



uhcl the signal

MARCH 24, 2014

**CHILI COOK-OFF,
PAGE 6** The 25-year
tradition continues.**SXSW, PAGE 5**
Check out photos from this
year's festival.

VOLUME XLII, NUMBER 4

VAPE
it outside**KAILIE HYDE**
THE SIGNAL

Battery-operated cigarettes, also known as electronic cigarettes, are treated the same as traditional cigarettes on UHCL's campus.

Even though e-cigarettes emit a vapor instead of smoke, David Rachita, interim dean of students, reinforces that e-cigarettes are included in UHCL's smoking policy.

"In our policy, it says 'or other smoking devices,' and we consider it to be a smoking device, whether it's emitting smoke or vapor," Rachita said.

As stated, the current smoking policy on campus prohibits the following:

2. 1. 2 lighting a pipe, cigar or cigarette of any kind or any other smoking material, equipment or device;

2. 1. 3 emitting or exhaling the smoke of a pipe, cigar or cigarette of any kind or any other smoking material, equipment or device.

"We are not saying that you cannot have them on campus," Rachita said. "We are saying to use them in designated smoking areas."

Last month, Rachita sent an email to UHCL faculty informing them that e-cigarettes can only be used outside in smoking designated areas. Faculty are allowed to ask students who do not comply to leave the classroom. If a student refuses to leave, faculty may call Rachita or campus police.

"I am well aware of the arguments by e-cig users that believe it is not a smoking device," Rachita pointed out in the email. "My argument is that they emit (or vapor) a mist/fog/cloud and odor that is highly annoying, particularly to those with allergies, the very behavior is a disruption to the class/teaching and the product is not FDA approved."

Stopcancerfund.org, an organization that works to analyze scientific research to prevent and treat cancer, states that e-cigarettes are battery-operated devices shaped like cigarettes that provide an

alternative way to receive nicotine, the addictive chemical found in tobacco. They work by heating a liquid cartridge containing nicotine, flavors and other chemicals into an inhalable vapor.

E-cigarettes can be dated back to the 1960s when inventor Herbert A. Gilbert developed a smokeless non-tobacco cigarette. However, it wasn't until a decade ago that e-cigarette purchases sky rocketed. An ABC News health facts report states that The Tobacco Vapor Electronic Association estimates about 4 million Americans now use e-cigarettes.

E-cigarettes do not contain tobacco, making it the main difference between regular cigarettes and e-cigarettes. Stopcancerfund.org reports, however, that tobacco is not the only ingredient in cigarettes that causes cancer or other health related concerns. Sara Exler, administrative and research assistant for Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund, along with fellow researchers, states that e-cigarettes contain some of the same chemicals that regular cigarettes do.

"An FDA study found that many contain some of the same cancer-causing chemicals as regular cigarettes," Exler said.

Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund argues that there are no long-term studies on the health effects. Therefore, consumers do not know the potential risks of e-cigarettes or if there are any benefits, such as a safe alternative to help quit smoking.

"The people who defend e-cigarettes say that they will help smokers cut back or even quit, but e-cigarettes have not been tested or shown to be effective for this use," Exler said.

As Rachita points out, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency responsible for protecting public health by assuring the safety and efficacy of human drugs, medical devices, the nation's food supply, cosmetics, etc., has yet to approve e-cigarette products.

SEE E-CIGARETTES, PAGE 6The ^(APPROX.) \$10,000 degree plan*Part 2 of a 3-part series on college tuition in Texas***TIFFANY FITZPATRICK**
THE SIGNAL

Three state institutions in Texas have teamed up to offer students a chance to obtain a bachelor degree in a new program utilizing a different curriculum model, shorter term lengths and a completely different tuition and fees structure.

A partnership between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Texas A&M University-Commerce (TAMUC) and South Texas College (STC) has led to the development of the Texas Affordable Baccalaureate Program (TAB).

The TAB program currently offers one degree — a bachelor of applied science in organizational leadership. The program runs year round and is divided into 7-week terms, which allows students the ability to complete the degree in three years.

Students are not, however, required to complete the degree in three years — in fact, they are not required to complete a course within one term.

"The competency-based model can be much more flexible," said Van Davis, director of innovations in higher education for THECB. "It allows students to accelerate or slow down without worrying about falling behind."

The degree is a result of Governor Rick Perry's 2011 challenge for colleges and universities to "leverage Web-based instruction, innovative teaching techniques and aggressive efficiency measures" in order to develop bachelor degrees costing \$10,000 or less, including books.

In 2013, Perry announced that 13 universities had developed or announced degree plans within this price range. Politifact, a website by the Tampa Bay Times that rates the truth of political statements, reported in May 2013 that seven of the 13 did not actually meet the requirements because the universities relied heavily on community college hours and high school dual credit but did not include those costs in the price tag.

SEE TUITION, PAGE 6Psychology program
nationally recognized**MARY MILLER**
THE SIGNAL

UHCL's school of psychology graduate program recently gained approval and recognition from the National Association School Psychologist (NASP). The three professors who helped the program achieve recognition are Gail Cheramie, Mary Stafford and Kate Jaspers.

"I am proud of these three very modest, unpretentious and dedicated professionals; not only do they set the standards for other psychology programs but also for the staff of all other psychology programs," said Patricia Cuchens, executive director of operations for the School of Human Science and Humanities.

NASP approves psychology programs, also known as specialty programs, all over the United States. Each specialty program has the opportunity to receive recognition,

although not all do. The approval process is renewed every 5-7 years. Cheramie, program director for the School Psychology program, has been running the show for this program for more than 25 years.

"Our program was the first in the state of Texas to receive recognition from NASP and become nationally accredited; we've held that standard of approval and recognition since 1988," Cheramie said.

Once a program receives approval from NASP, it is then eligible to receive accreditation from the National Counsel for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NACATE), making NASP a type of gatekeeper.

"Since the students in this program work in schools, we must be approved by NACATE to do so, but can't get that approval without NASP, so it's a big deal," Cheramie said.

Keeping track of all the

SEE PSYCHOLOGY, PAGE 6online ^{this} issue

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access The Signal online.

**VACATION, PAGE 2**

An examination of Americans, work and smelling the roses.

**WORLDVEST, PAGE 5**

The world's first independent
film festival.



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BLOGS

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Rehearsals

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For better or worse: *Updated school policy for e-cigs*

UHCL plans to update its campus smoking policy to specifically include e-cigarettes. Currently UHCL's smoking policy includes pipes, cigars and cigarettes of any kind. E-cigarettes have been raising confusion about the smoking policy since they project vapor rather than smoke.

E-cigarettes are battery-operated devices shaped like cigarettes. E-cigarettes offer an alternative way for users to receive nicotine. The major differences between an e-cigarette and normal cigarette are that e-cigarettes do not use tobacco and emit vapor instead of smoke.

E-cigarettes heat a liquid inside the device, which contains nicotine and other chemicals. This causes a vapor to form that can be inhaled by the user, and when exhaled, a vapor cloud forms much like cigarette smoke. E-cigarettes come in various flavors or can also be odorless, depending on what the user prefers.

The current smoking policy at UHCL states that the campus itself is a smoke-free zone except for in officially designated areas. The policy applies to all faculty, staff, students and third-party workers and visitors. There is no smoking allowed inside the buildings of UHCL unless approved for a theatrical performance.

The designated smoking areas include: the Arbor Building North entrance closest to the microwave tower; the Bayou Building 1500 entrance; the covered patio area behind the Patio Café; the Central Plant entrance from Lot D; the Central Services Building all entrances excluding the main entrances at the front of the building; the Delta Building entrance from Lot J; and the Student Services Classroom Building (SSCB) gazebo located in the North Plaza area of SSCB.

E-cigarettes are advertised as a safer way for people to smoke, which is why smokers who want to quit smoking often use them to transition from a smoker to a non-smoker, or at least to cut back on traditional cigarettes. Many people also believe they are safe because e-cigarettes emit vapor instead of smoke.

However, e-cigarettes are not as safe as many believe. Although they do not contain tobacco, they do have other chemicals that are potentially dangerous to users as well as

EDITORIAL

those who breathe the second-hand vapor.

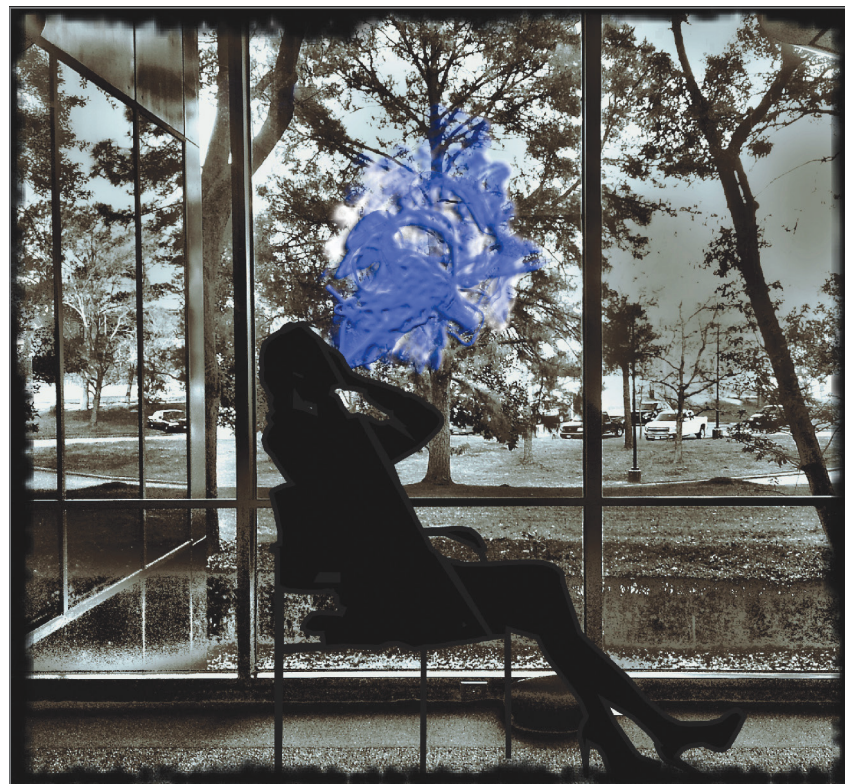
Students and staff should keep in mind that even though e-cigarettes may seem less harmful than cigarettes, they could have possible health risks. E-cigarettes are still too new to determine if there are any health risks, so as a precaution they should be included in UHCL's updated smoking policy.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have not declared e-cigarettes to be safe. The FDA found that three different electronic cigarette cartridges with labels stating they contained no nicotine did contain a different level of nicotine in each one.

There were also reports of some e-cigarettes containing diethylene glycol (the toxin found in antifreeze) and traces of metals (copper, nickel and tin). There are significant amounts of tin found in e-cigarettes as nanoparticles. These nanoparticles can be very toxic and are so small that they usually go deeper in the respiratory system from your lungs straight into your blood system, which then appears in various organs after travelling in your blood.

There have also been reports that e-cigarettes have exploded while people use them. A man in Florida had been vaping an e-cigarette to stop smoking when it blew up in his mouth. This not only started a fire in the room, but also caused serious injuries to the man, including burns on his face and tongue and knocking out some of his teeth.

E-cigarettes can still cause problems for people even though they are tobacco free. In addition to the chemicals released through the vapor, flavored cartridges sometimes cause eye irritations or affect allergies. As of right now,



I am only blowing off steam; no need to go outside for that!

EDITORIAL CARTOON BY ANDREA THOMAS

there is still not enough known about the effects of first or second-hand vapor from the chemicals contained in e-cigarettes. That is why some cities, such as Los Angeles and New York are trying to ban e-cigarettes as part of their citywide non-smoking policies.

Until more is known about the long-term effects of vaping, UHCL is wise to err on the side of caution. The UHCL smoking policy should include e-cigarettes. There is not enough evidence to say that e-cigarettes are indeed safe.

UHCL has a responsibility to protect its students and employees from the potentially harmful effects of second-hand vapor. If students and staff are not cautious, e-cigarettes and their health risks could easily mimic the early days of smoking. Learning too late the affects of second-hand smoking should have taught us a lesson instead of creating another potentially dangerous problem.

Vacation: A necessity of life

ERIKA THOMAS
THE SIGNAL

Vacation. We all want it and, for the most part, we all deserve it.

As Americans, in general, we are hardworking people. We all know to achieve our goals in life we must work, work and work some more, but to what end?

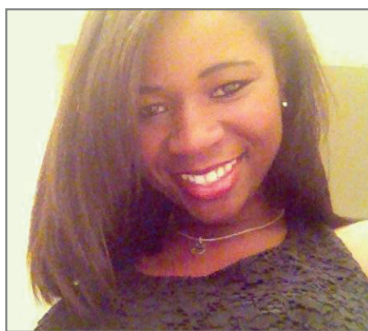
Does our family life really have to be put on the back burner; does our social life have to be thrown out the window? Should our own personal happiness come second place to our career?

It is a fact that in other countries going on holiday is a standard practice for maintaining health, family life and productivity. In fact, a study done by Columbia University's Earth Institute in 2013 reports that Denmark, Norway and Switzerland were rated the happiest countries in the world; the United States came in at 17.

For some reason, as Americans, we consider vacations a luxury and often feel guilty for taking time off from work.

A study by research firm Oxford Economics reports that U.S. workers who are given paid time off had an average of 3.2 days of unused vacation time in 2013. This is a huge improvement from 2012, during which it was reported that most Americans left about nine days of vacation time on the table.

A 2012 Hotwire study found that a whopping 87 percent of



STAFF COLUMN

Americans would take more vacation trips if they felt they had the time and the money to do so. But a vacation can mean so many different things to people, whether it is a trip across the world or across the country or, even better yet, a "stay-cation" where one does not travel but finds solace in staying at home and getting things done without traveling.

There are many benefits that come from taking time off from work, mental health being one of the most important benefits. Studies have found a positive relationship between vacations and intellectual function. A well-rested mind that is free of worry is often more effective. Having stronger mental health coincides with better work productivity because nothing makes for a great employee better than a happy employee.

Another vacation benefit is that it can help relieve stress. Studies have shown that stress is

a direct link between most health issues such as headaches, cardiovascular diseases, and other types of infections acquired as a result of a weaker immune system.

Vacations can help relieve this stress, which can give us a new perspective on life, allow us to regain energy and inspire us to find simple and sometimes obvious solutions to problems that had previously seemed impossible to solve.

Personal relationships often suffer when we are constantly burning the midnight oil. We tend to not give as much attention to our loved ones when we are focusing on our career or come home late at night in a bad mood from our workday, which in turn affects our personal lives. Vacations can be the cure to help improve our personal relationships by setting aside time to really focus and nurture the relationships we have, whether it is with family, kids or our significant others.

As Americans we don't live by the motto of "stop and smell the roses." We live in a time where we are constantly on the go. However, for our sanity, productivity and family, we must continue to strive to be better and feel better in and out of the workplace. We are hardworking people, that we cannot deny, but there is nothing wrong with working on ourselves and taking that time to smell the roses.

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25TH

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Any one requiring an accommodation in order to participate in these events should contact the Student Life office: 218-283-2560 at least two weeks before the event. Visit our website: www.uhcl.edu/studentlife



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of Student Engagement

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UHCL SGA

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SGA Appreciation Party

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Bayou Garden Room



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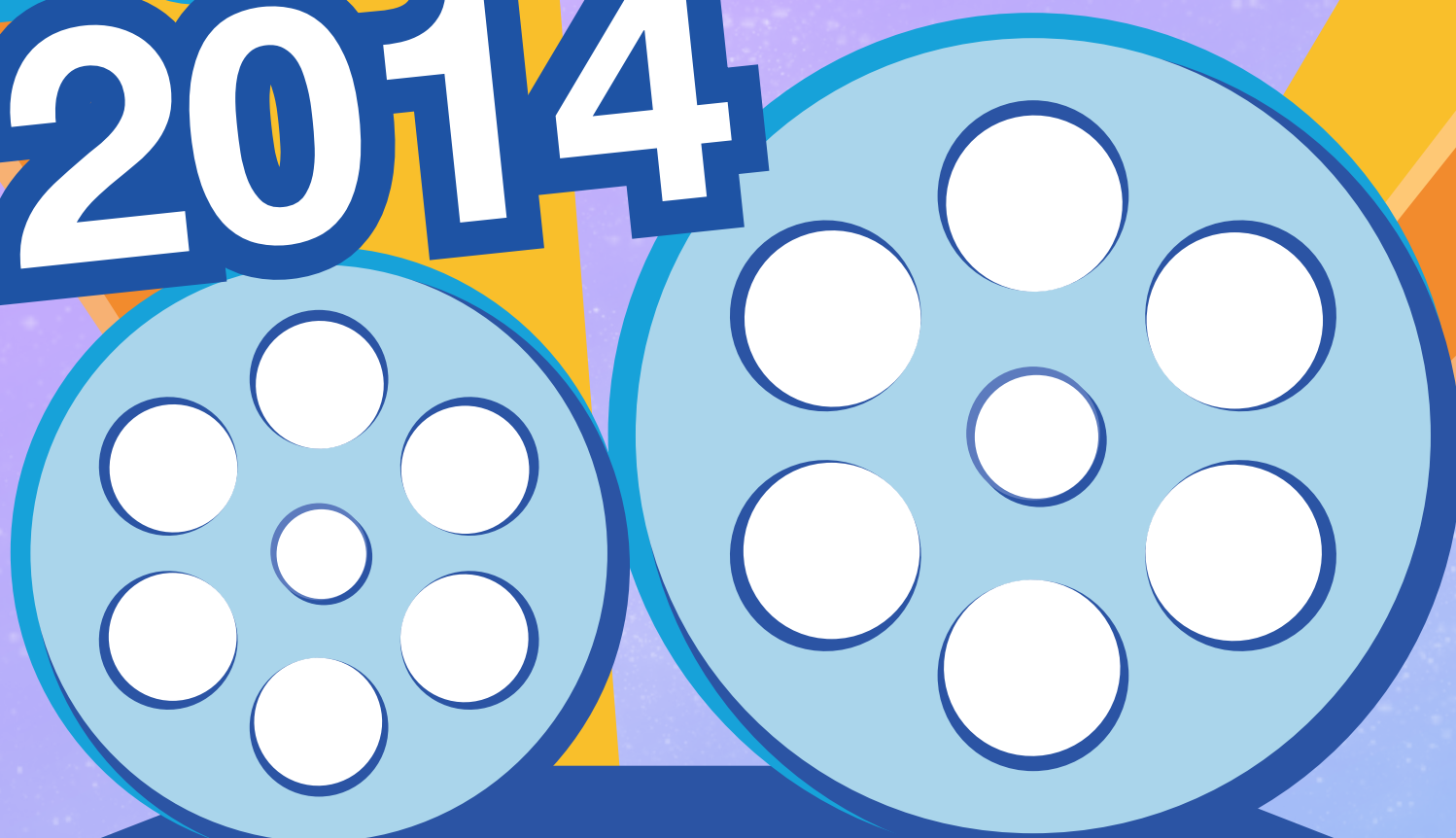
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WORLD FEST 2014



Film and fun in Houston

LOREE COUCH
THE SIGNAL

"There is at least one film festival in Houston every month, except in April. In April there is WorldFest..." said Trish Rigdon, executive director of Houston Cinema Arts Society.

Founded in August 1961 as a film society, WorldFest became an international film festival in April 1968 and is the oldest independent film festival in the world. It was the third film festival competitive to be created in the United States.

The WorldFest-Houston has given many universities in the Houston area scholarships to give out to those interested in attending their master classes. The University of Houston-Clear Lake received 10 of these scholarships.

The university is offering this opportunity to students interested in taking the master classes, which take place April 10, 11 and 12. The classes will focus on three styles of film work.

The festival hosts six master classes each year and this year's schedule includes training in documentary making, script writing, directing and creating a recognizable name for your business. Robert Loggia, known for his work in "Scarface," is scheduled to teach a master class the morning of April 12. WorldFest will honor him with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

Kathleen Haney, WorldFest program director, stated that the purpose of the

film festival is to allow a platform for independent filmmakers to showcase their work. For this reason, WorldFest accepts only films created outside of the Hollywood circle and does not screen any films produced by major studios or distributors.

WorldFest offers 10 major areas of competition and awards, including new media, music videos, screenplays, film and video production, commercials and public service announcements, television and cable production, feature films, experimental films, short films and student films. The festival accepts both film and video formats.

The WorldFest judges will evaluate the films based off of the concept of "a good story well told;" Haney explained that at the end of the two-hour viewing session the audience should walk away from the event with something good in their minds about the experience. The films, if they are doing what they were created to do, should leave the viewer captivated.

"The documentaries should be compelling, the dramas should speak to the people's hearts, and the comedies should entertain people," Haney summarized.

Haney said WorldFest is beneficial to film students because having reviews from film festivals validates the work of independent filmmakers and sets them apart from their peers.

"Getting into this film business

is very expensive, and of course the cheapest way to do it is to write a script and to get recognition from it," Haney said. "We have a scriptwriting competition for scripts and screenplays. If you have an accolade from a well-recognized and respected film festival then it does open doors to them [independent filmmakers] career-wise so that they can meet with the right people."

WorldFest has previously awarded first honors to filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg, George Lucas, Ang Lee, Ridley Scott, The Coen Brothers, David Lynch, Brian De Palma, Oliver Stone, John Lee Hancock, Randal Kleiser, Daniele Gangemi, Francis Ford Coppola and Spike Lee.

"I'd like to think that WorldFest has been instrumental in jumpstarting careers," Haney said.

Besides WorldFest, there are a variety of film festivals that take place in Houston. Rigdon also encourages students to attend the Houston Cinema Arts Festival, which will take place Nov. 12 through Nov. 16, 2014. The festival will be held at Sundance Cinemas, the Aurora Picture Show and the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.

"The film community in Houston is growing both in size and quality," Rigdon said. "I think there is more film business coming into Houston all the time."

APRIL 4th-13th



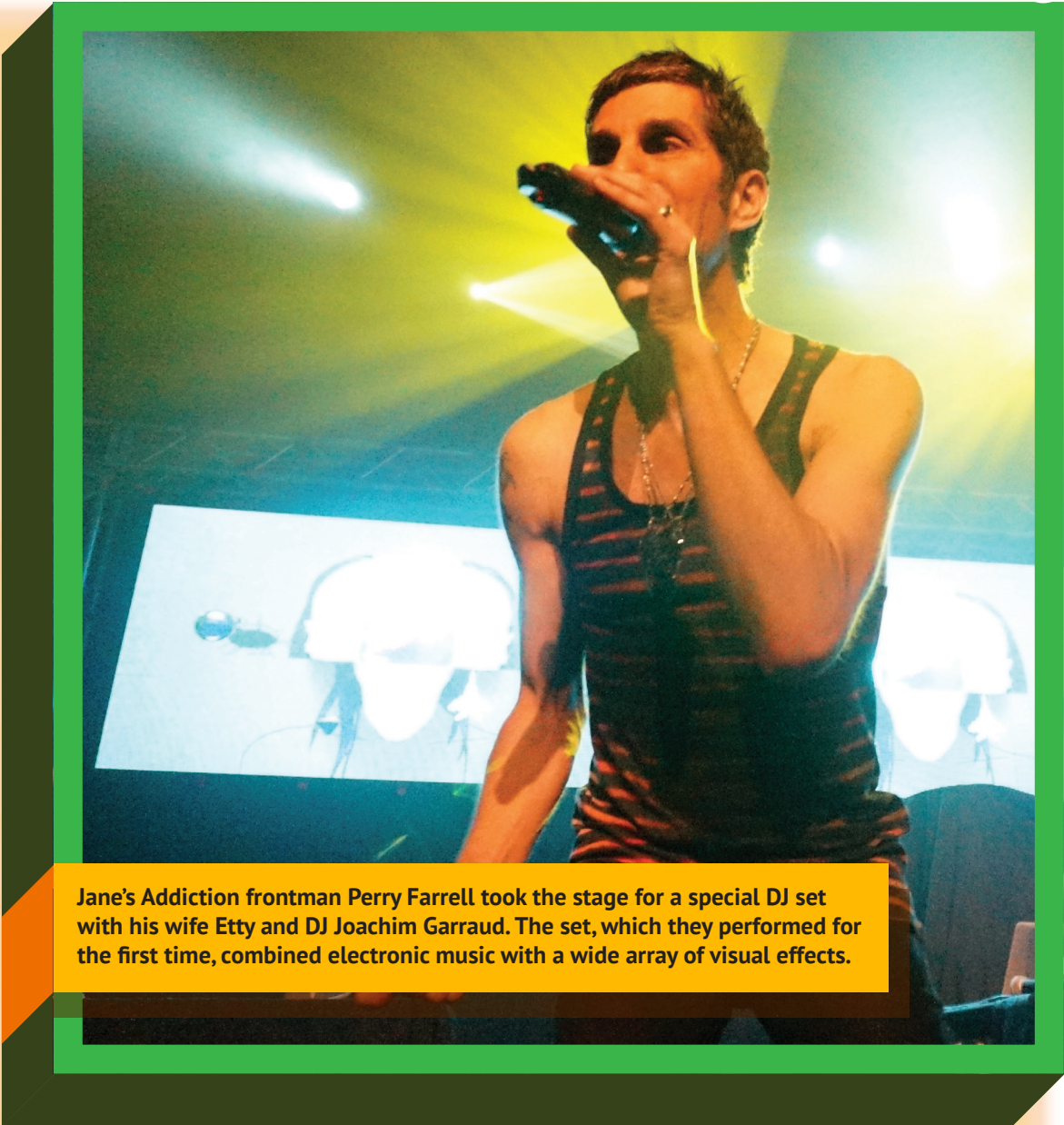
SXSW

MUSIC+FILM+INTERACTIVE

KRIS STIVERS
THE SIGNAL

The 2014 South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference & Festival kicked off March 7 in Austin. As with previous years, SXSW featured an exciting blend of live music, film screenings and cutting-edge technology. Geared toward creative professionals and enthusiasts alike, it also offered a wide variety of inspirational and thought-provoking panel discussions, as well as numerous networking opportunities.

Particularly inspiring was the community’s effort to rally together and create a relief fund for those affected by the events of March 13, where a drunk driver took the lives of three individuals and injured several others. Even in the midst of a tragedy, the spirit of creativity continued to thrive.



Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell took the stage for a special DJ set with his wife Etty and DJ Joachim Garraud. The set, which they performed for the first time, combined electronic music with a wide array of visual effects.



R&B/Soul artist Janelle Monáe gave an electrifying performance.



Astrophysicist/TV host Neil deGrasse Tyson ("Cosmos: A Space-time Odyssey") demonstrated the moon's proximity to the earth.



Actor Nicolas Cage stopped by SXSW Film for a fireside chat with director David Gordon Green.



Electronic music duo Thievery Corporation got the crowd moving with their eclectic mix of up-tempo dance tunes.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRIS STIVERS: THE SIGNAL

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EXPLORING SXSW BY
KRIS STIVERS

E-CIGARETTES: continued from page 1

In 2009, the FDA found that e-cigarettes contained detectable levels of known carcinogens and toxic chemicals such as diethylene glycol (toxic compound found in antifreeze) and tobacco-specific impurities such as nitrosamines (carcinogenic to humans). A carcinogen is any substance or radiation that is an agent involved in causing cancer.

This year, ABC15 Investigators tested two brands of e-cigarettes, Smoking Everywhere Platinum and Mystic, and found traces of metals such as copper,

“The very reason why we came up with the designated smoking areas was to attempt to get the odor, the fumes, the smoke, away from the doors, so that you, a person of allergies, does not have to deal with it,” Rachita said.

In an effort to keep UHCL’s community, faculty and students safe, Rachita believes that there is a cause to regulate e-cigarettes on campus by enforcing the smoking policy. Students who do not comply with the smoking policy face penalties.

“What sources are saying is that, whether you’ve got the nicotine cartridge in there or not, it’s still emitting some kind of harmful fumes, different chemicals.”

– DAVID RACHITA,
INTERIM DEAN OF
STUDENTS

tin and nickel. In ABC15 News Investigations, scientist Dr. Prue Talbot stated that these particles can be toxic for the smoker as well as dangerous for second-hand smokers.

Rachita believes harmful chemicals do exist in e-cigarettes, requiring them to be a part of UHCL’s smoking policy.

“What I tell students, regardless of what the industry says, they are emitting a vapor,” Rachita said. “The FDA has not ruled yet as to the contents or the safety of that vapor,” Rachita said. “What sources are saying is that whether you’ve got the nicotine cartridge in there or not, it’s still emitting some kind of harmful fumes, different chemicals.”

E-cigarettes also raise concerns for the nation’s youth. Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund reports that more and more people, young people, will try them and become addicted to the nicotine.

“We know, for instance, that the number of middle and high school students who have tried e-cigarettes doubled in 2012,” Exler said. “And this statistic greatly underestimates their use because most teens don’t even know e-cigarettes as ‘e-cigarettes;’ they call them ‘e-hookahs’ or ‘hookah pens’ or ‘vape pipes.’”

In addition to the health-related concerns, Rachita also voices disturbance and allergy concerns.

“There are no police walking around, looking for smokers,” Rachita said. “It’s more of a community enforcement. Everyone is accountable to the standards of the community. If someone refused, they could be responsible for the same violations and accountable to the sanctions as any other violation that we have.”

Those sanctions/violations could include: a written warning, restrictive privileges, disciplinary probation or suspension.

To make the smoking policy more apparent, Rachita and the Student Life Council shaped a new, more detailed smoking policy. The University Life Council, which is made up of faculty, staff and students, has approved the new policy. University Council, chaired by the president, is reviewing the new smoking policy this week for approval.

If the new smoking policy is approved, it will state: “smoke,” “smokes,” or “smoking” includes: “emitting,” “exhaling,” “vaping,” or “chewing” products or materials that include but are not limited to pipes, cigars, cigarettes of any kind, or any other smoking material, water pipes, smokeless tobacco, smoking/non-smoking devices, electronic cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, and any non-Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved nicotine delivery device.”

PSYCHOLOGY: continued from page 1

information and records needed for review is a never-ending process for these professors. Data is constantly being collected including research, course success rate and publications. Therefore when it comes time for review, all the material is readily available.

“A neat thing we do in this program is include our students in on the publications so when they graduate they are already published, which is not something a lot of professors do, but we feel it is a situation for all involved,” Cheramie said.

Even with the material available for easy access, it is around a 6-week process to put all the material together for review. Additionally, guidelines to meet standards are always changing to ensure the program is always up to date on the most current teachings and laws of practice.

The new guidelines implemented this year did not include examples to go by, so the School of Psychology program faculty

had to do what they felt appropriate to meet standards.

“The most difficult part of the process is meeting the new guidelines,” Stafford said. “There was no example to go by; we had to go back and contact students who have already graduated from the program, and that was hectic.”

Potential candidates for this UHCL accredited graduate program are quite competitive. Prospects are interviewed once a year in the spring for summer admission. Because it is a nationally recognized program, students from all over the nation try to get admitted, but no more than 12-14 students are accepted each year.

“Part of the reason we keep our numbers so low is so that we continue to meet the NASP requirements,” Jaspers said.

The three professors interviewed potential students from places like Pennsylvania and Maryland, and even did a Skype interview with someone in South Africa. During the interviewing

process, that is considered a typical day for them.

“There is a 100 percent guaranteed hire rate for our graduates, and more often than not I have companies calling me asking our students to intern for them,” said Stafford, the clinical and internship director.

Students who graduate from UHCL’s School Psychology graduate program only have to take the board exam to get their license once. Once they have their license, they can practice in any state. Whereas with other programs that are not recognized, the graduates must take the boards for each state they wish to practice in, which is another bonus this program has to offer.

“Receiving accreditation gives credibility to the students who graduate from this program,” Cuchens said. “It indicates the rigor of the School Psychology program which has high principle and integrity proven through national recognition.”

TUITION: continued from page 1

The University of Houston-Clear Lake is included on the list as one of the remaining six institutions that keep the total degree price, including expected transfer credits, around \$10,000 or less for a limited number of majors. Two other universities within the University of Houston System, University of Houston-Downtown and University of Houston-Victoria, are also included on the list.

At UHCL, a student can obtain a bachelor of applied science degree in early childhood education, health care services or information technology and spend less than \$10,500 for total tuition and fees.

Two of the six universities – UHCL and UHD – require 75 credit hours transferred in from community college, but the total cost claimed includes anticipated tuition and fees from community colleges as well as the university.

UHV allows students to obtain all credit requirements from the university but relies on the student completing his or her degree within three years.

All three expect the student to be receiving Pell grants.

William Staples, president of UHCL, said that the state does not provide any additional funding to UHCL for offering these programs and it does not offer any additional financial incentives to students for enrolling in them.

The universities that have developed programs costing around \$10,000 total, either alone or in

partnership with local community colleges, have used a variety of methods to achieve the cost reduction.

Qualification for the \$5,000-per-year scholarship that brings the student cost down for Angelo State University’s bachelor of interdisciplinary studies degree is based on admission test scores for first-year students and GPA for transfer students.

Students at the University of Texas-Permian Basin working toward degrees in certain science, math and technology programs can spend \$10,000 in tuition and fees for a four-year curriculum through the Texas Science Scholar Program.

“UT-Permian Basin implemented the Texas Science Scholar foundation to specifically increase enrollment in low-producing science programs needed to meet some of the region’s economic needs,” said Jenny Lacoste-Caputo, spokesperson for the UT System. “Officials indicate that they have succeeded in increasing enrollment at UTPB but have not yet measured the numbers increase. They do, however, expect the upward trend to continue.”

TAMUC’s organizational leadership degree has the most flexible price range so far. Davis said students have much more control over how much tuition they pay for their degrees with a competency-based program but acknowledged that the program isn’t necessarily suitable for every institution or every student.

University of Texas, Texas A&M University and University of Houston – the state’s three Carnegie-designated Tier One research universities – have not announced degrees within the governor’s requested price range yet, although schools within each of the university systems have established lower-priced degree plans.

“This is a game-changing innovation for higher education that has the potential to reshape the way that we deliver higher education in Texas,” said Dan Jones, president of TAMUC, in a press release about the TAB program.

Skepticism about providing quality degrees that fit into a low-price package was loud at University of Texas, where the administration, faculty and students spoke out against lowering research standards for affordability.

“The Commissioner of Higher Education is really adamant about this – and we are as well – we don’t want to sacrifice quality,” Davis said. “The rigor is actually pretty significant. It’s a higher standard than almost any program in the state.”

UHCL is already ranked one of the lowest-priced universities in Texas and Staples doesn’t think that offering degrees at a lower cost for students means lowering the quality of their education.

“UHCL maintains the same standards across the board when it comes to the degrees it offers,” Staples said.

Former student returns as keynote speaker

LIZ DAVIS
THE SIGNAL

The Women’s Studies program will sponsor an event on “Intersectionality and the Psychology of Gender: Pitfalls, Pleasures and Promises” March 26 at 6 p.m. in the Forest Room.

UHCL alumna Ronni Greenwood is the keynote speaker and will be followed by a panel of UHCL graduates including Genesis Grandados, Jessica Narvaez Gonzalez and Valerie Jackson, who all have experience working locally with vulnerable

populations.

In 1996, Greenwood earned a master’s degree in psychology from UHCL, and then attended the City University of New York where she earned a Ph.D in social and personality in psychology. Currently, Greenwood is a lecturer of psychology at the University of Limerick in Ireland where she examines how intersectionality can predict homelessness in the country.

“Intersectionality is an important area of study because the construct is a framework under which we can study

racism, sexism and heterocentric bias,” said Sharon Hall, professor and chairwoman of psychology at UHCL. “These variables overlap in complex ways that were not studied well only a decade ago in psychology.

“Today, because of a group of researchers like Dr. Greenwood, we are more apt to recognize risk factors for poor outcomes, and perhaps, be more savvy about how to ameliorate social ills related to bias.”



RONNI GREENWOOD



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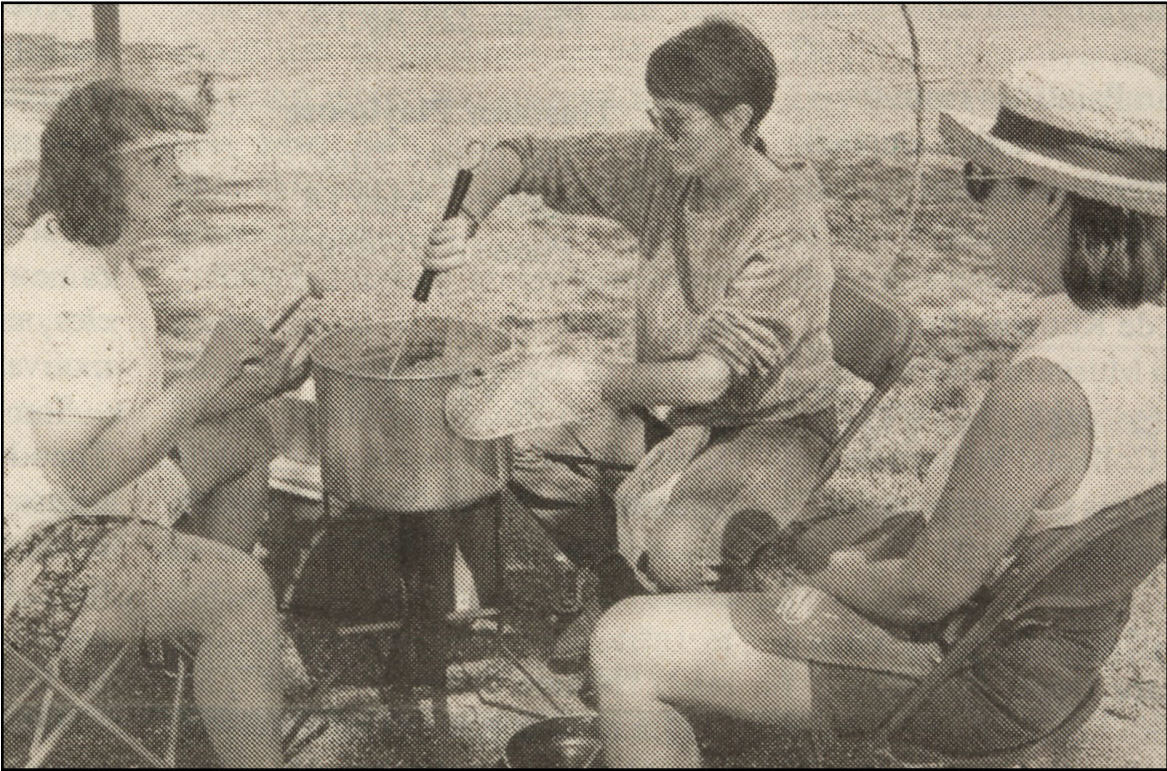
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UHCL CELEBRATES 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHILI COOK-OFF



COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Hunter the Hawk enjoys his first Chili Cook-Off with UHCL President William Staples in 2013 where he was unveiled as UHCL's official mascot.

Blast from the Past

Greg Scoggins of the Finance Department stirs up a heapi'n' bowl of tasty chili in 1999.
Environmental Science group members (from left to right) Sue Halamicek, Chris Weeks and Polly Gustafson whip up some chili in 1995.
Ray Wylie Hubbard and the Cowboy Love Child Band perform at an early Chili Cook-Off in 1989.

PHOTOS FROM THE SIGNAL ARCHIVES.

JESSICA ALCOGER
THE SIGNAL
Get out your parachute pants, leg warmers and everything neon. One of UHCL's longest standing traditions is bringing us back to the '80s: UHCL will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its Chili Cook-Off this year on April 15.

The Student Life Office began the Chili Cook-Off in 1988. The cook-off has evolved throughout the years by adding new events, creating different themes, donning countless outfits and making many memories.
Although chili is the main ingredient in this event, there is something for everyone. A live band, Molly and the Ringwalds, will be performing on-site along with plenty of food and drinks. A moonwalk, mechanical bull, sports challenge, and bungee run combo will be there for kids and adults alike to enjoy.

Acting Director of Student Life Andrew Reitberger has been with the university 16 years and has been involved with running the Chili Cook-Off for 10 years.
He has innumerable memories, one including a DeLorean making an appearance at a past cook-off. Also memorable is the daunting task of planning an outdoor event in the ever-changing Texas weather.

After hearing that the weather is frequently terrible for the cook-off, Reitberger pushed on with what he thinks was the 2006 cook-off.

"It doesn't rain on my Chili Cook-Off," Reitberger insisted.
As he predicted the cook-off came and went without a single drop, but it ended up raining in the surrounding areas.

He also has some favorite costumes competitors have worn in past years.
"One year the Art Association dressed up in their prom dresses, I thought that was hilarious," Reitberger said.

Competition is a definite dynamic at the cook-off. Reitberger says there is usually a good amount of trash talking.

Don't Mess with Tetris is the cook-off name for the Orientation New Student Programs office (ONSP). This will be their first time competing at the Chili Cook-Off. Graduate assistant at ONSP Kristen Skipper, biology pre-med major, is confident her team will win the cook-off.

"We're going to be the dark horse; nobody's going to see it coming," Skipper said. "Just let everybody know they better watch their backs."

Pranay Roy, computer science major, is competing with the

Indian Student Association (ISA). He believes the association has won a couple of awards in the past, but this is Roy's first time competing. ISA's team, named SHOLAY, is counting on spice to take their team to first place.
"This time we're going to win," Roy said. "I am sure of that."

Awards are at stake at the cook-off; they range from best chili to favorite booth and the chili-makers want to win. Those judging the chili are selected from students, faculty and staff to provide an even playing field.
Specific measures are taken to ensure a fair competition. The judges' identities are kept secret so they will not be influenced by the various groups vying for first place and bragging rights. The sample cups given to the judges are identical in appearance and they even taste the chili in a secret location.

Those competing this year will have to bring their A-game if they want to impress the judges. Reitberger insists the judges do not have mercy on bad chili.
"There is really no favoritism, they are brutally honest," Reitberger said. "If it's bad, it's bad."

Last year's Chili Cook-Off was the launch of Hunter the Hawk, the university's first official mascot. This year's festivities will celebrate Hunter's first birthday.

Jonathan Zophy, professor of history, has been with UHCL for 25 years and insists his favorite event is the Chili Cook-Off, which is why he hasn't missed one yet.

"Favorite memory, a toughie, but I liked the introduction of Hunter the Hawk last year," Zophy said. "I have also enjoyed the camaraderie of being part of a chili team, win or lose, it is a lot of fun."

You never know what will happen at the 80s Edition of The Chili Cook-Off. We might even go back to the future in a DeLorean. The cook-off stands as a staple of UHCL's history. It promises good company, a good time and good food. Leg warmers are not required.

The cook-off will be held Saturday, April 5, from noon to 4 p.m. on SSCB North Lawn. Tasting kits will be available at the Student Life booth. Prices are \$4 with a UHCL ID and \$5 without a UHCL ID. The tasting kit includes three cups from which tasters can sample chili and vote for their favorite peoples choice team. The event will not be held if there is inclement weather.

