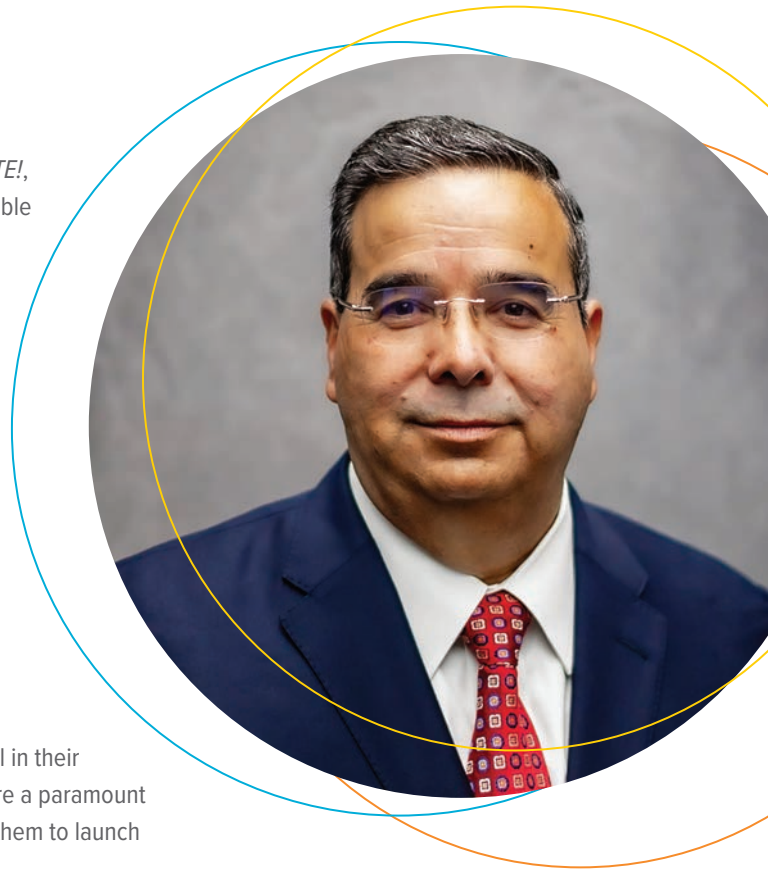
We have seen tremendous growth at A&M-San Antonio for such a young institution, and we owe so much to Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp for his support of our institution. We wish him well in retirement, but as he retires, this is only the beginning for A&M-San Antonio. I truly feel we are on the precipice of new heights, and I cannot wait for us to go on this journey together.

The stories you will read in ¡ADELANTE! are exemplars of our success, but they only scratch the surface. I invite you to visit campus soon and see for yourself all the progress. You'll have to excuse our construction, but it's leading to great things.

Paws Up,



Salvador Hector Ochoa, Ph.D.





By Sam Boykin

When Texas A&M University-San Antonio celebrated its 15th anniversary last year, it was the commemoration of both a remarkable journey and an unlikely success story. Established in a region often overlooked and historically underserved, a four-year institution was a spark of possibility for the community, but it was not built overnight. Despite the odds faced in creating a new institution, the University has flourished, establishing a solid foundation upon which to grow and thrive. Indeed, the future looks very bright at A&M-San Antonio, which is experiencing record enrollment with plans for new academic programs, campus facilities and transformative community resources. As an institution created to support the South Side, our future is centered on addressing the region's most pressing needs and uplifting our community.

Here's a look at what's on the horizon.



Educare San Antonio

Since the onset of the pandemic, Bexar County has been designated a “childcare desert”—a community with a severe deficit of accessible, high-quality early education options. The challenge is particularly acute in South San Antonio, where the number of available spots for quality childcare is approximately five per 100 children.

With Educare San Antonio, the only school of its kind in Texas, the University will offer much-needed childcare for students, staff and Bexar County residents. A&M-San Antonio in April hosted a groundbreaking for Educare, which is scheduled to open in the summer of 2026. The \$20 million facility will include infant, toddler, preschool and kindergarten

facilities, as well as areas dedicated to strengthening family-school connections and resources. The school plans to serve over 200 children and families.

A&M-San Antonio is launching the 26,000-square-foot facility in partnership with The Educare Network, a network of early childhood professionals that has opened 25 other schools around the country. The University’s College of Education and Human Development will oversee and manage Educare San Antonio, which will serve as an innovative teaching resource. The center will help train students studying early childhood education as well as business students looking to gain experience with issues like state licensing regulations and balancing budgets.

Educare San Antonio will be funded by the City of San Antonio, the Texas A&M University System, A&M-San Antonio and various philanthropic sources. Partners in this collaborative initiative include city-funded Pre-K 4 SA and other community organizations.

Like the rest of campus, the architectural style will reflect the classic beauty and craftsmanship of San Antonio’s historic structures. Complementing this distinctive look will be fun and inviting accents, such as arches and canopies. Other features will include a covered communal plaza and classrooms that connect directly to outdoor spaces and play areas.



“Educare San Antonio will be the only resource of its kind in the state, helping improve the lives of hundreds of families. It will be the gold standard for early childhood education and care, while establishing a seamless pathway for students to achieve academic and career success.” DR. EMMA SAVAGE-DAVIS, DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Public Health and Education Building

Bexar County has alarmingly high rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic ailments compared to the rest of the country. In parts of South San Antonio, there is a 20-year difference in lifespan compared to the North Side.

With these disparities in mind, A&M-San Antonio is making significant strides in improving community health and bolstering critical research. One primary initiative is the University's Public Health and Education Building. Scheduled to open in the spring of 2026, the \$55 million, state-of-the-art facility will expand education pathways and research opportunities throughout South Texas, enabling the University to grow its enrollment in health- and science-related courses.

The 35,500-square-foot center will include administrative and instructional spaces for the community health program, kinesiology labs, faculty offices, classrooms and administrative support for the College of Education and Human Development. The space will also support innovative new programs, such as the University's Public Health Genetics and Genomics Laboratory, which studies and addresses the health disparities that exist in South Bexar County.

"The Public Health and Education Building symbolizes the incredible potential of the University," said President Salvador Hector Ochoa. "The facility will serve as a launchpad for effecting change in the community and help build a workforce to provide compassionate patient care."

As part of A&M-San Antonio's ongoing mission to improve public health in the region and expand health sciences teaching, the University has also established a collaboration with A&M Health Science Center and University Health, which is building a hospital, medical complex and its public health institute on 68 acres next to the A&M-San Antonio campus. University Health's Palo Alto Hospital is scheduled to open in 2027, while Vida, the health care center and headquarters for the University Health Institute for Public Health, is scheduled to open in 2026.



Lounge



Large Conference Room



Student Study



Open Research Lab



New Academic Programs

A recent analysis conducted in the 75-mile radius around Bexar County identified critical workforce gaps in the fields of health care and engineering. As the region's population continues to grow and technological advances change how and where people work, it's critical that younger generations are prepared to navigate this shifting landscape.

A&M-San Antonio currently offers 39 undergraduate degrees and 23 graduate degrees, with areas of study ranging from criminology, history and business administration to kinesiology, biological sciences and sociology. With the University experiencing record enrollment—this fall's incoming class totaled more than 8,000 students, marking a nearly 10% increase in our two-year enrollment—the

University is looking to expand its academic programs to better serve students and help satisfy the region's changing workforce needs.

Part of this effort includes plans for developing foundational programs in nursing, health care administration, electrical engineering, computer engineering and construction engineering technology. The University is seeking legislative funding to launch these programs. A&M-San Antonio is striving to provide students with the skills and education they need to launch successful careers in these in-demand sectors.

The University plans to develop wrap-around support services across these University programs that include

experiential learning, career counseling, professional education, distance education and job placement. These strategies enable the University to continue its successful track record of developing new programs to meet the needs of students and the region.

"By expanding our academic programs, we are not only providing students with opportunities for personal and professional growth, but we're also helping meet the needs of the Texas workforce," said Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahman, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "With programs that cater to a wide-array of student interests, our graduates are excelling in in-demand fields and supporting the local and regional economy."

Student Housing and Dining

As A&M-San Antonio continues to grow its enrollment and academic and athletic programs, there is an increasing demand for more on-campus housing. Students feel more connected to the University when they live on campus, as it enhances their college experiences and creates a welcoming sense of engagement and belonging.

The Texas A&M University System's Board of Regents in February approved \$80 million for a new student housing and dining project. A&M-San Antonio has capacity for 720 student beds between its two residence halls, Esperanza Hall and Estrella Hall, which opened in the fall of 2024. This third phase of housing will add 300 student beds and a dining facility, helping accommodate significant student enrollment, especially as the campus continues to attract a larger population of out-of-region students. The University currently boasts students from 30 states and Puerto Rico, with some 24 countries represented among the student population.

The project calls for a four-story building to be constructed south of Estrella Hall, with features including a reception and lounge area, community learning center and laundry facilities. Additionally, the new facility will have an all-you-can eat dining hall, increasing food options for students, faculty and staff. The targeted completion date for the project is early 2028, with students moving in by the fall semester.

This phase of housing will be integral to A&M-San Antonio's continued recruitment of athletes, out-of-region students, foster youth, international and transfer students. It's also a critical part of the University's support system, helping

students develop pathways to pursue their ambitions and interests.

"Additional housing is critical for helping our growing number of students find their place at A&M-San Antonio," said Dr. Juan Guardia, vice president for student affairs. "To make the most of their college experience, students want to be on campus. We're dedicated to making our campus accessible and providing spaces where students can socialize, study, eat and form a sense of belonging. Our new housing also contributes to higher retention rates, allowing students to focus on their studies and graduate on time."





Garden Classroom

With nearly 700 acres, A&M-San Antonio has rapidly expanded its footprint over the years with new academic buildings, student housing and recreational facilities. But even with all the available land, relatively little has been done to take advantage of the area's natural beauty—until now.

Unbeknownst to most of the campus community, the University has had a greenhouse for years. It's been moved multiple times to make way for new buildings. Its current home is behind the Business Library Hall.

J. Rodolfo Valdez Barillas, associate professor of biology, has managed and developed the space, using it for biology classes and research projects. He's also collaborated with student volunteers and the Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement to establish a vegetable garden that supplies fresh produce to The General's Store, the University's food pantry.

The modest greenhouse is getting a big makeover as the University develops a 1-acre garden classroom complex that will

include an outdoor classroom. Barillas is spearheading this initiative.

"We are moving forward with a more permanent space and facilities that support outdoor teaching, gardening and greenhouse research," he said. "We envision this new space as a place where outdoor learning can happen, but more importantly, where our University community can gather, socialize and get some respite from a busy day's work. We hope the space can provide the mental health benefits provided by outdoor natural spaces."

The \$2 million project is being built in phases, with the first phase scheduled to wrap up in August. It will include an outdoor classroom, crushed gravel walking trails and a covered pavilion for events like movie nights, poetry readings and other special occasions.

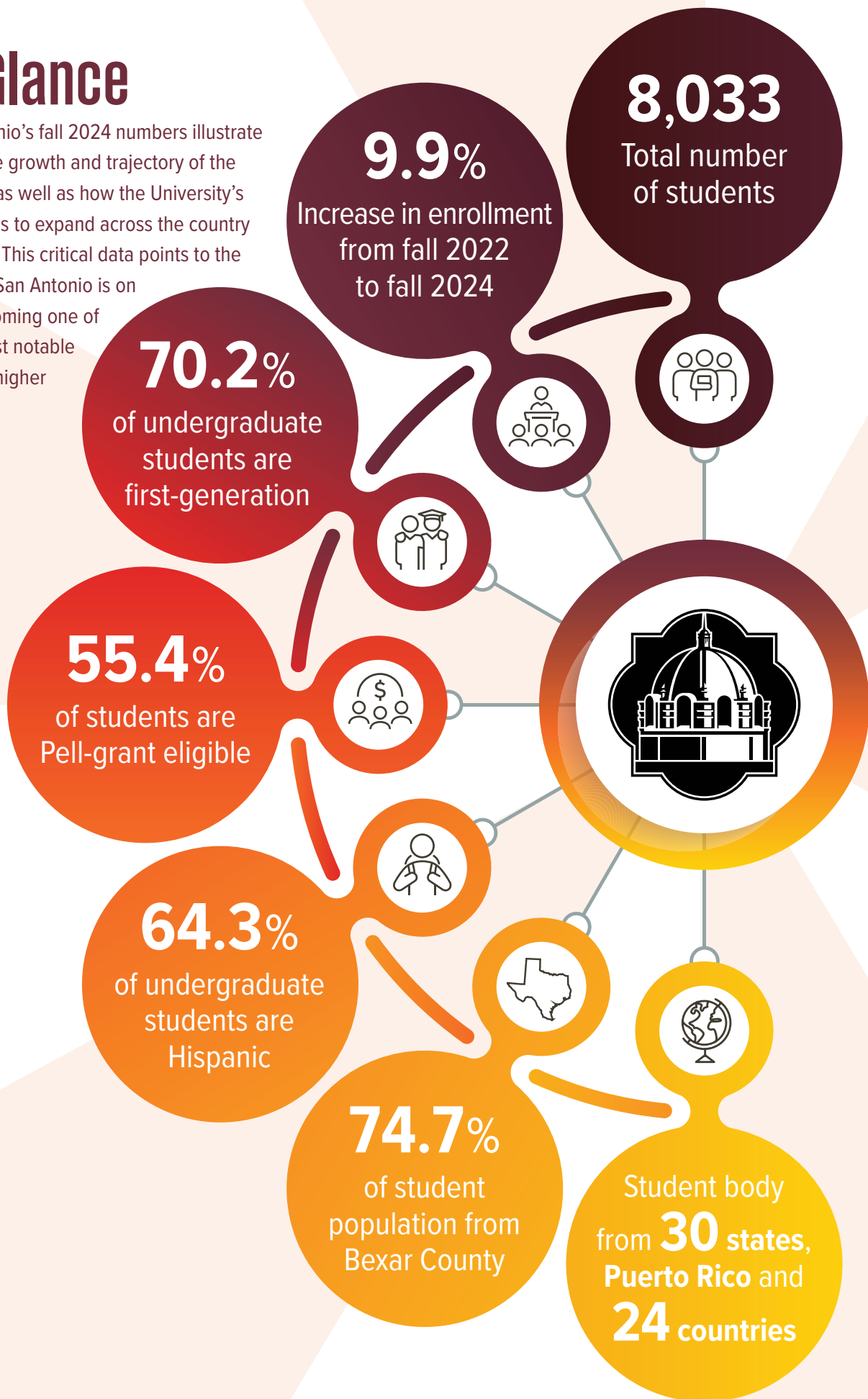
The first phase will also include electric and plumbing infrastructure to support a future research area with an expanded greenhouse and garden that will provide nutritious food for students. The entire project is expected to be complete in the spring of 2026.

"I love that we're dedicating land for this purpose. It will be a protected, dedicated space that will also support local wildlife. As the campus continues to grow, this gives the University a beautiful, natural area that students, faculty and staff can all enjoy."

DR. DEBRA FEAKES, DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

At a Glance

A&M-San Antonio's fall 2024 numbers illustrate the remarkable growth and trajectory of the student body, as well as how the University's reach continues to expand across the country and the world. This critical data points to the fact that A&M-San Antonio is on its way to becoming one of the state's most notable institutions of higher education.



Planning for the Future

As A&M-San Antonio builds upon its solid foundation, it's also planning for a bright future. In addition to the projects underway, leadership is working collaboratively with community leaders and stakeholders on developing a long-term strategic plan to help set a course for the next five to 10 years.

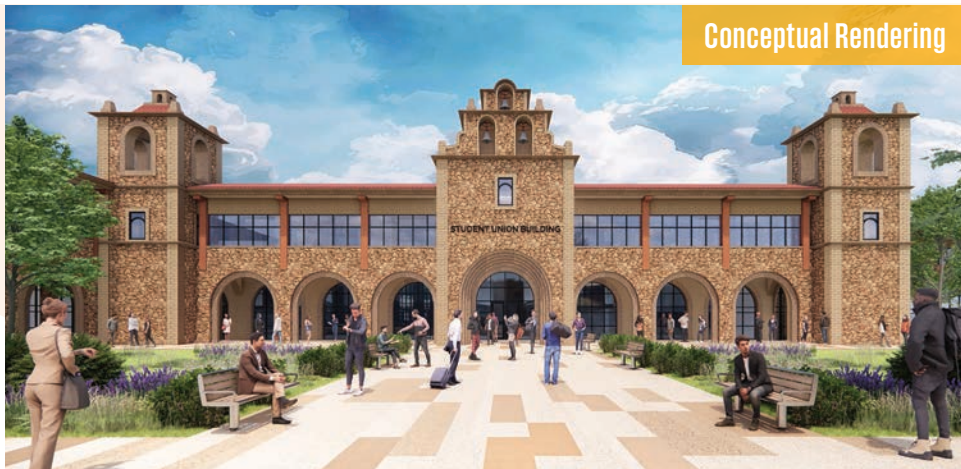
A primary focus of this plan is to establish A&M-San Antonio as a destination campus. While this includes enhancing academic programs and research initiatives, another important strategy is developing a focal point for the campus community. At the forefront of this initiative is a student union, a vibrant gathering place designed not only to accommodate the growing student body, but to also create a sense of place, community and belonging.

Envisioned as the “beating heart” of the A&M-San Antonio campus, initial plans call for a welcoming facility with programs designed to support personal and professional development, academic achievement, governance, student organizations and community initiatives.

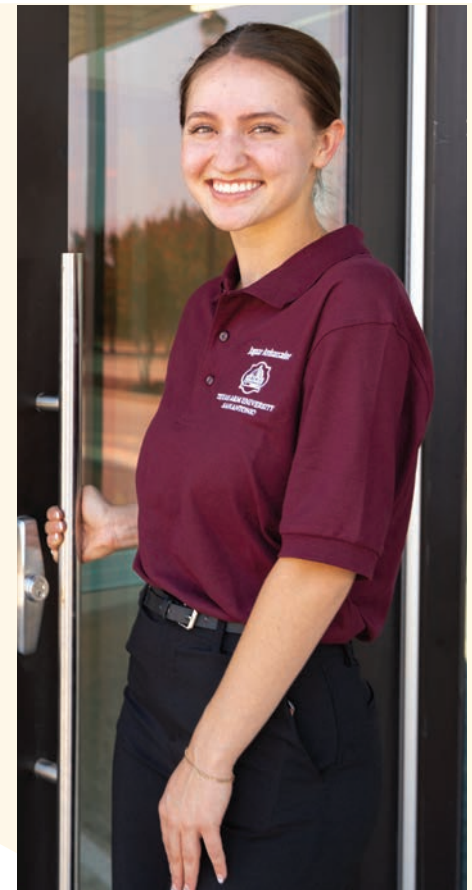
Potential features include a theatre/auditorium, ballroom, student organization offices, meeting rooms, primary campus bookstore and inviting outdoor spaces for special events where the University community can relax and socialize. It's a project that's destined to fundamentally improve the culture and connectivity of the University. For those who wish to make this resource possible for A&M-San Antonio students and the community, several prominent

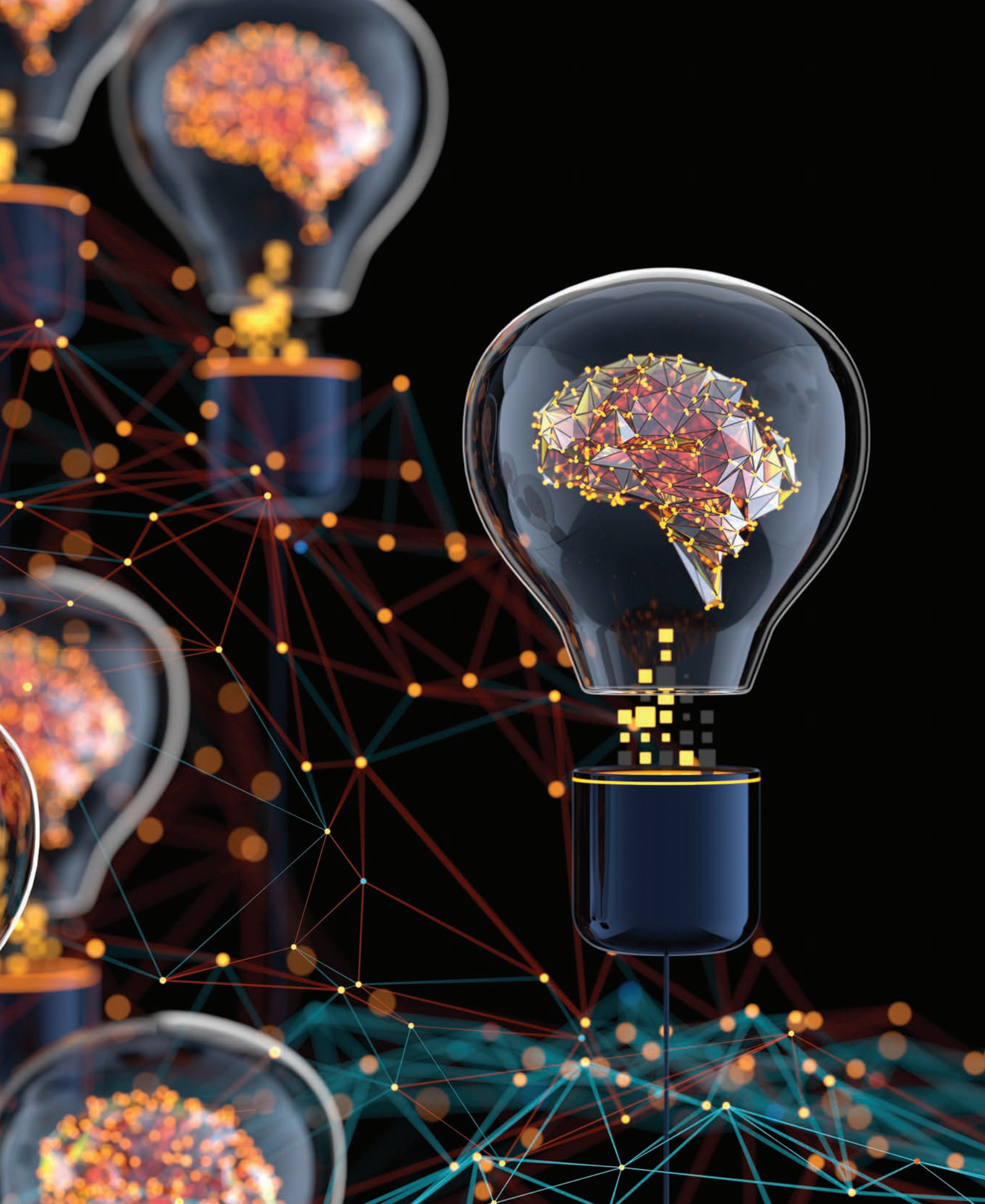
naming and philanthropic investment opportunities will be available.

“There are many exciting changes on the way at A&M-San Antonio,” said President Ochoa. “As the campus continues to expand its footprint with new academic buildings and student resources, we are poised to not only serve as one of the region's top education resources, but also becoming a workforce development engine, preparing the next generation of leaders and boosting the economy. While it's amazing what the University has achieved since it was founded in 2009, the road ahead holds even greater promise as the University establishes an increasingly vital and supportive role throughout the San Antonio community and all of Texas.”



“As the campus continues to expand its footprint with new academic buildings and student resources, we are poised to not only serve as one of the region's top education resources, but also becoming a workforce development engine, preparing the next generation of leaders and boosting the economy.” PRESIDENT SALVADOR HECTOR OCHOA





The AI Revolution

By Tricia Schwennesen and Sam Boykin

How the University uses this transformational technology across multiple disciplines

Artificial Intelligence, once deemed to belong solely in the world of computer science, is finding its way across many disciplines. Texas A&M University-San Antonio is embracing this emerging and transformational technology, ushering in what promises to be a new era of research and higher education.

"The University recognizes that generative artificial intelligence is reshaping education, research and the workforce," said Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahman, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. "AI is not a replacement for critical thinking or foundational knowledge but a tool that, when used responsibly, enhances student learning, faculty innovation and institutional effectiveness."



As A&M-San Antonio takes the necessary steps to responsibly incorporate AI into its academics and research, the University last year named Dr. Ashley Teufel, assistant professor of biology, as Provost Faculty Fellow for Generative AI. She's charged with driving the integration of AI across various academic and administrative spheres, enhancing educational practices and elevating student success.

"One of the exciting things about the boom in AI is that all these projects you'd typically see come out of computer science are now everywhere, from all departments," said Teufel.

Students in one of Teufel's biology classes are using AI to identify different animal species. As part of the project, motion-detecting cameras are stationed around the University's wooded acreage and snap photos when something moves nearby. Students sift through the photos using AI, which identifies the different species.

Teufel said AI streamlines the process, cutting down on the time students spend sorting photographs. However, it's not infallible—yet. A human still must double-check the accuracy of results. As AI advances, the hope is that the model will improve and become even more efficient.

In the College of Business, Dr. Vipul Garg, assistant professor of supply chain management, is also incorporating AI into his research.

He recently was awarded a grant from the University's Office of Research and Health Sciences to purchase electroencephalogram headsets that use special sensors to measure brain activity and eye movement.

Garg is using the high-tech devices for a project designed to improve the performance and safety of forklift operators in South San Antonio. The headsets use AI-enabled software to manage and analyze brain activity. He hopes to examine the "cognitive load" of forklift operators, which is essentially the mental effort required to process information. The initiative could bridge gaps in operator training and safety standards in warehouses and other high-stakes, labor-intensive work settings where workers are often under pressure to meet daily quotas.

"That can create a lot of havoc inside the driver's mind," Garg said. "I'm looking at how we can improve the stress and retention rate of employees within warehouse settings using the cognitive load data. Ultimately, managers can use the information to help prevent injuries and accidents and avoid safety violations. The technology can be applied to many different industries. There are endless possibilities."

Dr. Amir Fekrazad, an associate professor in the Department of Accounting and Finance, is also exploring the possibilities of AI-powered initiatives. He has built an online tool dubbed Maptimum that combines AI's problem-solving skills with specific datasets, including information like population, income levels, school performance and crime figures.

Fekrazad explains users can ask Maptimum's AI specific questions, like where is the best place in San Antonio to raise kids or start a business.

"The AI digs into your request, picks out the key factors, and matches them to the data," he said. "It creates filters and a scoring system on the fly, then ranks the top locations. You get the results on an interactive map, ready to explore."

Fekrazad stresses the technology has broad uses. A social worker, for example, could use it to pinpoint the most vulnerable neighborhoods in a city — areas with high poverty, low health care access and aging populations — to focus their efforts. Or a company might ask Maptimum to find areas with young families and rising incomes to help identify the best market to launch a new toy line.

"The tool doesn't just spit out answers; it shows you the 'why' behind them," Fekrazad said. "What makes this stand out is the balance. AI handles the thinking, figuring out what you need and how to measure it, while the data provides the facts. Together, they deliver answers that are both smart and grounded."

DR. ASHLEY TEUFEL

DR. AMIR FEKRAZAD

DR. JEONG YANG

DR. VIPUL GARG

PREPARING FOR A NEW ERA

One of A&M-San Antonio's earlier forays into AI occurred in late 2023 when the University began work on a new AI program designed to enhance its education and research capabilities while strengthening the local workforce.

With the support of a \$400,000 National Science Foundation grant, the University launched "Jag-AI," an initiative designed to expand the University's AI infrastructure, with a focus on improving health care, quality of life and national defense. Jag-AI is also helping advance careers in AI and assisting in developing curricula and training for faculty and researchers.

Dr. Jeong Yang, associate professor of computer science and cybersecurity, is helping spearhead the project. She stressed that Jag-AI will foster collaborations with industry and government to benefit economically disadvantaged students and help accelerate education-workforce development.

The University in the fall of 2024 rolled out two Jag-AI certificate programs, one for undergraduates and one for graduate students. Both credentials enable students to learn, use and develop AI systems within different academic disciplines.

"We are getting great interest from undergraduate and graduate students and are in full swing," said Yang, adding that a proposal will be submitted this fall to offer a minor in AI.

In addition, the University recently launched Jag-AI training workshops for faculty, researchers, staff and graduate students. The workshops provide unique opportunities to incorporate AI technologies, tools and principles into research, teaching practices and professional development. Moreover, the workshops promote collaborative multidisciplinary research in a wide array of fields, from health, biology and psychology to cybersecurity, criminology, economics and finance.

"AI will make a huge impact in education and research in all fields," said Yang. "The University is preparing for this new era, including reshaping our teaching methodologies and learning approaches to equip students for this new AI world. Our ability to adapt and apply AI in research and education needs to keep pace with evolving AI technologies and systems so we're not controlled by AI but can effectively integrate and use it."

NAVIGATING AN EDUCATIONAL CROSSROADS

As the University continues to incorporate AI into its research initiatives and educational offerings, Dr. Elisabeth M. Krimbill, an associate professor in the Department of Educator and Leadership Preparation, is looking into the legal implications of AI misuse by students and the impact on schools.

"I am interested in the disciplinary consequences when a student uses AI to create images that result in a significant disruption to the learning environment along the lines of cyberbullying and cyberharassment," said Krimbill, who was named chair of the College of Education AI Task Force last summer.

When it comes to issues like AI and plagiarism, Krimbill believes it's important to use such instances as a coaching moment rather than a cause to implement punitive measures.

"The learning happens through the coaching, not the grade," she said. "It's a 'point of need' lesson. We [teachers] fail students if we don't coach them."

Krimbill also notes the ways AI can enhance the learning experience and is incorporating AI into her classroom and research. She employs AI to analyze and improve students' work using a provided rubric and comparing AI's output to a student's personal work. In addition, she's exploring how AI can support education law and legal literacy, using AI to help research and find connections between legal cases.

"I think we will see greater opportunities for personalized learning, enhanced student support, and scientific collaboration," Krimbill said. "AI will help us transform and improve teaching, learning, research and administration."

Teufel, the University's provost faculty fellow for generative AI, is helping the University with this transformation. She worked with other faculty members to establish an A&M-San Antonio AI value statement, which emphasizes the University's ethical use of the technology and its dedication to fostering innovation, learning experiences and equitable access. She also helped spearhead the University's core principles around AI, which include research excellence, educational enrichment, ethical leadership and responsibility, and lifelong learning and adaptability.

Abdelrahman said these tenets emphasize how the University balances AI's potential with the need for students to build their knowledge base, while faculty have the autonomy and support to determine how AI is used in their courses.

"As AI continues to evolve, we are committed to thoughtful, ethical integration that empowers students and faculty alike," said Abdelrahman. "By embracing AI while maintaining academic rigor, we position A&M-San Antonio as a leader in AI-enhanced education, ensuring our graduates remain competitive, adaptable and ready for the future."



DR. ELISABETH KRIMBILL



ANSWERING THE CALL

BY KIKO MARTINEZ

*Alumna Valerie Frausto makes history as the San Antonio Fire Department's **first female chief***

As a young girl in San Antonio, Valerie Frausto remembers always being intrigued by the members of her family who worked for the local fire and police department. She would hear people talking on radio scanners and wondered what it would be like to be one of the heroes who answered the calls.

"Without a doubt, I wanted to be a firefighter," Frausto shared. "I knew I wanted to help people."

After 24 years in the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD), Frausto was appointed as the first woman to lead the department as its fire chief. She officially stepped into her role on Nov. 1, 2024, about 10 months after former Fire Chief Charles Hood's retirement. Frausto was selected among a nationwide search.

"[Frausto] emerged as the ideal candidate due to her exceptional leadership of all aspects of the [SAFD] and her undying commitment to serving the community in which she was born and raised," San Antonio City Manager Erik Walsh said in a statement last year.

As the first woman in the position, Frausto, a graduate of A&M-San Antonio, describes the promotion as an "honor" and a "huge responsibility" to lead a department of approximately 2,000 employees.

"This is more than just a job to me," she said. "I really feel like it's my calling. I'm very proud to put on this uniform. I do everything I possibly can to keep firefighters safe and to provide a service to the community. I love San Antonio."

SPARK IN HER EYES

With family ties to the SAFD, Frausto knew early on that she wanted to be a firefighter, but had doubts she could reach what, at the time, seemed like an unlikely goal.

"I didn't think being a firefighter was a possibility for me because I was a small-framed girl," she said. "It always seemed like it was one of those impossible dreams. I saw there weren't many women in the fire service."

Frausto thought that maybe she would go into the medical field instead. After graduating from Incarnate Word High School in 1991, she set her sights on becoming a medical technologist and working in a hospital laboratory. That idea, however, quickly changed when, at 19 years old, she was walking through a local mall and met an SAFD recruiter.

"The recruiter I met was a woman who was about my size, maybe even a little smaller," Frausto said. "So, I thought, 'If she could do it, it's definitely a possibility that I could do it, too.' I knew I just had to set my mind to it."

FIRE IN THE BELLY

After working at Santa Rosa Hospital and the Audie Murphy VA Hospital, Frausto officially started as an SAFD firefighter in 2000. Over the years, she steadily advanced through the ranks, including serving as fire engineer, lieutenant, captain, district chief and assistant chief.

But it's her five years as a firefighter that she remembers as being particularly challenging—and just as rewarding.

"Multi-family fires at apartment complexes are so heartbreaking because they place people in a position where they have lost everything that they own," Frausto said. "As a firefighter, we also handle other incidents like terrible car accidents and ammonia leaks where we have to evacuate a large area of people."

Frausto said it's important to have the strength to push ahead as incidents like this happen. Firefighters witness difficult moments, but the weight of those times should be managed so it doesn't affect the next job.

"You have to kind of let go and try to put it behind you," she said. "We all know that we're doing everything we can for the good of the community. We're helping people every day. Incidents put things into perspective. You begin to understand that it's part of life. What I'm here for is to help people get through those difficult times."

Looking to further advance her career, as Frausto gained experience at SAFD, she also enrolled at A&M-San Antonio to earn a bachelor's degree in fire and emergency services.

"At the time, there was an assistant chief with [SAFD] who was finishing up the program, so I got some information from him and decided to go for it," Frausto said. "I'm happy that I did because I learned a lot."

At A&M-San Antonio, Frausto remembers taking budgetary classes and doing a lot of research projects. She said her courses gave her a strong foundation and fostered her ideas on issues such as innovation, professional development, mental health and community engagement. Because she was already working as a firefighter, she would often take her books to the fire station to study during downtime.

"I wanted to learn more about management, especially in public administration," she said. "As I rose through the ranks, that was something that I was lacking. The City of San Antonio offered tuition reimbursement, so I knew that I had their support financially to complete the coursework."



**"I knew I wanted
to make a difference."**

-VALERIE FRAUSTO



FRONTLINE HERO

Frausto graduated summa cum laude from A&M-San Antonio in 2022. When starting at the University, Frausto never imagined that she would one day become fire chief. She did know that an education in fire and emergency services would benefit her in the long run.

"It's very easy to get comfortable in your position at the fire department because you like who you work with and trust your team," Frausto said. "It all depends on if someone is willing to break away from that comfort zone."

When the fire chief position became open, Frausto had been assistant fire chief for several years. The timing to step up and apply for the new role was perfect.

"I knew that I wanted to make a difference," she said. "I saw each promotion as an increase in responsibility and something that allowed me to improve the services that we provide the community. I wanted to see how we could be safer and more effective and focus on improving emergency response and public safety."

In addition to improving emergency response, she's also focused on increasing the number of women firefighters employed at the department, including through efforts like the "Hero Like Her" campaign. Launched in 2019, the campaign helped raise awareness about women firefighters and encouraged others to join the department.

"We continue to work to recruit more women and more minorities," she said. "It's very important to me to promote a culture that values our firefighters and ensures that they reflect our community. I encourage young women to apply for the fire department. It is a job where you can make a difference each and every day."



FINDING BALANCE

When she's not leading the fire department, Frausto likes spending time outdoors with her wife, Krista. She loves bass fishing, hiking, camping and traveling to national parks, including Yosemite in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains and Glacier National Park in Montana's Rocky Mountains.

"I like to stay active," she said. "I try to take at least one or two trips every year. All the national parks are gorgeous in their own way. I love the wildlife and the serenity of being out there."

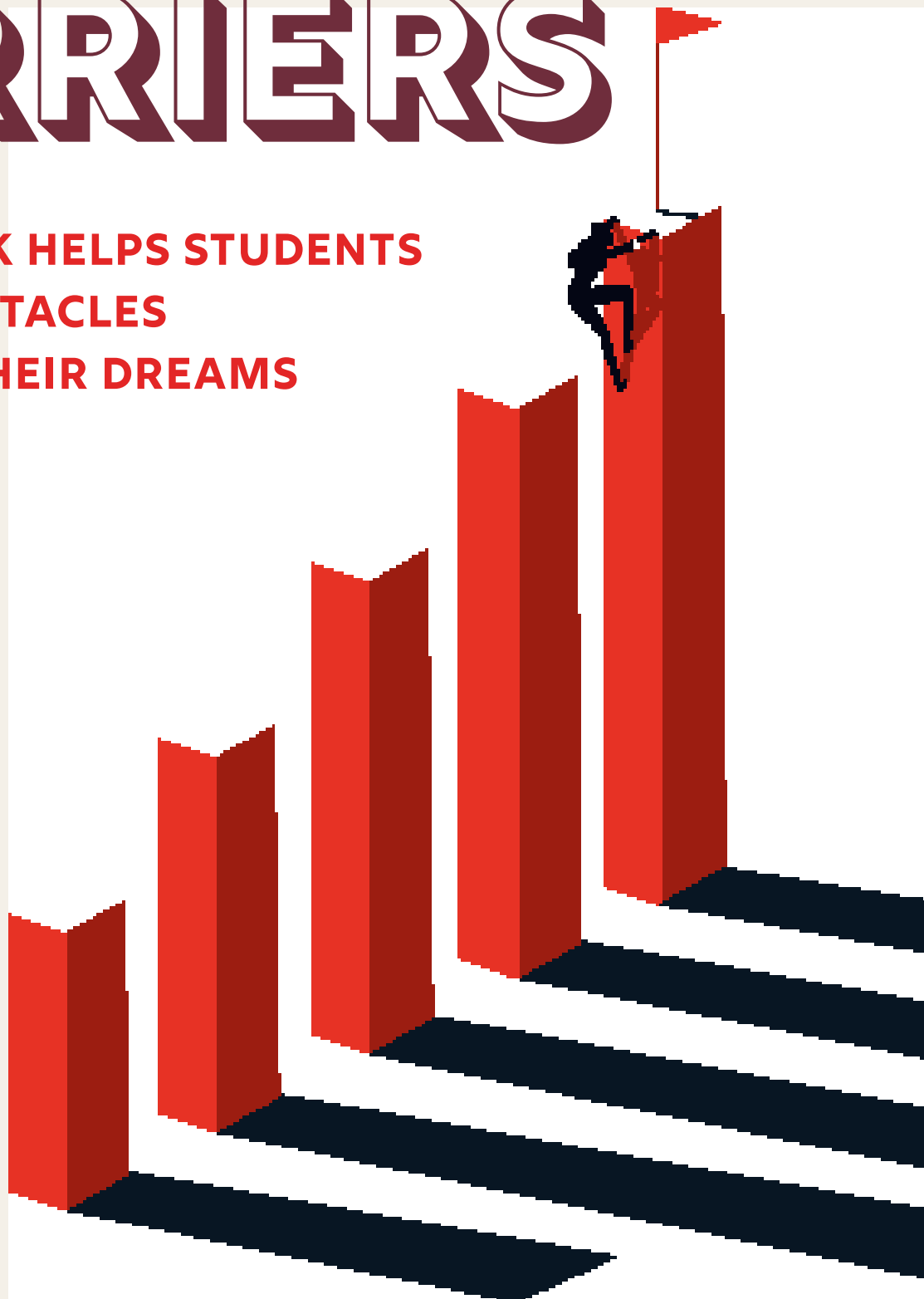
In the near future, Frausto hopes to visit Banff National Park in the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

"We obviously have to work hard, but we also play hard," she said. "That's kind of my motto. So, I just make sure to enjoy life."

BREAKING BARRIERS

**READY TO WORK HELPS STUDENTS
OVERCOME OBSTACLES
AND ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS**

BY DAVID DEKUNDER



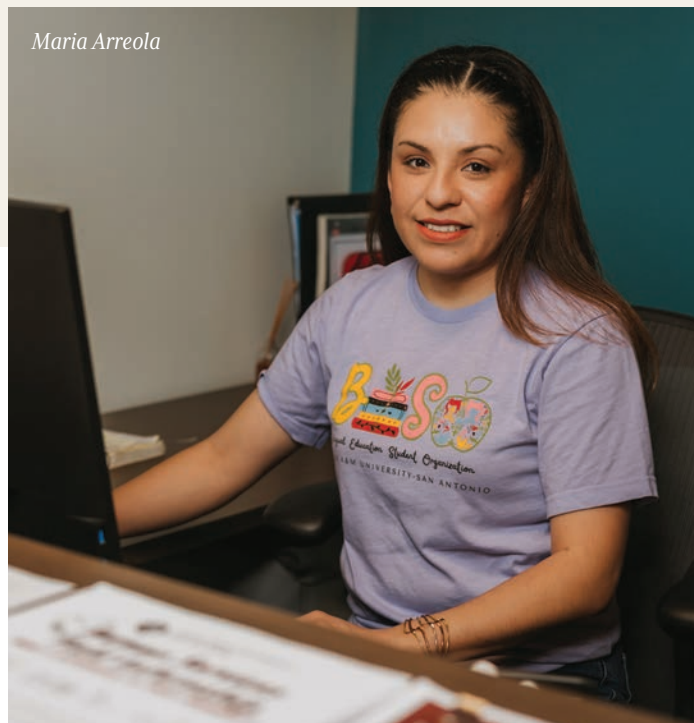
Maria Arreola was facing a daunting road ahead. The mother of two was struggling with financial challenges, including her husband losing his job and ongoing car repairs, all while she was trying to earn her bilingual education degree at Texas A&M University-San Antonio.

It was a stressful situation, especially during uncertain economic times. But Arreola discovered a unique University resource that has helped alleviate her financial concerns and allowed her to focus on her education.

While at a campus fair, Arreola enrolled in Ready to Work, a city of San Antonio workforce program. Through a partnership with the city, the University's Mays Center for Experiential Learning and Community Engagement oversees the program on campus, helping pave the way for students to finish their education.

Ready to Work is an over \$200 million investment in scholarship and support services for eligible participants and is funded by a 1/8-cent sales tax approved by San Antonio voters in 2020. Program participants must complete education and training for high-demand careers in the local workforce and take assessments related to workforce readiness, academics and skills aptitude.

Maria Arreola



Arreola enrolled in Ready to Work during her second semester when she was running out of financial aid and other options for covering her expenses. She's been with the program for a year and a half and said it has allowed her to continue to pursue her college education.

"It's a relief to know I don't have to worry about the financial burden," Arreola said. "If it wasn't for the program's resources, I probably would have quit during the semester to get a job so I could provide for my kids."

Arreola works at the front desk of the College of Education and Human Development providing customer service. In the fall, she will do her field residency observing teachers in the classroom.

GOAL: IN-DEMAND, HIGH-PAYING JOBS

Grace Aguirre-Garcia, assistant director for Ready to Work at the Mays Center, said the focus of the program is to help place students and community members in high-demand industries that pay well, including aerospace, architecture, education, energy, oil and gas, utilities, finance, health care, information technology/cybersecurity, professional services, and transportation and logistics.

As of the spring semester, 329 A&M-San Antonio students were participating in Ready to Work, according to Aguirre-Garcia.

“The primary goal is high-quality education and workforce development for San Antonio citizens,” she said. “Ready to Work is one more source that’s helping students overcome barriers to completing their goals, whether it is receiving a degree or completing a certification program.”



Ready to Work provides financial assistance to students for courses and training. The program’s services include personal coaching on job skills, education, life challenges and goals, career and education planning, job placement, resume building, interview preparation, time management and soft skills.

Also, program participants could receive short-term assistance for unexpected emergencies such as for mortgage, rent, hotel, utilities, food and transportation.

For A&M-San Antonio students, that means they could get up to \$4,100 per year for tuition and fees for up to three years, for a total of \$12,300 in tuition assistance. To qualify for financial assistance, a student must have earned at least 30 credit hours.

Dr. Adriana Contreras, Mays Center associate vice president and executive director, said the Mays Center provides the career resources for students who are in the Ready to Work program.

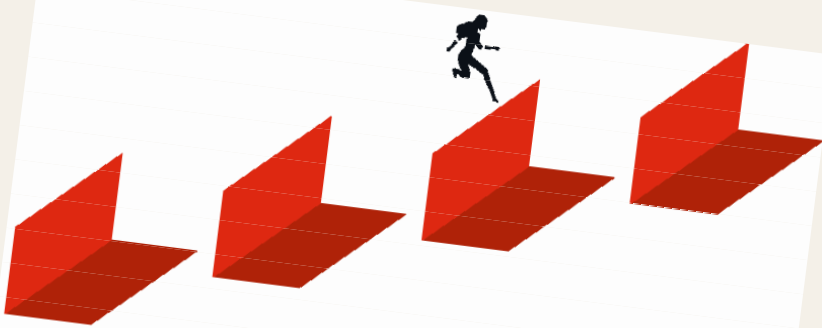
“At the Mays Center, our motto is making sure our students are career-ready and community-minded,” Contreras said. “A lot of external partnerships come out of Mays (Center) because we work with a lot of employers. I think the career services piece is important because the goal of Ready to Work is helping individuals find occupations in high-demand fields with benefits that pay more than \$15 per hour.”

OPEN DOORS

Like Maria Arreola, Ethan Hernandez also benefited from Ready to Work. A first-generation college student, he graduated in December 2024. He enrolled in the program during his senior year and participated in the networking sessions, where he talked to other students and graduates about their experiences in the workforce.

“I really enjoyed those networking sessions,” Hernandez said. “The big outcome of it is going out of your comfort zone. Because you’re doing something that you want to do in life, that every morning when you wake up, you’re going to enjoy going to work.”

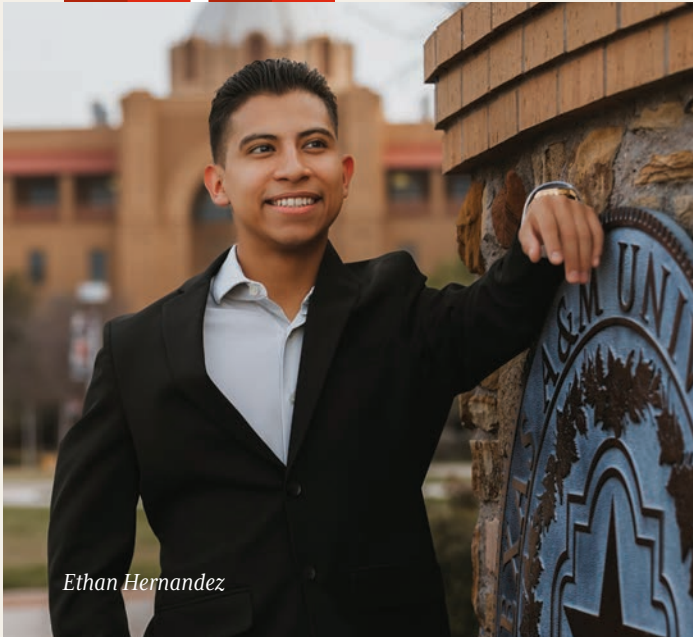
Hernandez said the Mays Center’s Ready to Work staff and counselors always have their doors open for students who have questions or need advice on career options.





“BUILD YOUR BRIDGES WITH PEOPLE BECAUSE THERE’S A STRONG NETWORK ON CAMPUS.”

– ETHAN HERNANDEZ



Ethan Hernandez

“They are able to meet students halfway,” he said. “That is one piece of advice I will give students, just build your bridges with people and one way to start is applying for Ready to Work.”

Before he graduated from A&M-San Antonio, Hernandez was able to use what he learned from Ready to Work to land an internship at Whitley Penn, an accounting firm that specializes in tax, audit and consulting services for several industries.

He plans to obtain his certified public accountant credential and has been accepted into graduate school at A&M-San Antonio, where he plans to pursue a Master of Professional Accounting degree.

Even though he has graduated from A&M-San Antonio, Hernandez said he can always take advantage of the resources offered by the Mays Center and Ready to Work.

“Stay connected with the people you engage with when you’re at A&M-San Antonio because there’s a strong network on campus,” he said.

FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES BENEFIT

Aguirre-Garcia said Ready to Work had already paid over \$34,000 in tuition assistance to A&M-San Antonio students for the spring 2025 semester. She said the investment Ready to Work has put into its participants will pay off in the long run, not only for them but their families and the local community.

“You have more educated talent, and they’re earning higher wages, and they’re local,” Aguirre-Garcia said. “They live here, work here, and they buy here, so it stimulates the economy. This whole loop has come full circle. They’re providing high-quality services to the people they’re serving in their jobs because they’re prepared.”

Moreover, these same skilled workers with higher earning potential are now able to better provide for their families, while showing them what’s possible through hard work, determination and perseverance.

“Ready to Work participants can serve as an inspiration to their families and community members,” Aguirre-Garcia said. “We’re essentially creating like-minded individuals who all are now living proof that education is a pathway to a better life.”



**For information about Ready to Work,
call the Mays Center at (210) 784-3300,
email readytowork@tamusa.edu
or scan the code above.**



A History-making Guest

University hosts U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

A&M-San Antonio welcomed Justice Sonia Sotomayor to campus as part of the 2025 Distinguished Lecture Series. The event was hosted by the University's Cisneros Institute for Emerging Leaders, which serves as a transformative incubator for student leaders. As part of her visit, Sotomayor, the third woman and first Hispanic to serve on the Supreme Court, participated in a private lunch with student and University leaders, engaging with guests in an intimate setting. She also took part in a conversation moderated by Jenna Saucedo-Herrera, chief executive officer of greater:SATX, about her personal and professional journey, during which students in the audience were able to submit questions. Several notable community leaders attended the discussion, including Dr. Henry Cisneros, a former Texas A&M regent.





Beneath the Surface

Researchers explore underwater caves to study creatures living in extreme environments

As part of the University's expansion of its research initiatives, Associate Professor Dr. Elizabeth Borda and Dr. Fernando Calderon-Gutierrez, a postdoctoral research fellow, are on a mission to discover and study strange and rarely seen creatures living in underwater caves. The pair has launched multiple expeditions to the Yucatan Peninsula and Cozumel Island, Mexico, where they explore cave systems filled with otherworldly formations and odd critters. Borda and Calderon's research, which is part of a nearly \$1 million project funded by the National Science Foundation, uses genomic tools to learn more about the unique biodiversity living in these caves while unearthing new information about evolutionary relationships.

Breaking Technology Barriers

University unveils free laptop loaner program

A&M-San Antonio rolled out a program that allows students to borrow one of the most important pieces of equipment in their academic journey — a laptop. A kiosk near the vestibule at the University Library's entrance has a selection of laptops available for rent for up to four hours free of charge. The laptop rental program is funded by a \$3 million U.S. Department of Education grant that helps address economic challenges and improves access to technology for students. In addition to the library kiosk, the grant funds a laptop loaner program through ITS, which enables undergraduate



students to rent a laptop for up to a semester. And through another DOE grant project, the University loans laptops through ITS to graduate students only. These services are especially important in South San Antonio, where many households lack access to the internet and computer equipment.



Transforming Lives Dream Maker breaks record

A&M-San Antonio's 16th Annual Dream Maker Scholarship Celebration raised a record-breaking \$350,000. Dream Maker is one of the University's primary fundraising events and has awarded a total of about \$5 million to students with financial need and helped fund more than 5,000 scholarships. Speakers at the event, held in November at the Witte Museum's Mays Family Center, included former Regents Dr. Henry Cisneros and Elaine Mendoza, as well as Chairman of the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System Bill Mahomes. Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp was the event's guest of honor, recognized as the longest-serving chancellor in the history of The Texas A&M University System and for his indelible impact on the education of A&M-San Antonio students. Sharp is scheduled to retire in June.

Reason to Celebrate

More than 700 walk at fall 2024 commencement

A&M-San Antonio honored the academic achievements of more than 700 graduates at the Fall 2024 Commencement Ceremonies at Freeman Coliseum. Faculty, staff, families and friends cheered on the graduating Jaguars as they embarked on their next chapters. The ceremony featured student speakers who represented the outstanding accomplishments and aspirations of the graduating class. To close out the celebrations, there was a Glow-in-the-Dark Party, a vibrant light-filled moment marking the culmination of their academic journeys.



Starting a New Tradition

A&M-San Antonio celebrates inaugural homecoming

A&M-San Antonio hosted its first-ever Homecoming in February, featuring a full lineup of special events and festivities, uniting students, faculty, staff and alumni. As the University experiences record enrollment and launches new campus facilities, this week-long event welcomed the entire A&M-San Antonio community and provided an opportunity for alumni to reconnect with their alma mater. Highlights included softball and basketball games; fun competitions; tasty food and Domecoming, a signature event with live music, food trucks, kids' games and rides, and a fireworks show.





Lighting Up the Sky

Lights of Esperanza dazzles, delights guests of all ages

A&M-San Antonio celebrated the holiday season in style with its ninth annual Lights of Esperanza. The beloved event transformed the South Side campus into a festive wonderland illuminated by more than 40,000 lights, delighting students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members alike. Combining the symbolic history of holiday lighting with modern customs, Lights of Esperanza has become one of the University's most cherished traditions, attracting some 4,000 attendees who are treated to a captivating light show, live music, family-friendly activities and games, and a holiday market.





The Gold Standard

University receives prestigious award from Texas Veterans Commission

A&M-San Antonio was selected as a Gold Recipient of the 2024 Veteran Education Excellence Recognition Award (VEERA) by the Texas Veterans Commission. As a VEERA Gold Recipient, the University received the highest level of recognition, highlighting the depth and breadth of services provided to veteran students and their families. This marked the fourth year A&M-San Antonio was selected for a VEERA, including in 2023 when the University was once again a Gold Recipient. A&M-San Antonio has approximately 1,200 military-connected students, or about 15 percent of the student population.

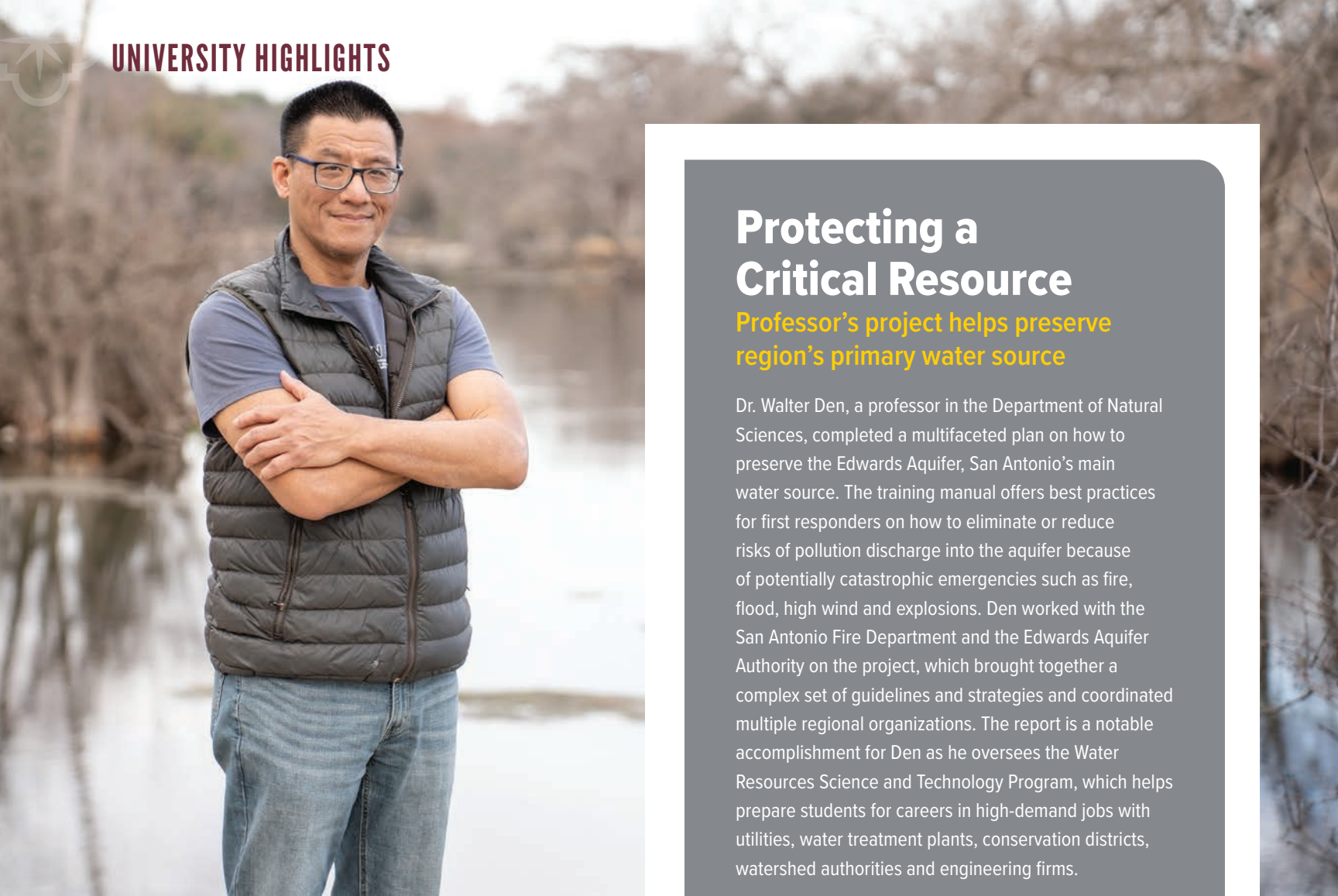
Esports Showdown

University co-hosts largest in-person A&M System gaming competition

Texas A&M-San Antonio Esports helped spearhead the largest in-person esports matchup among Texas A&M University System teams. The competition, held Feb. 22 at the Boeing Center at Tech Port, attracted more than 70 players. The event highlights esports' impact within the A&M System through the competition and the behind-the-scenes talent, including student-led broadcast, content and social media personnel. Teams representing Texas A&M campuses in College Station, Corpus Christi, Texarkana, Commerce

and San Antonio competed in rounds of Super Smash Bros. Ultimate and Valorant. A&M-San Antonio's Department of Recreational Sports launched esports in 2020. Over the past five years, the campus gaming organization has grown, with dedicated staff and facilities that help promote student engagement and career development. With plans to expand resources, host other invitationals, and explore esports curriculum collaborations, A&M-San Antonio is proving that gaming isn't just a pastime, it's a pathway to success.





Protecting a Critical Resource

Professor’s project helps preserve region’s primary water source

Dr. Walter Den, a professor in the Department of Natural Sciences, completed a multifaceted plan on how to preserve the Edwards Aquifer, San Antonio’s main water source. The training manual offers best practices for first responders on how to eliminate or reduce risks of pollution discharge into the aquifer because of potentially catastrophic emergencies such as fire, flood, high wind and explosions. Den worked with the San Antonio Fire Department and the Edwards Aquifer Authority on the project, which brought together a complex set of guidelines and strategies and coordinated multiple regional organizations. The report is a notable accomplishment for Den as he oversees the Water Resources Science and Technology Program, which helps prepare students for careers in high-demand jobs with utilities, water treatment plants, conservation districts, watershed authorities and engineering firms.

Beating the Odds

Local nonprofit shines spotlight on student

Growing up in East San Antonio and raised in the foster care system, Chloe Bruno has overcome significant adversity and is now earning her bachelor’s degree in cybersecurity. As part of her journey to A&M-San Antonio, Bruno received a scholarship from San Antonio Education Partnership (SAEP), a nonprofit that created a video highlighting her success. Bruno, who is on track to graduate in December, said she would like to earn a master’s degree and intern at the National Security Agency. Ultimately, she hopes to work for the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation as a cybersecurity agent.





Leveling the Field

The University is developing a new athletic complex to serve the campus community and beyond

Texas A&M University-San Antonio celebrated an important milestone in February when the University hosted a groundbreaking for its athletic complex, which includes renovation of the softball stadium, and an eight-lane competition track and multipurpose field. The expansive project ushers in a new era for the University, providing students with more opportunities for athletic competition and camaraderie, while also serving as a community hub for health, fitness and amateur sports. This project will serve as a practice and competition facility for the University's men's and women's sports programs, and the renovated softball field will help support recruitment and provide a top-notch training venue. Moreover, the facilities will be open to the public, providing space for a variety of sports in a part of the city where such resources are scarce. It's another critical way the University is improving the region's quality of life and being an active community steward.



Women's Soccer

Under the expert guidance of new head coach **Tim Moody**, the women's soccer team finished the regular season in eighth place, which earned them their third Red River Athletic Conference (RRAC) tournament appearance in a row.



Jasmin Dominguez captured the RRAC Women's Soccer Offensive Player of the Week honor for Oct. 28 – Nov. 4. This is the 11th set of conference awards for the 2024 women's soccer season. The sophomore midfielder from San Antonio generated three goals and two assists as the Jaguars closed out the regular season with a pair of conference victories. Dominguez raised her season totals to five goals and five assists.



Ana Baragan was selected for an Honorable Mention on the All-RRAC Women's Soccer Team. She claimed the RRAC Women's Soccer Offensive Player of the Week award for Sept. 25 – Oct. 1. The sophomore forward from Brownsville, Texas, is second in conference scoring with nine goals.



Ivy Jimenez, a senior from Lake Dallas, Texas, was named to the RRAC 2024 Champions of Character Team. The team is part of an innovative outreach program designed to instill character values in student-athletes and coaches, embracing the five core values of respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership and sportsmanship.

Men's Soccer

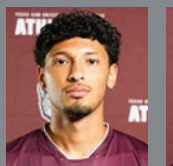
The men's soccer team finished the regular season in fourth place, tying their highest RRAC finish ever, which earned them their third RRAC tournament appearance in a row.



Ronald Aguilar was named the RRAC Offensive Player of the Year, selected for the All-RRAC First Team and the NAIA All-American Third Team, becoming the first soccer player in A&M-San Antonio history to be selected as an All-American. On his way to also being voted as the Offensive Player of the Year, Aguilar led the conference in both goals (19) and points (40) and nationally was tied for fourth.



Christian Guerrero, a senior from San Antonio, was named the RRAC Men's Offensive Player of the Week for Oct. 28 – Nov. 3. The sophomore midfielder from San Antonio produced the first hat trick (scoring three goals in one game) in school history en route to a 3-0 victory over the University of Houston-Victoria. Guerrero ranked in the RRAC top 20 in goals (6), assists (5) and points (17). Guerrero was also selected for an Honorable Mention on the All-RRAC Men's Soccer Team.



In other men's soccer news, **Eduardo Hernandez** (far left) was selected for the All-RRAC Second Team, **Joey de la Torre** (left) was selected to the All-RRAC Freshmen Team and **Marco Matranga** (not pictured) was named to the RRAC Champions of Character Team.

Excelling on the court and in the classroom

The cumulative student-athlete GPA for fall 2024 was 3.02, which is the Athletic Department's third semester in a row above 3.00. Additionally, 15 student-athletes achieved 4.00 GPAs for the semester, while 67 percent of Jaguar student-athletes had above a 3.00 GPA.

Accolades and Awards

Stephen Sherman, deputy athletic director, was inducted into the RRAC Hall of Fame for his accomplishments as a cross country and track and field coach at Our Lady of the Lake University from 2009-2020. This follows A&M-San Antonio's Athletic Director Darnell Smith being selected as the 2023-24 RRAC Athletic Director of the Year, and the Athletic Department being recognized with the 2023-24 RRAC Sportsmanship Award.





Nothing but Net

University makes history with inaugural basketball season opener

It was standing room only when the University kicked off its inaugural men's and women's basketball games to a packed house of 900-plus cheering fans. While the University teams debuted with a split decision—the women defeated Southern University at New Orleans—throughout both games the crowd's enthusiasm never wavered. Held in October 2024 at the University's new recreation center, the double header featured special guests in the audience, including Mayor Ron Nirenberg, former Mayor Henry Cisneros, Councilmember Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, as well as Dr. Maria Hernandez Ferrier, the University's inaugural president. Also attending was State Sen. Pete Flores, who the University honored with an on-court presentation recognizing his leadership in helping pass the enabling legislation for A&M-San Antonio's intercollegiate athletics program. Looking forward, men's coach Chris Dial and women's coach Chris Minner are positioning the University's basketball program for future success, exciting fans throughout the region.



A History-Making Run

Inaugural women's basketball team reaches RRAC Tournament semifinals

In a remarkable run, the A&M-San Antonio women's basketball team advanced to the semifinals of the Red River Athletic Conference tournament in the team's first season of competition.

The fourth-seeded Jaguars, who went 14-10 in their inaugural season, clinched a 66-60 win over No. 5 seed Huston-Tillotson University in a thrilling tournament quarterfinal game at the Rapides Coliseum in Alexandria, Louisiana, in February. A&M-San Antonio lost 81-61 to No. 1-ranked Louisiana State University-Shreveport.

The Jaguars made a big impact in the school's first season on the court and at the tournament.

Natalia Trevino, who had 19 points in the quarterfinal win, was named RRAC Women's Basketball Player of the Year. She ranked fourth in the conference by scoring an average of 18.2 points per game, and had 108 assists, 84 steals and 57 three-pointers.

Evelyn Lorenzo, who scored 21 points in the quarterfinal game, was named to the RRAC All-Conference 1st team.

"To make the tournament in our first season as a team and as part of a new program is a huge victory," said women's head basketball coach Chris Minner. "It took a lot of dedication, hard work, and talent to get this far, and I couldn't be more proud of the team and how everyone came together to reach this historic milestone."

"I'd like to personally congratulate Coach Minner and our women's basketball team for this remarkable accomplishment," said A&M-San Antonio Athletic Director Darnell Smith. "We are on a mission to build champions! I'm truly excited about the future of the University's athletic programs as we continue to grow and thrive. We're helping generate excitement and support both on campus and throughout the community."



DR. PRIDE ABONGWA

Dr. Pride Abongwa, assistant professor in the Department of Natural Sciences, is the University's principal investigator on a \$350,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Institute of Food and Agriculture for a proposal titled "Comprehensive Experiential Learnings to Promote Climate Resilient Agriculture for Underrepresented Minority Students."



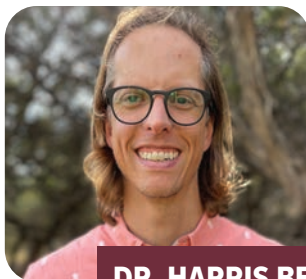
DR. IZZAT ALSMADI

Dr. Izzat Alsmadi, professor in the Department of Computational, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, received a grant from the National Science Foundation titled "CC* Strategy-Campus: Accelerating Research Computing at A&M-San Antonio."



DR. BRYAN BAYLES

Dr. Bryan Bayles, assistant professor of community health, received a \$585,000 grant from the Board of Baptist Health Foundation for "Cross-sectional survey on emerging environmental pollutant exposure and prevalence of obesity in communities."



DR. HARRIS BECHTOL

Dr. Harris Bechtol, lecturer of philosophy, published the book review "Dialogue on the Threshold," for the peer-reviewed journal Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy.



JAMES BERNSEN

James Bernsen, adjunct faculty member in the Department of History, Philosophy and Geography, published *The Lost War for Texas: Mexican Rebels, American Burrites and the Texas Revolution of 1811 through Texas A&M University Press* as part of the Vistas Series.



DR. STEPHANIE BLACK

Dr. Stephanie Black, associate professor of management, co-authored several works, including "Cultivating and Learning from Native American Employees for Organizational Success: Native American and Indigenous Peoples' World of Work" in *Human Resource in Management*. She also contributed to "Hispanics in the workplace: their job demands and resources" for *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*. She

also contributed to the chapter "HRIS and social media" for the book *Human Resource Information Systems* and has received numerous accolades, including the College of Business Community Ambassador Award.



DR. AMY BOHMANN

Dr. Amy Bohmann, associate professor in the Department Health and Behavioral Sciences, had a manuscript titled "The Nature of the Political Animal: Development of the Triplex Scale of Political Orientation" accepted by the *North American Journal of Psychology*.



BRENYA BUCHALSKI, J.D.

Brenya Buchalski, J.D., adjunct faculty member in psychology, published an article titled "Internet Radicalization of Extremists" in the *Journal of Forensic Sciences and Criminal Investigation*.



NONIE C. CABANA

Nonie C. Cabana, adjunct faculty member in the Department of Management and

Marketing, serves as vice president and a board of directors member with Communities Aligning Baguio (Philippines) and San Antonio, a nonprofit dedicated to fostering the Sister City relationship. He helped organize the inauguration of the San Antonio, Texas Garden at the Baguio Botanical Garden. The San Antonio, Texas Garden is a tribute to the cultural ties between the two cities. It features two iconic cowboy boots, inspired by the installation at North Star Mall, set against a scenic viewing deck adorned with a commemorative plaque.



DR. ZECHUN CAO

Dr. Zechun Cao, assistant professor in the Department of Computational, Engineering and Mathematical Sciences, received a \$35,000 grant from the Computing Alliance of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (CAHSI) titled “Toward Automatic and Sound Memory Safety Bug Repair.”

YVETTE CHAIREZ

Yvette Chairez, lecturer of English, was awarded the Charles Bazerman New Scholar Fellowship through the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Clearinghouse, an open-access publishing collaborative that curates and provides free or low-cost academic resources to instructors and students in the fields of writing, rhetoric and composition. As a Bazerman Fellow, she will help build and maintain the new “Artificial Intelligence and the Teaching of Writing” digital archive exhibit, and she will create a research and pedagogy guidebook to accompany it.



DR. DANIEL DELGADO

Dr. Daniel Delgado, associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Communication, received a grant from the National Science Foundation to support the creation of a computer laboratory dedicated to collaborative work with the co-investigators, supporting students, and providing statistical analysis software for the social sciences.



**DR. SONYA EDDY and
DR. ELIZABETH LEYVA**

Dr. Sonya Eddy, director of integrated reading and writing and instructional assistant professor, and **Dr. Elizabeth Leyva**, interim program coordinator, mathematics, were awarded a \$125,000 College Readiness and Success Models grant from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Texas A&M University-San Antonio is one of 16 institutions to implement or scale systemic, evidenced-based developmental education reforms to improve student outcomes and to increase access to high-quality professional development opportunities for faculty and staff providing direct support to underprepared students.



JUAN CARLOS ESCOBEDO

Juan Carlos Escobedo, adjunct faculty member in the Department of Language, Literature, and Arts, had work appearing in the show Shelf Life at the McNay and also had a solo show at the Mesquite Arts Center.

DR. VIPUL GARG



Dr. Vipul Garg, assistant professor of management, received funding from the Office of Research and Health Sciences to acquire neuroscience sensors, such as EEG headsets and eye trackers, for a project aimed at enhancing the performance and safety of forklift operators in South San Antonio. This initiative bridges gaps in operator training and safety standards in high-stakes warehouse environments. He also co-authored a paper titled “Flying Forward: Lessons Learned from Drone Logistics in Healthcare Supply Chains,” with a drone startup in India specializing in deliveries to challenging terrains. The paper explores the operational, technological and regulatory lessons learned from deploying drones in health care supply chains in underserved regions.



DR. ELENA FOULIS

Dr. Elena Foulis, assistant professor and director of Spanish Language Studies, had an essay titled “I didn’t write this for you: Using Translanguaging in Pages and in the Classroom,” published in the Journal of Folklore and Education. She also published a manuscript titled “Comida y Convivencia: Building community through food and food stories” in the Latino Studies Journal. She also had a co-edited collection titled “Working en Comunidad: Service Learning and Community Engagement with Latinas/os/es!” published.



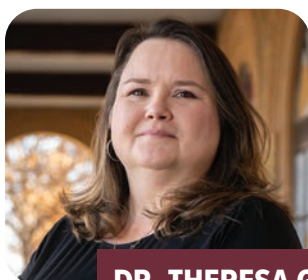
LAURIE ANN GUERRERO

Laurie Ann Guerrero, associate professor and the writer-in-residence at A&M-San Antonio, was included in “Latino Poetry: The Library of America Anthology.” U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón discusses Guerrero’s work in the accompanying video anthology. She was also part of a panel, in association with the Library of America, called “Explorations of Home: A Panel on the Latinx Diaspora in Poetry” at the San Antonio Public Library, Latino Collection & Resource Center.



DR. SARAH HARPER

Dr. Sarah Harper, assistant professor of criminology and criminal justice, was awarded a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Summer Research Team Program based on her proposal titled “Exploring Frontline Interactions with Sovereign Citizens and Anti-Government Extremists: Insights into De-Escalation and Procedural Justice.”



DR. THERESA GARFIELD

Dr. Theresa Garfield, professor of special education, is the Program Advisory Committee Co-Chair for the 2024-2025 Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) International Annual Conference. CEC is the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.



DR. ESTHER GARZA, DR. HSIAO-PING WU and DR. MYRIAM JIMENA GUERRA

Drs. Esther Garza, Hsiao Ping Wu and Myriam Guerro, all professors of bilingual and ESL education, organized and executed the University’s first Multilingual Education Conference. The conference is intended to provide educational opportunities, scholarly research and professional development for students and educators in bilingual and multilingual education to promote the broadening of perspective. The goal is to help the University become a national hub and model for preparing bilingual and multilingual teachers to teach in the nation’s increasing population of English Learners, thus empowering non-native English speakers to be contributing and active citizens of the country.



DR. SEAN KEARNEY

Dr. Sean Kearney, professor of educational administration, received the 2023-24 A&M System Board of Regents Professor Award. Kearney's research focuses on school culture and climate, the correlates of high-performing schools and principal preparation. He has forged partnerships with school districts to promote graduate-degree attainment, preparing educational leaders across the region.



DR. DONNA M. LEHMAN

Dr. Donna M. Lehman, with the University's Public Health Genetics and Genomics Group gave an invited talk at the Foundation for Prader Willi Research Symposium and Family Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia, titled "The epitranscriptome of hypothalamic neurons during fasting is altered in a T1 PWS human model."



DR. CHIN-YEN LIU

Dr. Chin-Yen Liu, associate professor of management, has published several articles, including "Beyond Traditional Methods: Enhancing Cost Escalation Forecasting in Commercial Construction amid Economic Turbulence" in the Journal of Construction Engineering and Management. She also published the article "Who Says We Can't: Collaborative and Cooperative Learning Through an Asynchronous Online Group Project" in the journal Management Teaching Review. And at the Northeast Decision Sciences Institute Conference, she made a presentation called "Navigating Cost Estimation Complexities in the US Commercial Construction Industry." She also made a presentation called "Collaborative and Cooperative QR Learning through an Asynchronous Online Class" at the National Numeracy Network Annual Conference.



DR. ELISABETH KRIMBILL

Dr. Elisabeth Krimbill, associate professor in the Department of Educator and Leadership Preparation, has been named president of the Education Law Association, a nonprofit that promotes and improves education law. The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-based organization has hundreds of members worldwide, including professors, attorneys, and school and college administrators. As president, Krimbill said one of her primary goals is to boost member engagement by increasing the nonprofit's number of programs and professional development opportunities, including new AI training.



DR. GONGBO LIANG

Dr. Gongbo Liang, assistant professor of computer science, and his students had eight papers on AI published or accepted to journals or prestigious conferences in 2024. He also had two papers accepted to the workshops at the 39th AAAI Conference on Artificial Intelligence. Liang was also awarded a Google grant to support his research project aimed at mitigating bias in generative AI.



DR. ERIC LÓPEZ

Dr. Eric López, professor in the Department of Educator and Leadership Preparation, published the paper "Bilingual special education in Texas: An opportunity for getting policy and practice right" in the journal Educator Perspectives.



DR. MATTHEW MANGUM

Dr. Matthew Mangum, clinical associate professor in the Department of Management and Marketing, contributed the article “Teaching the Cognizant Case: When Corporate Compliance Works” for the Southern Journal of Business and Ethics. He also made a presentation called Betamax and Monkey Selfies: Teaching the Copyright Law of Generative AI in the Absence of Direct Precedent, during the Southern Academy of Legal Studies in Business conference.



DR. O. VOLKAN OZBEK

Dr. Volkan Ozbek, assistant professor of management, published an article in Corporate Governance called “Assessing the market performance of U.S. corporate spin-offs: Effects of directors’ age and external board appointments along with their interaction.” He also made a presentation at the Academy of International Business-Canada Conference called “The choice of international acquisitions: Effects of CEO’s power distance orientation and firm’s competitive aggressiveness.” In addition, he received the Best Reviewer Award at the Academy of International Business Conference and a Professional Development Certification on “Fundamentals of Case Teaching” from Harvard Business School.



DR. ROBERTO SALDIVAR

Dr. Roberto Saldivar, assistant professor of marketing, co-authored the article “Personal Values Matter: International Students’ University Selection” for the publication Studies in Higher Education. He also contributed to the article “Do Materialism and Shopping Enjoyment Impact Luxury Brand Purchase Intention” for the Asian Journal of Business Research. Finally, he was the keynote speaker at the first International Conference on Eco Friendly and Zero Waste at Binus University, Indonesia, where he delivered “Presentation on the Importance of Strategic Planning.”



DR. SRINIVAS MUMMIDI

Dr. Srinivas Mummidi, a member of the University’s Public Health Genetics and Genomics Group, had a paper titled “Diet-enhanced LRG1 expression promotes insulin hypersecretion and ER stress in pancreatic beta cells” published in Diabetologia.



DR. REBEKAH PIPER, DR. KAREN KOHLER and DR. ROBIN KAPAVIK

Dr. Rebekah Piper, associate professor in literacy education, **Dr. Karen Kohler**, assistant professor in curriculum and instruction, and **Dr. Robin Kapavik**, professor of elementary and secondary education, organized “Jags Responsible, Organized, and Ready” (JAGS ROAR), an initiative to help former and current students realize their dream of becoming a teacher. The all-day event helps students prepare for the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards test, with strategies for overcoming test anxiety and content-specific breakout sessions.



DR. ADRIANNA SANTOS, DR. KATHERINE GILLEN and DR. KATHRYN VOMERO SANTOS

Dr. Adrianna Santos, associate professor, published her first monograph, *Cicatrix Poetics, Trauma and Healing in the Literary Borderlands: Beyond Survival*. With fellow A&M-San Antonio faculty member **Dr. Katherine Gillen** and **Dr. Kathryn Vomero Santos** of Trinity University, she published *The Bard in the Borderlands, V. 2* and won the Shakespeare Association of America’s inaugural large-scale public award. She also co-edited *El Mundo Zurdo 9, The Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa Conference Proceedings* with University of Texas at San Antonio professors, Dr. Sonya Alemán and Dr. Sylvia Mendoza.



DR. DAVIDA SMYTH

Dr. Davida Smyth, associate professor in the Department of Natural Sciences, was awarded the American Society for Microbiology Carski Award in 2024. The award includes travel support to attend and present at ASM Microbe in LA. She was also selected to the American Society for Microbiology Distinguished Professor Roster for 2024-2026 and she will be giving talks across the country. She also co-organized an international workshop at the Lorentz Center in the Netherlands called “Infectious Disease Surveillance through Wastewater Analysis.” She co-authored an article in The Journal of Microbiology & Biology Education called “Updated ASM Curriculum Guidelines describe core microbiology content to modernize the framework for microbiology education” and an editorial in Frontiers in Microbiology called “Using case study and narrative pedagogy to guide students through the process of science.”



DR. CATE WENGELNIK

Dr. Cate Wengelnik, instructional assistant professor of management, won the Best Paper Award from the Academy of Business Research for her paper, “Inclusive Leadership Practices: The Significance of Inclusive Leadership in a Global Business Environment.” She also presented her paper “Innovative Leadership Practices for HR Executives” during a workshop for the Society for Human Resources Management.



DR. JEONG YANG

Dr. Jeong Yang, director for information technology and cyber security and associate professor, received a grant entitled “VICEROY for the NCAE-C South Central Region” from the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station.



DR. EDWARD WESTERMANN

Dr. Edward Westermann, Regents Professor of History, was invited by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to give the 2025 Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhof Annual Lecture, one of the most prestigious lectures in Holocaust studies. He also gave the Holocaust Educational Foundation’s annual Winter Lecture at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Finally, he was interviewed for two documentaries as a subject matter expert including in Los Angeles for a documentary on the Holocaust in Latvia, “The Sounds of Silence,” as well as an interview in New York City for a three-part Holocaust documentary, entitled “Soldaten.”



**DR. LIZBETT TINOCO
and DR. SONYA EDDY**

Dr. Lizbett Tinoco and **Dr. Sonya Eddy** had an essay called “Disrupting White Mainstream English in a Hispanic-Serving Institution: Reflections from Two Latina Writing Instructors” published in Narratives of Joy and Failure in Antiracist Assessment: Exploring Collaborative Writing Assessments. They explore students’ experiences with labor-based grading and collaborative assessment in an institutional context.



A Love of History Inspires Alumnus to Give Back

Derek Kubacki '18, is giving back to the University by following his passion

Growing up in a military family, Derek Kubacki moved all over the country and overseas. During this formative time, he developed a fascination with history, especially the Vietnam War. Like his father, Kubacki was determined to serve his country, and he enlisted in the U.S. Army at 17, serving 22 years. After he retired, he enrolled at A&M-San Antonio, where he graduated in 2018 with a B.A. in history. Now, as an alumnus, he's giving back to the University.

"History has been at the forefront of my life and wanting to learn more guided me to A&M-San Antonio," he said. "I promised myself that after I graduated, if the opportunity arose to give back to the department that helped form my understanding of the teaching of history, that I would do what I could," he said.

Recognizing the importance of studying and understanding the past, Kubacki said he benefitted greatly from A&M-San Antonio's guest speaking events. One of the most impactful experiences he had at the University was when Dr. Edward Westermann, a Regents Professor of History and renowned expert on the Holocaust, hosted Rose Sherman Williams, a Holocaust survivor and former San Antonio resident (she passed away in January).

"It was very powerful to hear her perspective," he said. "There aren't many voices like hers that are still with us."

This experience is what inspired him to later give his first donation to A&M-San Antonio. He wanted to make an impact on the department that shaped his time as an undergraduate and support current students. He started by donating a \$500 annual gift to bring other guest lectures to campus. Over time, he has been able to increase his donation to \$1,500 a year.

Kubacki has found a meaningful way to share his passion and love of history with fellow Jaguars. As he continues to advance in his career, he said he's partnering with University Advancement to further increase his annual donation. He's also looking into setting up an endowment to continue his support.

"I'm so proud to be part of A&M-San Antonio," he said. "I got a lot out of my experience there, and it feels good to be able to give something back."



2007



Chanda Esparza '07, '10 in 2019 transitioned into full-time private practice, providing art, play, trauma and sandtray therapy to clients on the south side of San Antonio. Esparza offers children in foster care and mandated clients (probation and child protective service) a space to resolve their stresses and/or past trauma. She is certified in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and is a Certified Clinical Sandtray Trainer (CCST-T). She is on the board as a conference chair with the Texas Sandtray Association.

2009

Denise P. Gonzales has been with Department of Family and Protective Services for 12 years, currently serving as a hiring manager. She launched a small business, Rosie's Heavenly Blooms, which was created for her niece Rosie. This venture allows her to learn valuable skills while enabling her family to engage in meaningful and fulfilling work together.

2010



Elvira T. Marquez '10, '12 is director of placement services with ABC Adoption Agency, connecting pregnant women with prospective adoptive parents. She said she has never had more rewarding work. She also provides adoption counseling and home study services to prospective adoptive parents, including stepparents, grandparents and others.



Bianca Pankau is a paralegal/CSS in the Kansas City, Missouri, office of Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP. She graduated with a B.A.A.S. from A&M-San Antonio and a paralegal studies degree from Rockhurst University.

2011

Gabriel Cardenas owns and operates The Fridge, a San Antonio-based food truck, voted the best food truck in 2016 by the readers of the San Antonio Current. She is executive chef for a senior living facility, was married in 2012 and has two children.



Angela M. Cavazos earned an Ed.D. in organizational leadership from Abilene Christian University in fall 2024.

Monica J. Simpson is regional director of client services with EMPACT Engineering.



2012

Christina M. Baker started a position in May 2024 at a personal injury firm.

Clotia M. Bowens was selected in the first round to participate in an annual fashion show with BRC (Breathe and Rise Collective), Breatherisecollective.org.

Diana L. Orozco '12, '14 was selected to be part of the Small Business Committee for AFCEA International, a professional association for those working in preparedness and security. She is director of business development for Breakpoint Labs, a cybersecurity firm. She is on the St. Philip's Cybersecurity & Information Technology Advisory Board, Palo Alto Business and Operations Management Advisory Committee, and

Harlandale ISD Cybersecurity/IT Business Advisory Committee. Orozco received the Women's Appreciation Award from AFCEA International.

Brandon N. Pesqueda earned a master's degree in legal studies from Arizona State University, graduating on Dec. 14, 2020. He and his wife, **Marissa Deleon '16**, have two sons, Nathaniel and Noah. "As I like to call our family, it's the Fantastic Four," he said.

2013

Ingrid Zapata Read is celebrating year-two of her business, Grow With Community, a consulting agency that helps startups and businesses transform their audiences into communities outside of social media. Building on the success of her first venture, Working Momkind, Read draws inspiration from her Mexican-American roots and upbringing in San Antonio. Her culture instilled in her the importance of connection, resilience and community — values that have shaped her work in social media and community-building.



2014



Aarika R. Anderson earned a license as a certified public accountant.



Rose M. Hilt '12, a workforce manager for the city of San Antonio in the Workforce Development Office with San Antonio Ready to Work, leads the employer partnership team. She also serves as a city trainer, leading training sessions for newly hired city employees. In October 2024, Hilt earned a project management certification. In August 2024, she began pursuing a master's degree in organizational leadership and a Ph.D. in leadership studies. She was elected to co-lead the cohort.



2015



Kalin M. Skinner is an assistant professor of instruction, biology, health, and the environment at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Her courses include

Molecular Genetics Laboratory, Comparative Vertebrate Anatomy and Animal Nutrition. She started her research at A&M-San Antonio, publishing her work on intestinal parasites of feral hogs with Dr. Wise de Valdez in *Southwestern Naturalist* in 2019. Her other published works include research on parasites of quail, developing a mobile laboratory platform, as well as coinfection dynamics of pathogenic and symbiotic bacteria within tick cells. She earned her M.S. in 2017 from Angelo State University and her Ph.D. in 2023 from Texas Tech University.



Gabrielle M. Harden Herrera '16

was named Rising Star of the Year by the Community-Led Alliance and a finalist for the inaugural Customer Success Accelerator award from Captivate Collective. A senior marketing manager at HubSpot, Herrera scales and optimizes customer marketing and community program engagement for their 238k+ customers. Her team was also recognized by Khoros, a CX software provider, as the "Best Peer-to-Peer Knowledge Sharing Community" in November 2024.

2016

Subish S. Nair is an IT project manager in a petroleum company who recently earned Project Management Professional certification from the Project Management Institute.



Nicole B. Rink and her husband Spencer welcomed their first child, Spencer Jr., in June 2023. After graduation, she worked for Sprint/T-Mobile for eight years and a home health and hospice company in human resources for two years.

2018

Pablo R. Cabrera is executive project officer and knowledge manager at the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence.



2017

Luis E. Bravo is leading technical infrastructure refreshes for U.S. Bank corporate campuses and branches across the nation.



Michelle A. Delgado earned the designation of Certified Medical Laser Safety Officer.



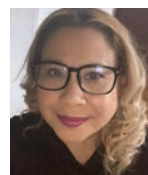
Saul Ramirez Jr. joined McKinsey & Company as a human resources professional supporting the firm's Houston, Dallas, and west coast offices. In 2025, he plans to obtain his SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) certification.

Monica Salazar-Zepeda earned an M.A. in counseling from West Texas A&M University in December. She recently passed the national counselor exam and will work at Aloe Vera Counseling in San Antonio, where she interned.

Brandi D. Wolfe, a family law attorney, is in private practice at Brandi Wolfe Law PLLC, where she focuses on uncontested and high-conflict divorce cases. She runs the Women's Empowerment Legal Center, a nonprofit providing free legal services to survivors of domestic violence. She has procured more than 70 protective orders across Texas. Married for 15 years to former pro-wrestler **Dusty Wolfe '12**, a college teacher, the two have a son, Grant Wolfe, and balance football, jiu-jitsu and advocacy.

2019

Jorge S. Alvarez-Luna was named Southwest ISD Teacher of the Year, a recipient of the Trinity Prize for Excellence in Teaching Award, and a finalist for H-E-B Excellence in Education recognition. He is finishing an M.Ed. in school leadership at Trinity University. "My ultimate goal remains steadfast: to serve my community and empower the students I have the privilege to teach," he said.



Cynthia A. Arce is a kindergarten teacher for San Antonio ISD at Collins Garden Elementary. She is Master Teacher-Recognized and being reviewed for exemplary performance. She has been awarded several grants through SAISD and Donor's Choose and has been recognized by SAISD for her use of technology in the classroom.

Adan G. Garcia is an IT specialist at the South Texas Veterans Health Care System in San Antonio, which provides service to veterans in the region. He is a U.S. Navy veteran.

2020

Robin M. Randall started a coaching business called M.U.Ms (Mentally Understanding Motherhood) All Over, designed to help girls and women navigate their tween years to young adulthood.



Samantha Tupper, a first-grade teacher at Harmony Elementary School, was named East Central ISD Teacher of the Year. She was recognized for “consistently demonstrat(ing) exceptional educational leadership, (and) fostering a vibrant and inclusive learning environment where her students thrive.”

Dani R. Vidal completed an internship at A&M-San Antonio Archives and Special Collections during the fall 2024 semester. She earned a master's degree in library science from Texas Woman's University on Dec. 13, 2024.

2021

Daryela A. Aguilera '21, '24 is a family support worker for the city of San Antonio's Department of Human Services. She provides Head Start families with resources for job training, food pantries, homeless shelters, and other assistance programs. She also connects them to counseling services and encourages them to seek higher education through programs such as Ready to Work.

Brandon T. Harrist is an associate assistant athletic trainer for the New York Mets organization. He will be working with their High A team, the Brooklyn Cyclones.



Justin Hartman is a cardiovascular perfusionist (a health care professional who specializes in operating and maintaining extracorporeal circulation equipment, such as a heart-lung machine) in San Antonio.



Kathryn Miller, along with Associate Professor Dr. Elisabeth Krimbill, presented at the Education Law Association conference in November on the historic Crumbley

cases and how they affect parental accountability. Jennifer and James Crumbley were the first U.S. parents convicted in a mass shooting carried out by their son.

Rebeca M. Sanchez married Matthew Buck in November 2024. She teaches in the Houston ISD.



College of Business Alumni Association Welcomes New Officers

Three officers were added to the College of Business Alumni Association: **Ana Carrasco-Trevino '18, '24**; **Sthefany L. Garcia '20, '24** and **La-Tieka Sims Howell '20**.

Carrasco-Trevino is a customer success supervisor for UPS. She and her husband Robert, an educator at Northside ISD, have two sons, Jacob and Benji. As a family, they prioritize quality time together and volunteering with organizations like Meals on Wheels.

Garcia is program manager and adjunct faculty at A&M-San Antonio. She graduated summa cum laude with a B.B.A. in 2020. Additionally, she received various awards including the Outstanding Senior Award, Top Business Management Student Award and the Ring Scholarship Award. In 2024, she earned an M.B.A. and was recognized as the Online MBA Distinguished



ANA CARRASCO-TREVINO, STHEFANY L. GARCIA AND LA-TIEKA SIMS HOWELL

Student. She also is a certified clinical medical assistant and phlebotomy technician.

Sims Howell is director of constituent services and events for the San Antonio City Council District 7. She also serves as vice president for philanthropy and president-elect for the nonprofit Driving Single Parents; is on the special events committee for the nonprofit Project Mend; and is the social action chair of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Epsilon Alpha Eta Zeta Chapter. While attending the University, she served in a variety of leadership roles. She and her wife have a son.



2022



Iliana V. Delgado will attend Georgetown University Law School in Washington, D.C. , this fall and is getting married in May. Since graduating, she has served as a volunteer advocate with Court Appointed Special Advocates and a youth mentor “big sister” with the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization.

Gabby Lopez '22, '24

earned a master’s degree in cybersecurity, graduating within one year of starting her program.



Andrea Lozano, a parole officer in San Antonio, graduated from Parole Officer Training Academy in August 2024 and has been with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice for two years.



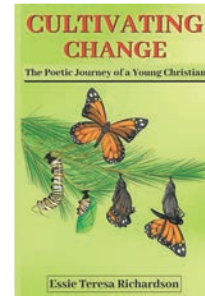
Brenda L. Reyes teaches third grade in the San Antonio ISD and was a nominee for Teacher of the Year.

Nick Tennessee earned a master’s degree in public administration at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Essie T. Richardson '22

is pursuing a M.S.W. at the University of Houston, with the goal of becoming a licensed clinical social worker. She works for

Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and published the book *Cultivating Change: The Poetic Journey of a Young Christian*. After graduating from A&M-San Antonio she participated in “City Year,” an AmeriCorp program that does near-peer mentoring with students.



2023



Sonia Beatrice is celebrating 20 years of her metaphysical business, Positive Direction The Wholeness Center. Beatrice is an intuitive channel and Reiki Master Teacher, assisting clients seeking empowerment and alignment. She also facilitates goal-oriented workshops, gives public speeches, and functions as a point-of-view life consultant and ordained wedding officiant.



Emanuel J. Bogany earned a master’s degree in theological studies from Dallas Baptist University on Dec. 13, 2024, with a 4.0 GPA. He proposed to his girlfriend on Dec. 20, 2024.



Jorge Garcia Jr. works at Connally Middle School, where he has role with the Second Chance Academy. His efforts include reducing youth involvement in drugs and alcohol, while promoting healthy environments and self-respect. Garcia coaches multiple sports including football, basketball and track, allowing him to connect with students in a positive, active way, offering them mentorship and guidance both on and off the field.

Kirstan Garcia is working in data analytics and coding in the accounting area of S.B. Value Partners, an investment firm specializing in providing financial tech advisory services to community banks. “If it was not for one of the electives that I took, I would have been looked over as a candidate,” she said.

Viridiana Gomez will earn a master’s degree in English literature from A&M-San Antonio in May.



Kristen A. Soderlund Slate '22 will begin her legal education at the Georgetown University Law School in Washington, D.C., this fall. She earned a master’s degree in public policy at the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy. She is an inspector for the U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, where she conducts evaluations and inspections of the nation’s justice programs. She is married and living in Washington, D.C.



Denise N. Hernandez is pursuing a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, where she maintains a 4.0 GPA. She has been inducted into both the National Honor Society and the Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity. She is working towards certifications in Sandtray therapy, rural area counseling, and trauma therapy.

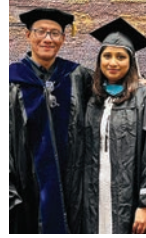


Andrea N. Rivera, a parole officer with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, graduated from the Parole Officer Academy in June 2024. Within two months she was promoted to a specialized caseload, the Special Needs Offender Program.

Riana I. Tovar is a membership and communications assistant at the Fiesta San Antonio Commission, where she is a part of the team that coordinates Fiesta. She is a former advertising manager at the University's Mesquite-News, the student-run news website, and designer for El Espejo Magazine, a student magazine.

2024

Elora Afrin is a water resources engineer for Gannett Fleming TranSystems in Dallas, Texas, where she contributes to water infrastructure projects, focusing on sustainable solutions for water and wastewater management.



Teresa V. Bofferding, who moved into the applied behavioral analysis field, is in the process of becoming a scientific research-based instructor. In the summer she will start A&M-San Antonio's graduate program in special education with focus in autism and emotional disorders.



Elizabeth A. Castro is an area manager for Amazon, having completed her training in Seattle, Washington. She plans to start working on an M.B.A. in July at A&M-San Antonio, followed by earning a second master's degree in psychology.

Roxanne Martinez is a legal assistant for a criminal defense attorney, where she reviews evidence, coordinates with multiple agencies, collects client information and edits court documents.



Bryanna L. Noriega is a Certified Career Experiential Navigator for students and alumni at Palo Alto College. She also plans to start the M.B.A. program at A&M-San Antonio.

Nigel L. Salisbury, an IT field technician at Goodwill San Antonio, is using programming skills he learned in Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahman's class to build APIs (application programming interface).

Stephanie M. Schleigh completed training to become a Certified Electronic Reporter. She is an independent contractor working with Veritext, a court reporting company, to provide audio court reporting services for depositions and other legal matters.

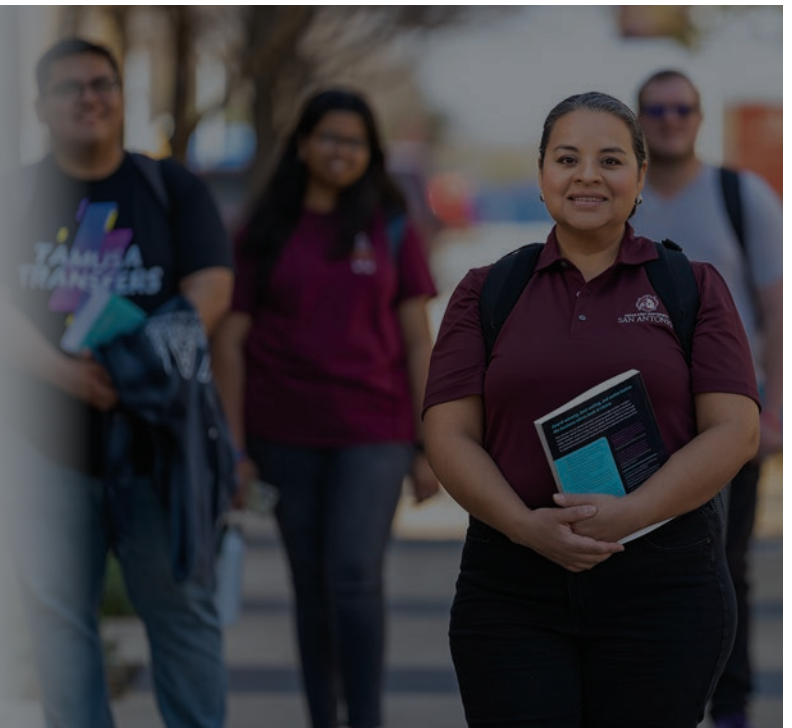
Taylor Treviño is the graduate admissions coordinator and academic advisor for the graduate program in the A&M-San Antonio College of Business.

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