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February 2013: Trees

Joyce Kilmer would have liked University of Houston-Clear Lake. You remember him, don't you? Perhaps his most famous poem is "Trees." You probably memorized it in English class. "I think that I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree. ..."

Arbor Day was celebrated last month, a time for people to further appreciate trees through myriad activities. People recognized the day with events, plantings and commemorations, including activities designed to bring more trees to areas that don't have enough, and to increase people's appreciation for them. All the programming and hoopla aspires to create what we have at UHCL: an environment where trees have a profound effect on everyone, without anyone even really noticing. They are part of our lives here. Students appreciate them, employees appreciate them and community members appreciate them. And, alumni remember them fondly.

People sit underneath them for studying or lunch breaks; classes meet underneath them. And in many ways, the trees are part of everyone's consciousness at UHCL. When we have a major storm, invariably alumni and community friends call to not only check on us all, but also to make sure the trees are okay.

Generations of students come and go, but the trees remain. More generations are coming. I think of all the plans the university is making to prepare for the arrival of freshmen and sophomores in 18 months, keeping an eye on the technology needs the students will have because of their experiences — both personal and in school — and the social needs of the students that also require gathering places. I hope that we never forget the value of being able to provide students something they haven't had instead of primarily thinking of giving them what they are familiar with. We provide them...trees, and all that those towering giants provide to our hearts, souls and minds.

"I think that I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree. ..." UHCL is full of poetry.



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