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## The 21st Annual Student Conference for Research and Creative Arts

Approximately 400 students assembled to present their original academic work for professional and peer review at the 21st UHCL Student Conference for Research & Creative Arts (SRCRA). SRCRA has experienced significant growth since its start in 1994. What originally began with 31 students from UHCL has evolved into an international conference that hosts participants from several different colleges and universities. While most students who sign up to participate in SRCRA are from local or state schools, the conference has also featured student work from 13 different states as well as from other countries such as Argentina, Canada and Mexico.



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PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFFREY BRUDER

Omar Radwan discussing how current advancements are “giving voices to the voiceless” during a presentation on speech generating devices.

# Student presentations cover wide array of research topics

BY GEOFFREY BRUDER

UHCL hosted the 21st Annual Student Conference for Research & Creative Arts April 13-17 featuring a wide range of presenters showcasing their recent research efforts and creative works.

Presentations were given by students from several Texas universities and colleges, a broad range of topics being addressed throughout the week.

Lectures, symposiums and presentations addressed topics including social and behavioral sciences, medicinal research, physics, graphic arts, and mathematics.

Charles White, a nursing student from Lone Star College, spoke about research into how different medications are absorbed into the bodies of patients with differing levels of the CP50 enzyme, which controls how the body metabolizes medications.

White emphasized “the role of nurses is to advocate for the patient” and spoke of the barriers medical staff face when trying to educate the public. He stressed that the largest hurdles faced by medical staff who are trying to educate patients are financial constraints, language barriers, the

education level of the patient, age, cultural practices and religious beliefs.

Omar Radwan, a psychology student at UHCL, presented on the history and progression of speech generating devices used by the speech impaired. Radwan discussed the need for creating better systems of speech generation that takes into account the personality of the user and age progression, which better conveys human emotion.

Madeline Carr, a San Jacinto College art student, gave a presentation of her recent works and explained how different parts of the creative process can help one develop a greater sense of self awareness. Carr, who enjoys creating self portraits, spoke on how self portraits bring things that are unseen to the surface.

“The goal is to create an interesting piece that people want to spend time with,” said Carr, who reminded creatives to “experiment, experiment, experiment!”

Samina Masood, assistant professor of physics, hosted “Astrophysics and Cosmology Lectures,” featuring an insightful presentation by Eric Van Mayes, followed by student presentations on high

energy physics research.

Mayes spoke about recent research at the Large Hadron Collider, in Geneva, Switzerland. He discussed efforts to discover evidence of neutrinos, left behind by the decay of certain known particles in the standard model, which would provide evidence of theoretical supersymmetry. Proving supersymmetry would serve as gateway to solving most problems in modern astrophysics. No evidence has yet been found.

Anne Henry, lecturer in communication and digital media studies, hosted an animation festival showcasing the creative works of students from 3D animation and 2D motion graphics courses here at UHCL. Presenters represented a group of skilled creatives working here at UHCL and in the local community.

Warda Ajaz, UHCL digital media studies major, created an informative and beautifully illustrated animation called “Use Time Wisely,” which resonated with viewers at the symposium.

Other presenters included past ACM Siggraph exhibitors Brenda Fixel and Jeramie Ibarra, as well as Siggraph award

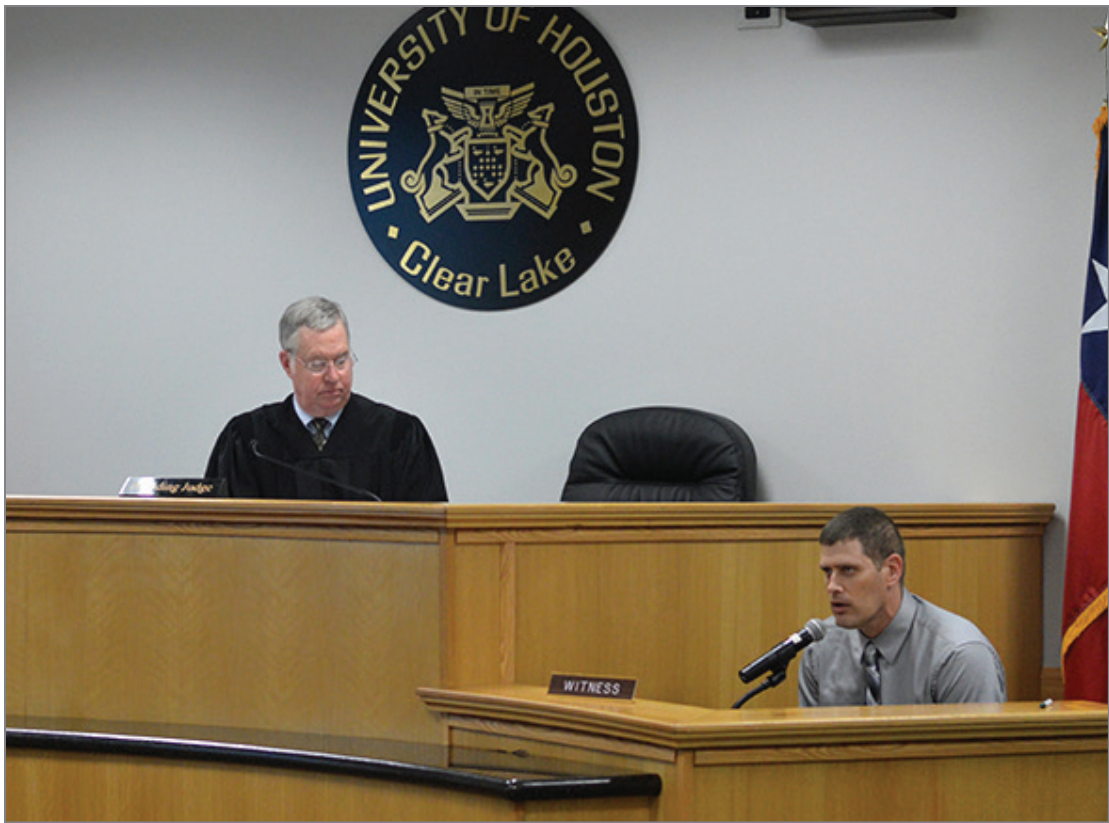
winners Liliana Cadavid and Amy Nichols.

Shreerekha Subramanian, associate professor in humanities, hosted a viewing of an edited recording from her roundtable discussion on texts from non-western tradition at the Texas Department of Corrections Ramsey Unit, where she teaches inmates seeking both first and secondary degrees.

A small audience was present and engaged in the conversation after the viewing, asking questions about the comments made by those included in the video presentation.

Thursday night attendees were treated to lively music and libations as a crowd gathered before the displayed work of skilled artists at the Bachelor of Fine Arts Exhibition juried by Katia Zavistovski, Ph.D. candidate, Rice University Department of Art History.

The event was sponsored by Sam Adams and the art displayed represented the creative works that are cultivated by students attending UHCL.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFFREY BRUDER

Kerry L. Neves presiding as judge over the mock trial of State v. Anderson: Robbery and assault with a deadly weapon. Kerry Wyman, posing as a witness in the trial, testifies.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFFREY BRUDER

Students, faculty and guests view the fine art on display at the conference's Bachelor of Fine Arts Exhibition.

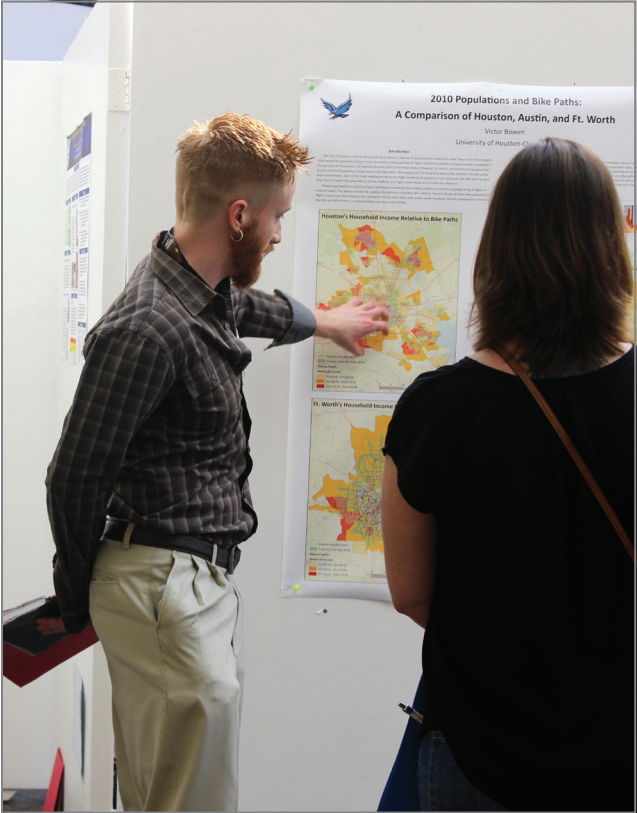


## MORE ONLINE

Scan the QR code below to see a slideshow on the Student Conference for Research and Creative Arts by Ericka Freeman



# Poster sessions illustrate student research data



PHOTOGRAPH BY ERICKA FREEMAN

Victor Bowen, geography major, presents his poster presentation on 2010 populations and bike paths: A Comparison of Houston, Austin, and Ft. Worth.

**BY ZACHERY HENRY**

Incarceration, dolphins and bike trails – these are a small sample of the diverse research topics that students showcased in the poster session this year at the 21st Annual Student Conference for Research & Creative Arts. Founded in 1994 by former director Kyna Shelley, associate professor of psychology, and current co-director and associate professor of psychology Michael Hunt,

the UHCL Student Conference for Research & Creative Arts is an annual conference that features a range of original, academic work presented by both national and international participants from different colleges and universities.

Kelvin Reginald Webster II, criminology major, noted how impressed he was by the variety of the topics displayed this year.

“It’s interesting,” Webster said. “You have a lot of people from different backgrounds coming to discuss things that either affected their life or really interest them.”

Faculty members serve as sponsors at the conference, providing students the opportunity to present their research in a professional environment. Students receive feedback on their research throughout the conference from their peers, the surrounding community and various corporations.

Stuart Larson, associate director of art and design, served as one of the sponsors this year, and said that he likes to stress to his students the value of presenting their work at the conference.

“It is a national conference,” Larson said. “Having your work selected for this conference is a line in your resume that is as powerful as submitting to any conference in the United States.”

Conference co-director, Pilar Goyarzu, adjunct instructor of psychology, said she is encouraged by the growth and success of the conference this year.

“It is fair to say we are continuing to grow in so many different areas,” Goyarzu said. “To me, every single student who presents in the conference is already achieving unique experiences toward a successful career.”

Students who choose to present their research at the conference also enjoy some major benefits, Goyarzu pointed out.

“Being able to present a scholarly work at a conference takes a lot of steps, and each one of these steps provides different learning experiences and benefits,” Goyarzu said. “For example, presenting their scholarly work to a forum of fellow classmates and receiving constructive feedback

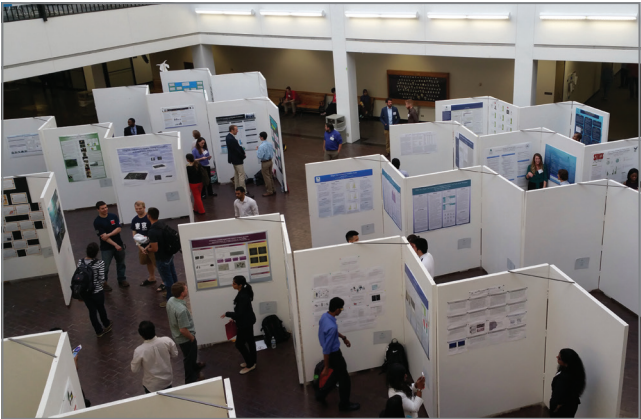
from experts in their field of study.”

UHCL students were encouraged to visit the poster exhibit and observe the research topics that presenters displayed. The hope is that this would offer students opportunity to network with one another, offer critique and evaluate their peers.

Goyarzu also extended a special thanks to all of the sponsors and evaluators who helped contribute to the conference this year, stating that without these individuals the conference would not have been possible, and the level of success that the conference experienced would have been unrealized.

Students are encouraged to find a topic of interest to them, conduct research on the topic, and then consider signing up for the next student conference in 2016.

To view presentations from past conferences or to learn more about having research presented in a professional forum at next year’s conference, visit the Student Conference website at: <http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/SCR/Home>.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ZACHERY HENRY

Students gather to present their original academic work during the poster session at the 21st Student Conference for Research & Creative Arts at UHCL.

# CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

*Best wishes as you soar into the future. Go Hawks!*

*William A. Staples*

William A. Staples, President

University of Houston Clear Lake



# Teen and Police Service Academy presents Second Annual Youth and Police Conference

BY LEENA VUOR

UHCL collaborated with Teen and Police Service (TAPS) and Houston Police Department (HPD) to host the Second Annual Youth and Police Conference April 17.

Nearly 300 high school students from Houston, Galveston, La Marque, Spring, Clear Creek and Alief Independent School Districts attended the four hour event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m in the Bayou Building.

The conference offered an opportunity for local area teenagers to express themselves in open discussion with participating police officers in mini interactive sessions covering key topics in police interaction, conflict resolution, dating and domestic violence, bullying, safe driving and career planning.

Many of the discussions began with officers introducing themselves, sharing stories and asking the students what they thought about police officers — both good and bad.

Treva Mott, HPD officer in public affairs, was a key speaker for the police interaction and conflict resolution session. Mott began the session by asking, “How many of you dislike police officers?” Almost 90 percent of attendees’ hands shot up in the air.

Mott said she appreciated the honesty but offered the following rebuttal.

“Now, tell me this,” Mott said. “How many of you all actually had interaction with a police officer?”

Only a few hands were raised.

One of those hands belonged to Amber Scott, senior at La Marque High School. Scott witnessed what she perceived to be police brutality against a student in her school.

Scott recognizes that there are two sides to every story; by the end of the conference she had a different view toward law enforcement.

“There are certain police that you know are crooked, and they don’t do what they’re suppose to do, but you have to be able to know the difference...and realize that your actions display how the officer should act towards you,” Scott said.

Officer Mott encouraged the students to share what they have learned with family and friends.

“Officers have a lot of interaction with the

community, and that’s what we’re trying to bring back and build a trusting relationship,” Mott said. “If you don’t like [police officers] — then you just don’t like us, but at the end of the day [police officers] take these uniforms off...we have children, we have sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews...so we’re just like you.”

Holly Roenig, counselor at Sam Houston Math, Science and Technology Center, said that at-risk students perceive law enforcement negatively because of personal and family experiences.

“I think [the Youth and Police Conference] is important because it helps our students to see that police officers can be viewed as humans,” Roenig said. “[Police officers] do not have to be depicted in a bad way or even a good way all the time. There’s good and bad people in the world, and it helps [youth] to view police officers as normal citizens that are maybe there to help them.”

Part of the negative opinion that students had toward police officers stemmed from what they perceived as a lack of respect. It was expressed by members of the audience that law enforcement abused their power and treated citizens poorly.

Monica Fortson, HPD officer and former Hightower High School teacher, reminds students that not all police officers are disrespectful and that as citizens they have the power to report the ones who are.

Fortson grew up in a neighborhood that was predominately white and witnessed her family being treated differently by police officers. It led her to dislike and avoid law enforcement while growing up.

Fortson had a change of heart and decided to become a police officer after constantly hearing about her students’ negative experiences.

“I left the classroom to be part of the change that I wanted for my kids,” Fortson said. “I’m telling you, do not let anyone take your power away from you. You have the power to let someone upset you, take you out of your own personality, take you out of your norm and take you out of the way you were raised.”

Not everyone who attended the conference

came with a negative outlook toward law enforcement. Jasmine Pacheco, junior at Westside High School, found the conference beneficial for learning about career opportunities in law enforcement.

“I would like to be a cop; that is why I came here in the first place,” Pacheco said. “I would like go into investigation, so it is good for me.”

Pacheco explained that an added benefit of the conference was that students had the ability to get their opinions heard and police officers had the opportunity to gain better understanding from the feedback.

TAPS Academy is an 11-week program primarily designed for at-risk youth to partner and interact with mentor police officers to build trusting relationships and to learn from each other.

Everette Penn, UHCL associate professor in criminology, and Brian Lumpkin, retired HPD assistant chief, created the program in 2012.

TAPS’ goal is to reduce the social distance between law enforcement and at-risk teens through learning, interaction, discussion and problem solving. The program started in Houston but has since expanded to six locations around the world: El Paso, Texas; Galveston, Texas; Columbus, Ohio; Tampa, Fla.; Ponce, Puerto Rico; and St. Kitts, Nevis.

Brittany Cuba, UHCL psychology graduate student and TAPS intern, explained that the conference is geared to receive community involvement. She has witnessed at-risk teenagers’ growth in interaction and perception of police officers through the TAPS movement and commends the program for doing a good job.

“I would not be a TAPS intern if I did not believe in what it does,” Cuba said. “It builds trusting relationships between at-risk teenagers and police officers.”

To learn more about TAPS, visit <http://www.tapsacademy.org> or <http://uhclthesignal.com/wordpress/tapspage>.



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PHOTOGRAPH BY LEENA VUOR  
HPD Officer Denito Berry, public affairs, addresses the importance of youth and police interaction.



PHOTOGRAPH BY LEENA VUOR  
Everette Penn, associate professor in criminology, engages with Shan-non Davenport, TAPS program manager, about the goals met through the TAPS program.