

THE SIGNAL

VOLUME XXXIX, NUMBER 12

www.UHCLTheSignal.com

NOVEMBER 21, 2011

‘LIKE CRAZY’

Using improv to create an honest look into long-distance relationships, page 4



Loan forgiveness equals student savings

Cody Hardin

The Signal

Kyle Riggs brings a glass of water to a table at a local area Gringos.

As a server, Riggs is used to seeing people come and go in the sometimes nomadic industry. Riggs left the industry in 2008 to go to school at UHCL, graduating in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in political science.

Riggs went with what interested him, passing up degree plans in business or other “market-friendly” degrees. However, even those degrees have not panned out for some of his co-workers.

“I knew a political science degree can only do so much, but it was all I was

interested in, so I bit the bullet,” Riggs explained. “I have friends who have degrees in finance who wait tables too so I understood the risk, but while it wouldn't be easy, I expected to find a job.”

Life after graduation led Riggs to apply for jobs everywhere, to no avail.

“I was dropping 7-10 resumes weekly, until I finally started getting desperate and willing to take anything, regardless if it applied to my degree or not,” Riggs said.

Facing \$20,000 in student loans and a fiancée, Riggs found himself back to square one, waiting tables.

Riggs still hopes he can put the degree he earned to use.

“I'm hoping the economy turns around

in the next couple years and, in the meantime, I may just go back to college,” Riggs explained.

However, executive orders from the Obama administration may help situations like Riggs' be a bit less burdensome.

Set in motion in late October, the orders are one of many in the latest “We Can't Wait” campaign launched by the Obama administration as it waits for another \$447 billion jobs bill to be moved by Congress.

The orders, estimated by President Obama to help 1.6 million students lower their financial aid loan payments is just that, a system designed to work with Americans with college debt who are find-

ing it difficult to pay off student loans.

The proposal is entitled “Pay As You Earn,” and bases monthly student loan repayments to be capped off at 10 percent of discretionary income as of July 2014. However, a new proposal has been put in place to allow those 1.6 million to start capping their loans next year.

Those 1.6 million are not the only ones in line to get a break.

The administration is also setting forth to allow another 6 million borrowers to consolidate their loans into one monthly payment, thereby allowing them to receive up to a 0.5 percent reduction.

SEE LOANS, PAGE 6

RISE IN TEEN PREGNANCY



GRAPHIC: PAUL LOPEZ: THE SIGNAL

Cindy Marquez

The Signal

The latest report issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009) lists Texas as the state with the highest teen birth rate in the nation among girls age 15 – 19.

The National Vital Statistics System on the CDC website shows that in Texas, a total of 52,656 girls

52,656 GIRLS became MOTHERS in 2009

between the ages of 15 and 19 became mothers in 2009: 44,175 Caucasians; 7,922 African Americans; 176 American Indians; and 383 Asian or Pacific Islanders.

Ninety-four percent of Texas schools teach abstinence-only

programs. In fact, Texas receives more federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage sex education than any other state. This program excludes discussion on any forms of contraception or birth control including condoms.

Regardless of what type of federal

SEE PREGNANCY, PAGE 7

PROPOSITION THREE PASSES

Amendment approval helps Texas Coordinating Board meet student loan demand

Daniel Agee

The Signal

On Nov. 8, 2011, Texas voters approved the passage of Proposition 3, which appeared on the ballot as a constitutional amendment.

Proposition 3 reauthorizes the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to issue and sell general obligation bonds on a continuing basis for the purpose of financing education loans for students.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has been providing low cost and low interest loans to help students pay for college since 1965. The Hinson-Hazelwood College Student loan program offers help to students who cannot obtain the funds to pay for college through other sources.

In 2007, Texas voters authorized \$500 million in bonds to be used for student loans. Of the \$500 million, approximately \$275 million remain unissued but is expected to be exhausted by 2013. Without the passage of Proposition 3, once the \$500 million is committed, the Hinson-Hazelwood student loan program would not be able to offer any more student loans without additional authorization.

SEE PROP, PAGE 6

Writing Center addresses plagiarism issues

Ashley Smith

The Signal

Academic honesty is an issue that arises in any institution of higher learning, and UHCL is becoming more proactive in the fight to eliminate plagiarism issues including the recent release of the Writing Center's new book, “Giving Credit Where Credit is Due.”

During the 2010-11 academic year, UHCL faculty reported 76 academic honesty violations,

and Interim Dean of Students David Rachita has listened to the different reasons students give for these violations including the most common reason – simply not knowing.

“I do receive reasons from both international and domestic students as to why this is new territory for them,” Rachita said. “All students, whether they are domestic or international, there is a large group of them that say they have never experienced the

documentation requirements as they've experienced them here at UHCL.”

Intellectual ownership in America differs from other countries that see it as more of a shared knowledge, which can cause citing issues for international students.

“Imagine you go to a different country where the standards change, it can become

SEE HONESTY, PAGE 6

ONLINE in this issue

STAFF BLOGS.

Campus Briefs
Signal Frequency
mixed SIGNALS

VIDEOS.

Student Loan Forgiveness

SLIDESHOWS.

Van Edwards Art Show
Global Expo

Use your smartphone to scan the QR code below to check out what's new on The Signal Online this week.



EDITORIAL Drowning in Student Loan Debt

What is being done to save us nationally and statewide, and is it enough?

Outstanding student loans will hit \$1 trillion this year, and that number will undoubtedly grow, but what does that number really represent? What once was a dog-eat-dog world has since turned into a sink-or-swim environment.

People now owe more in student loans than credit card debt. The average undergraduate in 2010 took out \$4,963 in loans, which is 63 percent higher than was borrowed a decade ago.

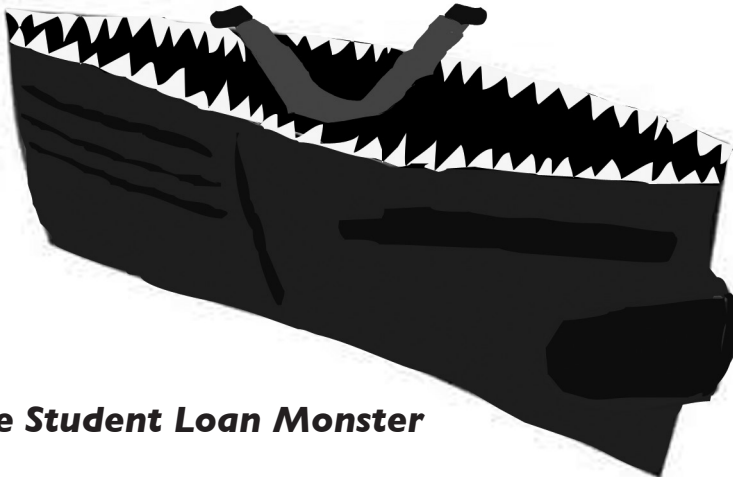
The national and state governments offer a glimmer of help, but the underlying fact is that more could be done for students and graduates who are struggling financially, especially with the current state of the economy.

At the national level, the president is rolling out the “Pay as You Earn Plan,” a plan to make graduates’ debt proportional to their income, allowing borrowers to consolidate different student loans into one government loan and providing the option to pay debt at 10 percent of their discretionary income annually for up to 20 years, after which the debt will be forgiven.

While this plan does sound promising, only a small percentage qualify. The plan does not help those with private student loan debt nor does it do anything for those who have been repaying their debts for years without making a dent in

TOO MUCH DEBT: BY COURTNEY BOWEN

“I NEED some HELP here!”



The Student Loan Monster

the primary amounts owed. Students who graduated before 2008 are not eligible for the plan; nor are those who have defaulted on their payments.

At the state level, voters passed a \$1.86 billion student loan proposal that will allow the state to automatically replace bonds that have been paid off with new bonds, as long as the total amount issued at any one time does not exceed the

total previously authorized. This would provide students with low-interest loans to help finance college expenses.

While this will help make college more affordable, some argue this will make the state take on additional debt obligations. Students are still dealing with tuition deregulation that passed in 2003, which allows public universities in Texas to set their own tuition rates. Borrowing

money for education is more important now than ever in this economy.

Any help from the national and state governments is a step in the right direction, but with skyrocketing tuition and fees, is the price of education something you should have to pay for the rest of your life? Has it come to the point where college is for elite individuals who are wealthy enough to not have to worry about student loans and borrowing money?

In the state of our current economy, jobs are scarce and to pay off loans, students have to get at least a bachelor’s degree to even be considered for a job after graduation. It all boils down to the bleak realization that some college graduates see opportunity after graduation, while most see debt in their future.

A challenge to the state and national government would be to see beyond tax dollars and high-interest loans and reinvest in something that is inevitable, the future. Tuition reimbursement, lower textbook costs, and more grant and scholarship opportunities are just a few ways the state and national governments can help students.

Students are the leaders of tomorrow; they shouldn’t be deprived of a future because they can’t meet the expense of an education today.

We are hip-hop: ‘The voice of urban America’ fans

Rachel Miranda
The Signal

Somewhere in America, right now, a self-proclaimed “hip-hop head” sits at a sticker-decorated Macbook exhausting 140 characters on why hip-hop is dead. With the age of the social media came the casual critic.

Social-networking tools like Tumblr and Twitter provide a platform to appease the human ego’s assumption that people care what you think. And so, we tell you. It is here that the hip-hop music community rears its ugly head as a mirror to the social class system of a capitalistic American society.

Snobbery in hip-hop invites polarization because the essence of the term induces a separation. What hip-hop elites do in terms of placing exclusionary boundaries on the music they deem acceptable illustrates a need for respectability and division from those with less authenticity. These are the bourgeoisies. They pick over each and every line, as regulated by a fictional “Lyrical Accountant’s Guide to Discernment.” The more conscious, the more lyrical and the less



STAFF COLUMN

commercial equals the more hip-hop. Any deviation from this self-regarding, ideological formula is instantly deemed ignorant. It’s just not “real hip-hop.”

But who and what is “real” hip-hop?

“Hip-Hop Music is Run DMC, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, Gang Starr, Wu-Tang Clan, Pharcyde, Hieroglyphics, Aceyalone, Mos Def, Talib Kweli, Public Enemy, Common, Mobb Deep, Nas, Rakim and many more old school and underground acts,” asserts the Urban Dictionary.

Well, sure, these artists are undeniable staples in hip-hop music, but they are also the top 1 percent. How unfair.

I find it a little difficult to clearly define an art form that has only existed for three decades. I can, however, say that hip-hop is the voice of urban America. Historically, the music was the voice of the disadvantaged. It told compelling socioeconomic stories of the lower-class neighborhoods and provided insight to political, social and personal struggles.

“There’s a war going on outside, no man is safe from,” wrote Prodigy of Mobb Deep in the duo’s critically acclaimed song, “Survival of the Fittest,” where he also compared life in the streets of New York with the Vietnam War. These lyrics have been echoed by various rappers ever since, to illustrate the upward battle to make something of themselves from nothing in a world that is a bucket full of crabs.

As the art form grew, so did the diversity of its artists, fan base and subject matter. I think it is very important to understand that at this point, the state of hip-hop is too diverse and complex to compartmentalize and ascertain what is best. Every

song cannot be a “Survival of the Fittest;” every album not an “Illmatic.” And guess what: that’s okay.

I can only imagine how many iPhones and snapbacks were thrown at televisions when Esperanza Spalding won her Grammy for best New Artist over “the realest in the [rap] game right now” - Drake. My Twitter timeline was instantly filled with “Who IS that?” - as if by dubbing yourself a knight of hip-hop templar, you forbade anything without familiarity to be considered great by others. That just goes to show that music is bigger than what one person likes.

The fact of the matter is everything has its lane. Every class of artists and fans serve a purpose in a collective - something more fulfilling than self-regarding agenda. For every politically apt, socially conscious fan who wants to hear Lupe Fiasco rap about the Gaza strip, there is a girl in the club ready to shake her hips and her hair on cue with an 808-heavy Lex Luger beat, while her boyfriend whines in tune with the newest Wale ‘rap-n-b’ song at home. I have unapolo-

getically been all three of these people.

Try not to put everything in a box. Allow your mind to be a clean canvas and let the artist paint the ideas you derive from what you hear. Music is designed to give you feeling, not only generate thoughts. There is no offense taken by Talib Kweli because you have chosen to listen to Waka Flocka while working out. (He sure knows how to get your heart rate up!)

Ultimately, by turning up a nose to what is not readily identified as hip-hop, we have separated ourselves from one another. There is no answer to who’s right and who’s wrong. Whether you are a drug dealer trying to make it from the most desolate of neighborhoods, or an educated young professional trying to climb the ranks of the corporate ladder, you are one of us. You are the culture of hip-hop. You are a fan.

And we are the 99 percent. And there is still a war going on outside from which we are not safe.

THE SIGNAL

EDITOR
Ashley Smith

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Rose Pulido

DESIGNERS
Paul Lopez
Jade Wise

STAFF
Daniel Agee
Kevin Aguilar
Wardah Ajaz
Courtney Bowen
Jessica Casarez
Chynna DeHoyos
Araina Edwards

Cody Hardin
Ryan Hart
Debra Machemehl
Cindy Marquez
Rachel Miranda
Padmashree Rao
Valerie Russell
Darby Staup

FACULTY ADVISER
Taleen Washington

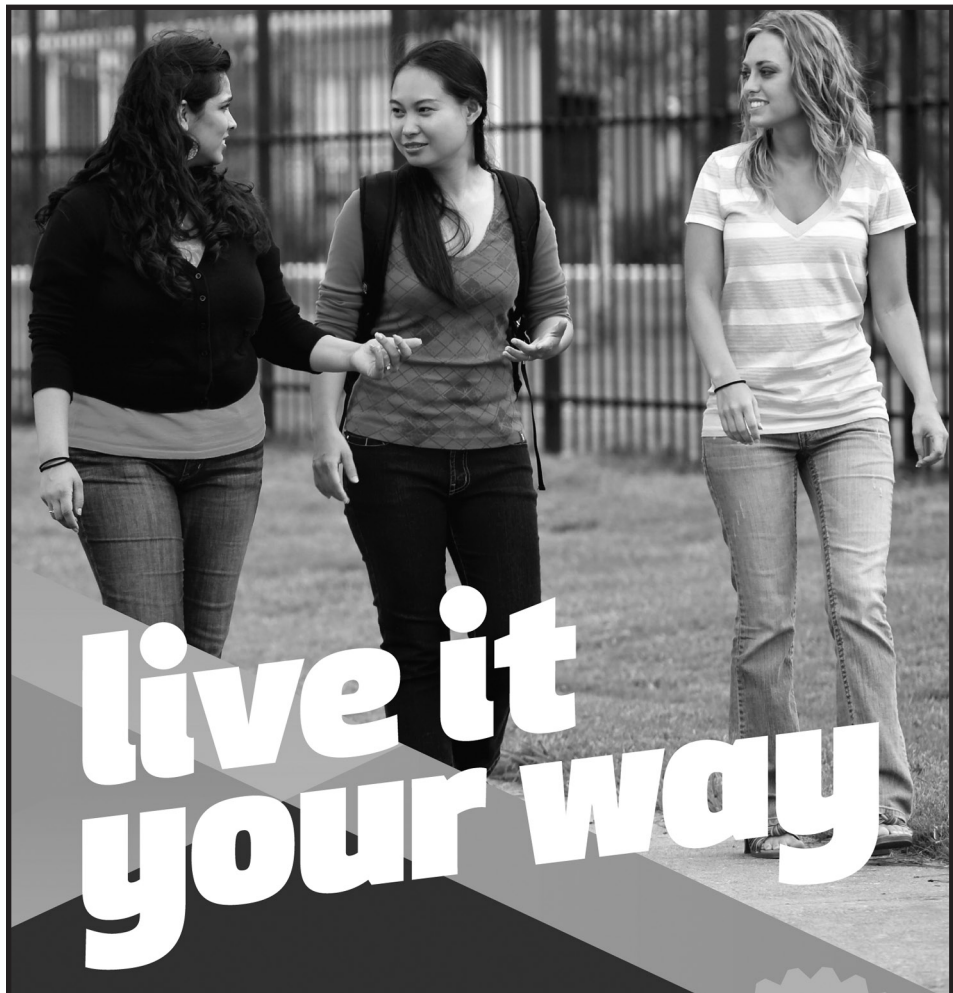
PUBLICATION SPECIALIST
Lindsay Humphrey

The Signal is a public forum and will print letters to the editor subject to the following:

- Letters must be no longer than 500 words.
- Letters to the editor are reprinted unedited.
- Letters must be signed and include the writer’s full name and contact information.
- The editors reserve the right to refuse letters, announcements and contributed articles deemed libelous.


Address letters to:
The Signal
Student Publications Office
UH-Clear Lake
2700 Bay Area Blvd., Box 456
Houston, TX 77058

Reach the staff:
Phone: 281-283-2570
Fax: 281-283-2569
Email: thesignal@uhcl.edu
Visit the website:
www.uhclthesignal.com




live it your way

Tired of the Commute?
Live on campus & be just a short walk
to classes. Limited spaces available.
Sign your lease online today!



university forest
student village

2600 Bay Area Boulevard, Houston TX 77058
visit us at: universityforestUHCL.com telephone: 281.286.5959 

text
UFA
to
47464
standard rates apply

**Salon
Mia Bella**
281.542.1400
www.salonmiabella.net


Hair. Color. Nails.



25% off
with UHCL student/faculty ID



GET CONNECTED TO WHAT'S
HAPPENING ON CAMPUS



Visit The Signal online at
WWW.UHCLTHESIGNAL.COM

Watch videos & slideshows
Read the staff blogs
Comment on articles
Submit story ideas & pictures

• Student Life • Student Life •



Having a hard time finding
a parking spot? You can
have a reserved spot!

**SPRING 2012
PARKING RAFFLE
COMING SOON!**

BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY FROM SGA!



**WE'VE BEEN
HOPELESS.
WE'VE BEEN
LOST.
WE'VE BEEN
INSPIRED.
WE'VE BEEN
THERE.**

WE CAN HELP US

text **WeCanHelpUs** to 30364
or go to reachout.com/campus

*HEAR FROM OTHER STUDENTS
that have been there & made it.*



Message and data rates may apply.

THIS LOVE STORY IS ‘LIKE CRAZY’

ASHLEY SMITH
THE SIGNAL

Two young lovers form a bond, becoming inseparable while in college, then pulled apart by fate and circumstance. Will their relationship survive or will the long-distance romance ultimately become their undoing?

This situation has been seen countless times before since the beginning of cinema, most recently in “Going The Distance” and “Dear John,” but what sets “Like Crazy” apart from the pack is how writer and director Drake Doremus created the film and his unique method of developing the story.

“Well, the writing process mostly entails trying to come up with scene objectives, emotional plot points, subtext, things like that and then the dialogue kind of comes later,” Doremus said.

Doremus, whose mother Cherie Kerr is a founding member of famous improv group The Groundlings has himself been directing and performing improv since the age of 12. He uses his improv roots to create his films, giving his actors an extensive outline as well as scene objectives and subtext, but allowing them to organically come up with the dialogue.

The two actors, Felicity Jones and Anton Yelchin, who portray the young couple in “Like Crazy,” which opened

in Houston Nov. 18, experienced first hand Doremus’ unique method.

“I think it was a little bit nerve-racking, but that was kind of what was exciting about it because it felt like it’s challenging,” Jones said.

“I think it was the process really that’s kind of a blessing for an actor to deal with, to make a film and have such freedom with your character,” Yelchin said.

Unlike other films that deal with long-distance relationships, Doremus wanted to give his film a more raw and honest feel to it.

“I think we find moments that are surprising and that feel really organic, and what’s exciting is when the actors listen to each other and they let things happen organically, amazing real true moments will sort of happen,” Doremus said. “That’s what I really wanted to do. I was really inspired to try to do something that didn’t feel staged or homogenized, that just really resonated with audiences.”

Doremus’ way of telling the story is what initially drew Jones to the film.

“The tone is so different than anything that I’ve ever read, and it was so intimate and very, very naturalistic,” Jones said. “I wanted to do something a little more serious and intimate.”

“Like Crazy” tells the story of Jacob, played by Yelchin, and Anna, played by Jones, who meet while both attending college in Los Angeles. They fall in love, but Anna, who is originally from England, overstays her visa and is sent back to London. The couple then becomes involved in a long-distance relationship and the perils that come with it.

“For Jacob, going to London, he just feels that he’s not part of her life there,” Yelchin said. “When he comes to London it’s just not – it’s not home for him and it’s not home for their relationship. It is her place but without him.”

Throughout the film Jacob

and Anna, even at the lowest points in their relationship, never can fully let go.

“I guess that love is gray and relationships are gray and long-distance relationships especially are difficult to sustain and stay connected with somebody,” Doremus said. “Just because you’re not fully with somebody, it

doesn’t mean you’re not sort of half with that person. This film ultimately covers what it feels like to try to fight to get over somebody and to sort of not be able to.”



Use your smartphone to scan the QR code above to view the movie website for showtimes and trailers.



Use your smartphone to scan the QR code to view a slideshow of the opening of "Campeche."

Campeche

Father and son exhibit pays tribute to Galveston

Jade Wise
The Signal

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words, but even a thousand words cannot describe the unique relationship between a father and his son.

Similarly, images and words share a relationship as old as time itself. One cannot hear or read the word "apple" without conjuring up a mental image of a round, juicy, crunchy, red, green or yellow fruit. Likewise, if one sees a photograph, or some other visual of this same fruit, a mental association is made between the image and the word—"apple."

It is these relationships between father and son, and words and images, that make the relationship between photographer Van Edwards and his son, poet Joshua Edwards so special, as illustrated in the Edwards' new book, "Campeche."

Titled after the famed pirate Jean Lafitte's name for Galveston Island, "Campeche" is a collection of poetry written by Joshua and photographs by his father Van.

Born and raised in

Galveston and Clear Lake Shores – both being islands – Joshua feels a strong connection with the sea, as reflected in "Campeche." Because of this connection, he places a lot of emphasis on the mythology of floods, water and nature.

"The book deals a lot with the idea of the visionary and the individual's place in the context of the problems of the world, be it local or global," Joshua said.

On the mythology of water, Van said, "Mythologically, and probably literally too, water in all mythology serves that function of birth and rebirth, arising and going."

John Gorman, professor of literature at UHCL, points out that modern poetry is often rooted in mythology.

"Mythology helps give a sense of the continuity of culture," Gorman said, "That people may have lived millennia ago, and yet, because of their stories, we understand something about our mutual humanity. It's also a way to deepen a 21st century life that moves on the surface so much. You see the recurrences of patterns

over 3,000 or 5,000 years of human time."

"The idea for 'Campeche' belongs to Joshua," Van said. "He wanted to create a dialogue between my photography and his, because it helped shape not only his poetry, but also his life. Henry David Thoreau said, 'you can't say more than you can see.' But I'm a visual person so I can see more than I can say. My son [Joshua] is a poet, and he can say so much because he sees so well."

This dual ability to be able to see the world around him and eloquently communicate it through poetry was brought about through Joshua's home life. Joshua muses that with his father being a photographer and his mother being a librarian, there was not only the influence of reading and books, but also the idea of meditating on images.

"My dad's aesthetic is sort of austere and formal and the poems in this book are kind of baroque," Joshua said. "A lot of my poems take their inspiration from visionary poets like Whitman, Blake and the French

symbolists, all of which are very formal. So I was interested in not only how his formalism and my formalism, but his austerity and my baroque or wordiness would interact."

"'Campeche' is a very unique type of exhibit," said Elbby Antony, assistant director of development in the office of university advancement, one of the offices responsible for bringing the exhibition to UHCL. "It is the first time we have had the pairing of two different types of art, the visual art and the poetic art."

Professor of Fine Arts and Gallery Director, Nick de Vries said the "Campeche" exhibition is quite a meditative environment.

"I always enjoy showing the works of local individuals, especially those who have given a lot of time to the university and the area in general," de Vries said. "Van being local and his son [Joshua] growing up in this area."

The exhibit runs from Nov. 14 through Jan. 13, 2012 in the Art Gallery, located on the first floor of UHCL's Bayou Building.

LOANS: continued from page 1

It is a sound strategy that UHCL Executive Director of Financial Aid Billy Satterfield agrees is worth considering.

“Some students may want to consider after the first of the year [consolidating loans], as those options are available until then,” Satterfield said.

Satterfield also notes that the new plan is basically the current plan, but much faster in action.

“The big thing with that is that it is actually accelerating what we commonly refer to as the Income Base Repayment Plan,” Satterfield said.

Satterfield explains that the old plan allowed for the situation that if students were paying more than 15 percent of their discretionary income, then they could apply for loan modifications and reduce payments. The plan also allowed for forgiveness of whatever was left on the loans after 25 years with timely payments.

Now, under the new plan, a student has 20 years instead of 25 and the rate is cut to 10 percent of discretionary income.

However, while lower payments are fine for most students, others simply want a lower interest rate from the current, as the current economy has made finding jobs a bit more difficult. In fact, the New York Federal Reserve’s newest report states that student loans are expected to surpass the \$100 billion mark, with outstanding balances exceeding \$1 trillion,

passing up credit card debt. Unlike credit card debt, however, student loans survive bankruptcy, forcing former students to have greater pressure to repay them.

Satterfield quotes the current interest rate for an undergraduate student taking a subsidized loan as 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent for a graduate student with unsubsidized loans.

“They are still a relative low interest rate,” Satterfield said.

Satterfield offers this advice for students who have graduated looking for assistance with their loans.

“The best advice we give students, especially after they have graduated, is to contact their lender,” Satterfield said. “Really, once the school gets the funds and we give the funds to the student, we are out of it.”

Satterfield recommends that students look into federal loans first, as they are in the best interest of the student, but also for those students to ultimately stay in contact with their lenders throughout the process.

“If they’re having loan issues, most definitely they should contact their lender,” Satterfield said.



Scan the QR code below to watch a video on student loans.



PROP: continued from page 1

Proposition 3 proposes an “evergreen clause.” This will allow the program to issue bonds without having to go back and ask for authorization as long as the amount of loans that are outstanding does not exceed the amount previously approved by the voters, which is \$1.86 billion.

“What this means for the program is that we are going to be able to respond more proactively to the student demands in terms of need for students’ loans,” said Dominic Chavez, director of external relations for THECB. “It’s a net benefit for students that we will now have sufficient capacity to serve as many students as needed for student loans.”

Although Proposition 3 did meet with opposition, it passed with a vote of 689,158 to 362,223. The opposing side of Proposition 3 argued that the state should not contribute more money into financial aid because state revenue is not coming in at the rate that it once was. They believe that with the current recession, the government should not be able to keep subsidizing the system for higher education; students seeking financial aid and college loans should lean more toward the free market and obtain funds for school through traditional routes like banks or agencies.

“Our organization was opposed to Proposition 3 because much like proposition 2, which wasn’t mentioned in ballot language, but the way that these bonds are set up gives the Texas Higher Education Coordination Board the authority not to go back to the tax payers and ask whether the bonds should be reinstituted after they have been paid out,” said Andrew Kerr, executive director of Texans for Fiscal Responsibility (Empowered Texans.)

“Basically, it puts the tax player in perpetianial debt.”

However, Chavez points out that the program has never relied on tax dollars to support the repayment of bonds of the money borrowed. Chavez emphasized that the tax payers are not on the hook for the operation of the program and since tuitions and fees have increased steadily over the years, and look as if they will continue to rise, these trends will put a squeeze on financial aid programs in terms of grants, at both the state and federal level.

“The access to low cost and low interest loans that we offer from the state of Texas, that Proposition 3 will support, will allow us to fill that gap in terms of at least to continue making higher education affordable for students, and in the terms of the state of Texas by basically extending the longest financial aid program in state history, for many more years,” Chavez said.

Billy Satterfield, executive director of financial aid for UHCL explains what Proposition 3 means for the students of UHCL.

“Proposition 3 is basically increasing money through the Texas Higher Education to loan out additional money under the college access loan,” Satterfield said. “Students will have more availability of funds. Basically they divvy it out. It will help some of our students who cannot finance their education through Stanford loans, the federal loan program. Unfortunately, for us, our cost of education is relatively low compared to other universities in Texas. I think there will be a need, just not as big of a need as though students who attend UH main campus.”

GLOBAL EXPO

RYAN HART:THE SIGNAL

Aranza and Anetza Contreras show off their dresses at the Hispanic culture booth. The Global Expo took place on Nov. 14 in Bayou Atrium II. Participants from more than 20 countries exhibited their culture’s food, music and clothing.

UHCL POLICE PRESS RELEASE

Use your smartphone to scan the QR code on the right to read a press release explaining an upcoming visit from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. and information on a public hearing Dec. 6.

HONESTY: continued from page 1

very confusing,” said Chole Diepenbrock, director of the UHCL Writing Center. “It’s not just a question of the rules changing, it’s also a question of cultural values. In the United States we value intellectual property quite a bit, we value originality of ideas, but other cultures value sharing and community. People lend things easily; people quote as a way of honoring the person they’re quoting. They don’t have to be perfect about it.”

Many domestic students, however, even though they have been exposed to citing and documenting sources as part of our education system, also cite lack of knowledge as a reason for academic honesty violations.

“They [domestic students] will also come and tell us that even if they knew that they had to document and cite that they were never really held to a certain style: MLA, APA, Chicago or any other style, as long as references were documented, they say they were okay,” Rachita said. “As with the international students, when they get here they find out how strict and serious we are about the proper way to document, there is a learning curve there as well.”

UHCL is taking measures to ensure that the learning curve happens before the potential of getting into trouble in the classroom.

For the past three semesters during International Student Orientation, Rachita has lead an academic honesty workshop, and this fall he has used that model to develop an academic honesty workshop for general new student orientation.

A major development in becoming proactive is the creation of the Writing Center’s book, “Giving Credit Where Credit is Due,” on how to correctly cite sources. Diepenbrock explained how even though there are books about plagiarism on the market, there are none that go beyond and explain why it is important to document sources in a relatable voice to students.

“I wanted the tone of this publication to be friendly and helpful, not to assume people are cheating,” Diepenbrock said. “We tried to make it positive.”

To achieve a friendly and relatable tone, Diepenbrock called on her tutors at the Writing Center to contribute not only articles and essays on different subjects, but also create cartoons and animations of all the tutors. They also decided to include the mascot for the UHCL Writing Center, Susie Q.

“We had some ‘Ask Susie’ columns that evolved so people were asking how to cite a tattoo, or how to cite something that somebody yelled outside of their car, stuff like that, silly things, so we wanted to make it fun, make it accessible,” Diepenbrock said.

The book, currently available for free to members of the UHCL community, is being reviewed for publication by the International Writing Center’s Association Press and, with approval, will be published and available for people outside UHCL to purchase. After giving away the first 1,000 copies, the book is now in its second printing.

“THE MORE THE STUDENTS HEAR THE MESSAGE ... THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THIS CAMPUS TAKES ACADEMIC HONESTY SERIOUSLY AND THEN THERE ARE FEWER ISSUES.”

– David Rachita
Interim Dean of Students

So far this academic year, which began this fall semester, there have been four reported cases of academic honesty violations. Rachita is not sure what the reason behind the drop in numbers is, but he feels that getting the word out on the seriousness of academic honesty is helping the downfall.

“The more the students hear the message, whether it’s in print, whether it’s on the website, whether it’s face to face, whether it’s the workshops we’ve created, they hear the faculty talking in the classrooms, they hear their peers talking about it, then they understand that this campus takes academic honesty seriously and then there are fewer issues,” Rachita said. “That’s what we’re working towards, making sure that it’s talked about and it’s heard in many different places on campus that not only does everybody take it seriously, but everybody respects it and understands why it’s important.

To pick up a free copy of “Giving Credit Where Credit is Due,” visit the Writing Center in the Student Services Building, room 2105.

Scan the QR code to go to the Writing Center website.



PREGNANCY: continued from page 1

funding has been applied for and received, in the state of Texas it is up to the individual school districts whether to teach comprehensive sex education or abstinence-only programs.

Governor Rick Perry has only sought funding for abstinence-only sex education programs in Texas schools. In October 2010, Perry sat down with Evan Smith, editor in-chief of the Texas Tribune. During the interview, Smith asked Perry why he continues to promote his abstinence-only sex education policy since Texas has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the nation.

Perry’s response was that “abstinence works,” despite Texas’ teen pregnancy ranking. His argument was that the problem “is the way it’s being taught or the way it’s being applied out there.” Perry went on to say that from his own personal experience, abstinence does work.

The School Health Advisory Council’s responsibility is to review the recommended sex education and curriculum to the school board. It is a state requirement that parents make up a percentage of SHAC membership.

“What we do know is that a lot of school health advisory councils, they don’t have the time or sometimes the knowledge to investigate the different programs that may be proven to work,” said Kim Johnson, project director for The University of Texas Prevention Research Center. “What will happen is they’ll have different vendors come in and sell their product and sell their curriculum; a lot of times that’s how their programs are selected. What we’ve been doing is educating school health advisory councils in choosing a program that’s evidence-based, abstinence-only, abstinence-plus, whatever program it is, that it’s evidence-based behavior.”

Johnson pointed out that Harris County was granted \$15 million to do evidence-based programming. Also, The University of Texas Prevention Center is currently in collaboration with 10 school districts offering a program that is abstinence-plus that has been proven to delay sex among adolescents in middle school. This program emphasizes the benefits of abstinence, but also includes medically accurate information as well as information on contraception and disease prevention.

“We know that abstinence is the healthiest and safest lifestyle and is the only 100 percent effective protection against the possible consequences,” said Julie Mayfield, director of ReL8, an abstinence-only program dedicated to influencing youth to pursue a lifestyle of saving sex for marriage. “Abstinence education encompasses far more than ‘just say no to sex;’ it’s relationship building, healthy versus unhealthy relationships, refusal skills, navigating media influences, talking about goals and really character-education based.”

In contrast, comprehensive sex education supporters such as Advocates for Youth “champions efforts to help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.”

“I think we need to recognize that sexuality is a normal and healthy part of all of us,” said Will Neville Rehbehn, director of strategic communications for Advocates for Youth. “Abstinence has no effectiveness whatsoever; looking at the problem backward rather than taking a realistic approach to what young people need.”

Although there are many sex education programs out there, they fall into five basic categories. In addition to

the abstinence-only-until-marriage and abstinence-plus programs these include: 1.) comprehensive sex education – provides information on human development, relationships, decision-making, abstinence contraception and disease prevention; 2.) abstinence-only – emphasizes abstaining from all sexual behaviors and does not include information on contraception or disease prevention; 3.) fear-based – abstinence-only and abstinence-only-until-marriage programs that instill fear, shame and guilt, and send negative messages about sexuality.

“Some of the common fatal flaws or fatal errors in programs that aren’t evidence-based are what we call scare tactics into abstaining, which we know does not work,” Johnson said. “If you provide the right information and the skills, they can abstain.”

Mona Lee, 19, took health education during her second semester of 12th grade in high school, but she was already pregnant. Lee is the mother of a 23-month-old boy and an 11-month-old girl.

“My life changed from having freedom to no freedom at all,” Lee said “Can’t do anything with a baby on the hip.”

Johnson points out that Texas parents have an opportunity to implement other programs besides abstinence-only-until-marriage. “What parents can do is join their local SHAC,” Johnson said. “The SHAC is probably one of the most influential committees in terms of sex education in the state for a school district. We’ve seen a lot of districts push a lot of good programs through when they have a really effective SHAC and the parents are there actively, so we’re seeing parent support overwhelming support abstinence-plus programs.”

For more information on the various sex education programs available, visit the following links:

The University of Texas Prevention Research Center

www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/tprc/

The School Health Advisory Council

www.dshs.state.tx.us

ReL8

www.myrel8.com

Advocates for youth

www.advocatesforyouth.org

You can also visit

www.uhclthesignal.com for links to these sites.

• Student Life • Student Life • Student Life • Student Life • Student Life •



Interested in getting more involved with your campus?
Gaining leadership skills? Helping new students during orientation? Then stop by the Student life office or go to www.uhcl.edu/newstudentorientation

Applicants must be available
Wednesday, January 11, 2012 4:00pm to 7:00pm
Friday, January 13, 2012 from 1:00pm to 4:00 pm
Saturday, January 14th, 2012 from 7:30am to 4:00 pm
(If you are interested in volunteering at Pearland Campus- Thursday, January 12, 2012 From 3:30- 9:00)

For questions or additional information contact Erika Ofodirinwa at Ofodirinwa@uhcl.edu or 261-283-2567

Chinese Delegation visits UHCL and Houston

Rose Pulido
The Signal

The University of Houston-Clear Lake, with assistance from the mayor's office, hosted a Chinese delegation from the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication Nov 8. The delegation was interested in visiting the campus to learn more about the Digital Media Studies graduate program offered at UHCL.

The campus tour was orchestrated through the mayor's Office of International Trade and Development where one of their primary goals is to build international relationships between the city of Houston, globally, in efforts to create opportunities for international education.

"From our perspective, it's important to help them [Chinese Delegation] establish a connection with different institutes of higher learning, locally, to see what kind of partnerships can be dreamed up," said Matthew Shailer, special assistant to the mayor, office of international trade and development. "They have a different perspective when it comes to educating and what is a serviceable, job ready education versus something more classic like liberal arts in the way that we understand it."

The Chinese delegation presented a list of topics they were interested in learning more about from different universities and

technical colleges to the mayor's office. They toured the University of Houston Main campus and Downtown campus before coming to UHCL. Shailer said the mayor's office reached out to institutions of higher learning in hopes that a relationship between the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication and other colleges would be established.

"In China, it's usually about getting to know you first," Shailer said. "We're talking about a different country; they have a different system of education."

UHCL's Office of International Initiatives facilitated the visit by welcoming the Chinese delegation to the campus and setting up a day of presentations by faculty from the school of Human Sciences and Humanities that focused on Digital Media Studies. Interim Associate Dean of Human Sciences and Humanities Robert Bartsch coordinated efforts to assist and contribute to the visit.

The delegates were greeted by UHCL President William Staples; the Dean of Human Sciences and Humanities Rick Short, the Dean of Science and Computer Engineering Zbigniew Czajkiewicz, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Mrinal Mugdh and Lecturer in Marketing Kathleen Williamson.

Short and Czajkiewicz preceded the presentations with a

brief, welcoming speech. Lectures were presented by Communication and Digital Media Studies faculty Leo Chan, Debra Clark, Anne Henry, Stuart Larson, Ashley Packard and Taleen Washington.

The Office of International Initiatives seeks to build international educational connections with other countries to find opportunities for students to study abroad and to build international relationships.

"Whenever there is a delegation like this, there is a collection of intellectual ideas," said Sameer Pande, executive director for the Office of International Initiatives. "Today is a globalized world. The academic standards and the way people teach is in competition and in sync with each other."

Zhang Wenhong, vice dean of the College of Publishing with the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication said they had three primary motives for touring higher learning facilities in Houston.

"First is to learn from our



ROSE PULIDO:THE SIGNAL

Leo Chan, assistant professor of Communication and Digital Media Studies, discusses the UHCL DMST graduate program with lecturer Fu Gang from the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication.

counterparts in American universities," Wenhong said. "The second objective is to promote academic and research exchange between our faculty members, and you can tell that they are all young, with their counterparts in the United States. And the third objective is to help our young faculty members to broaden their vision."

Wenhong said part of the reason for their visit to Houston is because they are looking for more opportunities to have a more permanent and systematic exchange program. Wenhong said the Beijing Institute of

Graphic Communication currently has established programs with Canadian universities and British universities. Their undergraduates study for three years in Beijing and then go to their sister universities in either Great Britain or Canada, study there for two more years and obtain a master's degree.

"It is a two way process," Pande said. "They learn from us, but at the same time we learn from them. That's what the beauty of delegation is."

UHCL and USA think pink for collaborative video



ASHLEY SMITH:THE SIGNAL

Digital Media Studies graduate student Sophia Stewart shares her experience working with USA to develop the Pink Glove Dance video. Other panel members were (from left) Jim Hansen, videographer for NASA/Johnson Space Center and USA, Mike Uguccioni, FOX Sports producer and Kim Nahas, customer and community relations specialist for USA.

Jessica Casarez
The Signal

During October, designated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, organizations are encouraged to go out of their way to think of creative and unique ways to raise awareness.

One method that has gained popularity is the "Pink Glove Dance," which originated at a hospital in Oregon and showcases people dancing while wearing pink gloves. Many of these dances, filmed and posted on YouTube, have become a source of inspiration and comfort for breast cancer survivors.

Digital Media Studies students from UHCL did not hesitate to partner with the United

Space Alliance when asked to participate in creating a video for breast cancer awareness last month. The resulting video features employees of USA doing the "Pink Glove Dance."

USA decided to create the video after having several employees diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011. Kari Fluegel, senior manager of communication and public relations at United Space Alliance, decided to spearhead this project after being diagnosed herself earlier this year.

"This group of survivors recently banded together and decided they wanted to do something to help raise awareness of breast cancer issues within the

aerospace community," Fluegel said. "So, we decided to do our own USA 'Pink Glove Dance' with a space twist on it."

USA and UHCL collaborated earlier when USA sponsored the UHCL digital media lab. A USA representative contacted Debra Clark, associate professor of communication and DMST, to see if she knew any students or individuals who would be interested in collaborating to make the video. Clark passed the message on to her graduate students and was pleased when three of them expressed interest.

Because she knew it was a great deal of work that needed to turn around quickly, Clark offered the students extra credit for their time and effort on the project.

"We collected over 67 hours of footage in less than a week," Clark said. "We worked from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. for three or four days and devoted two full days to editing."

DMST students Sophia Stewart, Erik Sanchez and Manning Stinson agreed to take the project on as part of their Critical Approaches class.

Unlike many of her other projects for school, Stewart said she was faced with the hard reality of the "real world" as she discovered the difficulty of

having multiple directors on one project.

"It was really difficult working with so many people and under so many different regulations," Stewart said. "To please everyone was just impossible, but I agreed to do it, and afterwards I was really glad I did."

Kimberly Nahas, USA customer and community relations specialist, was very involved with the structure of making the video. She was surprised at how many people ended up being involved with the project.

"Every senior member of leadership was involved," Nahas said. "It started with 20 people

and ended up with more than 100 people being involved."

In order to maximize the space twist on the video, certain permissions

had to be granted to be able to film inside some Johnson Space Center facilities, Space Center Houston and JSC facilities. Strict regulations had to be adhered to by everyone, including the students, while on those premises. Stewart was surprised when she was told she had to wear something over a tank top she had on while filming.

Although the video was made in a few days, a large amount of work went into it. USA contacted

the hospital in Oregon who did the first "Pink Glove Dance" and also requested permission from the copyright owner of the song used in the video.

Upon completion of the video, both the students and USA employees felt a new kind of gratification and appreciation for the survivors of breast cancer.

"I have never been on the backside of making one of these videos before," Stewart said. "It was very inspirational."

Some employees with USA had not revealed they were breast cancer survivors until after this project was in the works.

"Survivors have this sisterhood," Nahas said. "It's something I have never witnessed. Nobody knows or understands that the way they do. To see the support they provide one another is astounding – it has more impact than any medicine."

The USA Pink Glove Dance video is being shared on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and on the company's website. The ultimate goal is to raise as much awareness for breast cancer as possible.

"TO SEE THE SUPPORT THEY PROVIDE ONE ANOTHER IS ASTOUNDING — IT HAS MORE IMPACT THAN ANY MEDICINE."

— Kimberly Nahas
USA Customer and
Community Relations Specialist

Use your smartphone to scan the QR code to see the USA Pink Glove Video.

