ARTS & SCIENCES NEWS

Women of Arts & Sciences Honored

Dr. Elda Sanchez

Dr. Elda Sanchez, Co-Director for the National Natural Toxins Research Center (NNTRC) and Assistant Professor for the Department of Chemistry, was among the Honorees at the 32nd YWCA Annual Y Women in Careers Award Banquet. The YWCA Selection Committee chooses each year’s honorees based on their professional accomplishments and their position as role models for girls in the community. Dr. Sanchez has been working directly with young people in research for many years and has helped train many entering into the world of biomedical research, including students she mentored through the Ronald McNair Scholars Program. Her work on the biochemistry of snake venom has led to more than 60 peer-reviewed publications and numerous national and international presentations.

Artists Santa Barraza and Carmen Lomas Garza

Texas A&M University-Kingsville art professor Santa Barraza and Texas A&I University alumna Carman Lomas Garza were chosen to be a part of the Women Shaping Texas in the 20th Century exhibit at the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin. This is the first major exhibition in 30 years to tell the story of the impact of women on the state’s development. Barraza’s contribution is a painting entitled Frances con el Árbol de la Vida, an acrylic on amate paper.

As the exhibit curator noted, Barraza’s work “braids together many of the deep influences of the South Texas borderlands, reflecting her Mexican-American heritage and her identity as a descendant of the native Karankawas who once inhabited the Texas coast. Her bold, color drenched images address Mexican-American border life and culture, especially the religious elements, as well as the older pre-Columbian heritage. Barraza conveys the deep spiritual nature of the borderland – ‘a magical, magnetic location of unbendable forces.’”

Of Garza, the curator commented, “Her work depicts families and communities going about their everyday lives or sharing special events. ‘Almost all of my artwork is based on my memories of growing up in South Texas. And I have a very vivid memory. . . . I have a picture in my mind.'"
National Politics

However, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is "an ineffective body." Dr. Nancy Rabalais (B.S. 1972; M.S. 1975) has been named to the MacArthur Fellows Program. The Program awards five-year, unrestricted fellowships to individuals across all ages and fields who show exceptional merit and promise of continued creative work. Dr. Rabalais, who received her Ph.D. from the University of Texas in 1983, is affiliated with the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium, where she is currently professor and executive director. Since the mid-1980s, she has led a long-term monitoring program to study the size, intensity, and seasonal occurrence of dead zones in the waters off the Louisiana continental shelf. She has also analyzed the relationship between the extent of these dead zones (hypoxia) and the increasing quantities of nutrients flowing into the Gulf from the Mississippi River watershed.

Looking for a way to support your favorite programs in the College of Arts & Sciences?

As a Javelina for Life, your gift to the University demonstrates your commitment and Javelina Pride. You will have the opportunity to designate your gift to your program of choice. Contact Dean Abbey Zink to find out how you can be a part of the exciting things going on in the College.

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Faculty Achievements

Dr. Richard Hartwig has been selected to be a speaker in the Vaughan Park Scholars lecture series near Auckland, New Zealand, for June 2013. The focus of his lecture will be the need for reform of the United Nations Security Council to Make Global Decisions.

"An increasingly interdependent world needs to make decisions on matters which affect us all. Climate change is one such matter. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is a logical venue for some of these decisions. However, as currently constituted, the UNSC lacks legitimacy and is increasingly ineffective. The Regional Economic Proposal is an attempt to confront these problems."

Hartwig will also be a School Visitor within the School of Politics and International Relations at the Australian National University during April and May 2013 and will give a talk at Otago University in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Dr. Richard Hartwig is a Professor of Political Science in the Department of History, Political Science & Philosophy. Dr. Hartwig teaches American Government, Latin American Politics, Public Administration, Public Policy & International Relations, Technology & Society and Drugs, Violence and Politics in Mexico.

Dr. Jieming Chen has been collaborating with researchers at the Institute for Empirical Social Science Research (IESSR), Xi'an Jiaotong University, China, to conduct research on patterns of old age support and economic inequality in contemporary Chinese society. With a population of over 1.3 billion people and a rapidly growing economy, China is undergoing great social and economic transformations. Two pressing social issues that China faces today are rapid population aging and increasing economic inequality. The aims of Dr. Chen’s research are to investigate the changes of the age-old family support system for the elderly in China, and to examine perceptions of the general public on distributive justice in society. He and his associates at IESSR have carried out a semi-national survey to collect data on social and economic conditions, including family life and intergenerational support, of both rural and urban western China. The data collection phase is now complete, and he is conducting analysis of the data to understand the impact of economic development and political and cultural changes on the old support system and perceptions of distributive justice in China.

Dr. Jieming Chen is a Professor of Sociology in the Department of Psychology & Sociology. Dr. Chen’s specialty and research interests include: Health & Aging, Family Change, Social Demography, Intergenerational Support, Statistics & Research Methods, and Transformation of State Socialist Societies.
HPSP Students Take Advantage of Internship Opportunities

During the 2011-2012 academic year, interns Brittany Barrera (History, Pre-Law) and Kelsey Davis (History and English) assisted the John E. Conner Museum curator in unpacking and organizing artifacts in the Museum’s remote storage area and participated in artifact preservation projects. They also developed furnishing plans for revising the Museum’s period rooms exhibit. In another effort, Ms. Davis participated in an oral history project in which she interviewed a local nonagenarian. In addition to the students who served the Conner Museum, Aziel Del Rio interned with Dr. Shannon Baker and completed some Spanish to English translations. Matthew Ray interned at the Journal of South Texas. James Caldwell is completing his internship at the South Texas Archives. Daniela De Urioste, Jacob Gaslin and Melinda Schwartz are completing internships with the Kingsville Historic Survey this semester. Internships like these give students valuable hands-on experiences that enhance their learning.

Parents Experience Life as College Students

About a dozen parents of first-generation college students set to attend Texas A&M University-Kingsville received a first hand look at life as a college student during Parent College at the end of July. The two-day event allowed parents to experience everything from spending the night in the university’s newest residence hall, Mesquite Village, to enjoying a meal with the university’s academic deans in the Javelina Dining Hall, to touring the campus and sitting in on some college math, English and biology classes. “Students who are first in their families to go to college are often referred to as first-generation,” Dr. Marsha Tucker, co-coordinator said. “Even when these students are prepared academically for the demands of college studies, they need the added benefit of knowing and understanding how things work on a college campus. This change can be difficult when their families and friends from home have not themselves been to college.” Parent College is one way that parents of first-generation students can know what their sons and daughters will be experiencing in college and better support their students during their journey through higher education.

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Did you know?

The College of Arts & Sciences houses some of the most popular majors on campus.
Message from the Dean

The College of Arts and Sciences continues to move forward in exciting ways. Significant achievements highlighted in this edition of A&S Connections include:

- Prof. Santa Barazza and art alumna Carman Lomas Garza were honored in the “Women Shaping Texas in the 20th Century” exhibit at the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin.
- Dr. Nancy Rabalais, who earned her B.S. and M.S. in Biology at A&I in the early 1970s, has been named to the prestigious MacArthur Fellows Program. (These fellowships are referred to as MacArthur “genius” grants.) Dr. Rabalais currently serves as executive director and professor at the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium.
- A&S students and faculty continue to study around the globe. Over the past year, study abroad opportunities have taken students and faculty to England, New Zealand, Austria, and Puerto Rico.
- The Department of Mathematics hosted its first International Conference on the Theory, Methods, and Applications of Nonlinear Equations in December 2012. Nearly 200 scholars from more than 30 countries attended.
- Communications junior Gabriel Ochoa earned a “Best Music Show” award for his “Kingsville Country” show that airs on student-run KTAI radio.

These accomplishments help to underscore why so many students are selecting A&S majors and choosing to become Javelinas for Life. In Fall 2012, for example, five of the top 10 majors at TAMUK were in Arts & Sciences. We expect these trends to continue as we build upon current strengths and add new degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Please feel free to contact me at abbey.zink@tamuk.edu to learn more about our programs or to share your own Javelina success story.

KTAI 91.1 FM’s “Roughneck Rich” Earns National Honor

Texas A&M University-Kingsville’s student-run radio station KTAI FM 91.1 continues to earn national recognition. The station’s popular “Kingsville Country” radio show, hosted by communications junior Gabriel Ochoa, was one of four student radio music shows from across the nation earning the Best Music Show award during the first Radio Star Awards sponsored by RadioFlag. Ochoa’s on-air persona—Roughneck Rich—served as a popular fixture on KTAI’s late morning to early afternoon line-up during the spring 2012 semester. While country music was the cornerstone of the program, Texas country proved to be the most popular genre during the show. Never a fan of hip-hop or rock music, Ochoa said country music, and Texas country music in particular, is laden with themes with which many listeners can identify. “Country music hits right there at home,” Ochoa said. “It’s music that deals with roots, family, small towns. It’s always been about things that relate to my life.”

KTAI –FM Fun Facts

- Broadcast in 100 watts, stereo
- Run by volunteer students
- Now over 40 years old
- Broadcasts 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year from Manning Hall of TAMUK
- Started in 1969 inside a closet in the UCI physical sciences building
- Began broadcasting at 10 watts in mono on 89.9 FM
- Helps promote non-profit events with on-air PSAs
Math Department Hosts International Conference

The International Conference on the Theory, Methods and Applications of Nonlinear Equations was held on the Kingsville campus December 17-21, 2012, with over 175 scholars from all over the world attending. Conference organizer and department chair, Dr. Ravi Agarwal noted that “the main aim of the conference is to promote, encourage and bring together researchers in the field of nonlinear equations.” During the conference, scholars presented their research on nonlinear equations—an expression where the output is unpredictable given certain known output, such as weather changes which are affected by many factors. In addition to sharing their research, participants were able to enjoy some of the attractions of South Texas.

NNTRC Hosts 13th Annual Viper Day

The National Natural Toxin Research Center’s 13th Annual Viper Day was held Thursday, April 12, 2012. This all-day event included many activities for visiting high school juniors and seniors. The keynote speaker was Dr. Jacob Galan of the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer (IRIC) in Montreal, Canada. Keynote speakers for the Viper Day event are chosen from former students of the NNTRC, giving them a chance to tell the students attending Viper Day what opportunities helped them accomplish their goals and pursue careers in the sciences. Dr. Galan first joined the NNTRC as an undergraduate student working on his biology degree in 1999 and continued with the Center working his way up to a Research Associate by 2005. Following his time at the NNTRC, Galan earned his Ph.D. in Biochemistry from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and then moved to Quebec to take on his Post Doctoral studies. In addition to speakers from the NNTRC, Viper Day activities included poster presentations of current research projects, and tours of both the NNTRC labs and the serpentarium. This gave the visiting students a fairly unique chance to see a functional research laboratory where students work on screening, testing and cloning molecules from snake venoms and what they can look forward to when coming to a university and beginning a degree in one of the sciences.
Hoggies Study Abroad

This past year TAMUK Arts and Sciences students participated in a number of faculty-led Study Abroad experiences. Study Abroad trips enrich students personally, intellectually, and socially as they broaden their appreciation of global culture, further their sense of independence and self-reliance, and make new friends. Scholarships are available, and students may be able to use some of their financial aid for this program.

LONDON, ENGLAND

The London Shakespeare Program, led by Dr. David Sabrio, enabled students to experience and study the plays, culture, and history of William Shakespeare. Participants attended performances of four of Shakespeare’s plays, at least one at the New Globe Theatre in London and one at one of the theatres of the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon. Students took tours of the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, and the parts of London where Shakespeare worked. In Stratford, students visited Shakespeare’s birth house and Holy Trinity Church, where Shakespeare was christened and is buried. Students also participated in a Globe Theatre acting workshop facilitated by a professional Shakespearean actor.

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

Professors Roberto Vela and Marco Íñiguez from the Spanish program conducted a faculty-led program to Puerto Rico. During a week-long stay in the colonial city of San Juan, students worked closely with the directors of the National Library of Puerto Rico and the General Archives of Puerto Rico on multi-media research projects. This intensive research was complemented by events highlighting the cultural diversity of the Caribbean. Students visited the Modern Museum of Art as well as the Art Museum of Ponce, which houses an impressive collection of art stemming from the 16th century. These events were juxtaposed by a visit to the Tibes Indigenous Ceremonial Center and by a day-long event at the town of Loíza, recognized as a mecca of Afro-Caribbean traditions and a film location of Pirates of the Caribbean. Eco-educational activities followed with a river expedition through the rainforest basin of El Yunque, and a night kayak trip into one of three existing bio-luminescent bays in the world.

DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND

Under the guidance of Dr. Nirmal Goswami and Dr. Christine Reiser-Robbins, students traveled to New Zealand in July 2012. In partnership with the University of Otago, New Zealand, “The Politics and Societies of the Pacific” course enabled students to study the politics, history, culture, environment, and economics of New Zealand and the Pacific region and their implications for the United States. Part of the program included a Service Learning Project with middle and high school students from Bishop School District and Logan Park High School, Dunedin, Otago. The intent was to have TAMUK students master, teach, and produce global humanities knowledge through field-based service learning, while simultaneously widening those benefits among under-served community school populations. This project provided both topical grounding in global humanities by introducing students firsthand to a particular region of the world through the lens of culture and politics, while at the same time providing methodological training in primary research and scholarship.
The art program at the University of Graz, Austria, brought U.S. and Austrian students together under the supervision of art professor Santa Barraza. The art courses used the theme of the Mesoamerican concept of “nepantla,” the juncture where two opposing cultures meet and re-contextualize into a third distinct, combined (hybrid) culture. In the spirit of nepantla, the U.S. students used much of the iconography of Austria in their art production to produce original pieces that combined elements of both cultures. The art classes culminated with a group final critique of all the artwork produced by the students. Students also had the opportunity for various cultural outings in Graz, a Renaissance city that has been declared by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) as the City of Design. The friendly people, excellent food, architecture, education, culture, and general ambience provided for an excellent study abroad experience in the visual arts.

**Chemistry Adds New Tracks**

The Chemistry program now has two new tracks that meet American Chemical Society requirements. In addition to the traditional chemistry track, students may choose the biochemical track or the health sciences track. Graduates from the biochemical track are prepared to work in the pharmaceutical industry. The other track was developed for the students who are interested in medical schools, dental schools, or pharmacy schools. The upper-level chemistry courses required in this track should help students with the entrance exams for the medical, dental, and pharmacy schools.

**Geosciences Trains Future Geologists**

The Geosciences Program is evolving a new Field Camp program that is unique in the United States. We are training future Geologists with three two-week field experiences in Big Bend National Park (spring intersession), Central Texas (summer intersession), and on campus (fall intersession). The first two field experiences incorporate traditional training exercises to teach students how to map complex geological terrains and to place the knowledge gained into the development of the regional geology. The third part of our field camp is organized to provide our students local job training in the mining, petroleum, and hydrogeology industries with professionals from these career fields.

**Music Plans New Master’s Degrees**

The Music Department is seeking to add the Master’s of Music in Performance degree to our current program offerings. The degree will be offered during the fall and spring semesters and will allow master’s students the opportunity to continue to develop their musical performance skills learned during their undergraduate degrees. The degree will also prepare students to pursue a doctoral degree in music performance at a major university. If approved, the degree could begin sometime during the 2013-14 academic year. This will be the first graduate music degree that is offered during the long terms and will complement our current master’s degree in music education which is offered during the summer.
Upcoming Events

Women’s History Month
March 1 – 31, 2013
For more information on events:
Dr. Brenda Melendy, Director,
Women & Gender Studies Program
kfbdm00@tamuk.edu • 361.593.3609

Arts & Sciences Dean’s Colloquium 2013
Dr. Karen Devine
“Patriotism and Its Effects on Public Attitudes to Foreign Policy: Comparing the United States & Ireland”
April 19, 2013 • 11:30am • The Blue Room
For more information:
361.593.3506 or 361.593.2516

Spring 2013 Commencement Exercises
May 10, 2013 • Steinke Physical Education Center
10:00am – Arts & Sciences Master’s Candidates
1:00pm – Arts & Sciences Baccalaureate Candidates

Summer Session 2013
First Session: June 3 – July 3, 2013
Second Session: July 9 – August 8, 2013