2010–2011 Impact Report

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Special thanks to the many DDCE staff who helped us by providing information, contacts, and photographs, and who reviewed the stories included in this report.
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The University of Texas at Austin
MISSION
The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement advances socially just learning and working environments that foster a culture of excellence through diverse people, ideas, and perspectives. We engage in dynamic community-university partnerships designed to transform our lives.

Since 2007 the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) has played a vital role on campus, helping to recruit outstanding diverse faculty and students, enriching both intellectual and cultural diversity on The University of Texas at Austin campus. The division continues to foster a welcoming climate and academic excellence and has taken a lead role to ensure that first-generation to college and historically underrepresented students enter and succeed at the university.

As provost, I am pleased that the DDCE’s thematic hiring initiative continues to provide an avenue for attracting faculty who bring new areas of scholarship to our university community and whose diverse ideas and experiences help to shape a strong curriculum and enhance our core mission of teaching, research, and service. The thematic hiring initiative has been quite successful the past five years in the College of Liberal Arts, the School of Architecture, the School of Education, and the School of Law. Now the initiative is working with the College of Pharmacy and moving into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. We want our students to be encouraged by the realization that attending a university with a diverse faculty means that they will be exposed to a wider spectrum of cultural differences, research strategies, and teaching methods, all of which will enhance their educational experience.

As The University of Texas at Austin continues to attract the best and the brightest faculty, staff, and students, we can be assured that our growing diversity is an asset. For the first time, this year our incoming freshman class was a minority majority—the university’s student population is beginning to truly reflect the demographics of the state of Texas. Having a culture of inclusive excellence, a highly diverse faculty and staff and student body, and a commitment to providing the best educational experience possible, we will continue to graduate students who change the world.

Dr. Steven Leslie
Provost, The University of Texas at Austin

This has been an incredible year for the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE). Our first two years were spent building relationships, on campus and in the community, and establishing the processes and structures we needed to function effectively. Now in our third year, the DDCE has hit its stride. Although we are still laying the foundation needed for a large division, we have made real progress serving our communities, deepening existing partnerships, creating valuable new partnerships, and meeting new benchmarks of success.

When President Bill Powers created the division in 2006 as part of his commitment to diversity and community engagement, he aligned existing units and programs that had diversity and community engagement at their core. In doing so, he established a division that remains an exemplar in higher education. We have merged units and programs, but even in the face of budget cuts, we have been able to expand critical areas of work and develop new initiatives to support the core purpose of The University of Texas at Austin—to transform lives for the benefit of society.

Much of our work involves addressing long-standing, systemic problems—issues of equality, social justice, and equity. In just a few years’ time we cannot erase the past, but we can take steps to remove barriers that hinder the success of students from underrepresented populations, including those with disabilities; to foster new community partnerships to help solve problems related to economic development and education; and to recognize important contributions to the university from African Americans, American Indians, Hispanics, Asian Americans, individuals from the LGBTQ community, and individuals with disabilities.

Through our innovative initiatives, DDCE is especially dedicated to increasing the success of underrepresented students throughout the education pipeline. Beginning with the exemplary-rated UT Elementary School and the Neighborhood Longhorns Program, our division is working with the youngest students, helping them to achieve at high levels academically. Through our five UT Outreach Centers and academic programs such as our new Longhorn Pre-College Academy in Dallas and our ChemBridge and SPURS programs, we partner with underrepresented high schools, helping to create a college-going culture for students and educating parents about what is needed to enter college.

Once students are enrolled in the university, our Longhorn Center for Academic Success provides the support underrepresented students need to succeed, including exposure to graduate school and research. By helping students see that graduate or professional school is a real possibility, we encourage their pursuit of advanced degrees. The education pipeline is completed with our thematic faculty hiring initiative, enabling colleges and schools across the university to hire outstanding faculty members who bring intellectual and cultural diversity to campus.

The DDCE also hosts and supports a number of events that celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of students, scholars, and community members from underrepresented populations. We have played a key role in addressing issues of bias and inequity on campus through our Office of Institutional Equity and through our role in the creation of a campus climate response team. As well, we have helped build a more positive relationship between the university and East Austin through our community engagement efforts and our Community Engagement Center. Two of our largest units—the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health and the University Interscholastic League—touch communities across the state.

As you read through this report, we hope you will be encouraged by the work of our outstanding staff and be able to experience some of the ways we have changed the campus climate of the university. Our efforts do more than improve the educational experience for first-generation college students or students from underrepresented populations. All students benefit from being exposed to diverse ideas, perspectives, and people, especially as the global economy continues to grow. Our next generation of leaders must be equipped to face the challenges of a world where cultural competence is a necessity. What starts here in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement does indeed change the world.

Dr. Gregory J. Vincent
Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement
W. K. Kellogg Professor in Community College Leadership
Professor of Law
Diversity has been one of President Bill Powers’ strategic initiatives since taking office as the 28th president of The University of Texas at Austin in 2006. He took the bold move of aligning projects, units, and budgets to create the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE), and in doing so established one of the most comprehensive units of its kind in the country.

President Powers’ commitment to diversity has been longstanding. As dean of the UT School of Law from 2000–2005, he guided a marked increase in the number of underrepresented students admitted. During his tenure, the number of African American students admitted to the School of Law quadrupled, and the number of Hispanic students doubled.

We recently posed a few questions to the president to get his take on the state of diversity at The University of Texas at Austin.

Q: How has this campus changed in the past 20 years with regard to diversity?

A: The enrollment statistics give the clearest picture of the difference. In 1990 our student body was composed of 71.2 percent white students, 10.8 percent Hispanic, 3.7 percent African American, and 6.3 percent Asian American. This year our enrollment is 52.1 percent white, 17 percent Hispanic, 4.5 percent African American, and 15.2 percent Asian American. That represents a 63 percent increase in Hispanic students, a 26 percent increase in African American students, and a 150 percent increase in Asian Americans over a 20-year period. We will continue to work on making progress in recruitment, scholarship support, and financial aid for underrepresented students.

The 2010 freshman class is the most diverse in our history. It is the first entering class that does not have a white majority. Fifty-two percent of our freshmen are minority students, including 23 percent who are Hispanic, reflecting the changing demographics of the state. More students than ever are first-generation college students.

But statistics do not give the complete picture. Over the past 20 years, we have enriched the UT experience by adding more ethnic studies, more programs and initiatives targeted at improving diversity, a scholarship program for underrepresented populations, and more student associations that represent the diversity of our state. This year, for example, we created the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies.

Allocated significant additional funds to the Center for Mexican American Studies for graduate school fellowships, dissertation fellowships, faculty research fellowships, visiting research fellowships, and postdoctoral fellowships in Mexican American Studies.

Q: As dean of the School of Law and as president of the university, you have made diversity one of your priorities. Why is diversity so important to the university?

A: Diversity is important because The University of Texas at Austin is the state’s flagship public university, and we must serve the diverse population of our state. We must ensure fair access and affordability to every qualified student in Texas. That is our responsibility and our mission. To leave out any segment of our population is a disservice to the citizens who support us.

Q: What do you think has been the most significant impact of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement on campus and in the community?

A: Two things: Vice President Greg Vincent and the DDCE staff have been very productive in helping UT to recruit a more diverse faculty and student body. And the DDCE has created goodwill in the community through a series of events and celebrations that recognize the accomplishments of our African American and Hispanic populations. It is important to have an office whose chief responsibility is the stewardship of our diversity initiatives.

Q: What is your goal for campus with regard to diversity over the next decade?

A: To ensure access for students from the African American, Asian American, and Hispanic populations of our state; to offer academic courses and programs that examine the diverse ethnic heritage of Texas; to create an educational experience that includes more exposure to, and an understanding of, all cultures and peoples.

Q: Given the economic climate, costs of higher education are in the news a lot. What are the costs of not embracing diversity?

A: If we do not have a diverse university community, we will become a less attractive and less effective learning environment for our students, faculty, and staff. We will fail in our responsibility to represent all of Texas.

Diversity is an integral part of UT’s identity. Diversity will always be an important consideration in all of our economic decisions, now and in the future.

“If we do not have a diverse university community, we will become a less attractive and less effective learning environment for our students, faculty, and staff. We will fail in our responsibility to represent all of Texas.”

—William Powers Jr., President, The University of Texas at Austin
ACADEMIC DIVERSITY

Cultivating a culture of inclusive excellence

From hiring culturally and intellectually diverse faculty to creating a seamless pipeline for underrepresented students from pre-kindergarten to graduate school, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement is helping The University of Texas at Austin create a culture of inclusive academic excellence and diversity.

Thematic Faculty Hires Foster Diversity Across the University

Students don’t fully benefit from diversity on campus unless the faculty is truly diverse—intellectually and culturally. There must be a critical mass of diverse faculty and staff, and diversity must be integrated into the key elements of the institution’s organizational culture and behavior. The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement’s thematic hiring process works with colleges and schools across campus to establish the critical mass needed to effectively influence the institution, while fostering a robust intellectual community.

The thematic hiring initiative was conceived by Dr. Edmund T. Gordon, now head of the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies. Gordon has pushed for the university to hire more faculty from underrepresented groups since 1988 when he arrived on campus to teach in the Department of Anthropology. When Dr. Gregory J. Vincent came on board as vice provost for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Effectiveness in 2005, there was the opportunity to formalize the thematic hiring process.

Since 2005 there have been 39 faculty hires and two visiting professors hired through the thematic hiring initiative; this year five thematic hires are in process. Vincent explained that early on he reached out to deans who expressed a need or had a track record in diverse hires. The initiative has reached across campus, making a difference in the colleges of Liberal Arts, Fine Arts, and Education and in the schools of Law and Architecture.

A thematic hiring priority this year is reaching out to colleges and schools in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines. It is Vincent’s goal to develop thematic hires with every dean, school, and college on campus. Vincent and Dr. M. Lynn Crismon, dean of the College of Pharmacy, have been working on a thematic hire this year.

Crismon does not need to be sold on the value of diversity or the thematic hiring process. The College of Pharmacy has one of the most diverse faculties on campus, with nearly one-third of faculty members being African American, Hispanic, or

“Dr. Vincent and the DDCE have been central to our efforts in thematic hiring. Through our partnership with DDCE, we have promoted vibrant research in these new areas we’d never thought of before.”

—Dean Randy Diehl, College of Liberal Arts
Asian American. Crismon said, “Having a diverse faculty assists in recruiting and developing a diverse student body. The fact that our Doctor of Pharmacy program is now a majority minority program is evidence that we are achieving our goals of having a diverse community.”

The concept of thematic hiring is rooted in filling gaps in academic areas, but is strategic. “The areas of thematic hirings are not add-ons but part of each college’s strategic initiatives,” Vincent emphasized.

By working with provost, deans, and department heads, DDCE is able to help identify potential scholars who would bring new areas of research to the university and to offer lines of funding to support the new hires.

Dr. Randy Diehl, dean of the College of Liberal Arts (COLA), has had the most experience with thematic hires. He said, “Thematic hiring has helped open areas of scholarship in Liberal Arts that we never imagined.” Recent hires have included faculty in the Department of Anthropology, the Center for Asian American Studies, the newly formed Department of African and African Diaspora Studies, and the John Warfield Center for African and African American Studies.

The processes used to identify areas of scholarship lacking within particular schools and colleges vary. COLA relies on a committee that includes the heads of the three ethnic studies centers and other distinguished faculty. “The committee advises me on possible areas of scholarship where we should look at thematic hires. Those have included new approaches to studying migration and immigration issues, very timely and relevant issues in the world,” said Diehl.

Crismon explained that identifying new areas of scholarship in the College of Pharmacy is not a straightforward process because of the accreditation requirements for the Doctor of Pharmacy program. The college must have faculty expertise within a variety of areas, he said, “thus we must acquire the necessary teaching capability through one mechanism or another.”

Within the college’s graduate programs, faculty identify research priorities. Crismon said this year a collaborative research retreat will help the College of Pharmacy establish a roadmap for new research-focused hires over the next five years.

Crismon said the new thematic hire will have a focus on research into health care disparities among people with chronic or serious diseases. “In teaching our Doctor of Pharmacy students, we attempt to help them understand both the effects of genetics and culture on health behavior and outcomes. Health care disparities is an emerging research area in both our social and behavioral sciences and clinical sciences graduate education and research programs,” he said.

Crismon added that the new hire will assist with the recruitment of a diverse graduate student population and foster collaborative research among faculty: “I would also hope that this faculty member would make available an elective in health care disparities to undergraduate students at UT Austin.”

Thematic hiring has no doubt been successful in adding new areas of study to the university’s course offerings, and there are signs that diverse faculty and diverse course offerings make a difference to students. Recently after a 10-year hiatus, the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students was reinstated. The strong hires made in the Warfield Center for African and African American Studies have made possible the formation of the new Department of African and African Diaspora Studies. And, perhaps as another indicator of the initiative’s effectiveness, Dr. Vincent noted, “In this challenging economic climate, President Powers remains committed to initiative’s effectiveness, Dr. Vincent noted, “In this challenging economic climate, President Powers remains committed to providing greater opportunities for female students,” Saenz said. "In developing the mentoring program to be replicable across any institutional setting, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country. The mentoring model, we want to supplement existing programs such as those in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence or Longhorn Link at UT. We are developing the model with higher education faculty—most of them volunteers—from across the country.

Project MALES has two main components. The first is an educational research project, and the second is an intergenerational mentoring program. Through the research project data is collected from educational leaders from several Texas school districts, community colleges, and universities. The findings are then used to assess the needs of Latino male students, identify the higher education resources available to assist them, and determine recommendations for improving the pathways of male Latino students to higher education.

Project MALES seeks to raise awareness of the growing Latino juvenile gap with the assistance of the DDCE, the College of Pharmacy will be able to hire a new faculty member who will focus on the emerging research area of health care disparities. Having this new expertise will allow our college to recruit more diverse graduate students and the potential to offer a new elective in health care disparities to undergraduates.”

—Dean M. Lynn Crismon, College of Pharmacy
Bob Jensen Helps Strengthen Grassroots Social Justice Efforts

As one of four Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) faculty fellows affiliated with the Community Engagement Center, Dr. Robert Jensen is throwing his weight behind grassroots organizing in the Austin community.

“Those spaces in the community, out in the world, are so intellectually vibrant,” said Jensen. “It makes me a much better teacher to have input from the real world,” he said, describing his courses as ultimately addressing “how the world really works.”

A professor in the College of Communication and a long-time local activist, Jensen balances teaching journalism courses with his own work as a community organizer.

Dr. Eric Tang, director of the DDCE’s Community Engagement Incubator, is excited to have Jensen’s expertise on board. “Dr. Bob Jensen has, for nearly 20 years, been not only an active faculty member but a community-engaged leader,” Tang said, pointing to Jensen’s involvement with Third Coast Activist Resource Center and the Workers Defense Project, two groups with ties to the Community Engagement Incubator’s work.

Jensen is a founder of Third Coast Activist Resource Center, an Austin nonprofit that works to strengthen the local activist network by organizing speakers, showing films, and stimulating grassroots action to promote global justice. His work in the Austin community connected him with the Workers Defense Project, a local organization and DDCE incubator project of the past two years that empowers low-income workers to achieve fair working conditions.

In the spring of 2010, in partnership with the Activist Resource Center, the Workers Defense Project celebrated the acquisition of a new space in East Austin called 5604 Manor. The building is also home to Third Coast Workers for Cooperation, as well as several other budding community projects.

As a faculty fellow, Jensen will continue to foster use of 5604 Manor as an emerging community space and to support the projects growing out of it, such as the Cooperative Business Institute. The institute is a comprehensive training program that provides participants with the skills and resources needed to start their own sustainable, worker-owned, worker-run businesses.

Jensen said he feels passionately about “helping young people with ideas get things going.” As someone who has been involved in global justice movements, he feels that macro-level justice movements are important but not often successful. “Where the power lies is on the ground, in grassroots movements aimed at diagnosing real problems and helping people do what they need to,” he said. “That’s what’s so great about these projects.”

5604 Manor is a community space that houses the Third Coast Activist Resource Center, the Workers Defense Project, and several other projects.

Faculty Fellows Take Teaching, Research, and Service to the Community Level

The university has a rich tradition of working with communities across the state through collaborative efforts that involve our faculty. This work is often centered around solving problems and sharing research.

Through its Faculty Fellows program, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) supports a select group of faculty members whose teaching, research, and service has roots in the community—whether it is bringing art to a community, organizing individuals to solve a community problem, or helping address significant education challenges.

DDCE Faculty Fellows 2010–2011

Ms. Elizabeth Danze, School of Architecture
Dr. Edmund T. Gordon, Department of African and African Diaspora Studies
Dr. Bob Jensen, Department of Journalism
Dr. Robin Moore, Butler School of Music
Dr. Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, Department of Journalism
Dr. Victor Saenz, Department of Educational Administration
Dr. Cherise Smith, Department of Art and Art History
Dr. S. Craig Watkins, Department of Radio Television Film and Department of African and African Diaspora Studies
The institutional leadership is reiterating that UT values the past, present, and potential future of black undergraduate and graduate students and faculty, and that there is a legitimate space open to our knowledge and ideas on this campus,” said Dr. Edmund T. Gordon, professor of anthropology and AADS-department chair. Gordon added that the new department builds upon work that he and Dr. Omi Osun Joni L. Jones, director of the John L. Warfield Center for African and African American Studies, led “to build a black studies faculty of excellence and high achievement.”

Gordon, who previously served as director of the Warfield Center, as well as associate vice president in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE), has been instrumental in recruiting graduate students and faculty in this area. He credits Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, vice president of the DDCE, for rekindling the conversation among faculty to form a black studies department. “When he came in as vice president, one of the first things he talked about was the idea of forming a department of black studies, and it emboldened the rest of us to think of that goal as a real possibility,” Gordon said.

He added that the Thematic Faculty Hiring Initiative through the DDCE has created the necessary funding for the center, and now the department, to recruit and hire crucial black studies faculty. The department and the Warfield Center, both housed on the second floor of Jester Center, are entering a new era for black studies at UT—an era, Dr. Jones says, whose story is waiting to be written. “The thing that will make us stand out and give us longevity will be how uniquely we get to define black studies, and then how we graduate a group of undergraduate and graduate students who reflect that unique understanding.”

Although the center and the department have clear and distinct roles, their work is interwoven. The Warfield Center, an instrumental part of the legacy of black studies at UT, has supported faculty and student research and development since 1973 and will continue to offer this support, as well as programming and community outreach. The new department now takes responsibility for the curriculum, advising, and faculty hires.

To further propel the African and African Diaspora Studies’ status, a new entity within the department, the Institute for Critical Urban Policy (ICUP), was created. The ICUP “aims to use research and knowledge on behalf of underserved and marginalized communities, in particular the African American community in Texas,” said Gordon. The ICUP will work with the Texas Legislative Black Caucus and other organizations to turn university-generated research into policy.

State Rep. Sylvester Turner from Houston was among a group of lawmakers who supported the creation of the new Department of African and African Diaspora Studies. He said the new department “signifies that we’ve moved from where we used to be to where we need to be.”

The ICUP will address issues—such as disparities in health care and education—that are at the top of many AADS students’ minds. “Gaining the ability to learn about issues surrounding socioeconomic status and research about how diseases disproportionately affect people of color, for example, has put me a step ahead in my studies,” said Brittnee Hawkins, AADS senior and math minor. “Many people do not think about how race, gender, and sexuality play into health care access.”

Hawkins will be one of the first undergraduates to receive a bachelor’s degree from the new department. Currently there are about 40 undergraduate majors and 46 faculty members affiliated through full-time, part-time, and courtesy appointments. There are four full faculty appointments to AADS.

The department is working to increase faculty hires and student majors. Plans include doubling the number of undergraduate majors in the next three to four years and “restructuring the major to make it more accessible and more attractive to students so that they see it as a degree that contributes more centrally to their career goals and aspirations,” said Gordon.

“The department of African and African Diaspora Studies is the first of its kind in the state,” said Gordon. “Once we are approved to confer graduate degrees, we will be the first department of black studies in the south and southwest to offer a Ph.D. This will be a significant and historic occasion at the university.”

“When Dr. Gregory Vincent came in as vice president, one of the first things he talked about was the idea of forming a department of black studies, and it emboldened the rest of us to think of that goal as a real possibility.”

—Dr. Edmund T. Gordon, Chair, Department of African and African Diaspora Studies
Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence is Home to DDCE Academic Diversity Initiatives

The Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence (LCAE) is the cornerstone of Academic Diversity Initiatives within the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE). It is home to the Summer Scholars, Gateway Scholars, Longhorn Link, and Ronald E. McNair Scholars programs, all of which support first-generation and underrepresented college students.

Since DDCE assumed responsibility for the LCAE in 2007, Dr. Leonard Moore, associate vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement and Dr. Ge Chen, assistant vice president, have established new benchmarks for success and have ramped up the center’s offerings. The LCAE now serves three times as many students as it did three years ago and has expanded services in all of its programs.

The Summer Scholars program helps first-generation and underrepresented students make the transition from high school to a large university through a six-week program that allows them to get to know their way around the university, bond with peers, and meet professors. This past summer a total of 28 students participated; 15 of them were freshmen athletes.

Dr. Moore explained, “In the past, we’ve had some football players get in trouble. Now the minute they finish high school we’ve got to get them on campus so they see themselves as students. This summer it was just phenomenal. They fell in. A lot of them said, ‘Doc, we didn’t study a lot in high school,’ but you could see their confidence rise throughout the summer. That confidence is needed going into fall when there are 50,000 other students.”

Many of the students in Summer Scholars transition in the fall to the Gateway Scholars program, where they get early registration privileges and smaller class sizes. They also receive academic advising and mentoring from a staff that includes Executive Director Dr. Aileen Bumphus, Assistant Director Tiffany Tillis, Academic Support Specialists Dr. James Brown and Elena Payne-Wiens, and six graduate research assistants—many of whom come from backgrounds very similar to those of the Gateway participants. Not only do students get mentoring and academic advising, they also receive access to tutoring, workshops, and small learning communities. All Gateway Scholars enroll in one of the university’s signature courses, Race in the Age of Obama, which is taught by Moore.

Moore sets high expectations for students in the Gateway Scholars Program and for his staff. Although last year’s GPA for freshmen Gateway Scholars at 2.96 was higher than that for UT Austin freshmen overall, Moore said, “Last year’s GPA should have been better—it has taken a lot of work to get there, but I won’t be happy until that GPA reaches 3.0.”

Successful Gateway students are encouraged to participate in two other programs in the LCAE: the federally funded Longhorn Link and Ronald E. McNair Scholars programs. These two programs work to get more underrepresented and first-generation students into graduate and professional schools.

Longhorn Link serves 160 eligible students with the goal of increasing retention and graduation rates. The program provides tutoring, academic, career, and personal counseling; laptop and textbook lending; financial aid preparation assistance; and referral and assistance with campus resources and programs. Besides targeting students from low-income backgrounds and first-generation students, the program also supports students with disabilities.

The McNair Scholars Program introduces undergraduates to research and fosters their interest in graduate studies. Ten of the 11 seniors who graduated from McNair Scholars received a total of 40 graduate program acceptance letters from schools across the country, including Boston University, Cornell University, George Washington University, Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Wisconsin–Madison, and The University of Texas at Austin.

“Our goal is to be the premier academic success unit in the country.”
—Dr. Leonard Moore, Associate Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement

Summer Scholars Supported by Austinites Alice and Michael Kuhn

At first glance it might not seem that Michael and Alice Kuhn have much in common with the incoming University of Texas at Austin freshmen who participate in the Summer Scholars Program. But a closer look at the participants in the program, run by UT Austin’s Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, shows qualities the couple can appreciate: high motivation, a positive attitude, and a willingness to learn. The only thing holding back these top 10 percent graduates of Texas high schools is their socioeconomic situation.

The Kuhns have three grown children and are longtime Austin residents. Michael Kuhn owns a commercial real estate company and Alice Kuhn directs the Michael and Alice Kuhn Foundation. Like many participants in the Summer Scholars Program, Mr. and Mrs. Kuhn were first-generation college students. Given that perspective, plus their families’ Russian and Hungarian immigrant backgrounds, both recognize the value of attending college. “If you give someone a good education, he or she can live out their aspirations,” said Mrs. Kuhn, who earned a master’s degree in education at The University of Texas at Austin. “A good education can’t be taken away.”

All of the students in the Summer Scholars Program were top performers in high school. But research shows that first-generation students need additional support to become successful at the collegiate level. A primary aim of the program is to nurture the students and make them feel part of a true learning community. They join in research projects with tenured faculty, receive individualized tutoring and academic counseling, attend academic workshops, and bond with one another in social activities. In short, they’re immersed in the ideal college environment. The formula is working: The 15 participants in 2009 had an average summer GPA of 3.2. In 2010, 28 participants had a summer GPA of 3.83.

The program fully pays for each student’s experience; UT Austin covers tuition, fees, and program expenses, while housing and meals are funded by philanthropic donations. That’s where donors like the Kuhns are making a difference. Their foundation supports projects aimed at promoting social justice and ending poverty—both nationally and in the Austin area—and the Summer Scholars Program addresses both goals. “Eliminating poverty isn’t a goal we can accomplish by ourselves,” Mr. Kuhn said, “but we can play a role in it.”

“If you give someone a good education, he or she can live out their aspirations.”
—Alice Kuhn, Kuhn Family Foundation
Dr. Leonard Moore
High Expectations, Dedication to Student Success Make this AVP Tick

With his dedication to success for all students and to excellence for all programs in his portfolio, Associate Vice President Leonard Moore has come a long way since his days of a 1.6 GPA in high school. Moore, who grew up in the middle class suburb of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, started college as many young people do—partying instead of studying. Even so, he managed to earn a 1.8 GPA his first year at Jackson State University in Mississippi. Moore joked that when people asked his father how he was doing in college, Mr. Moore the elder would reply, “Better than he did in high school.”

Then Moore got a wake-up call that profoundly changed his life. One of his professors told him in no uncertain terms: “You need to go back to Cleveland and quit wasting your dad’s money.”

Moore began studying and left college with a 3.0 GPA, then entered a 10-month intensive program at Cleveland State University to get a master’s degree in history. He went on to earn a doctorate in history from the Ohio State University at age 26. Moore’s love of history stems from his positive experiences with African American history and literature in high school. “Those were the only courses I made a B in besides gym,” he said.

“I take everything back to that professor at Jackson State University who turned my life around. And that’s what I’ve tried to do in my career—try to be that person, that faculty who cares about students, who knows their name,” said Moore. And he has been “that person.”

While a professor at Louisiana State University (LSU), his students created a Facebook page called “Dr. Leonard Moore Is My Role Model.” Moore spent nine years at LSU where he taught and was director of African American Studies. He was also director of the Pre-doctoral Scholar’s Institute, a summer residential program director of African American Studies. He was also director of the Pre-doctoral Scholar’s Institute, a summer residential program.

Throughout his career, Moore has focused on African American males. He explained, “Any index you look at, by and large, African American men are at the bottom in terms of graduation rates. If black males improve, everything at the university improves.”

Moore says his approach to working with young men is holistic. “I want them to be better students, better boyfriends, and eventually better husbands and fathers,” he said. He believes that all too often black males are presented with three career options: criminal, athlete, or entertainer. “We’re trying to get them to look at other role models,” he explained. “That athlete or entertainer piece is so vicious, it has a stranglehold on many black males. I tell the football players I work with, ‘you know football is an intellectual enterprise.’ I also remind them ‘you are not a football player, you are a student who happens to play football. Football is just one of the things you are good at.’ And so we’re trying to change their identity a bit.” He added, “Some of these young men have been told these things since they were 7, 8, 9, 10 years old, and trying to get them to look at themselves in a different way is difficult.”

This past summer, Moore and his staff in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence worked with 15 football players in the Summer Scholars Program. “They were with me every single day for six weeks. Without a doubt it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career,” said Moore.

Gift from Google
Dr. James Brown’s Enthusiasm, Expertise

It isn’t often an unexpected, unrestricted donation lands on your desk. When a generous check from the search engine giant Google arrived in his office last year, Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement, knew what to do. He used the donation as seed money to fund a position within the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence focused on the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

“The money from Google is an example of how donations can be leveraged to make a huge difference to students, especially at a time when budgets are tight,” said Vincent.

With this donation, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement was able to recruit Dr. James Brown, who earned his bachelor’s degree from Princeton and doctorate from Cornell in physics and who spent 30 years in research and development at Motorola, Honeywell, and 3M. He was hired to work in the Longhorn Center for Academic Excellence as a STEM coordinator and tutor for students enrolled in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses.

“Having someone like Dr. Brown, who has spent years in the field and has the energy to motivate and teach students, is invaluable,” said Vincent. “We want all Gateway students to fulfill their aspirations and encourage them to go on to graduate or professional school. Dr. Brown has helped students in the Gateway program reach new levels of success.”

After years in the corporate world, Brown suffered a bout with cancer; his illness caused him to reevaluate his life and led him to earn a master’s degree in education, which he received in 2009. He explained that although he had a doctorate, the focus on pedagogy provided by the master’s program in education helped him become an effective teacher. Brown now thrives on his work at The University of Texas at Austin and at Huston-Tillotson University, where he is an adjunct physics professor.

Brown brings to the initiative not only passion about STEM topics but a deep-seated concern for students. “I want them all to excel,” he said. “Tutoring is more than equations—I invest time, energy, and passion in the process. I feel like I’ve failed if they don’t succeed.”

He told the story of a student who came to him in tears because she could not work the problems that were on a test. He helped her work through problems in the textbook that involved the principles she needed to learn and told her to apply those concepts to the test problems.

A few days later she called out to him in the hallway—she had improved her score by 50 points. “Seeing the excitement, the light in her eyes, I was thrilled,” said Brown.

He credits his success working with students to his “hands on” approach to teaching and learning. He said that as a student at Princeton and Cornell, he had professors who won Nobel prizes, but he was intimidated by them. “I never approached them, never went to get help,” he said. “I don’t want to be that way with my students. I’m trying to be what I never had from those professors.”

NOTE: Since this story was written, the DDCE has received another unsolicited donation from Google.
Michael Booker: Ready to Give Back to His Community

Freshman electrical engineering major Michael Booker is one of the standout Gateway participants this year, according to Dr. Aileen Bumphus, executive director of the program. Valedictorian of his high school class in a small town in the Mississippi Delta region, Booker is both a first-generation high school graduate and college student who is unusually aware of how his academic success impacts his family and his community, one of the poorest in the country.

“I take pride in attending college because I’m setting the example for my family and my other family members, and the generations that will come after me,” Booker said.

The desire to give back to his community plays a prominent role in his personal outlook, both as a student and as a leader looking ahead to the future.

Booker explained, “My whole goal of coming here to UT was to learn all I could, so I can go back home and help out in my own community and better my own community.”

A finalist in the electrical and computer engineering category at the 2010 International Science and Engineering Fair in San Jose, California, Booker takes a great interest in robotics and artificial intelligence. He currently works as a student technician in the School of Engineering.

Booker has high praise for the faculty and staff who have helped guide him during his first college semester. “The Gateway Scholars, the people, the staff, have been like family here to me,” he said.

He has formed an especially strong connection with Dr. Leon - ard Moore, associate vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement and instructor of the Gateway Scholars’ signature course, Race in the Age of Obama. Moore received his undergraduate degree from Jackson State University in Mississippi. Commenting about the small class sizes and Moore’s familiarity with his native Mississippi, Booker said, “It led to a bond with Dr. Moore, he’s been a mentor to me.”

Booker praises other privileges Gateway Scholars enjoy, such as personalized academic advising and priority registration, and he credits opportunities such as these with aiding his academic success this semester.

“I like the academic advising because we have priority registration…It’s the best thing you can get because we get to reg - ister before graduate students, seniors, juniors, sophomores; it plays a big role when you’re trying to get these classes.”

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Alfonzo Paredes: Diversity and Connections Make UT the Perfect University

Before freshman biology pre-med major Alfonzo Paredes came to The University of Texas at Austin, he already knew about the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE). As a two-time finalist in the Barbara Jordan Historical Essay Competi - tion sponsored by the DDCE each spring, he visited campus and was sold on the university’s diverse offerings. “It was everything I needed and much more,” he explained.

As a Gateway Scholar, Paredes is appreciative of his experience. “The faculty and advisors for Gateway were here for students all the time—no matter what we needed,” he said. “I loved going to Dr. Moore’s class. He makes you think outside of the box and pushes you to the limit about how you think about race.”

Graduate Research Assistant Rian Carkhum is Paredes’ advisor. “She was always helpful, making sure we were on the right track,” he said of the sessions that complemented Dr. Moore’s signature course.

In addition to the Gateway Program, Paredes is involved in the American Medical Student Association, the Latino Community Group, and the League of United Latin American Citizens. He is enthusiastic about the connections he has made on campus through these extracurricular activities: “It allows you to meet new people, to broaden the spectrum of people you know, and you have more friends to help you out.”

Alfonzo Paredes, a freshman from Laredo, Texas, appreciates his experience in Gateway Scholars and is enthusiastic about the signature course, Race in the Age of Obama.
The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement has played a big part in pushing the envelope to make sure we believe in all minority students—that all students can have the good life at The University of Texas.

—Dr. Michael Hinjosa, Superintendent, Dallas ISD

President Powers, Dr. Vincent—thank you for working with me to make sure we provide these necessary resources to our young people.

—State Senator Royce West, District 23
IE’s Growth Tied to Strong Alumni Base

With endorsements from university chancellors and presidents across the United States, the Intellectual Entrepreneurship (IE) Consortium at The University of Texas at Austin continues to earn national recognition. Meanwhile at home, IE is tapping into its most supportive audience—its alumni—to increase donor support and expand its cross-campus initiatives to even more students. Since 1997, IE has actively engaged more than 5,000 students through programs, internships, and workshops that focus on the pursuit of graduate studies, career exploration, and how one applies research to address community issues. As students navigate through their college experience, IE helps them to become more self-reflective; and, as the tagline to its largest program—the Pre-graduate School Internship—states “find their true passions.” This sounds like a tall order for a single initiative, but IE students and alumni regularly sing the praises of the program, the people, and the experiences that have guided them.

One IE alumnus recently took such gratitude to another level by anonymously gifting $10,000 to the intercollegiate consortium, which includes every college and school at UT Austin. The donation has since spurred a campaign challenge for the university to raise another $10,000 from IE alumni. Sociology senior Aida Morales, which includes every college and school at UT Austin. The donation has since spurred a campaign challenge for the university to raise another $10,000 from IE alumni. Sociology senior Aida Morales,.

Prazak is just one of the IE fans who found her career passion after just one semester of an internship that matched her with a graduate student mentor and a faculty supervisor.

“I got clarity,” Prazak said while discussing the religious pilgrimage she made to fulfill a class assignment. “My mentor gave me the tools, and I came back with clarity and inspiration.”

Prazak’s internship enabled her to shift her academic focus from public policy and law to divinity. Although undergraduates receive course credit for IE internships, graduate students do not. Prazak is grateful that graduate students make time to become mentors and that personal connections are fostered in the monthly meetings where mentors and mentees discuss their IE experiences.

Pascale Khoury Jbeily, a recent communication studies graduate, believes the opportunity changed her college experience for the better. Jbeily was a non-traditional undergraduate student in every respect—in her 30s, mother of two, and a war refugee who escaped Lebanon in 1989 before arriving in Canada and then Austin. After nearly ten years spent pursuing a bachelor’s degree at three different colleges, she was unsure about her next steps. She doubted how much she could accomplish with a degree.

Before her internship Jbeily admits feeling in the minority, underrepresented, and at times overwhelmed with family life; however, once in the program she was thrilled to see more women, minorities, and older adults. “I was dealing with someone [her mentor] who was my age,” she stated. “I felt like I was not the oldest one here. It just made school more realistic.”

Like Jbeily, Carlos Morales didn’t discover IE on his own—IE found him. Jake Ptacek, a teaching assistant for one of Morales’ English classes, approached him and asked if he was interested in pursuing a career in academia, something that seemed apparent through his writing in class. Though unsure at first, Morales researched and wrote a paper with Ptacek that discussed the connection between colonial and Mexican-American literature. Now Morales plans to use the paper as the basis for a graduate school application writing sample.

Continuing the Mentoring Chain

For others like human biology senior Justin Jefferson and biomedical engineering senior Oscar Ayala, an Intellectual Entrepreneurship internship meant a path into laboratory research. Ayala knew all along that he wanted to do research, but he didn’t know where to start. Then during fall 2007, he began to shadow his graduate mentor in a fiber optics lab. The next semester Ayala’s work progressed from shadowing to assisting. By the following year, he was collaborating with other students to develop imaging hardware. Although he is no longer part of the internship program, Ayala has developed a new group, IE Citizen Scholars, with the goal to represent the program in all of the undergraduate colleges. Still in its initial phase, the group aims to get the word out and connect more students with IE.

“’This program is already out there, but you’d be surprised at how many students don’t know about it,” Ayala said. “I want to have representatives in each college, so there can be more awareness.” As the director of IE Citizen Scholars, he encourages members to use their talents and skills to benefit the group and the UT Austin community. “We want to let our members know this is a way to get involved and give back to the IE program so it can become stronger the next semester,” he said.

Jefferson and other group members are also working to put systems in place to assist future IE students. For instance, Morales is creating a mentor database for new IE students. “Through IE, I got to know my mentor better. And to this day, he’s helping me out and I’d like to think we’re friends,” he said.

At the same time, Jefferson is working to increase the IE presence in local high schools, a long-term project for the group. He wants future students to know that IE is another opportunity available after graduation. With a clear focus on the mentorship experience, graduate school and networking, the program successfully empowers students to develop and continue with their interests. “I feel like the IE program is just entirely altruistic, like it gives and it gives and it gives without ever really asking for much from you,” said Morales. “It gave me insight and knowledge, and it gave me the realization to say ‘yeah, I can continue with my education.’”
Pre-Graduate Internship Earns Accolades from Students, Press, and Higher Ed Leaders

Dr. Richard Cherwitz, professor of Communication Studies, created the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium in 1997 as a graduate-level program that focused on professional development students needed before entering their fields of work. But as time went by, Cherwitz began to consider the program’s usefulness to undergraduate students. “If graduate education needs renovation, undergraduate needs it more,” he said in reference to starting the IE Pre-Graduate Internship program in 2003.

Since its inception, the program has grown from serving a dozen students per year to enrolling 250 undergraduates during the 2009–2010 academic year. These students represent 45 academic programs and 12 colleges and schools at UT Austin.

For most undergraduate students, the bulk of the internship takes place in the interactions between the student and his or her mentor—a graduate student in the undergraduate’s proposed field of advanced study. To be accepted into the program, the student and mentor are required to draw up a contract that clarifies what they will focus on during the semester. They then spend the semester working on different projects and meeting with other IE participants. For students who do not have the social networks to navigate the world of advanced study, an IE internship can provide needed connections.

“One of the exciting things about this IE program is that it helps demystify graduate education for students who are first generation and come from underrepresented backgrounds in the academy,” said Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement.

The IE internship program serves a diverse population. Between 50 and 60 percent are first-generation or underrepresented students and over 70 percent are women. Fifty percent of IE interns who’ve completed degrees have gone on to graduate school and high school students are matched with mentors; the students then sign contracts, along with their parents, to develop educational plans and portfolios in their chosen fields of study. This three-year project is funded by a $267,000 grant from the Austin Housing Authority.

It Could Be U Offers Mentoring Opportunities to Local Youth

Starting in January 2011, graduate student mentors can share their expertise with Austin area youth as the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium enters an intensive mentoring and college readiness project called It Could Be U. The project is a collaboration with the nonprofit organization, Media Communications Council, and its parent organization, the Texas Diversity Council. It Could Be U leverages pioneering curriculum, social media tools, and mentoring from UT Austin and Pflugerville ISD graduate students. Middle school and high school students are matched with mentors; the students then sign contracts, along with their parents, to develop educational plans and portfolios in their chosen fields of study. This three-year project is funded by a $267,000 grant from the Austin Housing Authority.

“Through our partnership with the DDCE, our staff members are exposed to ideas and strategies that ensure Pflugerville ISD campuses are ready to educate every child who walks through our doors, and helps Pflugerville ISD live up to its promise to prepare ‘Each Child for Their Future in Our World.’”

—Charles Dupre, Superintendent, Pflugerville ISD

Diversity Education Institute and Pflugerville ISD Give Educators Tools to Talk About Differences

When administrators of Pflugerville Independent School District approached Dr. Michele Guzmán about finding presenters for their diversity conference, one of her first questions was “What are the limits?”

As former assistant vice president for diversity education initiatives in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) and director of the Diversity Education Institute (DEI), Guzmán knows that issues of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation can be challenging to address in public spaces. “That’s where I give complete recognition to Pflugerville ISD,” Guzmán said. “There was total support in being able to talk freely about those important topics.”

Pflugerville ISD has a long history of talking about diversity. For about 15 years, the district has had a committee that addresses diversity, and when K-12 Social Studies Coordinator Sara Lucas and her colleague Rachelle Warren wanted to expand the district’s diversity initiatives, Superintendent Charles Dupre and other district leaders supported them. In the summer of 2007, Lucas and Warren organized the inaugural Pflugerville ISD Diversity Conference, a district-wide professional development event for teachers and administrators.

The University of Texas at Austin became involved in the initial conference when a member of the Pflugerville ISD Board of Trustees asked Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement, if the DDCE would provide presenters for the conference. Vincent was excited to support the district’s endeavor, which was the first of its kind in the region. He quickly connected the conference organizers with Guzmán, who was tasked with implementing the call for presenters.

Through the partnership between the DDCE and Pflugerville ISD, the annual conference brings in educators and other professionals from within the university and across the state to teach best practices and bring insight into diversity-related topics. “Having presenters from UT volunteer their time to present at the diversity conference has been extremely important,” said Lucas. “The expertise they bring and the connections they put in place are invaluable.”

The conference started with a modest attendance of 130 Pflugerville ISD educators but has grown larger each year. When Pflugerville ISD opened participation to area educators in primary, secondary, and college levels at the August 2010 event, attendance surged to more than 1,800.

“The Pflugerville ISD Diversity Conference has grown tremendously over the last few years as the district has continued to strengthen its commitment to diversity and as other districts have begun to send staff,” said Guzmán. “Administrators from other districts in the Austin area have also begun to contact us about diversity education.”

(Continued on next page)
Lucas attributes this success to Pflugerville ISD’s premise that diversity development should be based on building understanding between students and educators, and that it provides the cornerstone for student success. “The unique nature of diversity work is that, as we understand more about others, we really find out ourselves,” said Lucas. “Our educators are coming more and more voluntarily to diversity training, including the conference, as they understand how it impacts them, their work, and their students.”

Guzmán acknowledges that talking about diversity and social justice issues in a teacher conference sponsored by the school district is different from having these conversations directly with students. But according to Guzmán, it is exactly this model that makes the Pflugerville ISD conference so effective. “I have not been approached by another school district that seemed to have such a comprehensive, top-down approach to diversity, which I think is very important,” said Guzmán.

This year the collaboration between the Diversity Education Institute (DEI) and the Pflugerville Independent School District (PISD) expanded to include diversity professional development workshops for administrators during the school year. Guzmán is currently writing a discussion guide to provide educators with tips on building understanding between students and their teachers. “There’s a sense that you want to develop leadership around diversity and social justice issues within your own district, as well as emerging expertise, where you're supporting your own and teaching your own,” said Guzmán. “It’s a wonderful thing, because we’re building their capacity.”

Being a part of DDCE allows DEI to connect to a broad community of teachers, administrators, and superintendents, a community where Guzmán sees the greatest potential for developing capacity. “The reality of teaching in diverse classrooms is here,” said Guzmán. “No matter what their viewpoints, teachers are starting to be hungry for tools on how to better deal with this. Nobody wants failing schools. Teachers don’t want failing students. They are open to how they can make things better.”

Neighborhood Longhorns Paves the Way for College Readiness

Last fall Melissa Alvarez was one of several thousand freshmen to arrive at The University of Texas at Austin to eagerly begin the challenging path to a college degree. For Alvarez, as for many other native Austinites, the path that led her to pursue higher education was one paved in part by the Neighborhood Longhorns Program, an initiative of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin.

The Neighborhood Longhorns Program (NLP) works in tandem with the Austin Independent School District (AISD) to serve students in 30 Title I elementary and middle schools in the Austin area. The program aims to provide economically disadvantaged students in grades 2-8 with resources and support to increase academic success and make a college education an achievable goal.

“Participating in the Neighborhood Longhorns Program really granted me the opportunity to experience a perspective on college life at an early age,” Alvarez said. “The experience that I had with this program and the connections it gave me made it easier for me to choose to attend UT because it was already familiar to me. In many ways, I feel that this program has had a positive impact on my education because it has shown me that pursuing a higher education after high school is possible with hard work and dedication,” she said, adding that the program not only motivated her to set higher goals for herself but also prepared her to achieve them.

“The beauty of the Neighborhood Longhorns Program is providing college exposure to students as early as seven years of age,” said NLP Executive Director Celina Ruiz-Snowden. “We believe the earlier we can plant the seed of academic success with our students, the better prepared they will be in their academic career.”

The program was started in 1991 through a partnership between UT Athletics and Austin ISD, when leaders in the university athletics community noticedflagging minority enrollment rates. Jody Conradt, who was at the time coaching the Lady Longhorns basketball team, worked with a group of colleagues—including Tom Fenders, Donna Lepiano, and DeLoss Dodds—to find a way to bridge the gap between the university and the communities that were increasingly underrepresented in the student body.

NLP’s strategy is uniquely comprehensive: from connecting students with tutors and engaging them in educational incentive programs to exposing students to college at an early age. NLP works to ensure that students who are at a higher risk of experiencing academic difficulties are given the tools they need for academic success and encouraged with incentives tied to Longhorn athletics programs.

NLP also enables students to earn scholarship funds throughout their time in the program, helping students not only to envision themselves in higher education but to play an active role in realizing this future. “The generosity of our NLP donor community provides assistance for students who have completed our program and are entering The University of Texas at Austin by matching the scholarship amount earned in our program,” Snowden-Ruiz explained.

Cindy Lind is a strong supporter of NLP’s inspiring work. Not only does she serve as chair of the NLP board, she is also the president of the Lind Family Foundation, which supports the success of NLP students by awarding annual scholarships to college going alumni of the program.

“We serve over five thousand students in this program,” said Lind. “I feel very strongly that every child—every one—deserves an opportunity for a good education, and that is what this program does.”

In 2010 the Lind Family Foundation awarded $5,000 in scholarships to five outstanding former Neighborhood Longhorn students, including Alvarez.

“Receiving a $1,500 Lind Family Foundation Scholarship was definitely a wonderful experience for me,” Alvarez said.

“We serve over five thousand students in this program. I feel very strongly that every child—every one—deserves an opportunity for a good education, and that is what this program does.”

—CINDY LIND, LIND FAMILY FOUNDATION, AND CHAIR OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD LONGHORNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

When I first enrolled in the Neighborhood Longhorns Program I was 8 years old,” said Alvarez, who was at the time a third grader at Zavala Elementary in East Austin. Alvarez’s three siblings were also involved in the program, and her both older sister and older brother went on to graduate from The University of Texas at Austin.

Alvarez was involved in the unique university outreach program through eighth grade, and still remembers the many events, field trips, and banquets the program hosted to get students excited about college. These included expeditions to The University of Texas campus and events with student athletes and university coaches who work with and mentor NLP students.

“Being part of this program and attending these events was definitely a great experience for me because they introduced me to the Longhorn community,” she said. “When I look back to all these events I participated in, I would say that the ones that will always stay in my mind would definitely be the chance I got to meet coach Mack Brown at the Lunch with the Coach event I attended in the fourth grade, and my first time setting foot inside Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium to join every-one in celebration of our 2005 National Championship victory.”

“I’ve had the privilege of working with the NLP since I was an undergrad in 1994,” said Ruiz-Snowden, who has seen the program brighten the future of innumerable students over the past 16 years. “It’s an honor to be affiliated with a university that cares about the youth in the community and dedicates programs like the NLP to providing the opportunity for students to have exposure to The University of Texas at Austin,” she said. “Ultimately, we hope our students can attend UT, but if they choose to go elsewhere, at least we know they are making the right choice—and that choice is higher education.”

The Neighborhood Longhorns Program annually supports the success of over 5,500 Austin-area youth, some of whom, like scholar-ship recipient Melissa Alvarez, go on to become not only fully fledged Longhorns but role models for academic excellence.
CAMPUS DIVERSITY
Creating a welcoming and supportive environment

Each year the student body, faculty, and staff continue to become more diverse at The University of Texas at Austin. However, just having more diverse students, faculty, and staff is not enough—the campus needs an environment that is welcoming and supportive for all, an environment that is rich culturally and intellectually.

Millstone explains that students with hearing disabilities have long received interpreter or captioning services through the DDCE’s Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Yet, historically, deaf and hard of hearing faculty and staff have had to rely on services provided by individual departments. Millstone pointed out that, as an employer, the university should provide services to these members of our community under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the ADA Amendment Act of 2008.

“We do this because it is the right thing to do,” said Millstone. “Centralized funding sends a signal that the university is open to hiring more persons with disabilities, that we value every single faculty and staff member.”

Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement, agrees. “It is important to realize that diversity takes many forms. As the unit responsible for creating a more intellectually and culturally diverse campus, we want to do everything we can to encourage hiring faculty and staff who have abilities and backgrounds that are underrepresented on campus.”

UT Austin Stands Out for Support of Individuals Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

New centralized funding for interpreter services for faculty and staff pays The University of Texas at Austin “way ahead of the curve,” according to Linda Millstone, associate vice president for Institutional Equity and Workforce Diversity within the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE). Among universities nationwide, UT Austin has become a leader in serving deaf and hard of hearing members of its community.

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Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement, agrees. “It is important to realize that diversity takes many forms. As the unit responsible for creating a more intellectually and culturally diverse campus, we want to do everything we can to encourage hiring faculty and staff who have abilities and backgrounds that are underrepresented on campus.”

Changes in funding for deaf and hard of hearing services also benefit members of the public who attend university events. While some prominent events, such as graduation and performances at Texas Performing Arts, already had money budgeted for such services, other events, such as free public lectures, were unfunded. Now funds have been budgeted for a greater number of events, reflecting the university’s commitment to provide deaf and hard of hearing services to members of the larger community.

“Making the university more accessible to persons with disabilities benefits everyone,” explained Millstone. She noted the Athletics Department’s recent acquisition of the state-of-the-art Jumbotron as a perfect example of universal design that benefits not only those with hearing disabilities, but everyone who attends the games.

While the football stadium was being renovated, one student came to SSD and requested interpreter services for a game. Millstone, as the university’s ADA coordinator, approached the Athletics Department about attaching an LED screen for closed captioning to the Jumbotron. According to Lauren Kinast, SSD’s assistant director for deaf and hard of hearing services, “We knew that it would benefit all the participants in the stadium; it gets LOUD in there—we know many people miss information auditory!”

As a result, 110,000 fans now enjoy captioning provided by the Jumbotron. Basketball games at the Erwin Center are captioned as well, and live captioning and webcasts are provided at commencement. “These advances have shown the university is dedicated to engaging everyone in campus life,” said Millstone. “And our university community is all the richer for it.”

110,000 fans at the Darrell K Royal–Texas Memorial Stadium benefit from the Jumbotron—not just those fans who have hearing impairments.
Peers for Pride: Educating, Changing Attitudes through Performance

Through workshops and student-created monologues, UT Austin students from a variety of disciplines are educating peers about what it means to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ). Peers for Pride, one of the many programs to come out of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement’s Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC), trains these peer facilitators to lead workshops and provides them with the opportunity to earn academic credit.

Members of Peers for Pride (PfP) conduct research and develop monologues that represent a range of perspectives. Past monologues have explored LGBTQ issues from the points of view of a daughter of lesbian parents who break up, a mother speaking to the PTA about LGBTQ acceptance, a young Chicana lesbian, a gay teen on the middle school football team, the partner of a student who comes out of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement’s Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC), trains these peer facilitators to lead workshops and provides them with the opportunity to earn academic credit.

GSC Education and Outreach Coordinator Shane Whalley, LMSW, serves as the program’s coordinator. “Some schools do coming-out monologues only,” Whalley said, “but one of the things I love about our monologues is that they are varied and amazingly impactful.”

The range of perspectives encourages audience members and workshop participants to see themselves in the monologues. Some make connections because of friends or family members who question their identity or identify as LGBTQ, others because of their own sexuality. And they aren’t hesitant to talk about these connections, an outcome that GSC director Ixchel Rosal and Whalley had hoped the program would produce.

Rosal said that when Whalley came on board in 2007, the GSC was only a few years old. “I was doing most of the trainings,” she said. “And while they were successful, I noticed that students wanted to talk to each other about these issues.” She and Whalley looked to other peer education programs at UT Austin—Voices Against Violence and the Healthy Sexuality Peer Educator program—as models. “People are compelled by human stories, people want testimony,” Rosal explained. “But we felt funny about bringing in people to tell their own stories and put themselves on display. With Peers for Pride, we are able to introduce the notion of fiction, each student telling a very human story— it’s just not necessarily their story.”

Meg Sungue, a PfP alumnus who is now a women and gender studies and rhetoric double major, loved the creative aspect of the monologues. “I think it serves as a fantastic medium to tackle many important issues, including how identities that might not be expressed by all the people involved in the program, as well as create a barrier between the performer and the story they’re telling,” she said. “It doesn’t make it any less sincere or realistic. It makes it easier to challenge people’s assumptions about identities because we could tell stories that touched on myths that might not have appeared in our own personal stories but were important to talk about.”

Sacha Jacobson, now a senior in the School of Nursing, was in the first cohort of Peers for Pride. She said the “aha moment” for audience members was the most rewarding part of the program: “It is all so cool, especially when you are performing and see an audience member click—there is a certain moment when you can see that happen.” Jacobson recalled that after one workshop in which a monologue on biseuxuality was performed, a participant stopped her on campus to tell her she didn’t think biseuxuality was “real” before she saw the performance. “I’m going to apologize to my friend now,” the student told Jacobson, “because I didn’t understand what it was like for her to be bisexual.”

Peers for Pride is more than just monologue performances. Unlike many peer education programs around the country, it’s rooted in academic coursework. Students must apply to get in and, once accepted, enroll in a course that is cross-listed in the School of Social Work and Women’s and Gender Studies. Students study and discuss LGBTQ community history, identity, issues, and resources, and learn facilitation strategies. They also learn to use Theatre of the Oppressed techniques—which Whalley describes as theater that encourages dialogue—and to keep a journal of their experiences and reactions to readings, films, and course activities. Students begin to research and write a monologue during the fall semester, honing and performing it in the spring.

Students are changed by their participation in the program. “It is fun to see how their experience in Peers shifts their thoughts and plans,” said Whalley. “We have a space where they get support, share stories, and build community.” The support is important for students at different stages in their lives who experience coming out differently, though not every student involved identifies as LGBTQ.

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The 2009–2010 Peers for Pride cohort brought a variety of LGBTQ issues to life in their monologues.

Darcy Kues, another former PfP student, said, “Shane’s curriculum was involved and allowed us to engage with each other to gain deeper understandings of social justice and LGBTQ issues. Shane was always open to our questions, which was valuable for me, since I came into the class with little knowledge about LGBTQ issues. Plus, through the class, I learned a lot about all kinds of privilege and oppression—racism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, ableism. It really rounded out a lot of the education I was receiving in other Women’s and Gender Studies classes, and I actually think that PfP gave me a stronger foundation to excel in my other classes.”

The program has become a model for other universities. Last spring Whalley and two students attended the national Creating Change conference in Dallas. The students conducted a workshop and performed two monologues. Since then, Whalley has been contacted by staff from Vanderbilt University and Central Michigan University about setting up peer programs on their campuses.

Whalley would love to expand Peers for Pride, but capacity is a big issue. Sixteen students is the maximum for the two courses now. A “third” semester has been added for students who have completed the two courses for the program. Credit isn’t offered, but students who sign up can conduct workshops and perform monologues during the fall semester and receive pay from the GSC.

Both Rosal and Whalley are pleased with the touching evaluations from student educators in the program. “The state of LGBTQ affairs and the student experience has improved on campus,” said Rosal. “I’d like to think GSC and Peers for Pride has had a part in that change.”

NOTE: The GSC recently moved into the new Student Activity Center and changed its name to the Gender and Sexuality Center: Serving Women and LGBTQ Communities.
DDCE GRAs Recognized for Excellence

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement’s 12 graduate research assistants (GRAs) are full-time graduate students who work in units across the division, often serving as teaching assistants, mentors, and academic advisors. These bright, ambitious scholars have received recognition beyond the division and continue to amaze our staff with their honors. Here we highlight several of the GRAs who have made a difference at The University of Texas and beyond.

Rian Carkhum
M. Ed., The University of Texas at Austin

When Barack Obama spoke at the university in August, Rian Carkhum didn’t have to worry about standing in line for a ticket that would allow her to catch a glimpse of the 44th president of the United States. She introduced him.

The GRA was chosen as a lead-in to the president’s speech on higher education due to her tireless efforts to help traditionally underrepresented students succeed in school. Carkhum and fellow GRA Darren Kelly have been coordinating the Summer Scholars Program for newly admitted UT freshman who are low income or the first in their immediate families to attend college. For six weeks, the students participate in social, academic, and cultural workshops. Carkhum and Kelly are proud to divulge that the Summer Scholars have had an average cumulative GPA of 3.4 during the summer programs, and have gone on to become Hispanic Scholarship Fund recipients, Student Government representatives, Ronald E. McNair Scholars, and Student Volunteer Board chairs.

“DDCE provides a wealth of opportunity for graduate students to grow and develop,” Carkhum said. “This culture of support stems from DDCE’s continued investment in people.”

Daniel Spikes
M. Ed., Stephen F. Austin State University

A tireless advocate for underrepresented students, Daniel Spikes examines school tracking policies in hopes of making structural changes that will help more students enter college. He put this goal into practice as a program coordinator for the Neighborhood Longhorns Program, and was tasked with proposing new programs and events to inspire students toward higher levels of achievement.

“I want to pay it forward and help others just as I was helped. When society is telling someone that they can’t do something, I want to tell them that they can,” he said. “Further, I just don’t want to help one person, but I want to figure out how to put structures in place that will serve large groups of students.”

Spikes’ efforts have not gone unnoticed. In the past year he received the Martin Luther King Jr. Fellowship and was selected to be a member of the Friar’s Society and an Archer Center Fellow. As an Archer Fellow, Spikes had the opportunity to work for the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development of the U.S. Department of Education and take a federal policy-making course in Washington, D.C.

By working in the DDCE, Spikes has been exposed to many different avenues for helping students to succeed. “Institutions of higher education are in a unique position in that they can enact many programs that can increase college awareness,” he said.

Tracy Arámbula-Turner
M. Ed., Boston College

Tracy Arámbula-Turner was awarded the Teresa Lozano Long Endowed Fellowship, the David Bruton Fellowship, and an American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education Graduate Student Fellowship, the latter awarded by a program she now chairs.

As chair of the Graduate Student Fellows’ Program, Arámbula-Turner is responsible for planning and implementing the program. “The entire fellowship experience is student-created and student driven,” she said, “and I wanted to serve as chair-elect and chair because of what the experience did for me.”

“I feel we must ensure support systems are in place for the next generation of Latina and Latino scholars. The type of mentorship the Fellows Program offers is critical to the success of our growing community if we are to be adequately represented in higher education.”

At the Association for the Study of Higher Education Conference in Vancouver, Arámbula-Turner presented a case study of Latino male undergraduates’ experiences during their first year in college.

“Working in the DDCE … has enabled me to be a part of a new university entity from its genesis, which is a rare opportunity. It has also afforded me the opportunities to teach at the undergraduate and graduate level,” said Arámbula-Turner.
Norcell Haywood and friends Robert Norwood, John Hargis, and Marion Ford were among the first seven African Americans initially admitted to The University of Texas at Austin as undergraduates in June 1954. But almost as soon as they were admitted, their admissions were effectively revoked. The students were told they had to take freshman prerequisites for the programs they wished to major in, architecture and engineering, at a tax-supported accredited institution for African Americans in Texas, such as Texas Southern University or Prairie View A&M. UT Austin registrar H. Y. McCown had urged the university to adopt such a policy to "exclude as many Negro undergraduates as possible."

Peggy Drake Holland transferred to the university from San Antonio Junior College in 1958. She remembers being the only black woman business major in her classes, and it was by no means an asset. "I had studied for a test with someone and with almost the same answers on the test, she had a B+ and I had a D," Holland said. She recalled that later, when she went to the professor's office to discuss the discrepancy, "I could see that D was wrong. The issue of inferior and limited dormitory space was not anticipated the hostility that awaited us. I guess why we did not anticipate the hostility that awaited us. I guess why I stayed is the challenge to stay and not be run off," he explained. Holland, a natural sciences major, lived in one of two dormitories for African American men. The dorms were actually old military barracks. He remembers that the rooms were not very nice, but he was thankful to several graduate students living there who gave guidance on how to deal with not only the college environment, but with the environment of segregation.

The African American women students who sought housing on campus were also limited to two dormitories. Bowles, who lived in Whitis Co-op, remembers her time there fondly. "It was a great experience. I loved it, being around the other girls," she said. "It was like a home. We would rotate doing all the cooking and cleaning."

Despite her and other African American students finding solace and support in the dorms, they knew that mandated segregation was wrong. The issue of inferior and limited dormitory space was one of the major causes that African American students, along with white faculty and student supporters, would take up for several years in order to force the university to fully integrate.

In 1961 the African American students attempted to integrate Kinzolving Dormitory with a sit-in. Lonnie Fogle, president of the Precursors, was part of the group that participated. "We went on a Friday evening and sat in the lounge area," he recounted. "All the campus cops came and asked us to leave. We were very slow to leave."

The Precursors and Early Integration of The University of Texas at Austin

The Precursors, was part of the group that participated. "We went on a Friday evening and sat in the lounge area," he recounted. "All the campus cops came and asked us to leave. We were very slow to leave."

Thelma Miller Bowles began at UT Austin in 1959. She entered the university-wide speech contest reciting Rudyard Kipling's Gunga Din. "When I finished they couldn't believe I was using that English accent," Bowles said. She was awarded second place, but later a female judge told her that the judges wanted to give her first, "but they felt like they couldn't give it to a black."

For the first time, the Precursors took part in the annual Heman Sweatt Symposium on Civil Rights held last April. The 2010 symposium commemorated 60 years of integration at UT Austin and included a panel discussion by the Precursors, titled "Sitting at the Knees of Our Elders." For many of them, it was the first time to set foot on campus since they attended the university.

"We see it as a way of preserving our legacy and documenting our experiences since we were the real pioneers."

—Leon Holland, UT Alumni, B.S. 1961

The students were organized in their protests. Fogle explained that the next morning, when all the black students were summoned to the dean's office, "We met to develop a strategy. We were going to take the Fifth, not going to tell."

A few students were placed on probation despite a General Faculty decision against disciplinary action. Three students brought a lawsuit against the university a few days after the incident, but the dormitories weren't officially desegregated until 1964 when the Board of Regents voted to completely integrate all university facilities. Even so, dormitories continued to have de facto segregation—residence hall applicants were asked to specify their race on housing contracts.

The first African American students could not participate on the official Longhorn sports teams—only on intramural teams. Bowles recalled, "We would sing The Eyes of Texas, but during the Texas Relays our hearts were with the black guys that would come from Michigan and other places because we had no representation from Texas." It wasn't until 1963 that black students were allowed to join the sports teams.

Although many of the Precursors remember countless instances that left them feeling hurt—like the minstrel shows put on by the university spirit organization Texas Cowboys, being pulled from a class taught by a popular professor and reassigned to another class, or being purposely run into in the hallway by another student without an apology—there are positive instances of non-black students and faculty coming together to support integration. Bowles remembers standing in protest outside of the Texas Theatre. "A member of English professors stood with us and white students and students of other nationalities were with us," she said.

As Bowles views her 1962 Cactus yearbook, she also proudly notes the first black student achievements: the first student assembly representative, Orange Jacket and Spooks inductees, and the founding of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority chapter.
TCEP Advances Equity and the Improvement of Education at State and National Levels

Since its inception in 2005, the Texas Center for Education Policy (TCEP) at The University of Texas at Austin has been an active, authoritative voice in Texas public and postsecondary education. The center utilizes research to advocate for high-quality education for all students, in particular, historically disadvantaged students in Texas public schools.

One of TCEP’s significant achievements involved a revision to the Texas Education Code that removed the reliance on high-stakes tests as the sole criterion for decisions pertaining to grade promotion and retention, with the potential to positively affect over 300,000 third-grade children in Texas public schools this year. Grade promotion and retention decisions will now be based on such factors as grades, attendance, classroom performance, teacher assessment, parent input, and test performance.

TCEP’s continuing efforts include convening groups for the discussion of policy, writing policy and research briefs, conducting original research, providing recommendations, and advising on proposed education legislation and policy at local, state, national, and international levels. Each year TCEP engages the academic community by sponsoring Policy Brown Bags where research is shared on policy-related issues. The center also hosts an annual distinguished lecturer who speaks at a free public forum that recognizes the contributions of key scholars whose research impacts education in the state of Texas.

This year TCEP is holding its first statewide conference and awards ceremony titled, “Leading the Nation: A Texas Retrospective on Education Reform.” The event provides an opportunity for statewide audiences to hear from experts and leaders and to engage in discussion about the importance of investing in our youth and communities. In honor of the legacy of Oscar and Anne Maury’s lifetime of work improving education for underserved students, the 2011 statewide conference will inaugurate the Oscar and Anne Maury Award for Outstanding Leadership in Education.

“TCEP tackles difficult issues, like distributing education funds more equitably and reducing teacher and principal attrition rates.”

—FORMER TEXAS STATE SENATOR CARLOS TRUAN

TCEP’s work is partly supported by the Oscar and Anne Maury Endowment for Educational Policy established in 2005. Twice annually, TCEP convenes its advisory board which consists of notable state leaders such as Anne Maury, former Lt. Governor Ben Barnes, former Senator Carlos Truax, former Representative Dora Olivo, Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins, Texas State NAACP President Gary Bledsoe, and philanthropist Bernard Rapoport. These leaders provide financial, organizational, and administrative guidance for the center’s growth.

TCEP also plays a major leadership role nationally as the home for the National Latino/a Education Research Agenda Project (NLERAP), a national consortium of Latino/a faculty across the country that together contribute several decades of experience as researchers, practitioners, and community advocates. With generous funding from the Ford Foundation, TCEP has been facilitating the NLERAP national initiative that seeks to reform teacher preparation through the Teacher Education Institute (TEI), a community-based, university-connected, grow-your-own, teacher preparation education pipeline project for high school youth in the following six states: Texas, Arizona, California, Wisconsin, Illinois, and New York.

This initiative will increase the representation of grow-your-own Latino/a teachers by recruiting them as students from high-need schools, providing access to university teacher preparation programs, and helping them to return to their communities to teach. This process consists of building local capacity to develop a robust, research-based curriculum that is culturally relevant and intellectually rich. Drawing on best practices from the field, it promotes multiple literacies, parental and community participation in school governance, leadership and political awareness, systemic change, and academic achievement for all students.
APAC Impacts
Teaming up with the Student Volunteer Board to Reach Out in Austin Community

When the Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective (APAC), a student organization of the Multicultural Information Center (MIC), wanted to add a service event to their array of student activities last spring, they were faced with a decision. The group thought about doing a small service project on their own but decided instead to join forces with the Student Volunteer Board, which is part of the Volunteer and Service Learning Center (VSLC), to co-host Project Reach Out, a day of service in which student organizations lend a hand to area nonprofits.

The event’s slogan, “APAC to Impact,” reflected the unprecedented partnership between student organizations housed in the VSLC and the MIC—both part of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement.

Eighteen community agencies were served by approximately 500 UT Austin student volunteers during Project Reach Out, held on March 27, 2010. Volunteers worked on beautification and repair projects, helped with education programs, and aided in other behind-the-scenes tasks at nonprofits, museums, and cultural centers. Working together gave the students a chance to build community in the broader sense, as well as amongst their peers.

“These volunteer events allow for students to be together for the whole day, so they’re getting to know other people and share ideas,” said junior actuarial science major Nosheen Khan, who serves as co-director of operations for APAC.

Student Organizations Rock Campus with Diverse Events Throughout the Year

From events such as Jashan, a carnival organized by the Indian Cultural Association, to a women’s lacrosse tournament, to Latina/o AIDS Awareness Day, University of Texas at Austin students are involved in diverse activities hosted by a range of organizations throughout the academic year. With more than 900 registered student organizations on campus, the sheer variety is one way to gauge how far The University of Texas at Austin has come with regard to campus diversity.

During the spring 2010 and fall 2010 semesters, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement helped fund 72 events sponsored by 59 organizations. According to Dr. Gregory J. Vincent, vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement, student organizations on the UT Austin campus play an important role in advancing the university’s cultural diversity and developing significant social networks for students of all backgrounds. He said, “Because their work is critical to the development of a robust campus life, we think it is important to sponsor a variety of events that serve educational and social functions.”

Students from the Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective get together to discuss Project Reach Out.

Student Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Cultural Association</td>
<td>Preventing the Spread of HIV/AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese Students Association</td>
<td>Empowering Leadership Alliance</td>
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<td>Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity</td>
<td>Best Buddies</td>
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<td>Muslim Students Association</td>
<td>Mentorship in Education</td>
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<td>Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority</td>
<td>Gamma Beta Fraternity</td>
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<td>Delta Phi Omega Sorority</td>
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<td>Vietnamese Students Association</td>
<td>Association of Latinos in Communications</td>
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<td>UT Women’s Lacrosse</td>
<td>Sigma Lambda Gamma Sorority</td>
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<td>APAC Impact</td>
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<td>Filipino Students Association</td>
<td>Sigma Delta Lambda Sorority</td>
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<td>Asian American Cultural Association</td>
<td>China Care</td>
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<td>Phi Beta Chi Sorority</td>
<td>Omega Psi Alpha</td>
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<td>Hispanic Scholarship Fund Chapter</td>
<td>Hispanic Students Association</td>
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<td>African Students Association</td>
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<td>Nazar, A South Asian Perspective</td>
<td>Multicultural Greek Council</td>
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<td>Zeta Sigma Chi Multicultural Sorority</td>
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<td>Longhorn LULAC</td>
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<td>Kappa Delta Chi Sorority</td>
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<td>Lambda Theta Alpha Sorority</td>
<td>Black Student Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>Kappa Phi Gamma Sorority</td>
<td>Worlds Unite</td>
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<td>Women in Medicine</td>
<td>White Rose Society</td>
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Spring 2010 Events

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jashan: An Indian Carnival</td>
<td>April 23</td>
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<td>Dai Ho! The Thai 2010</td>
<td>April 24</td>
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<td>Diwali</td>
<td>December 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIFA Annual Meeting</td>
<td>December 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010 UT-LSC Showdown</td>
<td>December 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pan-African Scholars and Professionals</td>
<td>December 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tau: ISA Talent Show</td>
<td>December 16</td>
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<td>Lactose Awareness Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forty Acres of Diversity</td>
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<td>Worlds United</td>
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<td>11th Annual Project Come Together</td>
<td>December 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ladies Night Out</td>
<td>December 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>China Care Benefit Night</td>
<td>December 28</td>
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<td>Funding Futures</td>
<td>December 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIDS Awareness Week</td>
<td>January 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banquet Week: Light Up Africa</td>
<td>January 4</td>
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<td>Nazar’s Debate</td>
<td>January 11</td>
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<td>Dream Week</td>
<td>January 18</td>
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<td>Census 2010</td>
<td>January 19</td>
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<td>Founder’s Week</td>
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<td>Cultural Trivia Night</td>
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<td>C.A.R.E. Week: Cancer Awareness</td>
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<td>Hope Africa</td>
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<td>Rhymes and Reflections</td>
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<td>Sur Aar Talai Ka Milan</td>
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<td>Black Women’s Symposium</td>
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<td>Identity Panel Discussion</td>
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<td>Tri-Ball</td>
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<td>High School Science Symposium</td>
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<td>Islamica Series</td>
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<td>Black Essence Awards</td>
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<td>Apathy or Action: The Struggle for Human Rights</td>
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Fall 2010 Events

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<tr>
<td>Fall Diversity Showcase</td>
<td>September 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women’s Health Day</td>
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<td>4th Annual Halloween Carnival</td>
<td>October 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empower: A Retreat for Asian Women</td>
<td>November 5</td>
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<td>Latina/o AIDS Awareness Day</td>
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<td>LINK Soccer Tournament</td>
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<td>Jalal</td>
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<td>Health Week</td>
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<td>Filipino Cultural Night</td>
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<td>Philanthropy Week</td>
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<td>Moon Festival Celebration Show</td>
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<td>Diabetes Awareness Week</td>
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<td>Ashahi Mentoring Program</td>
<td>December 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women in Medicine General Meeting</td>
<td>December 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Night</td>
<td>December 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic Health Professions Organization</td>
<td>December 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muslim Students Association</td>
<td>December 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taiwanese American Students Association</td>
<td>December 6</td>
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Fall 2010 Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast-a-thon</td>
<td>November 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Night Market</td>
<td>November 2</td>
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Students from the Asian Desi Pacific Islander American Collective get together to discuss Project Reach Out.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Addressing issues around social justice and inequality

The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) builds on the university’s long history of community involvement and service by working with community partners to address issues around social justice and inequality. Our Community Engagement Center in East Austin serves as the home base for many of our activities and partnerships. The center enables DDCE staff to promote and coordinate services, learning opportunities, and research for communities historically underserved by the university.

Shannon Speed
Assistant Vice President and Activist

As assistant vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement, associate professor of Anthropology, director of the Indigenous Studies Initiative, and activist researcher at The University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Shannon Speed has a hand in many of the leading community-oriented initiatives on campus.

“I came to academia as an activist,” said Speed. “Politically engaged research was at the heart of what I was interested in doing.”

As a Chickasaw citizen, she has a strong background in the politics of North American tribes. She is also trained as a Latin Americanist, having earned her first master’s degree in Latin American Studies from UT Austin in 1992. In 1996 she added a master’s degree in Anthropology from the University of California, Davis where she went on to complete a doctorate in Anthropology and Native American Studies. Her doctoral studies took her to Chiapas, Mexico, rounding out the broad perspective she brings to her work.

“I see a lot of shared experiences for native peoples across the hemisphere—because of that I want to do work that helps bridge the gap in work for native peoples in North and South America,” Speed said.

Her passion for community engagement in scholarship underpins her teaching, research, and administrative leadership. She was initially drawn into the folds of UT in 2003 as an activist researcher. After connecting with Dr. Ted Gordon in DDCE’s Office of Thematic Initiatives and Community Engagement (which has since evolved into two separate programs), she quickly became an instrumental force behind several community engagement initiatives. Speed was named assistant vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement in 2009 and now oversees a full portfolio including the DDCE Community Engagement Center, the Community Engagement Incubator, the Indigenous Studies Initiative, the Regional Foundation Library, and the Volunteer and Service Learning Center.

Speed balances instructing anthropology seminars, supporting the many partnerships growing out of the Community Engagement Center, and guiding the Indigenous Studies Initiative as it continues to grow. She remains deeply committed to activist research and is currently pursuing two projects that explore indigenous women in the immigrant detention system and indigenous women in indigenous justice spaces.
Community Engagement Incubator
Advancing Social Change through Collaboration
As part of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, the Community Engagement incubator connects faculty, staff, and students with partners in the Austin community to create and support projects and programs that will advance social change. The incubator also supports organizations already engaged in important community efforts, helping them to broaden their scope. Led by Dr. Eric Tang, an assistant professor in the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies, and a DDCE faculty fellow, the incubator affects the East Austin community, Austin area construction workers, immigrants seeking political asylum, and food lovers all over Texas through the following far-reaching efforts:

- Hutto Visitation Program
- ProArts Collective
- Free Minds Project
- Garden to Table
- Foodways Texas
- Workers Defense Project
- Community Organizer Training Series

Tucked inconspicuously into the rural landscape of Taylor, Texas, the T. Don Hutto Detention Center and those confined within its walls are easily overlooked by the outside world. Though the facility accounts for just a small portion of the more than 10,000 immigrant detention beds housed in Texas, its policies and conditions have been the object of years of public protest. The facility is now the focus of a Community Engagement Incubator project, the Hutto Visitation Program, through the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) at The University of Texas at Austin.

Run by Corrections Corporation of America, the Hutto facility houses several hundred immigrant women, nearly all of them asylum seekers, awaiting their fate in uncertainty and isolation.

The idea for a visitation program, according to DDCE Community Engagement Incubator Director Dr. Eric Tang, sprang from a desire to provide friendship to the women detained at Hutto, many of whom have fled from dire situations. Such a program also allows for documentation of the conditions inside Hutto, while establishing a public presence within the detention facility.

“Visitation seeks to break the isolation caused by detention for women at Hutto,” explained Bob Libal, an organizer with Grassroots Leadership, another organization involved in the program. “It also builds bridges between people detained and the community outside of the detention center walls. We hope these bridges lead to advocacy to transform the immigration system towards one where detention is not the norm.”

The DDCE Community Engagement Center (CEC) has played a pivotal role in the project, providing resources for coordination and space for recruitment and training. Currently, Texans United for Families is working with the CEC to develop a pool of volunteers.

“These volunteers are brought to an orientation here at the CEC and given ‘101’ sessions on the issues,” explained Tang.

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“The Hutto Visitation Program emphasizes building solidarity with the women who are detained there,” said Rocío Villalobos, a second-year master’s student in Cultural Studies in Education and a program coordinator for the Hutto Visitation Project. “We encourage our visitors to repeatedly visit with the same woman in order to develop a relationship and a connection that we hope becomes a friendship over time.”

Working within the bureaucracy of the detention system creates many challenges for volunteers. For example, volunteers are not allowed to bring anything with them on their visits, including paper or a pen. Sometimes visitors will discover that a detainee is no longer at Hutto, but it can be impossible to find out if that woman was released on bond, transferred to another facility, or simply deported.

Villalobos attended the first orientation for the Hutto program in early spring of 2010 and has since been regularly visiting a woman from Honduras. She recalls being moved by the immediate openness of the Honduran woman, who, during their first meeting, shared some deeply personal and painful experiences. “Her need to tell her story and to just have someone know what had happened to her was so great that she did not think twice about essentially pouring her heart out in front of strangers,” said Villalobos.

In addition to fostering personal connections, the program provides legal guidance to help the women, most of whom speak no English, through the convoluted asylum process.

Advocates urge for an alternative to detention for asylum seekers. Tang explained, “We believe if you parole people out while they are waiting on asylum cases and if they are given enough support they will return for their asylum hearings. They won’t disappear.

On the moral or ethical level, as well as on the pragmatic level, an alternative to detention makes sense.”

In the meantime, Tang said, the Hutto Visitation Program serves to “send a political message to the broader community that some of us don’t believe detention is the correct way to treat those seeking asylum.”

“We hope these bridges lead to advocacy to transform the immigration system towards one where detention is not the norm.”

—Bob Libal, Grassroots Leadership

VISTA volunteer Katie Cullather, UT graduate student Rocío Villalobos, and Grassroots Leadership organizer Bob Libal advocate for the women who are detainees at the T. Don Hutto Detention Center.
ProArts Collective, DDCE Collaborate to Shape the Future of Austin's African American Cultural Heritage District

The DDCE is always looking for innovative community partners that are not only making positive changes in the Austin community, but are also transforming the way the community sees itself. ProArts Collective does just that.

Founded in 1993, ProArts is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the celebration and honor of the African Diaspora and its arts culture. It produces transformational and accessible work to enrich the community. Although the organization's primary responsibility is to bring performances to Austin, it also spearheaded the formation of Austin's African American Cultural Heritage District.

Now under the direction of Lisa Byrd, ProArts joined the DDCE as a Community Engagement Incubator project last spring. The DDCE will help the Cultural Heritage District build relationships with academic departments that can provide student interns and research fellows, who in turn can assist in researching and archiving historical places, people, and events in East Austin. The division will also work with ProArts to develop financial resources for the new district’s community programming and make positive changes in the physical environment of the area.

The concept of the African American Cultural Heritage District was devised five years ago when the City of Austin and the black community started the African American Quality of Life Initiative to identify disparities found in the black community of Austin and search for ways to address them. They found that while Austin’s black community had a higher quality of life than the national standard, when compared with the Anglo community of Austin, there was still a significant gap. Ten recommendations were made to address the discrepancies. As Chair of the Committee on Arts, Culture, and Retainment, Byrd took on the recommendation that a cultural heritage district be formed, positioning ProArts as a frontrunner of the project.

From there, the district began to take shape. In 2007 City Council approved its boundaries, and ProArts secured funding for the creation of a heritage facility in a bond election. In fall 2009 the district obtained the state designation of Cultural Heritage District. Now Byrd is working to gain national recognition for the district.

To understand why East Austin is a center of African American heritage, one has to go back to 1928, when a city plan effectively forced African American residents to move to East Austin by providing them access to education and utilities—including water and electricity—only in that area of town.

“That policy was created in 1928, and we’re still living the reality of that,” said Byrd.

Unfortunately, the pattern of segregation and discrimination of Austin’s black community has often been repeated by the university. Byrd acknowledged the historical relationship as “less than desirable,” but she envisions turning that reality into something constructive.

“We hope DDCE’s commitment to the growth and stability of the district will change that relationship to a positive partnership,” she said. “We want to be able to say, ‘Yes, the black community was forced into this neighborhood, but it’s what this neighborhood created that makes Austin the cool place that it is.’”

Byrd was careful to underscore that recognizing contributions of the black community is not only important for East Austin, but for the Austin area as a whole. “It’s important for the region as we look at how significant culture is to the building of a diverse community. And diverse communities are important for sustainability,” she said.

As issues of gentrification arise in East Austin, the district offers a counterbalance, reminding community members new and old of the history and context in which they’re living. “It’s very important for everyone to know the full story of the history of Austin,” said Byrd, “and part of that full story is why central East Austin is what people see as the East Side and the black community.”

The district also has an economic thrust. It is expected to drive cultural tourism and small business development. “Hopefully it will stave off the exodus of black families from Austin to other places,” said Byrd, a big mandate by her own admission.

The Committee on Arts, Culture, and Retainment is now beginning to think about its operational structure and decide what kinds of programming it will present. The first event large event, District Day, took place in October and celebrated nine of the district’s historical sites with mini-festivals.

“We’re at the planning stage now,” said Byrd, “so anybody with an idea is welcome to the table.”

Byrd will be working with Diversity and Community Engagement Officer Freddie Dixon to create an exchange of ideas between the university and the local community that will influence the direction of the new district.

“The way we frame it is, ‘How can we be in dialogue and communication with the university?’” Byrd said. “And, ‘How can the university be a part of what we’re developing?’ We should be in conversation, because the university does not exist in isolation.”

The partnership captures the spirit and mission of the incubator program, forging what Dixon calls a “cooperative venture” between the university and a vibrant and innovative community project.

“What we really hope here, as a partner to the Austin community and in particular the East Austin community, is to recognize through this cultural district the historical significance of African Americans and their contribution to the Austin community,” said Dixon. “We can’t make up for the past, but what we can do is enhance the future.”

“We hope DDCE’s commitment to the growth and stability of the district will change that relationship to a positive partnership.”

—Lisa Byrd, Director, ProArts
Free Minds: Changing Lives by Jumpstarting a College Education

Sitting around a big square table, twenty-odd students lean over their notebooks, scribbling notes, nodding, and raising their hands now and then as their instructor paces and gestures in front of a white board. It is immediately apparent this is not your usual cast of college students—and not just because no one is texting under the table. This class is made up of adults representing diverse, low-income backgrounds and ranging in age from 20- to 60-something, all with one thing in common: Each has faced barriers to the pursuit of higher education. Now, two evenings a week, they are breaking down those barriers together as students in a free, year-long accredited humanities course called the Free Minds Project.

The Free Minds Project was hatched in 2006, initially under the umbrella of UT’s Humanities Institute. The pilot program was modeled after the Clemente Course in the Humanities, a unique educational initiative started by Earl Shorris in 1995 to teach the humanities to individuals living at or near the poverty level in New York City. Like the Clemente Course, Free Minds seeks to eliminate the financial and social obstacles that prevent low-income adults access to education. Tuition, books, and materials are free, and childcare is provided for the students’ children. Each class meeting begins with a free meal and some time for the students to relax a bit before embarking on that evening’s intellectual exploration.

Free Minds became a Community Engagement Incubator project in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement in 2009, and now operates as a partnership between the DDCE, The University of Texas Humanities Institute, Austin Community College (ACC), and Foundation Communities.

Through the Free Minds Project, students sharpen their critical thinking, writing, and communication skills while expanding their knowledge of key works in the humanities. The course syllabus is centered around the theme of intellectual exploration.

Prospective students connect with the course through many avenues. “We put out brochures at all public libraries, recreation centers around town, at all Foundation Communities sites, and send out a lot of emails to generate word-of-mouth interest,” said Free Minds Director Vivé Griffith. Along with Hana Silverstein, an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, Griffith networks and makes presentations to all kinds of audiences around Austin to reach those whose interest would be sparked by this unique opportunity.

Many of the students are parents, so Free Minds partners with Camp Fire USA to provide programming for the students’ children during class time. Throughout the year, the Camp Fire curriculum mirrors what the Free Minds students study each week. Griffith says that one of the most moving and rewarding outcomes of the program is that it enables the students, especially those who are parents, to become role models of academic achievement for their families. One year, Griffith recalled, the 17-year-old daughter of a Free Minds student came along to a college fair held for the class towards the culmination of the program. The daughter told of how she had been planning to drop out of high school until she saw how hard her mother was working to succeed in her Free Minds coursework; instead, the young woman was inspired to graduate from high school and pursue a college education.

In the fall of 2006: “All it took was the opportunity, and since then I haven’t stopped,” she said.

Free Minds: Changing Lives by Jumpstarting a College Education

“By giving people access to education and the resources and support to cultivate their minds, the program empowers people to succeed both in the classroom and beyond its walls.”

—Vivé Griffith, Director, Free Minds

Foodways Texas Joins DDCE Incubator Program

Expanding the flavor of community engagement, Foodways Texas preserves, promotes, and celebrates the diverse food cultures of Texas. The organization, which will draw support for Texas food traditions through an educational symposium, independent film series, and an oral history project, joined the DDCE as a community incubator project in November 2010. Modeled after Southern Foodways Alliance, Foodways Texas will convene scholars and food writers, restaurant owners and chefs, and ranchers, farmers and brewers to foster greater awareness of the state’s distinct food traditions.

The project has been connected with The University of Texas at Austin since its inception. Dr. Elizabeth Engelhardt, associate professor of American studies, is both a founding member and board member, and American studies doctoral student Marvin Bendele has been named Foodways Texas director. Along with others, the two have already conducted an oral history project on the tradition of Texas barbeque, documented in the book Barbecue: Stories Beyond the Brisket.

“We want to uncover stories that were never told,” said Bendele. “The more you can educate people on what’s happening in other communities, the less prejudice they’ll have toward the other, the unknown. If you don’t understand where you come from, you don’t really understand the ground you stand on.”

Operated out of the Community Engagement Center, the project will further the DDCE’s contribution to both local food initiatives and cultural preservation. “The DDCE has been extremely helpful in attempting to forge a new kind of relationship between an outside community-based nonprofit and The University of Texas at Austin,” Bendele said.
Indigenous Studies Initiative Opens Opportunities for Multidisciplinary Collaboration, Community Engagement

When Dr. Jim Cox, a professor in the Department of English, arrived at The University of Texas at Austin in 2002, a university portfolio that focused on Indigenous Studies was notably absent for a campus that emphasizes intellectual diversity.

“We had faculty and students working in indigenous studies already. In fact, UT has long had people working in the field, particularly in Latin America,” said Cox, who is now coordinator of the Indigenous Studies graduate portfolio. “However, we did not have an official, university-wide program—neither a research cluster nor a portfolio, neither an institute nor a center,” Cox said.

He was one of several faculty members—including Dr. Shannon Speed, now assistant vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement—concerned about the lack of a substantial presence for indigenous studies at the university.

In 2007 the small but committed group of faculty members submitted a proposal and the Indigenous Studies Initiative (ISI) became official the following year, under the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. Dr. Speed has been at the helm of the initiative since then. A visioning circle, comprised of faculty members engaged in the field from a range of perspectives, guides the program.

The ISI operates on several levels, offering an undergraduate certificate, a graduate portfolio, a speaker series, and a panorama of student and community programming.

The undergraduate and graduate programs include multidisciplinary courses that bring various lenses to the study of indigenous peoples across the globe and enable students to supplement their majors with a cohesive foundation in Indigenous Studies (IS). The coursework is enriched by lectures from leading indigenous peoples throughout the world. “Both courses and visiting speakers draw on contemporary indigenous lives and communities in Austin, throughout Texas, across the U.S., and around the globe,” said Cox.

In only three years, the ISI has developed into a model with a unique geographic breadth. While the program’s strongest focus is in the Americas, Speed said, “The driving force has been to create an Indigenous Studies program that’s global and encompasses indigenous peoples throughout the world.”

“Technical and visiting speakers draw on contemporary indigenous lives and communities in Austin, throughout Texas, across the U.S., and around the globe,” said Cox.

“We have a dynamic group of faculty and students who are doing cutting-edge work,” said Speed. “We’re really excited about continuing to grow and offering an interesting and unique program at UT,” said Speed.

a reading club for Native American children at tribal schools across the country. Roy recalled how in 2009 she and a team of students participated, with the support of other faculty and students associated with IS, in Operation Teen Book Drop, delivering free books into the hands of 10,000 native teens in 42 tribal schools around the country. “For the first time, we were able to include other interested people on campus, because there was an avenue—a community central point,” said Roy.

In tandem with preparing students for careers in Indigenous Studies and supporting engagement with native communities, ISI works to ensure that indigenous issues are on the university’s radar. “We also want the program to help make indigenous people more visible on campus and to make issues important to indigenous peoples and communities more a part of public dialogue,” said Cox. To that end, students and faculty members support the Longhorn American Indian Council, a student agency of the Multicultural Information Center, and have started working with the university’s admissions department to identify ways to recruit American Indian students. “We have also been able to hire some wonderful new professors, including Luis Cárcamo-Huechante in Spanish and Portuguese, Circe Sturm in Anthropology, and Matt Cohen in English,” said Cox.

Cox said, “We have a dynamic group of faculty and students who are doing cutting-edge work,” said Speed. “We’re really excited about continuing to grow and offering an interesting and unique program at UT.”

The Austin Area Urban League (AAUL) celebrated its annual gala at the AT&T Conference Center on The University of Texas at Austin campus this past September thanks to a strategic partnership with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE).

The partnership is more than financial support according to AAUL President and CEO Jeffrey Richard. It also means the nonprofit can count on the university to provide technical assistance, academic scholarships, and board leadership.

The partnership between the AAUL and DDCE seems natural: Rev. Freddie Dixon, a diversity and community engagement officer in DDCE was one of the AAUL founders. Currently, Dr. Gregory L. Vincent, vice president for Diversity and Community Engagement, is chair-elect on the AAUL executive board committee. Other board participants include corporate and city leaders from AT&T Labs, State Farm Insurance, and Capital Metro.

“The university’s support through the DDCE is a huge investment and vote of confidence in the Urban League,” said Richard.

The AAUL serves more than 5,000 people a year. It relies on grants, fundraising, and contributions to support its $2 million operating budget. It also partners with many community groups to offer programming, including Austin Community College whose employees provide GED instruction and the Capital Area Food Bank which provides snacks for an after-school youth computer program at three of the Housing Authority of the City of Austin sites.

Richard said upcoming plans for The University of Texas at Austin partnership are to bestow merit scholarships in the lives of youth and families in our region by ensuring adequate housing services, work training, and education preparation,” said Vincent.

The AAUL is one chapter among the 100 affiliates of the National Urban League, which is celebrating its centennial this year. The Austin chapter has been serving the Austin community for 33 years and operates ten programs including computer classes, a GED program, a job readiness program, and home repair, its oldest running program. Each program has eligibility requirements based upon meeting grant-specific criteria.

“We are a hands-up organization, and, yes, we help many people with their rent and utilities because they are trying to help themselves by enrolling in one of our classes or in the GED program to better their skills,” said Richard.

“The university’s support through the DDCE is a huge investment and vote of confidence in the Urban League,” said Richard.

“Austin Area Urban League: A Community Partnership that Promotes Meaningful Work

The Austin Area Urban League (AAUL) celebrated its annual gala at the AT&T Conference Center on The University of Texas at Austin campus this past September thanks to a strategic partnership with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE).

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AmeriCorps VISTA Team Expands Community Outreach and Collaboration

Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement Dr. Gregory J. Vincent has called them “the most energetic group of young people” he has ever seen. The 18 AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers who work with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement are not only energetic but bright and well-educated. They come from a range of backgrounds and educational experiences. They have attended universities large (The University of Texas at Austin and the University of Illinois) and small (Clark Atlanta University and Lewis & Clark); they speak French, Arabic, Spanish, and German; their majors range from American Studies to human resources; they have traveled the world, interned on Capitol Hill and for New York Magazine, and made custom T-shirts for a living. However, they all have one thing in common: They are dedicated to social justice, so dedicated that each was willing to sign up for a year of service, receiving only a small living allowance. However, they all have one thing in common: They are dedicated to social justice, so dedicated that each was willing to sign up for a year of service, receiving only a small living stipend.

Under the guidance of Volunteer and Service Learning Center (VSCLC) Program Coordinator Cheryl Sawyer, VISTA members began working on The University of Texas at Austin campus last year as part of the Community Engagement Collaborative. The collaborative was designed to document the university’s efforts to tackle societal issues such as hunger, homelessness, and educational access.

After spending a good part of the year assessing the university’s efforts, the VISTA volunteers identified four areas that could be strengthened: community organizational outreach, the student volunteer experience, academic service-learning, and community resource building.

Now in the second year of the project, with a larger number in their group, the VISTA volunteers are working in units across campus to build the university’s capacity in those four areas with an eye toward “creating an entity within UT so the community can better access university resources,” said Sawyer.

Under the leadership of Volunteer and Service Learning Center’s Web site: www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/vslc

All of the information gathered about community issues and organizations is posted under nine blogs which can be accessed from the Volunteer and Service Learning Center’s Web site: www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/vslc

NOTE: The AmeriCorps VISTA program at The University of Texas at Austin is made possible through funding from the Corporation of National and Community Service and the OneStar Foundation.

Back row: (L – R) VISTA Program Coordinator Cheryl Sawyer, Eric Zimmerman, Joseph Heimsath, Amanda Brown, Katie Cullather, Steven Ditto, and Grace Witsil  Middle row: Jill Hokanson, Paola Rodriguez, Leeann Terwilliger, Amina Pollack, Kimberly Edwards, and Emily Seeger  Front row: Tessa Thibodeau, Hana Silverstein, Eliot Smith, Luciana Alvarado, Meg Halpin, and Rose Cahalan
Each year the Office of the President and the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement recognize community leaders and organizations that have made significant contributions to the city’s underserved populations. Recipients of the university’s Community Leadership Awards are selected by committee based on the positive impact their work and advocacy has had on the Austin community, especially with regard to education, civil rights, and social justice.

Community Leadership Awards ceremonies held at the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC) in September and the George Washington Carver Museum in December have quickly become traditions in East Austin in a few short years. At each of these events, the university also bestows a named legacy award. The Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Legacy Award, presented at the MACC event, is named for the two alumni who have been strong supporters of the university, as well as supporters of the arts, education, and other causes throughout Texas. The Dr. June Brewer Legacy Award, presented at the Carver Museum event, is named after the late Dr. June Brewer, who was among the first five African Americans admitted to The University of Texas at Austin after the 1950 decision in *Sweatt v. Painter*.

In 2009 DDCE partnered with the UT School of Law to award the first Virgil C. Lott Medal of Honor. In 1953 Mr. Lott was the first African American to graduate from the School of Law, and he became the first African American judge in Austin.

Last spring for the first time, Community Leadership Awards were given during the 2010 Association of Asian American Studies Conference, a national event held in Austin. This year the ceremony will be held at the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center on campus, and will recognize those who contribute to building stronger communities and forging new paths for Asians in Texas.

For many guests, the Community Leadership Awards events offer an opportunity to applaud the men and women whose work and achievements they admire and value. For those who are honored, the awards represent validation and recognition from a university they may or may not be affiliated with, but that still considers their work important.

“It is very gratifying for me to honor Austin’s community leaders, men and women who are making lasting impacts on our city and future generations of young people,” Vincent said. “By honoring these individuals we can all celebrate and share in their wonderful achievements.”

“The Virgil Lott Award goes to a graduate of UT Law, who, like Virgil Lott, has honored us by his or her achievements. This is our way of acknowledging our debt to extraordinary figures like our awardee, Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson.”

—Dean Larry Sager, *The University of Texas at Austin School of Law*

“What Dr. Vincent has been able to accomplish under his leadership in terms of reaching out to the community, especially in East Austin, and through honoring individuals who have made Austin what it is today, has shown that the university is a willing community partner that values and supports local improvement efforts. I commend Dr. Vincent and DDCE for their excellent work.”

—Dr. Charles Akins, Associate Superintendent for Development and Community Partnerships, AISD (retired)
UT Elementary School Shares Best Practices for Better Urban Schools

Reading, writing, and arithmetic will always be key to academic success, but The University of Texas Elementary School (UTES) also emphasizes another set of skills in its Urban Education Project that are just as important through its Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) model. SEL is designed to promote five key skills—respect, problem solving, empathy, communication, and teamwork within the classroom—concepts essential to a supportive learning environment.

The exemplary-rated UTES has been using the model for years and it shows. “I can see that they’re [the UTES students] learning,” said student teacher Sonam Shahani, a senior majoring in education and finance. “I can see that coming out in their behavior.”

Not only does SEL positively affect interactions among students, teachers, parents, and administrators, it helps pre-service teachers from The University of Texas at Austin College of Education and as a professional development tool in school districts throughout Texas.

“Many of our kids are more about survival and how to get along in the community, but behaviors like bullying and yelling at each other are not appropriate in school,” said Nancy Maniscalco, UT senior Sonam Shahani is well on her way to becoming a successful urban educator with experience she has gained as a student teacher at UT Elementary School.

In just one year, Govalle and Metz have seen remarkable results. Since SEL was introduced at Govalle, the occurrences of office referrals have reduced from 80 incidences down to six in the first month and a half. Fewer referrals to the principal’s office also mean more time can be spent teaching, which has a direct impact on student achievement.

“Most of the work in SEL core curriculum of one classroom lesson a week. For students considered at risk and not modeling the key skills, teacher consultation and pull-out group counseling are used at Tier 2. For the small number of students showing significant emotional difficulties, at Tier 3 more intensive interventions are used, including psychological therapy, psychiatric consultation, and behavior intervention plans. The implementation of the program model is led by UTES school psychologist Dr. Jennifer Carter, who trains the teachers at the UEP schools and enlists the help of seasoned UTES teachers to provide their real examples and experiences with the model.

According to UTES principal, Dr. Benjamin Kramer, “Most of the work in SEL over the last 20 years has been in the field of early literacy. By bringing the conversation into upper grade levels of literacy, into mathematics, into social and emotional learning, and into wellness, we’re expanding the definition of SEL.”

As an instructional tool, SEL empowers students to manage their emotions, their relationships, and their tasks successfully and ethically. Getting students to treat each other with respect and to try to understand someone else’s perspective are new skills for her students, according to Govalle Principal Nancy Maniscalco.

“Many of our kids are more about survival and how to get along in the community, but behaviors like bullying and yelling at each other are not appropriate in school,” said Maniscalco. “With the Social and Emotional Learning model implementation, student learning involves role playing and practicing other ways to communicate and solve problems. It is very powerful for our children.”

UTES is in its third year of the UEP. Govalle and Metz joined the program for the 2009–2010 academic year, and Andrews became part of the project this school year.

NOTE: The outreach for the Social and Emotional Learning model through the Urban Education Project is made possible by generous grants from the Buena Vista Foundation, Klein Foundation, and Tapestry Foundation.
Hogg Foundation Invests $1.5 Million to Extend Bilingual Scholarship Program Three More Years

A statewide strategy to increase Spanish-language mental health services has proven so successful the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health is investing an additional $1.5 million to extend the program three more years.

The foundation pays tuition and fees for new bilingual students entering graduate social work programs in Texas. In return, students agree to provide mental health services in Texas for a period equal to the timeframe of the scholarship. In just two years, the foundation already has awarded 82 scholarships.

“Texas has a shortage of mental health workers, especially those who speak languages other than English. These scholarships are producing a new generation of social workers who have the education, training, cultural awareness and language skills needed to help fill that gap,” said Dr. Octavio N. Martinez, Jr., executive director of the foundation.

The foundation’s goal is to increase linguistic diversity in the Texas mental health workforce. As of this fall, the foundation has begun to broaden the program to include languages other than Spanish. The University of Houston, for example, plans to accept scholarship recipients who speak Vietnamese or Mandarin, languages that are prevalent in Houston.

The scholarship program is also spreading to more schools and creating more opportunities for academic collaboration at participating schools. In 2010, the University of Texas at El Paso became the 12th school in the program. Participating graduate schools must be accredited or pending accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education.

Program Officer Rick Ybarra, who manages the scholarships, said, “Beginning this year, we added a new funding component to support mentoring, professional development, and networking among faculty and students.” The foundation invited scholars and professional development during the annual conference of faculty mentors to meet in Houston in October for networking among faculty and students.

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Participation in nearly every UIL competition for Texas public schools has increased. The UIL has already seen record enrollments in both its One Act Play competition—1,223 schools participating—and its A+ Academics Program for elementary, middle school and junior high students, which has seen a 23% increase in participation over the last five years.

This year’s UIL Football State Championships brought a new experience to high school football in Texas. For the first time ever, the UIL hosted all 12 state championship games at predetermined times and locations. Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Vernon Newsom Stadium in Mansfield, and Shotwell Stadium in Abilene served as the venues for two action-packed weekends of football in December.

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### DDCE by the Numbers: A Quick Glimpse at 2009–2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrons served by the Regional Foundation Library</td>
<td>2,728</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers expanded the university’s community outreach</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors accessed the Volunteer and Service Learning Center’s (VSLC)</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer database</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participated in VSLC-sponsored projects</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service projects completed in one day during Project 2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Employee Charitable Campaign through Hearts of Texas</td>
<td>$641,442</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Success Initiatives and Pre-College Youth Development</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships awarded to qualified UT Outreach-Dallas students</td>
<td>$3 million</td>
<td>earmarked for scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school students participated in ChemBridge</td>
<td>272</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school students mentored by UT Austin students through SPURS program</td>
<td>220</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships awarded to Barbara Jordan History Essay Competition winners</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incoming UT Austin freshman served by Gateway Scholars program</td>
<td>237</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA of Summer Scholars students</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I students served in Austin by Neighborhood Longhorns Program (NLP)</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards for educational achievement given by NLP</td>
<td>4,137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT Austin undergraduates participated in Intellectual Entrepreneurship (IE) Pre-Grad Internships</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UT Austin graduate students served as mentors for IE Pre-Grad Internships</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE Pre-Grad Interns went on to graduate school</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hogg Foundation for Mental Health</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships awarded to mental health research projects</td>
<td>$7.8 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school students served by Gateway Scholars program</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Essay Competition winners</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>University of Texas Elementary School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and their families served</td>
<td>260</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendents in Texas will receive a copy of the school’s best practices book</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exemplary ratings from Texas Education Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School Partnerships</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Scholarships awarded to college students worth more than $1 million</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students represented in Texas schools</td>
<td>852,692</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students represented in Texas schools in athletic competitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students represented in Texas schools in music competitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students represented in Texas schools in academic competitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarships awarded in scholarships</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in grades 2-12 served by UIL academic programs</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Diversity Initiatives**

- **40** student organizations awarded funding by the DDCE
- **75** student organizations participated in Campus Fusion
- **800** middle school, high school, and college students impacted by the activities of the Multicultural Information Center's six student agencies
- **2,667** students, faculty, and staff community members served through Gender and Sexuality Center (GSC) events
- **111** trainings conducted by staff from the GSC
- **27** events sponsored or co-sponsored by the GSC
- **7,997** people engaged by the GSC via e-mail, telephone, and in person
Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. If you find we have made an error, please accept our apologies and contact our Office of Development and External Relations at 512-471-2557, or send an e-mail with corrections to ddcedev@austin.utexas.edu.
Volunteer Leadership
Building Relationships to Achieve the Mission

DDCE Advisory Council
Ms. Sylvia Acevedo
Austin, TX
Mr. John A. Adkins
Houston, TX
Mr. Byron G. Anderson
Houston, TX
Ms. Claire Babineaux-Fontenot
Bentonville, AR
Mr. Stephen C. Beasley
Houston, TX
Ms. Carla Ann Blumberg
Duluth, MN
Mr. Hector De Leon (CHAIR)
Austin, TX
Ms. Tamia Groce
Houston, TX
Dr. James L. Hill
Austin, TX
Mr. Jodie Jiles
Houston, TX
Dr. Sharon H. Justice
Austin, TX
Dr. Marcus Martin
Mansfield, TX
Mr. Howard D. Nirken
Austin, TX
Mr. Liam O’Rourke (EX OFFICIO)
Austin, TX
The Reverend Joseph C. Parker Jr.
Austin, TX
Mr. Keshav Rajagopalan (EX OFFICIO)
Chicago, IL
Dr. Garrett W. Scales Jr.
Austin, TX
Mr. Robert E. Shook III
Cedar Park, TX
Ms. Carole L. Zoom!
Austin, TX

Austin Community Advisory Council
Ms. Sylvia Acevedo
Chief Art Acevedo
Ms. Marilyn Bostick
Ms. Debbie Bresette
The Reverend Paul Collinson-Streng
Chief Robert Dahlstrom
Ms. Susan Dawson
Mr. Benjamin De Leon
Ms. Margo Dover
Mr. Charles Dupre
Ms. Loretta Edelen
Dr. Chiquita Eugene
Mr. Akwasi Evans
Ms. Barbara James
Mr. Ali Khataz
Mr. Andrew Kim
Dr. Stephen Kinslow
Rabbi David Komereofsky
Mr. Nelson Linder
Mr. Andrew Martinez
The Honorable Harriet Murphy
Ms. Sylvia Orozco
Mr. Mark Ott
Ms. Marva Overton
The Reverend Joseph C. Parker Jr.
Mr. Jeffrey Richard
Mr. Ed Roby
Mr. Alfredo Santos
Ms. Vanessa Sarria
Ms. Suki Steinhauser
Mr. John Trevino
Mr. Doyle Valdez
Mr. Leslie Walker
Mr. Andy White
Mr. Mark Williams
Mr. Tommy Wyatt
The Division of Diversity and Community Engagement advances socially just learning and working environments that foster a culture of excellence through diverse people, ideas and perspectives. We engage in dynamic community-university partnerships designed to transform our lives.

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