

# Environmental Engineering Department News

## Texas A&M University-Kingsville

### Special Points of interest:

- December Commencement
- Student Achievements
- Student Organizations

### Inside this Issue:

- Student Achievements and Defenses
- Faculty/Staff News
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- Alumni News
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## EVEN Highlights



Jan. 2018— May 2018

### Student Achievements

**December 2017 Graduates**—**Master of Science:** Onyinyechi Anyanso, Natalia Rojas Arias and Nida Shaikh. **Bachelors of Science:** Yvonne Dives-Gomez (pictured: Onyinyechi Anyanso, Natalia Rojas Arias and Yvonne Dives-Gomez). **Congratulations!!!**



The latest [U.S. News & World Report](#) rankings for Environmental Engineering Graduate Programs lists **Texas A&M University-Kingsville's Environmental Engineering Program** at **#69**. We have moved up 14 spots and are tied with [Dartmouth](#), [Marquette](#), [Montana State](#), [University of Georgia](#), [University of Kansas](#) and [University of Missouri](#).

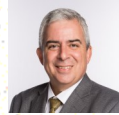
**PhD Student, Jalil Ghobadi** published a paper in the [Journal of Membrane Science](#) titled "*CO<sub>2</sub> separation performance of different diameter polytetrafluoroethylene hollow fiber membranes using gas-liquid membrane contacting system*". [Ghobadi, J.](#); [Ramirez, D.](#); [Jerman, R.](#); [Crane, M.](#); [Khoramfar S.](#) (2018) Volume 549, Pages 75-83. (pictured)



**PhD Student, Shooka Khoramfar's** manuscript was accepted in the [Journal of Chemical Technology and Biotechnology](#) titled "*Evaluation of a sequential biotrickling-biofiltration unit for removal of VOCs from the headspace of crude oil storage tanks*" - [Khoramfar, S.](#); [Jones, K.](#); [Boswell, J.](#); [Ghobadi, J.](#); [Paca, J.](#) (2018). (pictured)



**PhD Student, Francisco Haces-Fernandez** published a paper in [Renewable Energy](#) titled "*Wave energy characterization and assessment in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, East and West Coasts with Energy Event concept*" - [Haces-Fernandez, F.](#); [Li, H.](#); [Ramirez, D.](#) (2018) 123, 312-322.



**PhD Student, Mohamed Elansary** presented a poster at the [American Meteorological Society 98th Annual Meeting](#) held on January 8, 2018 in Austin, TX. (pictured)



**MS Student Neha Patnaik** passed her FE. Students selected for the [Texas A&M University-Kingsville All Star](#) are: **PhD Student, Francisco Haces-Fernandez**, **MS Students Hunter Balzan and Md. Umer Shafiq**, and **BS Student Miranda De La Garza**.

### Student Organizations

The [AAEES](#) and [AWMA Student Organizations](#) participated in the [Corpus Christi Beach Clean-Up](#) on April 21, 2018. Students who donated their time were [Andrew Medrano](#), [Jose Soria](#), [Melynda Ambriz](#), [Elissa Garcia](#), [Samantha Ronk](#), [Olivia Garcia](#), [Alejandra Moz](#), [Maria Aguilar](#), [Nicholas Ramos](#), [Jodi Swaenepoel](#), [James Dominguez](#), [Diana Briseno](#), [Cole Buckalew](#), [Tamara Guillen](#), [Yvonne Dives-Gomez](#), [Umer Shafiq](#), and [Isaac Estrello](#).

The [AAEES Student Organization](#) held a successful **Beverage Sale** on the 1st floor of the Engineering Complex building on April 24, 2018.

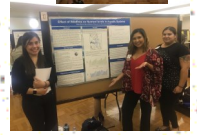
If you are interested in joining the [AAEES Student Organization](#) please contact [Andrew Medrano](#) (BS), President at [tamuk.aees@gmail.com](mailto:tamuk.aees@gmail.com). If interested in joining the [AWMA Student Organization](#) please contact [Mohammad Umer Shafiq](#) (MS), President at [AWMA.tamuk@yahoo.com](mailto:AWMA.tamuk@yahoo.com). If you are a PhD student and interested in joining the [Association of Doctoral Students \(ADS\)](#) please contact [Mohammad Anwar Hossain](#) (PhD), President at [adstamuk@gmail.com](mailto:adstamuk@gmail.com).

## Student Achievements (cont.)

BS Students Katelyn Buse, Jody Swaenepoel and MS Student Lauren Rodriguez presented their poster at the [11th Annual Javelina Research Symposium](#) titled “*Water Quality Impacts in the Aftermath of Hurricane Harvey*”. Advisor: [Dr. David Ramirez](#). (pictured)



BS Students Olivia Garcia Ramirez, Elissa Garcia and Mary Kat Villarreal presented their poster at the [11th Annual Javelina Research Symposium](#) titled “*Wildfire Effects on Aquatic Life*”. Advisor: [Dr. David Ramirez](#). (pictured)



MS Monsuru Suara received **2nd Place** for his poster presentation at the [11th Annual Javelina Research Symposium](#) on April 18, 2018. Monsuru is invited to present his research at the [Phi Kappa Phi Student Research Forum](#) to be held on May 8, 2018.

### Dissertation/Thesis/Project Defenses:

PhD Student, Johnson Ajedegba successfully defended his dissertation titled “*Dune Vulnerability, Resilience and Ecological Modeling and Restoration in South Padre Island, Texas*” on March 2, 2018. Chair: [Dr. Kim Jones](#)

PhD Student, Md Ahsan Ullah successfully defended his dissertation proposal titled “*Activated Sludge Modeling and Removal of Nutrient for the Treatment of Municipal Wastewater*” on March 28, 2018. Chair: [Dr. Lucy Mar Camacho](#).

PhD Student, Nebechi Osia successfully defended her dissertation titled “*Evaluation of Alternative Reductants for Stimulating Uranium Reduction and Immobilization*” on March 29, 2018. Chair: [Dr. Lee Clapp](#)

PhD Student, Ahmed Mahmoud successfully defended his dissertation titled “*Evaluation and Characterization of Removal of Bacteria and Nutrients in Runoff in Bio-retention Structures in Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas*” on April 11, 2018. Chair: [Dr. Kim Jones](#)

Sunil Parajuli successfully defend his thesis titled “*Reuse of Natural Zeolite for Adsorption of Ammonia and Adsorption of Phosphate on a Modified Natural Zeolite*” on April 23, 2018. Chair: [Dr. Lucy Mar Camacho](#).

Hunter Balzen successfully defended his thesis titled “*Morphological and Chemical Characterization of Atmospheric Particulate Matter from Aguascalientes, Mexico*” on April 24, 2018. Chair: [Dr. David Ramirez](#).

## Department News

Dr. J. César Bezares-Cruz participated in the 2018 Academic Research and Leadership Network Symposium at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA on March 23-24, 2018. [Dr. Bezares-Cruz](#) received the NSF-Assist Travel Award to attend the MAES Faculty Development Institute in El Paso, TX.

Dr. Lucy Mar Camacho gave a presentation titled “*Development of Membrane of the Desalination Process of membrane Distillation*” at the [TWO NATIONS ONE WATER—US-Mexico Border Water Summit](#) on March 1-2, 2018 in El Paso, TX. This summit was in cooperation with [International Boundary and Water Commission, North American Development Bank](#), and [U.S. Bureau of Reclamation](#).

Dr. Lucy Mar Camacho gave a presentation titled “*Use of Natural Zeolites for the Removal of Heavy Metals from Water*” at the [1<sup>st</sup> International Symposium on Zeolites-Use of Mexican Natural Zeolites for the Removal of Contaminants from Water](#) on February 21-22, 2018 in Chihuahua, Mexico.

Dr. Thomas Lynn is teaching **EVEN 6329 Environmental Monitoring and Measurements** this spring semester with the [Coagulation/Filtration Challenge!](#) Steps of the challenge were: Determination of BOD experiment, preparation of sand filter, and observation of the treatment performance of the coagulation process. First picture (left-to-right):

[Sreemanth Yarandalli](#), [Anusha Vijayeendra](#), [Khurram Yasar Mohammed](#) and [Chuckwudera Ibe](#) (**This team won the competition**; achieved turbidity reduction of 96%) Second picture (left-to-right): [Rayan Ibrahim Shaar](#), [Tinayi Zhang](#) and [Lauren Rodriguez](#) (achieved turbidity reduction of 92%); Third picture (left-to-right): [Anna Longnecker](#), [Leslie Llanos](#), [Lorena Interiano](#) and [Stephany De La Rosa](#) (achieved turbidity reduction of 92%). All students are EVEN MS students.



## Faculty/Staff News

**Department Changes:** Dr. David Ramirez, Associate Professor for Environmental Engineering was appointed as **Interim Chair for Environmental Engineering** effective February 1, 2018. Dr. Ramirez has been with the department since June 1 2006, and became tenured Associate Professor in September 2012. He has served as the PhD Coordinator from July 2015 until January 2018. Dr. Ramirez was the **Director of the CREST-RESSACA** from 2012—2014 (pictured)



Dr. Tushar Sinha has been appointed the **PhD Coordinator** for Environmental Engineering effective February 1, 2018. Dr. Tushar Sinha was invited to give a keynote speech at the **International Conference on “Sustainable Technologies for Intelligent Water Management”** during February 16-19, 2018 at **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)** Roorkee, India. The title of his talk was “*Water Resources Management under Climate Change in a Semi-arid Basin: Challenges and Opportunities*”. Some of the attendees include researchers from U.S. and Canada Universities, National Institute of Hydrology and other IITs as well as representatives from state and federal agencies in India. Dr. Sinha also chaired a technical session at the conference. Dr. Tushar Sinha attended several colleges and high schools while in India recruiting for the **Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Environmental Engineering** programs. February, 2018.



Dr. Tushar Sinha and Dr. Kim Jones submitted a proposal in collaboration led by **UTRGV** titled “*Collaborative Research: NRT-INFIEWS: Intergrated Food Energy Water Science, Engineering & Policy (InFEWSEaP)*” for **\$1,006,360**. February, 2018. (pictured)

“*Membrane Distillation to Augment RO Desalination Efficiency and Reduce Brine Disposal in a Brackish Desalination Plant—Phase III*” PI: **Lucy Mar Camacho** funded by **El Paso Water Utilities** for **\$67,117** for 3/1/2018—2/28/2019. Proposal Awarded. (pictured)



“*Identifying saline water resources for treatment at the Rancho la Union, San Ignacio, Texas*” PI: **Lucy Mar Camacho** / Co-PI: **James Glusing** funded by **The Guadalupe and Lilia Martinez Foundation** for **\$44,839** for 3/15/2018—8/31/2019. Proposal Awarded.

Dr. **Lucy Mar Camacho** and Dr. **Saritha Karnae** participated in the **GEMS Conference**, at Moody High School, Corpus Christi, TX on March 7, 2018.

## Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Environment (ISEE) News

**Constructed Wetlands Workshop** “Creating multiple benefits for your community and the environment” was given on March 7, 2018. The workshop was hosted by: **Alan Plummer Associates, Inc., Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program and Texas A&M University-Kingsville’s Institute for Sustainable Energy and the Environment**. Forty-Six attendees participated at the workshop that was held at the **Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Center**. All speaker presentations from the workshop can be found on our website.

**ISEE is gearing up for their 2018 EPA Region 6 Stormwater Conference** “*Our water, our future: communication, collaboration, and adaptive management for improved Stormwater quality*” will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the **Hotel Albuquerque** in Old Town on August 19-23, 2018. The Conference is co-hosted by **Bernalillo County, Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA) & Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA)**. Visit the conference **website** ([tamuk-isee.com/conferences/epa2018conference/](http://tamuk-isee.com/conferences/epa2018conference/)) and stay up to date with the latest information, Sponsorship Opportunities, Call for Papers, and Early Registration open for \$300 until April, 30, 2018,. Call for presentations will close on April 27th.

“*South Padre Island Dune Vegetation Repository and Revegetation of Reconstructed Dunes at Isla Blanca Park, Cameron County, Texas*” PI: **Kim D. Jones** funded by the **Cameron County** for **\$210,000** for 02/01/18—01/31/2020. Proposal Awarded. (pictured)



Feel free to visit our website: <http://tamuk-isee.com>

## Alumni News

Gerardo Carmona, P.E. (BS Class of '13) is working for [City of Corpus Christi—Utilities](#) in Corpus Christi, TX as an **Engineer III**.

Dr. Anuradha Nagaraj (MS Class of '16) is working for [Veritas Healthcare Solutions](#) in San Antonio, TX as a **Health & Safety Engineer**.

Olusola Fasae (MS Class of '17) is working for [Littlehorn Engineering & Surveying LLC](#) in Fairplay, CO as a **Project Engineer**.

Alexandra Juarez (MS Class of '17) is working for [Trinity Consultants](#) in Pittsburgh, PA as an **Associate Consultant**. Alexandra also passed the FE Exam in January, 2018. (pictured)

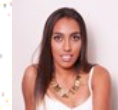


Onyinyechi Anyanso (MS Class of '17) is working for [Cummins Inc.](#) in Columbus, IN as an **Environmental Health & Safety Analyst**. (pictured)

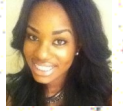


Myoungwoo Kim (MS Class of '02) is working for [FMC Corp.](#) in Philadelphia, PA as a Senior Scientist.

Tabata Lua Cervantes (BS Class of '17) is working for [HCL Engineering & Surveying, LLC](#) in Denver, CO as an **Environmental Engineer**. (pictured)



Dr. Nebechi Osia (PhD Class of '18) is working for [Chevron](#) in Midland, TX as a **Health, Environment & Safety-Environmental Compliance Support**. (pictured)



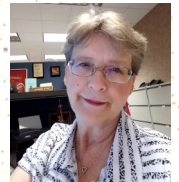
Geraldo Pinzon (MS Class of '02) is currently a **PhD Student** with [TAMUK-Env Eng](#) and is working for the [City of Laredo](#) in Laredo, TX as the Residential Reviewer-**Senior Engineer** for the Building Development Services.

Natalia Rojas Arias (MS Class of '17) is working for [BSI Services and Solutions](#) in Austin, TX as a **Consultant Specialist**. Natalia also passed the FE Exam in March, 2018.

## Upcoming Events

**Friday, May 18, 2018 Commencement** will be held at **4 P.M. for College of Engineering Students**. Environmental Engineering students graduating are: **PhD Students:** *Johnson Ajedegba, Nebechi Osia, and Ahmed Saad Mahmoud* **MS Students:** *Abiola Adebawale, Hunter Balzen, Sulochana Sneha Eati, Andrea Meyer, and Sunil Parajuli* **BS Student:** *Alexandra Arrazola, Courtney Davis, Omar Dela Garza, Brooke Schalm, Candice Valerio and Christina Williams*. **Congratulations Graduates!!!**

Catherine Allen will be retiring on May 31st after serving over 23 years at Texas A&M University-Kingsville for the Environmental Engineering department. A **Retirement Party** will be held on May 16th in the Engineering Complex Faculty Lounge at Noon. A private retirement celebration will be held on May 26th at the [Kings Inn](#). *"It has been an honor to work for Environmental Engineering. The faculty, staff and students are all very dear to me. Thank you for letting me be your secretary, I have so many wonderful memories"* Cathey.



ISEE will hold its **20th Annual EPA Region 6 Stormwater Conference** in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the *Hotel Albuquerque* in Old Town (room reservation link is pending) on August 19-23, 2018. The Conference is co-hosted by [Bernalillo County, Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority \(AMAFCA\) & Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority \(SSCAFCA\)](#).

### Upcoming Important Dates:

**First Class Day for Summer I Session is June 4th and July 9th for Summer II Session.**

**Deadline to File Application for Degree Candidacy in December with Academic College Dean is August 1st!**

**First Class Day for Fall 2018 is August 27th!**



**Go Javelina's !!!!**

