

# The WINGSPAN

*A New Perspective*

in



The University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2016-2017 Edition

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CONVERGENCE







## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Another year at the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) has come and gone. To mark the end of the 2016-2017 academic year, we are pleased to present “The Wingspan in 3D: A New Perspective”.

The theme for this year’s edition of “The Wingspan” mirrors the experiences of the third-year students in UHCL’s first class as a four-year institution. Students in their third year of college typically reflect on their time as freshmen and sophomores, and look forward to their future as seniors and college graduates. They begin to appreciate all the different perspectives that they have been exposed to during college about life and the world around them, and how these perspectives have helped them grow into the individuals they are today.

We further explore the theme of different perspectives through the different sections that “The Wingspan” is divided into: Convergence, Aerial View and Inside Look. The Convergence section was named so because it marks the convergence of an ending and a beginning. As we moved forward from the 2015-2016 academic year, we embarked on a new journey that took us through the 2016-2017 academic year. Next, Aerial View provides readers with a broad look at all the memorable events that took place throughout this year, from the exciting Welcome Back Bash to the delicious Chili Cook-Off. Lastly, we allow readers an Inside Look into some of the special things happening on campus, such as the retirement of our beloved President William Staples.

Our hope is that this year’s edition of “The Wingspan” truly depicts all the different sides of life as a UHCL student and shows how wonderfully different and diverse our university body is.

This one is for all of you Hawks out there! UHCL would not be the same without each and every one of you.



Kristin Boyd  
Editor

## ‘Till Next Year, Hawks

This school year has been one of the most academically-challenging and emotionally-fulfilling years of my college career.

This was the first time I had to take all science classes, and I began the year expecting my course load to be as demanding as it was when all of my courses were electives. To say I was wrong would be an understatement. I did not fail any course, but I did have to drop a few and struggled with a couple of failing test scores. At the end of each semester, I was able to bring my grades back up and end on a good note. Thinking back on it, I realize now that I need to focus more on schoolwork and less so on just having a good time. This year was a difficult experience, but a well-needed wake-up call.

The most valuable experience for me this year, however, was not related to my academics or even my social life, but to my involvement with the Hawk Leadership Institute. I was constantly challenged, educated and given amazing opportunities to grow as both a leader and an individual. I went on several eye-opening and enlightening retreats, participated in interesting workshops and was given a set of responsibilities I had never thought myself capable of handling.

Toward the end of the spring semester, I had not only become a better scholar, but I had also grown to be a much better leader than I was before. These are two identities of which I am very proud and that I will continue to foster throughout my life.



Natalia Marfil

From the Welcome Back Bash to the Chili Cook-Off, my third year at UHCL has been full of amazing events, memories and overall great experiences that helped shape me into the man I am today.

My junior year was a different experience for me; it has been one of growth and self-reflection. I did not change who I am, nor did I change my values and dreams, but rather I matured and grew to be a person who truly lives his life according to those values and dreams. There were moments throughout the year when I would doubt myself and not know who to lean on. I realized that I would not always have my mommy and daddy to help me, so I persevered and grew to overcome the challenges that came my way. It did not matter if it took me forever to figure the situation out, I would always tell myself, “The third time’s the charm.”

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to share many of my memories and experiences with you all through my blogs during the past year. I love that I have these as a way to look back at my junior year. If I had to sum up my junior year in a sentence, I would quote John C. Maxwell: “The greatest day in your life and mine is when we take total responsibility for our attitudes. That’s the day we truly grow up.”



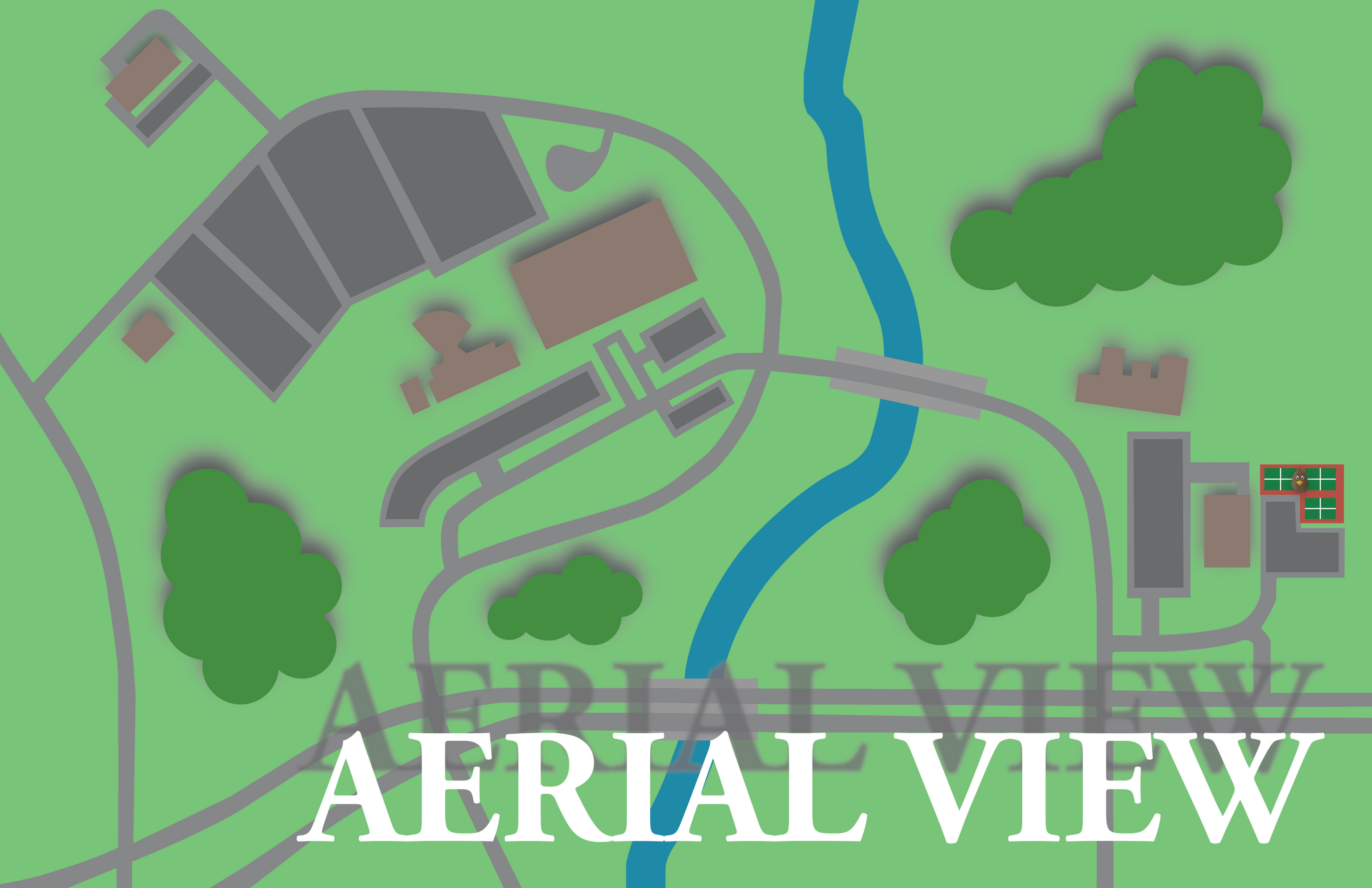
Eric Yanez



# Meet Our Staff







# AERIAL VIEW





# Welcome Back Bash

*Story by Eric Yanez  
Photos by Trish Zalesak*

The summer of 2016 was officially over, and many students were not looking forward to the sleepless nights spent studying that would come with the new school year. Luckily, the office of Orientation and New Student Programs (ONSP) helped ease students into the semester by hosting the annual Welcome Back Bash. The Bash was a huge hit full of endless surprises such as the new Spirit Squad and various vendors from around the Clear Lake area. Oh, and did we mention that there was a DJ dropping some great hits?

The Welcome Back Bash presents a great way for students to go out, meet new people and get a

bunch of free stuff—and who doesn't like free stuff? Students walked away with freebies such as t-shirts, sunglasses and even portable phone chargers. The party was lively with many fun activities, such as mechanical bull rides, giant Jenga and bouncy houses—and let us not forget all of the great food! The Bash always has a great selection of food every year, with choices like delicious cupcakes, frozen yogurt and the famous Ben and Jerry's ice cream. There is no doubt that one would leave the Bash with a full stomach and a satisfied smile. After just a few trips through all the vendors at the event, one would have enough food for the entire year. Whether from a





*“My favorite part from the Bash was all the giveaways,” said Alex Sechelski. “I didn’t expect there to be so much.”*

food coma or a mechanical bull ride accident, there were many laughs to be had and great memories to be made at this year’s Bash.

In addition to all the food, freebies and games, there was great entertainment at the Bash. UHCL

has been very spirit-oriented in the past few years with the introduction of a school mascot and spirit days, and now the Spirit Squad has joined the action. Seeing the group with their pom poms, crisp new uniforms and electrifying energy was surely a sur-

prise for many. Each and every year, the Bash boasts amazing performances and the new Spirit Squad did a great job living up to that expectation—they really got everybody pumped for a new semester.

With all of the prizes, food, the new Spirit

Squad and an amazing DJ, there was no possible way not to have a great time at the Bash. UHCL really knows how to kick off the school year in an awesome way. 🦅



# Alice in Libraryland

*Story by Trish Zalesak*



Oh my, oh my. Where have the librarians gone, and why are the Red Queen and the Mad Hatter in the Alfred R. Neumann Library? No, it is not Wonderland; it is the Neumann Library Open House.

For the past few years, the library has held an open house for students to become familiar with the facility and the services it offers. According to Casey Roberson, the library research services coordinator, the event has typically been held early in the semester, so that students are not yet loaded down by papers or tests when they come. Without the stress of homework, students are free to enjoy the event.

The Neumann Library's committee chooses a theme every year to spice up the event—this year's theme was 'Alice in Libraryland.' Students were

transported to the wacky world of Wonderland by way of an aptly decorated library to join the cast—also known as the library's staff—of Lewis Carroll's classic novel for an afternoon of fun. The staff joined students in playing games including flamingo croquet, toadstool bowling, a bean bag toss, checkers and Caucus Race (a variation of musical chairs).

Students at the event also enjoyed tea, coffee and snacks, which included homemade scones and peanut butter balls. Signs reading 'Eat Me' and 'Drink Me' decorated the snack table, above which also hung 'bread-and-butterflies,' made of pieces of cardboard decorated to look like buttered toast with the wings of a butterfly.

"The librarians were wonderful, very in character," said Alyssa Morgan, a junior art major. "They pulled off the Wonderland theme very well. The bread-and-butterflies above the snacks were very cute. Bruno[, my son,] had fun with the mushroom bowling and the bean bag toss."

Besides having fun, there was another reason for students to play the games. By doing so, they could earn tickets that could be spent in a raffle for a chance to win a prize.

"In past years, we've been able to have one grand prize – something that's bigger, flashier," Roberson said. "This year, we settled on multiple little prize baskets."

The gift baskets had different themes, such as movie night, cooking and relaxation. In addition to the prize baskets, ticket holders had the chance to win gift vouchers to local restaurants, the Patio Café or the Copy Center on campus.

"I'm excited to watch the movies with my son," Morgan said, after she won the movie night basket. "I wanted that particular basket to share with him."



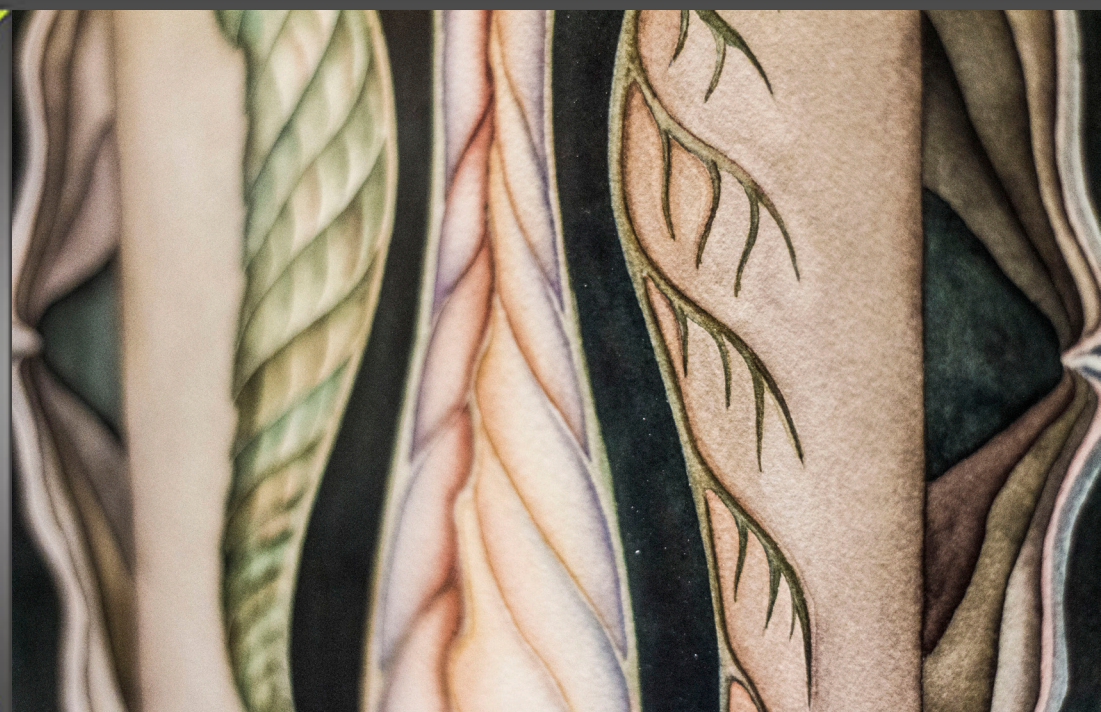
# “FEARFUL SYMMETRIES”

*Bringing Feminism Back to the University*

Story by Natalia Marfil  
Photos by Scott Scarborough & Zahra Alshair

*“Universities were the birthplace of feminism. It seems only appropriate that we bring it back.”*

— *Faith Wilding*



Wilding’s artistic interests began at a very young age with drawings of flowers, insects and the Paraguayan forests that surrounded her. She is a multidisciplinary artist, well-known for her contributions to feminism through both literature and art. Enveloped by two worlds, her physical location in humble Paraguay and the cultural enrichment that was instilled in her by her European parents, Wilding found herself enamored by science, literature, nature and art, traces of which can be found in her artwork. Most noticeably, however, is her involvement in and contribution to feminism.

“Fearful Symmetries” is a retrospective of Wilding’s feminist artwork spanning 40 years and was displayed at the Bayou Art Gallery throughout the fall 2016 semester. At the opening reception, Wilding read excerpts from her memoirs and discussed the artistic processes behind her works.

Before even entering the gallery, spectators could already appreciate some of Wilding’s strikingly unique works. A favorite amongst the UHCL community was “Flow,” which consists of two chemistry vessels holding a mixture of ink and water, connected by a cheesecloth, stained by the contrasting colors at each end.

“I was very intrigued at how the liquid flowed through the fabric but didn’t fully soak it,” said Aileen Kelly, a student and passerby. “I went in because I wanted to understand how it worked and what it meant.”

The intrigue, however, did not stop there, because there were slightly bizarre pieces throughout the gallery that would catch anybody’s attention.

“The composition of the ‘Armour Drawings’ was very interesting and unusual,” Kelly said. “I wanted to know what she was thinking when she created it.”

Other artworks included intriguing combinations of collages, watercolors and pencil

on paper (“Wait-with Virginia”), thought-provoking papier-mâché figures (“Armless Mermaid”) and even video excerpts from her famous 1972 performance of “Waiting.”

Many pieces included recurring themes, such as the use of leaves, teardrops, butterflies and, if one looks closely, even female bodies hidden within these figures.

“The leaves have body forms in them, which are in constant metamorphosis,” Wilding said. “These are the forms of transformation and growth that we, as women, go through.”

It is important to note that as a self-proclaimed feminist artist, the subjects of Wilding’s artwork are almost exclusively women. Wilding stated that one of her initial goals as an artist was to depict the female experience from an internal point of view, answering the question of what it is really like to be a woman.

“At the time, most female forms were either found in works done by men or in pornography,” Wilding said.

“I wanted to find new, different ways to represent female bodily experiences, without exploiting or commercializing them.”

Wilding believes she has accomplished this, in part because of the large number of female spectators who have told her that they have found hope, familiarity and a sense of true beauty in her artwork.

For Kaitlyn Coughlin, a humanities major, the figure of a siren, entitled “Armless Mermaid,” resonated with her.

“As a woman, I feel that people expect less strength from me than they would from a man,” Coughlin said. “The siren is a symbol of power to women, and it teaches us that strength doesn’t necessarily need to be in a masculine.”

Wilding hopes to reach a male audience as well, as feminism is not an experience limited only to women.



“I hope men who look at my artwork gain some respect toward women,” Wilding said. “Many men don’t know how to approach a woman respectfully, because this is how their environment has taught them to behave, sometimes without them even realizing it.”

For Izuh Ikpeama, a pre-pharmacy major, these vividly raw depictions of the female phy-

sique helped him understand a deeper meaning of feminism.

“A lot of people see feminism as being equal to man-hating, which is a misconception,” Ikpeama said. “When seeing actual visual depictions of feminism, like Wilding’s art, [one realizes] that the movement isn’t really about men at all, but about the injustices that



*Artist represented the leaves as a natural personification portrait of her parents.*

women face throughout their lives.”

Of course, not everyone’s opinion will be swayed solely by art. Marisol Cepeda, a guest at the university, said she thoroughly enjoyed the exposition, but she had trouble accepting it as feminist.

“I can definitely see myself in many of the experiences shown here – like carrying a child or being viewed in a vulgar way by men,” Cepeda said. “I just don’t understand why it needs to be called feminist. Isn’t that just as bad as misogyny?”

It is no secret that the word “feminism” is a controversial topic of discussion for many. However, Wilding believes that there are only a few places left in today’s society to have real conversations and that universities are one of them.

“To young men and women who do not consider themselves feminists, I urge you to be open. You may already be a feminist and not know it,” Wilding said. “Don’t be afraid of labels. Do your research. And talk about it.”





# CONSTITUTION Day

Story by Kristin Boyd  
Photos by John Tran

This year's UHCL Constitution Day event focused on the biggest political event of the year—the 58<sup>th</sup> presidential election between candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. With the political world buzzing with news about the nominees, poll numbers and the upcoming election, it was the perfect opportunity to raise awareness and offer resources to students who wanted to be more involved in the election process.

The first booth visited by students at the Constitution Day event was the Voter Registration Booth, manned by representatives from the League of Women Voters (LWV). Cari Greene, Ann Davidson and Angela Howard are passionate members of the LWV who believe that all eligible individuals should vote so that their voices can be heard in the political world. For students who were unfamiliar with the voting process, this was the perfect place to start. The LWV representatives were well-versed in the voting registration process, introduced students to this process and aided in their completion of the appropriate materials to become registered voters.

"I think [young people being active in the upcoming election] is very important," said Greene. She and the other LWV members expressed that they believed that young people do not seem to participate in political processes as much as they should. This is in part why the group was so motivated to give their time to the event, educate students about voting and help students register to vote. In fact, Howard, who is a UHCL professor of history in addition to being a representative of the LWV, is so passionate about citizen involvement in the election that she will be deputized as a voter registrar.

As a staunch supporter of the democratic process, Howard expressed her excitement to be able to serve the university in this way and encourage involvement in the political process among the students around her. She and the other women voiced that being able to assist college students through this to be the most difficult part about becoming an informed voter for many and they were happy to be able to help students through that stage.

The idea that young people are not heavily involved in the voting process was shared among



*Representatives from the Bay Area League of Women Voters help students become registered voters. Pictured are Judith Blanchard, Ethel Patter and Connie Nyquist.*

many of the volunteers at the event. David Jones, Diane Rhorer and Donald Rhorer, representatives of the Bay Area New Democrats (BAND) were also hopeful that the event would encourage and boost involvement of young people in the political process. The booth manned by these three gave students more in-depth information about when and where they could vote and encouraged students to go to the early voting opportunities.

However, they did not stop with the presidential election. Jones, in particular, emphasized the importance of local elections, adding that these tend to get lost and neglected in all the excitement of the presidential election, despite the fact that their outcomes may often impact individuals' lives in more salient ways than the outcome of the presidential election.

election occurring roughly two months from the event, it was the perfect opportunity to raise awareness and offer resources to the students of UHCL. In addition to providing information about voting, these individuals also shared information about local elections so that students could make informed choices about voting for more obscure positions such as members of the State Board of Education or district judges.

Jakob Lucas, another member of the BAND, also volunteered at the event. Lucas, a student at Texas City High School in Galveston County, manned the Presidential Trivia booth and discussed the policy positions of the 2016 nominees with students in an effort to help them become more informed when considering who they might support with their vote. Lucas had much to say about young people being involved in politics. He expressed that voting was important than some people might think, saying that "[voting] determines laws, it determines everything."





*Hunter the Hawk joins the action of the bean-bag throwing activity.*

He agreed that students should be more involved in voting than they seem to be and offered some explanations for why they do not seem to be.

"I know a lot of people who have the misconception that the election is rigged, or that voting is meaningless," Lucas said. He also said that being properly educated about the voting process and the current political climate is vital to being involved in the political process. For individuals who want to be involved, but are not sure how to go about educating themselves, Lucas said that one of the most important things was to "be open-minded."

He further suggested that individuals identify and watch a trustworthy news station or learn about what political party or groups they identify with and then join a club or group associated with those views. Lucas shared that joining BAND was a great experience for him because it provided a context for him to discuss ideas and current events with others, as well as get involved in his community.

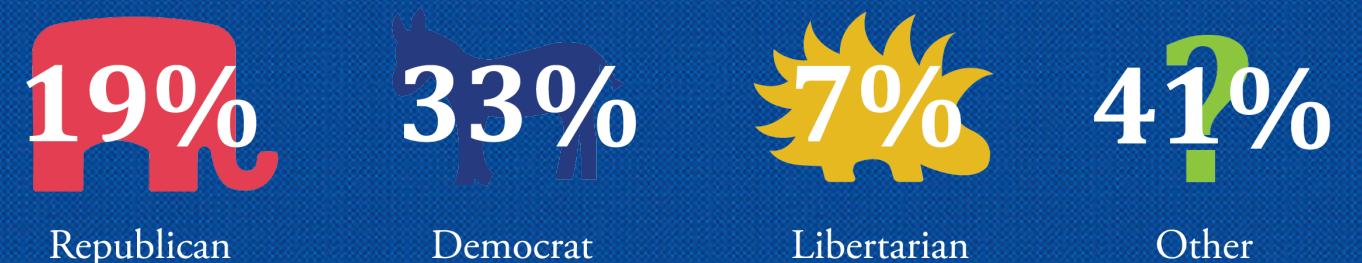
All in all, this year's Constitution Day was the perfect opportunity for students to learn more about how they can get involved in the U.S. election process. 🦅

## Student Follow Up...

### ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Voter Participation ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



### ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Party Affiliation ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



### ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Informed Voting ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

68% felt they made an informed choice based on an understanding of the nominees' platforms



*Data based on a survey of 73 UHCL students*





# Celebrating Latino Heritage

Story by Zahra Alshair and Kristin Boyd  
Photos by Scott Scarborough



To kick off this year's Latino Heritage Month, the office of Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (SDEI) hosted the second annual Piñata Bash, which included food, fun and, of course, piñata bashing.

Erika Garcia, coordinator of Intercultural Student Programming for SDEI, said the outdoor festival-like event was hosted not only to give students the opportunity to network with one another and enjoy themselves but also to celebrate Mexico's Independence Day, which takes place September 16.

"I am always very surprised by how many young people [there are] in Texas who have never hit a piñata," Garcia said.

She explained that she loved seeing how much fun the event was for students and that it reminded her of her childhood. "I was happy to bring that experience here," Garcia said.

Of course, bashing the piñatas was only part of the fun. After the piñatas busted open, students collected small plastic fruits that could be exchanged for gift certificates redeemable at various venues around the Houston area. The event also

featured games, such as musical chairs, and more opportunities for students to win prizes.

Another goal of the Piñata Bash was to get students excited about events to follow that would continue to celebrate Latino culture and offer some educational opportunities. In particular, the motivation behind some of the events of the Latino Heritage Month was to bring awareness to the Latino experience and community.

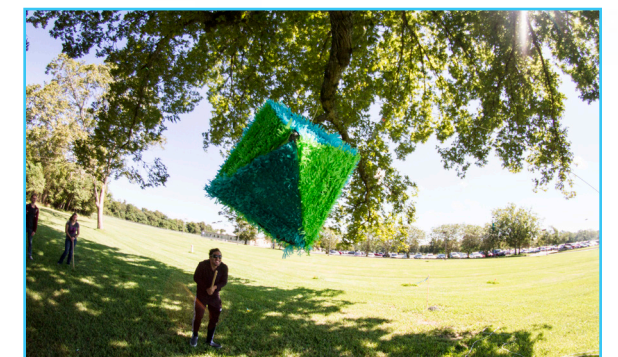
Garcia said approximately 33 percent of UHCL students are of Latino heritage, but there seems to be a lack of awareness of this community on campus. Garcia hopes that events such as those that were part of Latino Heritage Month will help increase awareness.

A couple of events seemed to be especially successful when it came to getting students involved and spreading awareness of the Latino culture. For one, Garcia led a campaign in which she asked students the question, "What do you wish people knew more about the Latino community or about Latinos in general?" The rate of responses more than doubled from last year's campaign initiative. Students seemed to be very excited about getting involved, and Garcia displayed some of their answers in Atrium I of the Bayou Building in an effort to promote awareness of the Latino community at UHCL and share about their experiences.

Another event, "Latinos: Student Discussion on Important Topics," was hosted to provide Latino students with a platform from which to share their experiences as a Latino at UHCL and in general. Topics discussed included what students are exposed to, such as messages received from outside the community and messages that are shared within the community. The event was an opportunity for students to vocalize their experiences and seemed to be a big hit.

"That was a very productive conversation and I think that students really appreciated it," Garcia said about the event. "We had Latino and

non-Latino students who were able to share their experiences and gain a better understanding of each other's cultures and backgrounds.







For Garcia, the Piñata Bash and this discussion, as well as other events like these, are important for getting students involved and showing them that there are culturally significant events that they can enjoy at UHCL, as with most other campuses. Although this was only the second year the Piñata Bash was held, these events seem to be promising in leading the university in a new and different direction for its students. Garcia hopes that events like these will give UHCL a new identity, akin to that of other four-year institutions. She anticipates these events will facilitate a smooth adjustment for students entering college for the first time and that all students will be able to benefit, whether it is through sharing experiences, learning about different cultures or celebrating the diverse cultures represented by the university's student body. 🦋

# Hawks Care

*Story by Trish Zalesak  
Photo courtesy of the  
Environmental Institute of Houston*

The UHCL Cares Day, a modest affair, provided students, faculty and staff an opportunity to give back to the campus and the local environment.

The Environmental Institute of Houston (EIH), located on campus, hosted the event, which consisted of a rewarding afternoon of re-landscaping, gardening and nourishing EIH's grounds and expansive gardens.

Guided and assisted by EIH's staff, students, including several volunteers from the Hawk Leadership Institute, raked mulch, fertilized the gardens, weeded, planted flowers and landscaped. Old logs from the garden perimeter were hauled away, and a new stone edging revitalized the space. Space around the nearby persimmon trees was spruced up with a new log edging. New plants were added to the gardens, along with wheelbarrows full of fresh mulch.

The afternoon proved to be a great time for attendees to chat, get to know each other a little better and enjoy the beautiful surroundings together.

"I think that giving back to your community is part of what you should do as a citizen," said Hailey Willard, a freshman fitness and human performance major. "Whenever you have the chance, you should always give back." 🦋





# I Heart UHCL Day

Story by Kristin Boyd, Trish Zalesak and Natalia Marfil  
 Photosh by Scott Scarborough  
 Video by Krista Kamp

I Heart UHCL Day was a festive explosion of blue, green and love for everything UHCL. Row upon row of booths for the participating student organizations were set up beneath a canopy of green and blue lanterns in the second atrium of the Bayou Building. The smell of hot popcorn and the sounds of catchy music filled the air. At some of the booths, attendees could participate in games and win prizes. If they visited several booths and earned enough punches on a special card, they could win an I Heart UHCL t-shirt, tumbler or both.

Sandy Samaan, a junior biology major, said she thought the many games available to play were very creative. Usually, they had something to do with the organization sponsoring them. The Chemistry Club had a 'pop the periodic element balloon' game, the Model Arab League had trivia about international students at UHCL, and the American Dental Association encouraged people to try and guess which celebrity was which by only looking at their smile.

Samaan went on to say she was motivated to represent some of the student organizations she is involved with at the event because she believes that organizations should be highly visible on campus and work to make connections with people. She thinks that I Heart UHCL Day is a particularly good day to do so, because lots of other organizations are doing the same, and everyone is there to celebrate UHCL and have fun.

Shreena Bhakta, a biology major, holds the same belief as Samaan.

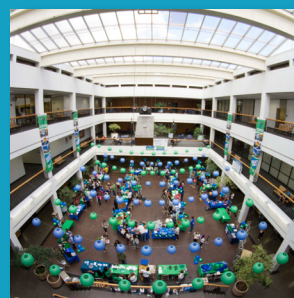
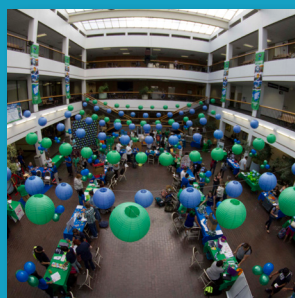
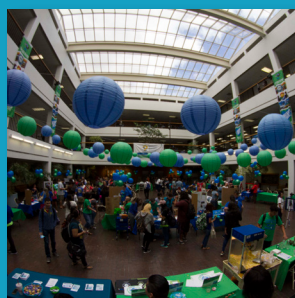
"I think it is important for orgs to take part in this event and to come together and show their school pride," Bhakta said. "By taking part in the event, students show that they care enough about the school and love UHCL enough to get involved in student organizations and help the school grow!"

"[I also] enjoyed [playing] the Finish the Lyrics game for Music Club and playing [the] History Club's version of pin the tail on the donkey," she continued.

She added that she also liked playing the 'guess the smile' game at the American Dental Association's booth, where she volunteered for the day.

When it came time to announce the annual Spirit Week awards, the Office of Admissions won Best Office for their fun Super Mario-themed decorations. The Student Assistance Center was also recognized as the Best Office for their patriotic theme. The Best Window Award went to the Alfred R. Neumann library, which showed its fun side by decorating its window like the Monopoly board game. Counseling Services were presented with the Best Door Award, and the Best Individual Spirit Award went to Melissa Plunkett, from the Office of Admissions.

I Heart UHCL Day was the perfect way to bring the school community together to celebrate the university and show pride in being a Hawk. 🦅







# National COMING OUT Day

*Story by Natalia Marfil  
Photos by Kristin Boyd*

*October 11 marks the annual Coming Out Day, when Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender awareness is fostered and gender and sexual diversity is celebrated.*

**O**n this day, UHCL's office of Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (SDEI) and the LGBT Student Coalition hosted a panel of speakers who shared their coming out stories to various guests, including both students and faculty. Among the speakers for this year were Joanna Eleftheriou, an assistant professor of literature and creative writing; Blake Jones, a student; and Genesis Granados, a graduate student in general psychology and a student ambassador at the university. The emotionally compelling coming

out stories were followed by a question and answer session and an open mic for guests to share their own stories.

"This event is something that I really needed when I was 15 years old and was in school," Eleftheriou said, who had prepared two essays for the event, one of which was to be published in the "Switchgrass Review," which is a national literary journal that focuses on women's health, history and transformation. "My teenage journals record a sense of terror that had no cause. By the time

I got to college... I was so deeply invested in an identity forged around social starvation and sexual repression."

Eleftheriou recounted her struggles, including her priest describing homosexuality as a deformity, her determination to fit into the norm of a straight, Greek woman and her feelings of oppression even from those who were closest to her.

"I expended so much energy staying alive, in spite of my unmet needs," Eleftheriou said, describing her early life. She further explained her coming out process and experience (which occurred at the age of 27) as "inhabiting fear fully, in order to claim some measure of freedom."

As Jones shared his story, he described himself as "not the typical face of the gay man." Jones recalled instances in his life when hiding his sexuality hindered his happiness, was detrimental to his familial relationships and even jeopardized his dream of being a professional wrestler.

"When people would find out that I'm gay, they would obviously call me names and make jokes about me," Jones said. "But it's something about not having to put up a farce and pretend to be someone you're not 24 hours a day, 7 days a week."

Jones dealt with backlash from his mother and acquaintances and witnessed firsthand the homophobic slurs of his army comrades. Upon realizing that he was unhappy, even in his dream career as a professional wrestler, he decided to speak to a famously out wrestler who gave him advice that would later change his life.

"You can't live for other people; you have to do things for yourself," the wrestler said to Jones. "I'd rather be happy sitting at home than miserable trying to live my dream."

The event was followed by the presentation of a narrative, which had been previously submitted by an anonymous writer and was read by the SDEI host of the event, Ashley Green. The writer described themselves as a white, able-bodied student who identifies as queer, genderqueer and polyamorous.





"Genderqueer is still an identity I am scared to ask for, even from my friends or partner of many years," the author said. "I have been worried that the opinions about queer people won't change fast enough for me to be successful."

The author revealed that their career involves children and, though children do not always have a strong opinion on these matters, it is impossible to control the prejudices and stereotypes that their parents may hold.

"I hear people say that the LGBT community now has equal rights. This is not true," the author said. "But in the end, I wouldn't change anything about my identities if I had a choice. I know my intersecting identities make me more dynamic, compassionate, flexible and individual." Among the audience was Orientation Team Leader, member of LGBT Student Coalition and junior environmental science major, Madison Stults. Stults expressed that events that create visibility for the LGBT community help create an environment where everyone can be themselves.

"Coming out is not something that happens once in someone's life," Stults said. "I am glad we have this day to recognize the most integral part of who we are—and who we love—with the universe."

Another student in attendance was Reynaldo Maldonado, who thought UHCL was a very progressive and inclusive university.

"I remember before I was even a student here, I got an email about the Orlando Vigil being held at school," Maldonado said. "Once you show support, you make a change. And once you make a change, it makes it better for the LGBT community."

A welcoming environment is necessary for an individual to feel comfortable when making the personal choice to come out to others. UHCL aims to provide such an environment so that all students, staff and faculty can feel supported for being who they are.

However, it is important to remember that coming out and sharing one's true self is a complex experience. There are so many paths that a person's story can take. Each person experiences coming out differently and has different needs associated with this experience.

"After coming out, many queer people in fact experience a cascade of painful experience," Eleftheriou said. "The assumption that everything gets better if we're only honest about who we are isolates sufferers and deepens their pain when nothing is better." 🍃



## Meet ASHLEY GREEN

*Story by Trish Zalesak*

Meet Ashley Green, the newest coordinator in UHCL's office of Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (SDEI). Her experience and expertise has helped to make events like the Coming Out Day successful.

Originally from the Dallas area, Green graduated from San Diego State University in 2015 with a master's degree in women's studies and a graduate certificate in Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) studies. She joined the SDEI as the Women's and LGBT Coordinator in May 2016.

Green was an excellent candidate for the job with four years of experience with women's and LGBT issues, two of which involved volunteering at an LGBT center.

Green said that her position combines two issues that she is passionate about: "I identify as a woman, and I identify as a member of the LGBT

community. They're both experiences I've had in my life."

She shared that she had a difficult time in college because of her identity. Her experiences instilled in her a passion to work with youth and a determination to make sure that other students do not have negative experiences during their time in college.

"One of the things that I've been hearing a lot, since I first arrived, is that there's a need for LGBT visibility on campus," Green said. "I'm definitely interested in helping [to] ensure that happens."

Part of Green's job is anticipating the future needs of students as the university grows. To make sure that those needs are met, she is working with the university community to expand existing programs, such as the ally safe zone training program, and to develop new programs as the university prepares to build on-campus residences in the near future. 🍃



# Around the Globe in 16 BOOTHS!

Story by Kristin Boyd, Trish Zalesak and Eric Yanez  
Photos by Scott Scarborough



The annual Global Expo, hosted by the office of Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (SDEI), boasted representation from at least 16 countries this year, including Venezuela, the Czech Republic, Nigeria and Saudi Arabia. The event gave students, faculty and staff an opportunity to teach others about their culture and, in turn,

learn about other cultures—or even learn more about their own culture.

It is a celebration of pride in one's ethnic identity and diversity within the university, as well as an opportunity to raise awareness of how many cultures reside within the university and about what makes each culture unique. As junior dual-major in psychology and sociology



Judith Lynn Lacross put it, the event was the perfect opportunity to learn more about “other ways of seeing the world.”

One draw for attendees was the varied spread of food offered throughout the event. From spicy dishes to sweet treats, the Global Expo offered just about any type of food that you might want. A few items that seemed to be particularly popular were the German sausage and the Vietnamese lychee fruit. Attendees were excited to try new food and truly experience the different cultures in this way. It was definitely a fun and hands-on way to learn about different places in the world.

“I’ve sampled just about everything more than once,” Lacross said. She shared that, in particular, she kept coming back to the Taiwan, Vietnam and German booths for their delicacies.

Delicious though the food was, it “was secondary,” Lacross said, who found connecting with others and learning about the different cultures to be the more exciting part of the event. She shared that she especially enjoyed visiting the Vietnam booth because (aside from the food) the student presenters were quite knowledgeable about the culture and she was able to learn a lot from them. She found “the architecture of the buildings and...the nature” to be particularly interesting, noting that “[Vietnam] looks like a beautiful country.”

The Global Expo fosters discussion about shared interests, which encourages individuals to share their knowledge and experiences and to form connections with one another. Although attendees are generally coming to the event to learn from the students and faculty

manning the booths, they have a lot of knowledge to offer too.

Kevin Johnson, a cross-cultural studies master's student, represented the nation of Ethiopia at the event and showcased some of the fruits of his research at the university. Johnson's booth featured several artifacts from the country, including fabrics and a unique tea kettle (probably the smallest one might ever have seen). He also shared a lot of facts about the nation, including the fact that it is a birthplace of the coffee bean, and took attendees on a tour of the Ethiopian hot spots available to visit in the Houston area.

With his abundant knowledge of the culture, Johnson was expecting to be the expert when it came to Ethiopia, the nation he represented at the event. However, student Elizabeth Corbin-Sapaugh came across the booth and was able to teach him a thing or two, especially about the culture's history. Corbin-Sapaugh shared that her god son is of Ethiopian descent and, when he wanted to learn more about where he came from, she sprang into action to help him find the information. For Corbin-Sapaugh, one's identity is incredibly important and she believes that one of the best things that one can do is learn about one's roots. She noted that it was quite rewarding for her to help her godson learn more about himself and develop his identity.

This is just one of many stories that illustrate why events such as the Global Expo are enriching for the students of UHCL. Here is to celebrating each and every Hawk and all of the cultures in this university community.



# Through My EYES

Story by Trish Zalesak & Photos by Scott Scarborough

**2016** was my first year to participate in the Global Expo. I represented the Czech Republic, my family's home country. Sharing my culture is not something I usually do, but I had a lot of fun sharing

my family's traditions, language and my cultural experiences with others. I especially enjoyed watching people try to pronounce the words in my Czech/English dictionary and helping them when needed.



I appreciated having the opportunity to talk to so many people. Some were familiar with my culture, and others were not. It was an amazing experience to talk to someone who was familiar with a country and culture that means a lot to me.

One conversation that especially stood out was with a woman whose family is also Czech.

She was so excited about my booth and took pictures of nearly every page in my cultural guidebook. She said that the recipes and stories inside took her back to her childhood. That was something I am not going to forget.

It turns out that although the Global Expo is meant to provide an opportunity for the university community to learn about the national-



ities and cultures represented at the school, the learning experience is not strictly one way. The booth operators often had opportunities to learn more about the countries they were representing as well. Some learned from their visitors, and when I took a moment to visit the India booth, a representative told me he had learned a lot of new facts about his country while doing research for the event.

Furthermore, I saw one visitor talk with a representative from a nearby booth for a long time. She definitely was not part of the booth's

scheduled staff and she obviously knew a lot about the country being represented. A little while later, I was surprised to see that when the man running the booth had to leave for a little while, he left her in charge.

The Global Expo really does have a lot to offer, both for booth operators and attendees. If you get the chance, come by the event next time and learn something new about your peers—better yet, sign up to operate a booth. I am glad I did. 🍀



# Lighting of the Letters



*Story by Eric Yanez  
Photos by Scott Scarborough*

Over the years, UHCL has been incorporating more and more traditions to help spread school spirit and unite the student body. One of those long running traditions, one that has become the favorite of many Hawks, is the annual Lighting of the Letters.

The fourth rendition of this tradition took place in November, and it proved to be the best yet. Although the event has previously been hosted by the Student Life Office, the Campus Activities Board (CAB) took the reigns this year.

Students enjoyed a nice break with some hot cocoa or apple cider before end-of-semester assignments and final exams. The event was a great way to stay connected with friends and even meet new ones amidst what can sometimes be the busiest time of the year.

Computer science major Ivan Almendariz was in agreement, saying, “My favorite part of the Lighting of the Letters was getting to help CAB [and] getting to meet new people.”

The event gave all of the attendees an opportunity to slow down and enjoy some holiday cheer. Not only that, but it made for a great photo opportunity with Hunter the Hawk.

“The Lighting of the Letters was so much fun,” said freshman behavioral science major, Esther Calderon. “I loved seeing all of the performances. It was a very festive UHCL tradition.”

One of the university organizations that helped make the atmosphere festive was the office of Orientation and New Student Programs, who gave out free finals mugs to attendees. The mugs included some goodies to help students

study for their final exams—now that is some great motivation to end the semester strong.

The Spirit Squad also did their part to spread cheer and jumped into action by delivering a performance of “Jingle Bell Rock,” reminiscent of the performance featured in the movie “Mean Girls.” The fun holiday performance met with applause that filled the grounds. The Spirit Squad was not the only group to perform, though. The music club also delivered a strong performance of a mix of holiday tunes.

Holiday cheer was all around. There was even snow on the ground—CAB creatively prepared a long sheet of black plastic liner and spread fake “snow” all over it. Students were hav-

ing a blast making snow angels and having the occasional snowball fight. This was truly a great way to bring some snow to Houston.

It was not until the end of the night, however, when it truly felt like the holiday season was upon the university. Students, faculty and staff all gathered around for the moment they were all waiting for: The lighting of the UHCL letters. The whole night led to the moment when the letters were bright and sparkling with beautiful green and blue twinkling lights. It was a truly magical way to end a wonderful semester—cheers to many more fantastic Lighting of the Letters to come. 🌿



*These Hawks enjoy the break from schoolwork by playing in the fake “snow” as the Spirit Squad prepares to perform “Jingle Bell Rock.”*



# “Reflecting/Reimagining”

*Selections from Glassell School of Art Studio School Faculty Members*

*Story by Natalia Marfil & Photos by Scott Scarborough*

Students, faculty and staff took in a colorful, thought-provoking and diverse array of paintings, jewelry pieces and sculptures as they visited the Bayou Art Gallery during the spring semester. The exhibit, entitled “Reflecting/Reimagining”, featured vibrant pieces from faculty members of the Museum of Fine Arts and Glassell School of Art Studio, enriched campus culture and piqued the interest of many passersby.

Before the exhibit was officially open to the public, UHCL hosted a preview reception to give visitors a peek at the featured works of Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak, Susan Budge, Sharon Dennard, Nathan Dube, Jeff Forster, Jan Harrell, Clara Hoag, Patrick Palmer, Mark Ponder, Christopher Wallace and Sandie Zilker. The event attracted a large crowd, with students, faculty and alumni from all walks of life mingling amongst the complimentary refreshments and beautiful artwork.



The “Reflecting/Reimagining” gallery provided its audience with an incredibly diverse collection of artwork, ranging from psychedelic drawings by Wallace and motivational videos by Ponder to abstract vases by Budge and a Breast-O-Meter by Harrell.

Contrary to the gallery’s custom of inviting the featured artist to speak at the initial reception, several Brown Bag Luncheons were hosted outside the gallery throughout the following weeks to accommodate the featured artists. Although not all of the artists attended, Budge, Dube, Forster, Harrell, Palmer and Zilker participated in the events.

The Brown Bag Luncheons each consisted of one or two artists discussing their art, taking questions and eating lunch with anybody who was willing to join them for a couple of hours. Many students and faculty stopped by in between classes, bringing along their lunch, a mind full of questions and eagerness to listen to each artist’s perspective.

Dube, who created “Safety Pin: Falling Hole,” said his inspiration came from the traffic and safety signs he saw during a semester he spent teaching abroad. These signs, Dube recalled, presented themselves as fascinating images that he had taken for granted in the United States.

“In the States, the signs feel more sterile and with no emotion or life, but in Italy they have a personality to them,” Dube said. “I really like the absurdity of some of them.”

Dube’s art has a mechanic feel to it, as can be seen in his collection of safety pins on display, arguably because he was an architecture major at the start of his college career. Furthermore, Dube’s choice of media is enamel and copper in the form of jewelry.

“Jewelry marks moments,” Dube said. “It has a life outside the body.”

Zilker, whose art also takes the form of jewelry, attended the Brown Bag Luncheon

alongside Dube. Her artwork includes “Blue Cone with Points” and is distinctively colorful, inspired by current and recurrent events. When she creates, she starts with a simple idea, image or thought.

“Sometimes you see something, and it sticks with you,” Zilker said. “Other times, you have an idea of what you want to say and start from there.”

Palmer, the painter of “Vesta,” which depicts a woman’s head that is visible from outside of the gallery, explained the concepts behind his artwork to the attendees of a Brown Bag Luncheon as well.

“The origins of my art was the human head, but when I went to Arizona State they told me that they didn’t want me working figuratively,” Palmer said. “I had to learn how to be more expressive in my paintings.”

For a while, Palmer worked on architectural pieces until he returned to Texas to re-pursue his passion for the human head. The specific works selected for the “Reflecting/Reimagining” gallery were from his “Roman Bust” series, inspired by Roman emperors and Renaissance paintings. Palmer explained how he used the Roman influence of the bust to reinterpret his own style.

“I’m still totally attracted to the head,” Palmer said. “It’s very hard to connect with a drawing or a painting of a specific person, so I abbreviate the head so it’s not a portrait of a specific girl but a portrait of an emotion or an expression.”

This is evident in the pieces displayed at the gallery, as Izuh Ikpeama, a sophomore pre-pharmacy major, noticed.

“The paintings exude a feeling of content sorrow,” Ikpeama said. “They look like they’ve been through a rough time in their past, but are ultimately okay.”

Alongside Palmer during the Brown Bag Luncheon was Budge, a sculptor whose primary media is clay and whose artistic philosophy is



inspired by Peter Voulkus, a famous ceramics artist.

“The way that Voulkus approached his work was through spontaneity, and that is what worked for me too,” Budge said. “I’ll go into my studio and start building, and it isn’t until after I finish the piece that I have to figure out what it’s about. I think that it’s a more genuine expression



for me.”

On exhibit were Budge’s “Blue Fish” and “Gray Diptych,” the latter of which she made specifically for the “Reflecting/Reimagining” gallery.

The preview reception, Brown Bag Luncheons and two-month long exhibition wonderfully showcased the artwork of a diverse group of faculty from Glassell School of Art, but the Bayou Art Gallery wanted to promote the artworks of its own faculty and community writers as well. The Writing Center, in conjunction with the art gallery, hosted Flash Fiction Reading, an event in which writers read their original works, inspired by the “Reflecting/Reimagining” gallery.

The Flash Fiction Reading featured readers were Joanna Eleftheriou, an assistant professor of literature; Dana Kroos, a local ceramics instructor and creative writer; and Adrienne Perry, a Ph.D. candidate in literature and creative writing.

Conor Bracken, the Writing Center’s assistant director, introduced each writer with a short biographical, original poem.

“It is not often you get to experience local art in person and then have our staff reinterpret that art in the form of poetry,” Bracken said. Eleftheriou’s piece, “The Oregon Trail,” was inspired by Wallace’s work of the same name and was in the point of view of a horse reminiscing on its years at war.

“My students know that I complain or resist anything that is not realism,” Eleftheriou said. “This visual art got me out of, perhaps, the illusion that my brain had about what it could do.”

Madison Coates, a literature major and student of Elefetheriou, listened attentively in the audience while her professor read poetry.

“It can be very rare to get to hear a professor read their own work,” Coates said. “I wanted to hear it read aloud and show my support.”

Eleftheriou was pleased that she had the opportunity to share her work with one of her students.

“This is beyond thrilling,” Eleftheriou said. “It is a dream come true to see my students here, appreciating the art—both literary and visual.”

Kroos wrote a short, satirical fiction piece inspired by Harell’s “Breast-O-Meter” that was entitled “Man Boobs.”

“This is an incredible project,” Kroos said. “It makes us all think differently about the world and about our own work.”

Perry followed Kroos with her original fiction piece, entitled “Classified Memo,” that was inspired by Wallace’s “Fire in the Hole.”

All three pieces, though they focused on

works of art from the same exhibition, were wildly different in almost every aspect—from themes, to diction, to content.

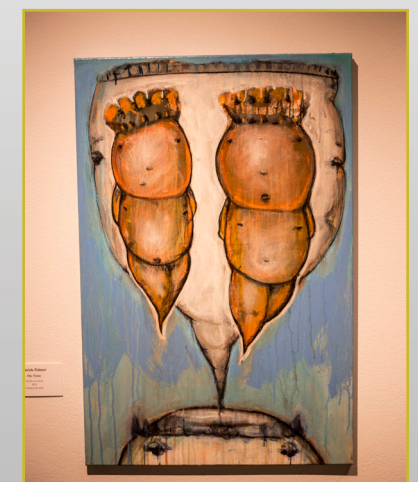
“The writers had a range of interpretations, which made the entire experience more unique than usual,” Coates said.

After the featured readers presented their works to the audience, a break was given for everyone to mingle, look at the exhibit and even quickly write a piece for the open mic that would follow.

The gallery flooded with dozens of intrigued and fascinated eyes, with different pieces sticking out to different people.

“When such a variety of art is brought together, it demonstrates a strong sense of community that the gallery can garner,” Coates said. “I really appreciate the art gallery and how fresh and lively it is every semester.”

The event continued with many students sharing their own poems and fictional pieces, as a larger crowd began to form around them. It was evident that the “Reflecting/Reimagining” gallery and Flash Fiction Reading event had been successful in bringing the UHCL community closer together and enriching its culture. 🍃







# WE WANT YOU FOR STUDENT ORGS!

Story by Trish Zalesak  
Photos by Scott Scarborough

Attending college tends to present students with many new questions to answer. To name a few, students might wonder what to major in, what classes to take and whether or not to get a job, on top of academic responsibilities.

There is also the issue of socializing, which often involves the need to make new friends. College can be a scary time, given the challenges of navigating a new environment, juggling schedules and the possibility of living away from home for the first time. Fortunately, UHCL provides many opportunities to help students address these issues. One of these opportunities is the Student Organization Expo.

Hosted every semester by the Student Life Office, the Expo provides a setting for new and returning students to learn about some of the more than 70 active organizations (generally called “orgs” for short) on campus. These organizations cover a vast range of topics. With so

many extracurricular groups available, every student is bound to find a perfect fit.

Some orgs focus on activities, including music, sports, games and cooking. Other orgs are related in one way or another to the many majors across UHCL’s four colleges, or provide spaces for people who share certain aspects of personal identity, such as national origin or religion, to come together.

Dean Burse, a senior business management major and member of Gamer’s Guild, said that the fun and friendly experience he had in his org led him to join additional orgs as well and become further involved. They have enhanced his college experience by allowing him to meet a wide range of people outside of his major and make new friends, some of which he hopes to keep in touch with long after he graduates.

Kathryn Rose, a senior information technology major, agreed with Burse. She explained that her degree plan requires her to spend a lot

of time in the Delta Building, far away from the heart of campus life. By taking part in a student org she found at the Expo, she has been able to make new friends and take up an active role in the UHCL community.

In addition to bringing people together, student orgs can reduce boredom and stress by providing a support system, aiding students in their studies, providing networking opportunities and exposing students to new perspectives.

Cheyenne Valdez, a freshman physics major and a member of the Chemistry Club, said that her time in the UHCL club and a similar club at her high school helped to expand her worldview by enhancing her understanding of the universe around her. The clubs also helped nurture her passion for science. Someday, she hopes to become an astrophysicist and study black holes and dark matter.

Leadership experience is another perk that is offered by student orgs. While it may seem scary to be in a leadership role, it is an important experience for college students. Not only do orgs need leaders in order to function, but a leadership role looks great on a résumé.

“[W]e started [InterVarsity Christian Fellowship] from scratch,” explained Michele Gibson, a junior communication major and vice-president for the org. “I became an officer mainly because we needed one, and the more involved that I got and the more work that I put



All kinds of gaming figures decorated the UHCL E-Sports booth to entice attendees of the spring student organization expo.



Kat and Justin play some tunes at the Music Club booth to show attendees what they are all about.





*Nhee Vang of the Office of Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion was thinking hard about his next move.*

into it, I really just enjoyed being an officer. Not only was I learning more about the Bible and everything that the club was about, but I was also gaining a lot of good leadership skills and everything, [which is] something that's really good to have for the future."

"Holding an officer position means you have another responsibility," said Victoria Duffoo, a senior communication major and leadership veteran. "It's a blessing, but it definitely takes work. It's accountability, I think. It isn't only yourself that you're counting on, other people are [also] counting on you, so it definitely changes your commitments, and you have to be fully committed. You have to make time for it, and it also teaches you to prioritize."

Finding the right org may seem like a bit

of a challenge. Fortunately, that is why the Student Organization Expo happens every semester. It gives students a regular chance to explore the different orgs and ask the members questions.

Not all orgs are structured in the same way, though. They have different levels of participation opportunities and goals. Although one student might have a great time in one org, another student may or may not feel the same way. So, what should students keep in mind when looking for an org that suits their needs and tastes?

"I think the one biggest thing that you [should] look for when joining a new org is 'does it relate to one of your interests' or 'does it relate to the career path you're going towards,'" Gibson said. "You don't want to join a dentist club [if] you hate teeth or you don't want to be a dentist.

Join a club because it focuses on the passion you want to pursue and/or it focuses on the career path that you're pursuing."

Rose explained that when it comes to looking for new clubs, she looks for groups that are motivated by what they do. She said that she has been part of some groups in the past that seemed exciting, but once she joined, she felt that she was not really doing anything.

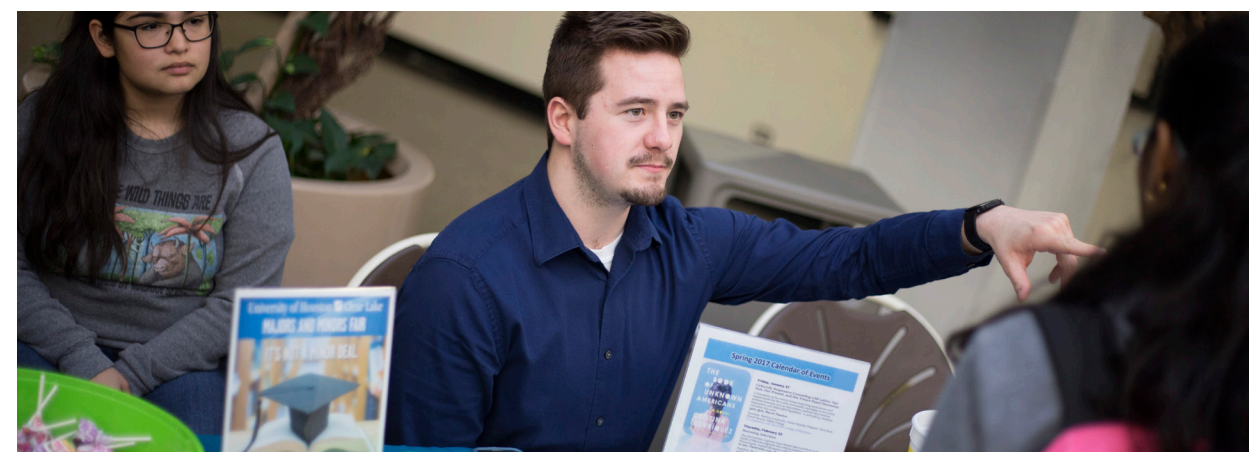
"In the Music Club, we have things all the time and we're really involved in other clubs... [W]e played at a [Campus Activities Board] event last semester and a NASA luncheon," Rose continued. "It's pretty cool! We actually get to do a lot of fun stuff."

For her last bit of advice on the subject, Gibson encouraged students to attend the Stu-

dent Organization Expo. She explained that it is a good idea to take as many fliers as possible, because students cannot always make it to organization meetings. Taking a lot of fliers will make it easier to figure out which meetings can be attended. She stressed the importance of getting an org's contact information, so students can stay on top of the social events they may have planned.

Orgs are a fabulous asset to the university, and an opportunity that students should not miss. They have so much to offer.

"I think overall my experience with organizations has just tremendously developed my leadership ability and it's given me community here on campus," Duffoo said. "It's just given me opportunity to grow."



*Tyler Hall provides a visitor with information about the Student Orientation group.*



# Study PAWS

Story by Natalia Marfil  
Photos by Scott Scarborough

During the March mid-term season, the Alfred R. Neumann Library hosted one of its most successful events of the semester: Study PAWS. The purpose of the event was to give students the opportunity to pet away their worry and stress by interacting with registered therapy dogs.

The Neumann Library website says: “Studies have shown that interacting with an unknown dog for just five minutes can reliably lower blood pressure and stress-related hormones, slow down heart rate, release tension from muscles and regulate breathing.”

The event was held on the main floor of the library in three to four study rooms, each with about three dogs. Students were encouraged to share posts of the event on social media and to give praise to

their favorite dogs. Large construction paper hung on the wall with different categories listed on it, such as “Best Eyes” and “Best Dressed.” Students were able to write down which dog they thought fit the category the best. At the end of the day, the trainers were able to see how their dogs did (and hopefully give them some extra treats).

By partnering with Faithful Friends, a group of volunteer therapy dogs and trainers, the library hosted about 15 different dogs of a wide variety of sizes, breeds and personalities. Among them was Humphrey, a beautiful two-year-old Border Collie, who spent the entire time giving everyone dog kisses.

Kathy Pritchard, Humphrey’s trainer, explained how the dogs became registered therapy dogs. Pritchard reported that dogs need to train and

pass a series of assessments to test their temperament and their abilities to walk past food and calmly interact with strangers. With this certification, Humphrey, and other dogs like him, can volunteer at a variety of events. For example, Humphrey regularly volunteers at Devereux, a national behavioral healthcare provider.

“Humphrey helps kids with one hour of dog play a week,” Pritchard said. “He also helps those who suffer from drug addiction, people in retirement homes and at schools with kids who don’t read well.”

Two other crowd favorites at the event were husky brother, Newman, and sister, Denali.

“Denali is very active and vocal at home,” trainer Julie Diall said. “But she knows when it’s time to work and is completely different on the job.”

Five-year-old Denali proved this by laying completely still and quiet as various students hovered around her, showering her with love.

Newman, who is oftentimes the unanimous winner of the “Best Eyes” category, also received his share of praise and attention.

“Newman is super friendly and wants to meet everyone,” Jordan Mueller, a biology major, said. “He always gets excited when people walk in – especially girls! He’s such a flirt.”

Other volunteer dogs present at the event included Copper, a 4-year-old, huge, white, extra-fluffy, hypoallergenic Labradoodle.

“He should definitely win the ‘Fluffiest’ category,” Mueller said. “It felt like petting a cloud.”

Small dogs were also present, including Junie B., a Terrier mix, and Rusty, a Poodle mix.

Junie B. impressed the crowd by performing a series of tricks, including solving a puzzle and dancing for treats. Rusty, who is an older dog of 10 years, was possibly the tiniest of all. He wore a vibrant tie that won him first place in the “Best Dressed” category.

“I really love Rusty! He’s precious,” Cheyenne Valdez, a physics major, said. “He looked like a little teddy bear.”

Valdez only attended the first day of the event, but made sure to FaceTime Mueller so that she could still see the dogs on the second day.

“It’s my favorite event on campus. I go to it every time, so I already know most of the dogs,” Val-

dez said. “I had already gone home to study, but I still wanted to see them.”

It is clear that the connections that Mueller, Valdez and other students form with the dogs are incredibly helpful with reducing the students’ stress and improving their mood. Study PAWS is one of the events that students look forward to the most: Every time the event comes around, the library is filled with students who want to take a break and re-charge so that they can approach their exams with the best chance for success. The popularity of the events ensures that the tradition will continue during both mid-terms and finals each semester.

The Neumann Library staff sure does know how to take care of their Hawks! 🦅



*Humphrey and Kenya giving UHCL communications major Kate Gaddis all of their attention.*





# CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

*Story by Trish Zalesak and Natalia Marfil  
Photos by Kavya Erla*

Houston is known for being one of the most diverse cities in the United States, and UHCL certainly celebrates that. On a typical day at the university, students, faculty and staff will mix and mingle with others from many nationalities, religions and cultures that are different from their own. Additionally, every spring, the office of Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (SDEI) celebrates this diversity by hosting the Cultural Extravaganza, an evening dedicated to celebrating what makes every person unique and draws us all together.

"I love letting people [know] about what [Egyptian] culture is and who we are, also, just getting to share this night with everyone else," said Sandy Samaan, a biology major. "It's one thing to watch and a whole other thing to actually partake in it and exhibit your own strengths and talents."

Students and visitors alike took to the stage in the packed Bayou Theater to showcase dances, stories and songs from India, the United States, Vietnam, West Africa, Saudi Arabia and Japan.

"Last year I attended the Cultural Extravaganza, and I liked it very much," said Manoj Bathini, a graduate student in engineering management and performer in this year's Cultural Extravaganza. "From the start of my master's program, I have seen so many shows on stage [at] UHCL, so I was very inspired by that. I wanted to be a part of this event, so I worked hard to come onto the stage with a dance performance."

Among the performances in this year's line up were acts featuring Bollywood fusion music and dances. Other performances included a drum solo, a dance from Saudi Arabia, hip-hop dances, a piano performance, stand-up comedy, blues music and dances from West Africa.

"We [performed a] song that comes from a traditional tale of our nation," said Dat Phung, a

member of the Vietnamese Student Association, regarding the group's "Bong Bong Bang Bang" performance. "It tells the story of a Vietnamese Cinderella...[t]he pictures of the characters on our clothes came from a very popular comic book in Vietnam. This [was] our first time doing Cultural Extravaganza. I wanted to introduce our culture to everyone in this school to make them know that we are here."

The annual Cultural Walk followed the main show as students paraded across the stage, proudly representing their countries and carrying their flags. The flags of the different nations were then followed by the peace flag.

"The Cultural Walk represents everyone on campus and the diversity of the students," said Erica Rae Bermea, the representative for Spain in the Cultural Walk. "At the end of the Cultural Walk, the peace flag comes out, kind of uniting everyone that's joining the Cultural Walk that represents UHCL. We're technically all one here at the university."

Special guests from Kaminari Taiko Houston, led by Natalie Hudson, closed the show with a literal bang, sending the powerful and lively sounds of Japanese drums reverberating throughout the theater.

"We're such a multicultural university," Samaan said. "There are so many people here who have such a great story to them and have such a great background, and we don't really know a lot about it until we see stuff like this. We interact with these people on a daily basis, but I don't think we always know what their culture is. Even though this is just one night, it's definitely a good insight into who they are and their music and their dances. It's entertaining, of course, so why not have more stuff like this on campus?"







# The 28th Annual Chili Cook-Off

Story by Kristin Boyd, Natalia Marfil, Eric Yanez and Trish Zalesak  
Photos by Scott Scarborough and courtesy of the Student Life Office

The annual Chili Cook-Off has become a truly enjoyable way to close out the school year by bringing together all the members of the UHCL community to enjoy a fun-filled day and, of course, eat some delicious chili.

Teams competed for the recognition of having the best chili at UHCL, which required months of planning. When the big day finally arrived, the teams began to set up four hours before the event was scheduled to start, all to give their visitors the best chili-eating experience possible.

Each team chose a fun theme for their booth that added some extra flair to the event, including superheroes, Hollywood and baseball. Madison Stults, an environmental science major, was part of the Hawk Leadership Institute (HLI) booth and dressed as a bright green alien to bring their theme of Area 51 to life. The Alumni Association also went to great lengths to showcase their theme of firefighters by bringing along a real fire truck.

"I thought it was cool to see so many people involved in a school event," said Kaitlyn Coughlin,

a biology major. "Everyone seemed pretty spirited about it. My favorite theme was the alien one because I'm a freak who's obsessed with 'The X-Files' and everything alien. It was also exciting because it had nothing to do with chili, which made it more interesting."

Coughlin said she tried three different chili recipes, and she thought the Alumni Association had the best one.

Nevertheless, it was the UHCL Dance Fusion team that ended the day with the top prize for their chili by winning both the judged and the popular vote for their chili.

Although they missed first place, Stults said that the HLI team finished the day victoriously. Not only did they win the Best Spirit prize (by both judged and popular vote), but they were also successful in deepening their friendships as they prepared for and participated in the event.


The great thing about the Chili Cook-Off is that it is so much more than a friendly cooking competition. This year's event featured a rock-climbing



The UHCL Dance Fusion team handed out some tasty chili.

wall, bounce houses, volleyball, a giant inflatable slide, bingo, a selfie contest, special performances from campus organizations and more.

Events like these are a must-go for Hawks who want to let loose and shake their tail feathers before the semester ends. There was even a special cake at the event to celebrate Hunter's fourth birthday.

With all the music, laughter and intoxicating aromas, the atmosphere was incredibly uplifting. The Chili Cook-Off was an amazing way to bring the UHCL community close together and bid adieu to the spring semester. (And with free admission, it would be insane to pass this event up). 





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# “Pokémon GO”

Story and photos by Eric Yanez

*What took the world by storm during the summer of 2016? Was it a bird? Was it a plane? No, it was Pokémon GO!*



“Pokémon GO” is a mobile game that is part of the Pokémon franchise, which also includes a TV show and various Nintendo video games. The product of a partnership between Niantic and Nintendo, this game is the ultimate Pokémon trainer mobile application.

The main objective of the game is to CATCH ‘EM ALL, which is a timeless slogan of the franchise. The slogan refers to catching all of the Pokémon—or ‘pocket monsters’—that a trainer can find. Until the spring of 2017, “Pokémon GO” only featured the 151 (some not yet released)

Pokémon from generation one. Now, the game also includes the 100 Pokémon of generation two. However, with seven generations of Pokémon in total, trainers will certainly be seeing even more new Pokémon introduced into the game every so often. Nonetheless, this gives trainers about 251 Pokémon to catch for now—and that is a lot of Pokémon!

“It’s just fun,” said student Nereida Tanori about the game. “I love going out to play with my brothers and see[ing] what new Pokémon we [can] find.”

It is always exciting to see what is out there during your latest Pokémon excursion. However, playing “Pokémon GO” also requires more patience than one might think. Many features of the

game involve accumulating a certain number of steps (literal, physical steps, just like accumulating steps for a Fitbit or similar device). Trainers walk for miles to hatch eggs and help their Pokémon ‘buddy’ find candy, which is needed for Pokémon to grow to higher levels. Even more walking is involved in finding Pokémon, as trainers travel anywhere and everywhere in the physical world to find them. Some Pokémon are more rare than others, which means that trainers may have to travel a greater distance to find certain types of Pokémon. For example, although Pidgey (i.e., a small bird Pokémon) is fairly common, others such as Lapras (i.e., a large water-ice Pokémon that resembles the mythical Loch Ness Monster) and Kangaskhan (i.e., a large kangaroo-like Pokémon) are very rarely found in the wild. In fact, Kangaskhan is reportedly only found in Australia.

The game uses a GPS approach and involves visiting well-known landmarks that act as “PokéStops” where trainers can replenish needed items like Poké Balls (i.e., items used to catch Pokémon) and potions (i.e., items used to heal Pokémon). Trainers also join one of three teams and can work together to battle Pokémon that are left in gyms by trainers of opposing teams and then claim the gym as their own. The three teams to choose from include the powerful Valor, the mysterious Mystic and the analytic Instinct. Gyms are specific locations (for example, the UHCL sign in between the Bayou Building and the Student Services and Classroom Building) at which trainers can leave Pokémon to guard the gym for their respective team.

On top of all of this, another aspect of the game includes evolving Pokémon. Most of the

Pokémon in the game can grow into new evolutions—which can be thought of as older versions of the Pokémon. For example, a ‘baby’ Charmander can first transform into a ‘teenaged’ Charmeleon, which can then evolve into an ‘adult’ Charizard. Through the process of evolution, Pokémon not only experience physical changes (e.g., once a Charmeleon involves into Charizard, it grows wings), but they also develop new features as well, such as more advanced attacks and skills.

To evolve Pokémon, trainers must have a certain amount of candy (which can be earned by catching a certain Pokémon, or by walking with your Pokémon buddy) and stardust (which can be earned by catching Pokémon, winning battles, or visiting “PokéStops”). The catch is that it can take a while to evolve some Pokémon. For example, it takes 25 candy to evolve a Charmander into a Charmeleon, and then another 100 candy to evolve a Charmeleon into a Charizard—better start feeding your Charmander as soon as possible!

With all of the different features that it has, “Pokémon GO” is a certainly a complicated game to learn for many.

In fact, student Guadalupe Siella shared, “It was hard for me to get into the game at first, but I soon got the hang of it. It was somewhat hyped up, but overall still enjoyable.”

On the whole, the game has been well-received by every age group, from children and adolescents to middle-aged adults and older adults. It seems like everyone has become enamored by the Pokémon craze. Contrary to what some might think, widespread participation in the game is not a bad thing. Some companies have already found evidence to suggest that playing the game has increased the amount of walking and jogging that players are engaging in. Results of a study by Microsoft and Stanford University suggest that playing “Pokémon GO” can even make you live longer. All it takes is for one to simply open the app and get started. Before you know it, you have already walked a great distance without realizing it.

The app has a unique ability to blend reality with the virtual world (called augmented reality) such that it gives a new meaning to “playing outside.”

It seems that, during the fall (especially since the start of school for many players), “Pokémon GO” has lost some of its captivated audience. However, the mobile app is still undergoing updates to improve the quality of the game for trainers. One of the most notable of these updates includes the introduction of a buddy system and the release of



new Pokémon. Now, trainers can choose their favorite Pokémon buddy to walk alongside them in the game. These buddies can collect candy as they travel a certain distance, allowing them to level up and evolve. For example, it only takes one kilometer to find a candy for Pikachu! 🍌

*Keep on walking to catch ‘em all!*



# “Pokémon GO”

## A Tour of the PokéStops of UHCL!

Story and photos by Kristin Boyd

*The introduction of “Pokémon Go” to UHCL students has shed some light on areas around campus that students may not know much about yet play an important role in the history of the university.*



**The Veteran's Bell:** Students can find this stop near Suite 1604 of the Bayou Building, which is where the Veteran's Bell is kept on permanent display in the Office of the University Advancement. As the name suggests, the bell is dedicated to veterans as a representation of all that they have done and sacrificed for this country and every person in it. Every year, the bell is rung on the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day, of the eleventh month, in remembrance.



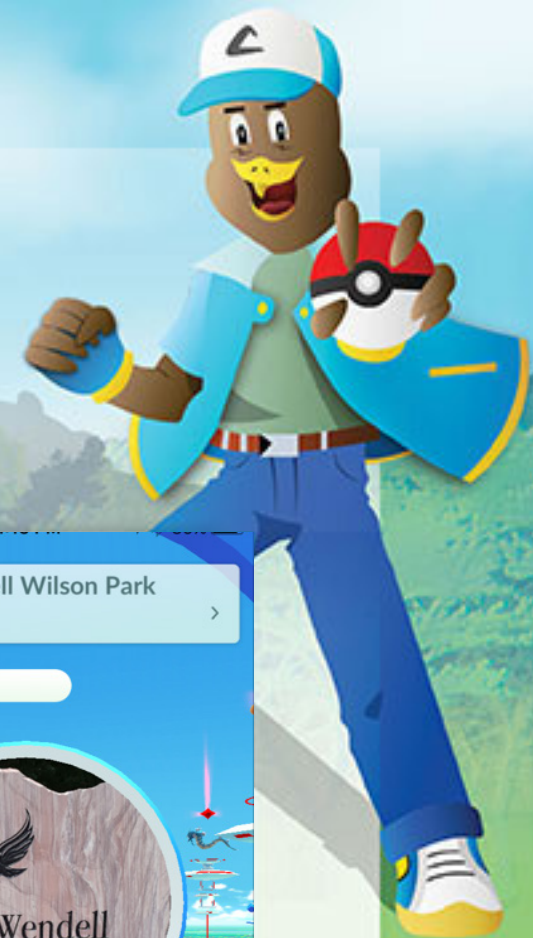
**The Distinguished Alumni Fountain:** This stop is located in the Alumni Plaza area between the Bayou Building and the Student Services and Classroom Building. The Alumni Plaza was dedicated in 2006 and, in addition to the Alumni Fountain, includes the Distinguished Alumni Wall, inscribed on which are the names of recipients of UHCL's Distinguished Alumni Award.



**“Spiritus Mundi”:** Students can pick up some items by the “Spiritus Mundi” sculpture by the front entrance to the Bayou Building. It was installed in 1977 under the supervision of the Spanish sculptor Pablo Serrano. The statue was named “Spiritus Mundi,” which means spirit of the world, by Alfred Neumann, UHCL's founding chancellor.



**Pat and Wendell Wilson Park:** The Pat and Wendell Wilson Park, just south of the Bayou Building, is home to yet another PokéStop. The park was named for Associate Professor Emeritus Patricia Potter Wilson of the UHCL College of Education and Captain Wendell M. Wilson, a former U.S. Air Force serviceman and pilot, who have supported UHCL for decades. 🖋️





# Spirit Squad



*The Spirit Squad entertained attendees with a spectacular performance.*

Student organization fairs are often bustling with students going every which way to find their niche in a group to which they can belong. This year's UHCL Student Organization Expo did not disappoint. Not only were there booths upon booths at which students could learn about the many different opportunities that the university offers for student involvement, but the atrium was also rocking with music, the enticing aroma of freshly popped popcorn filled the air and attendees of the Expo were enjoying a great array of refreshments.

One of the organizations of particular interest this year was the newly-formed Spirit Squad. This spirited group made their debut at the Welcome Back Bash and immediately captured the attention of many of their peers as they enthusiastically waved their pom poms, sported their crisp uniforms and spread their school spirit.

"It was a big deal," said Autumn Mason, founder and captain of the Spirit Squad. "We got a great response from people, so we were super excited."

As a previous cheerleader at her high school, Mason reported that she founded the group because she felt like "something was missing" at UHCL, where she did not have that same outlet for fun, athleticism and campus involvement.

She further explained that her vision for the Spirit Squad was for it to be "a way to build school spirit and community."

Mason also addressed the elephant in the room: What activities do the Spirit Squad members take part in at UHCL, where there are no major sports teams to cheer for?

"We actually get that question a lot," Mason said, laughing. "It is a shift in how people think about the stereotypical cheerleader. We are normal people. We are students, family members and mothers. [We are] breaking the barrier of the 'stupid cheerleader'."

Mason further describes this shift as going from "cheering on the boys" to "cheering on going to school and getting a better education."

In addition to supporting their peers as they strive to reach their educational goals, the Spirit Squad focuses heavily on community volunteerism and philanthropy. Many members of the Spirit Squad are education majors, so the group does a lot of work with children. For instance, the group worked with and performed for special needs children at the Baytown Special Rodeo.

"It is incredibly rewarding when we can make their experience really great," said Mason.

The Spirit Squad also visits chemotherapy patients at nearby hospitals to cheer them on and perform for them, and volunteers at nursing homes to pamper the residents.

For the Spirit Squad, the goal is to instill spirit wherever and however they can, and lift others up so that they can achieve their dreams and live their lives to the fullest. Thus far, the Spirit Squad has been well-received by the members' fellow Hawks and have loved the opportunity to show their support for their peers and spread their passion for education throughout the university.

The Spirit Squad looks forward to continuing to be highly visible in the UHCL community and spreading their contagious school spirit at many events throughout each semester. Go Hawks! 🦅



# Lead Like a HAWK

Story by Natalia Marfil

Photos courtesy of UHCL Music Club, SLICE and CAB

There is no doubt that student leadership is prevalent on the UHCL campus. Students may not realize it, but they see glimpses of it every day, from student-led organizations to student-facilitated events. Colorful, hard-to-miss flyers decorate the hallways, depicting the active presence of our student body. Opportunities for students to discover, exercise and enhance their leadership skills are plentiful at UHCL. From the moment they set foot on campus, students are met by a vast array of student leaders (e.g., orientation leaders, student organization officers, student workers and SLICE members, to name a few), and by the

encouragement of faculty and staff to become a part of the leadership community.

One of the best and most fun ways to become involved on campus is through a student organization. Entirely student-led, these organizations can serve as social spaces and opportunities for leadership development.

Madison Stults, an environmental science major and president of the UHCL Music Club, developed her organization because she wanted to give music lovers on campus their own space for creative expression and musical appreciation.

“When I came on campus there were no music programs or orgs,” Stults said. “One of

my classmates and I started Music Club to create that space. We sensed a void, so we filled it.”

Along the way, Stults faced some of her first challenges as a leader, but she ultimately brought the organization closer because of it.

“Usually any challenge you face as a leader can be solved by uniting your team with a common goal,” Stults said. “After our first semester, we were wondering what was next. People start-

ed to lose interest and our membership declined. We regrouped over winter break and decided how we wanted to proceed as Music Club within the UHCL community. We came to the decision of holding our own concert to showcase all of our talents.”

Now, Stults is a peer mentor for the Hawk Leadership Institute, an orientation leader and an academic tutor.

*“The best thing about being a leader is the fulfillment,” Stults said. “I think that [as] a leader, you uncover untapped potential in yourself because of the confidence you acquire.”*

Stults believes that you have to be comfortable in your own skin to be a leader. Once you have achieved that, you can begin exploring who you are as a leader through campus involvement. The newly-established Campus Activities Board (CAB) is often mistaken as a student organization because of its active involvement in the betterment of UHCL’s student life. CAB regularly hosts fun and interactive events for students, ranging from volleyball games to outdoor movies. What most students do not realize, however, is the hard work that goes in behind the scenes to make these events happen.

Christos Patelis, an accounting major and vice president of CAB, helps promote, develop and plan these events, so they run as smoothly as possible and are as successful as they can be. Although this job is not easy and Patelis often encounters issues within his own team members, he is aware of the benefits of his position.

“Leadership positions provide students with an outlet through which they can practice working in a team setting,” Patelis said. “For example, CAB has helped me learn how to effectively resolve conflict between my peers.”

CAB is made up of an e-board, committee chairs, committee vice chairs and general members—all of which are students. Regardless of position, CAB is structured so that every member can grow within their own committee as well as the overall board.

Katelynn Rivardo, a special education major and the secretary of CAB, is ready to take a

step up in leadership by running for CAB Vice President.

“Most people think the secretary only deals with minutes, attendance and paperwork. Since this was the first year of CAB, my role was expanded a little more,” Rivardo said. “I had to coordinate with many different people about logistics of events and help resolve challenges they faced.”

Taking on leadership roles means taking on a set of responsibilities that oftentimes are accompanied by some challenges.

“I had to learn to separate between friendship and the organization,” Rivardo said. “Sometimes I had to be the bad guy and tell people things they didn’t want to hear. It can be very difficult to do those things in general, but especially with friends.”

These difficulties, however, are a big part of why taking on leadership roles is so beneficial to the individual.

“CAB has really helped me to grow and be more respected as a leader,” Rivardo said. “It’s also awesome to see the community that we are helping to build at UHCL. I want to continue contributing to CAB, and I like the vice president role of working more closely with the committees.”

It is not uncommon for student organization officers to also take on a number of other leadership roles on campus. For example, Justin Murphy, a communication major, is Music Club’s SGA Representative, CAB’s Recreation



Chair and a peer mentor for UHCL's First Year Seminar. Being a peer mentor is similar to being a teacher's assistant in that students in this role help the professor throughout the semester by scoring papers and facilitating class discussion. However, there is more to it. Being a peer mentor means taking on a big sibling role to, usually incoming, students.

*"Servant leadership is the most democratic way of leadership," Murphy said. "It's kind of a way of leading by example."*

There are many different leadership styles that students bring to UHCL.

"I think that who someone is determines their leadership style. For example, one of my strengths is empathy, so it is hard for me to give criticism because I do not want to hurt the person's feelings," Stults said. "But you can imagine, in Music Club, preparing for a huge concert, you would have to give honest feedback, so I find my own way to redirect their efforts but also take into account how they feel."

For those students who want to explore their own leadership style, Student Leadership, Involvement and Community Engagement (SLICE) is a program to consider becoming involved with. SLICE focuses directly on the development of leadership potential and self-efficacy in UHCL students, through workshops, conferences and retreats.

Yolanda Barnes, the assistant director of SLICE, helps students understand what leadership means for them by working specifically around leadership philosophy and style. SLICE

*"People who take initiative, who are open to have conversations about their social identities and how that impacts their leadership, who want to contribute back to their campus community, and who are critical thinkers are the kinds of people that I look for," Barnes said.*

One of the SLICE programs that Barnes spearheads is the Hawk Leadership Institute (HLI), an elite learning community of leaders. Through this program, many incoming students have found themselves in leadership positions they never thought they would feel comfortable

"Being a peer mentor has helped me develop my leadership skills," Murphy said. "It [has] allowed me to apply the theories behind servant leadership."

Servant leadership is the philosophy in which it is believed that a leader should share their power and put their people's needs first.

also focuses on community engagement and service by helping students become connected with and give back to their community.

Barnes points out that many events on campus are staff-led, rather than student-led, possibly because of what the on-campus culture was like before it became a four-year institution.

"One thing that I've started to do and hopefully [will] continue to do moving forward is creating opportunities for students to lead different initiatives and programs," Barnes said. "I feel like once a student feels empowered to contribute to their campus community it will encourage them to want to stay engaged and involved, and even want to graduate from here."

Barnes interacts with many students throughout the semester, some of whom are growing leaders and some of whom may not yet be aware of their potential. As part of her job, Barnes encourages these students to pursue leadership, by providing them with the opportunities to foster that hidden quality.

pursuing.

"I joined HLI in wanting to develop my leadership skills, and I feel that I have grown as a leader and gained the confidence in taking on leadership positions that I once thought I couldn't do" Anne Ngo, a literature major, said.

"Being a part of HLI has encouraged me to get out of my comfort zone and take on roles that may scare me."

Now, Ngo is the project manager for the year-long service project with the HLI Second-Years. This year's service project was at Bay Area Pet Adoptions. The Second-Year Service Project was a great opportunity to practice leadership skills in a real-life scenario. Second-Year members visited the shelter at least twice a month and focused on ways to better the shelter's presence in the community and improve the animals' standard of living. This was done through establishing a social media presence, building a sign, constructing a path to prevent mud when it rains

*"I am the person I am today because of the leadership experiences that I had as a student," Barnes said. "My involvement on campus, where I was challenged and had critical feedback about who I was as a leader, was very helpful."*

Barnes, whose own career path changed from going into medical school to going into higher education, is very passionate about ensuring that UHCL students have the opportunities to grow and discover themselves as she did during her college experience.

and repairing the animals' play area.

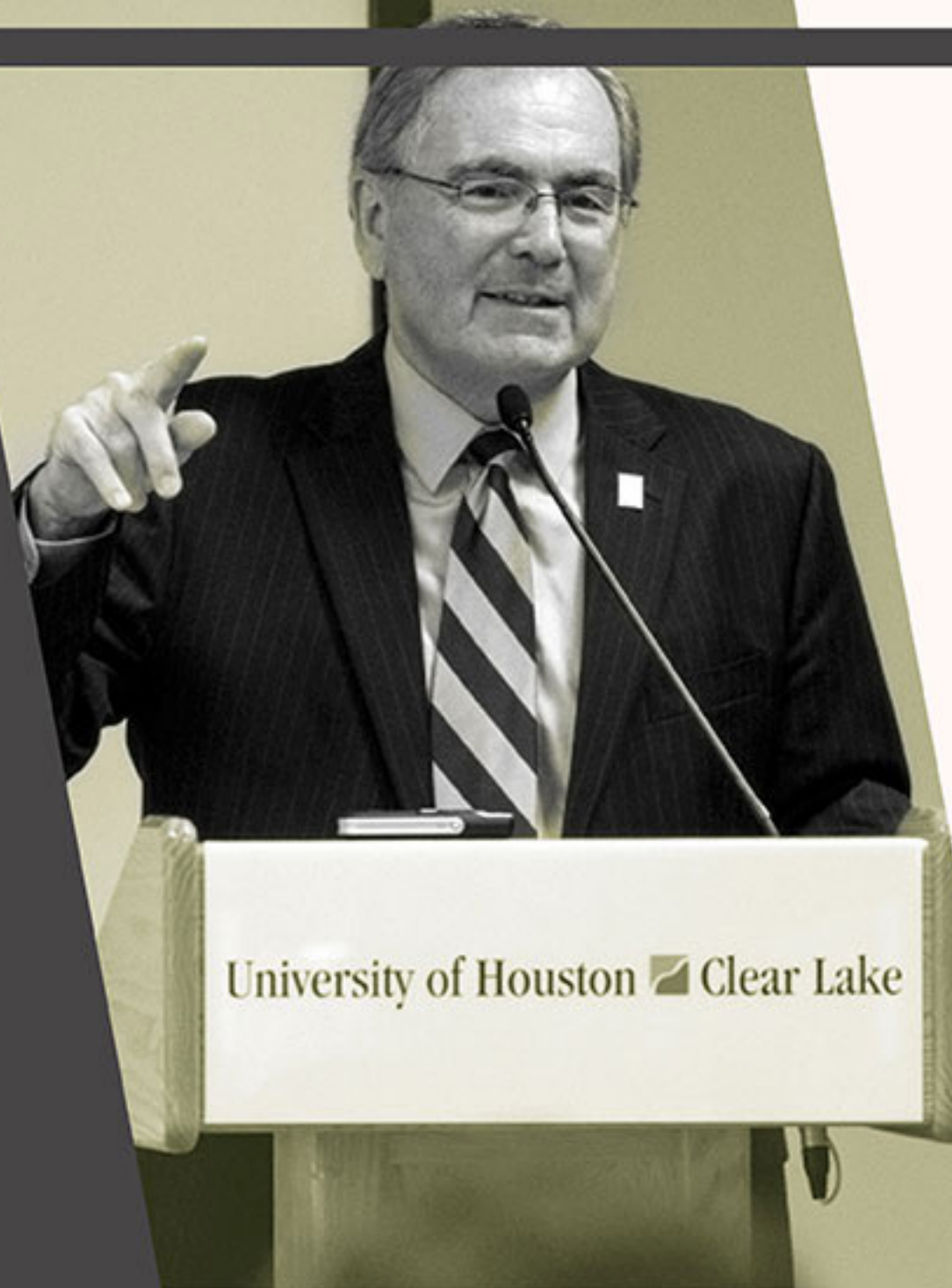
SLICE also provides similar opportunities for non-HLI students. For example, every year, SLICE hosts their Day of Service, an event in which students give back to the community through volunteering. During the Day of Service, students are able to partake in one of many projects, which range from organizing food at Galveston County Food Bank to doing garden-work at Armand Bayou Nature Center.

Of course, students do not have to wait until the Day of Service to give back to their community. SLICE encourages everyone to become involved in community service and leadership opportunities all year, especially on campus.

"For me, the reason why I think student [engagement] in leadership is so important is because of the process," Barnes said. "All the learning, the challenge and the frustrations that you have leading up to that end goal is the beauty of it."







*A*fter 22 years of service as the president of UHCL, William Staples is retiring in August 2017.

Although he grew up in Iowa, Staples earned a doctoral degree at the University of Houston. He returned to Iowa to teach at his undergraduate alma mater, but when he “heard of an opening at what was then called University of Houston at Clear Lake City,” he felt compelled to return to Texas as a faculty member in the UHCL business school in 1979. “I thought it was a good opportunity to be at UH-Clear Lake City at that time,” he said, explaining that the business school was very young and trying to get accredited (which it did in 1981). “I enjoyed being in Texas...while I was earning my PhD. Now, I’ve been here 38 years.”

Regarding the strides the university has made during his presidency, Staples stressed that all accomplishments were made “by us, the university” and emphasized the importance of working together to make significant breakthroughs.

“The opening of the university in 1974 will always be the most significant accomplishment,” Staples said.

He cited the transition from UHCL being an upper-level to a four-year institution as the second major accomplishment in the university’s history.

“It was a major undertaking,” he noted, explaining that UHCL received legislative approval for the change in 2011 and then two and a half years of planning and implementation occurred before the first freshman and sophomore classes began in 2014. “Without a doubt, that was a major accomplishment.”

In addition to this achievement, Staples’ presidency has made its mark through: the establishment of the first doctoral program in 2007 (as of fall 2016, this number has grown to three), the opening of the Pearland campus in 2010, the addition of the healthcare administration program in the college of business and the groundbreaking on the new STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) building and recreation and wellness center.

Before Staples’ retirement is effective in August, he will also see through the groundbreaking of student housing at the UHCL main campus and a health sciences and classroom building at the Pearland campus.

“Collectively, [these projects are worth] \$150 million and 350,000 square feet of space. We’ve never done anything like that [before]. It will make the campus really different, I think,” Staples said.

As a president who always kept the best interests of his students at heart, Staples wanted to express how proud he is of all the Hawks who earn a college degree.

“For the students who have persevered, semester after semester, some who’ve had to work and go to school at the same time...students who are maybe the first person in their family to go to college...students who’ve come back, I recognize those students and congratulate them for their determination and drive to get a degree, because it’s not easy,” Staples said.

Moving forward, Staples advises students to “do the best you can. Usually when you do the best you can in a given job, other opportunities will come along, oftentimes when you don’t expect them.”

# *Thank You,* PRESIDENT *Staples*

*Story by Kristin Boyd  
Photos courtesy of the Office of Communications  
and the Signal*



*Glen Houston, UHCL's Interim Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dennis Paul, District 129 Representative; William A. Staples, UHCL President; Zbigniew Czajkiewicz, UHCL Dean of the College of Science and Engineering; and Bryan Bogle, chair-elect of the Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce pose for a photo during the ground-breaking ceremony.*



He also wants students to remember the importance of life-long learning.

“Never stop learning,” Staples said. “I don’t care what age you are. There is always something to learn. Just because you get a...degree...your learning doesn’t stop. I am still learning every day.”

Staples stated that something that was helpful to him throughout his academic and professional career was having a mentor (or several), “somebody who’s already been there and done that.” The chairman of Staples’ undergraduate program encouraged him to earn a master’s degree. Then, his research supervisor encouraged him to earn a doctoral degree. Staples shared that he never expected to earn a master’s degree, let alone a doctoral degree, but “it was these different people along the way that encouraged [him] to do that... I’m not sure I would have done it [without their encouragement].”

In addition to achieving academic and career success, Staples wants students to recognize the importance of balance in their lives.

“If you don’t have...balance, I think that you eventually get burnt out,” Staples said.

Staples emphasized that building relationships is important that balance will come naturally to those who pursue their passions. The key is to not wait for something to happen, but to work to make things happen.

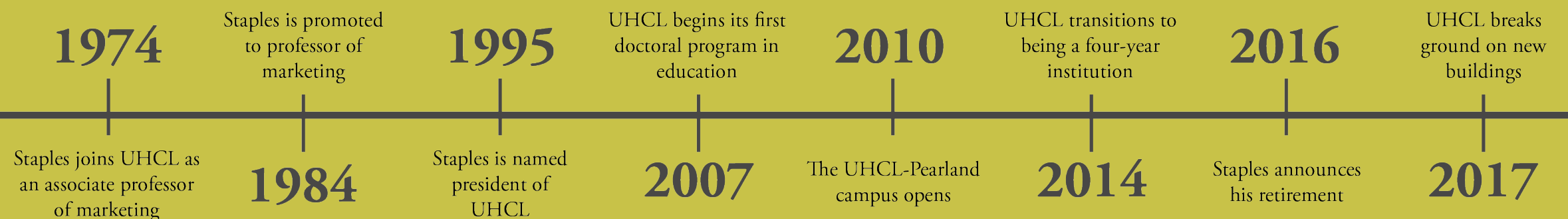
“Life is shorter than you think. Our parents always tell us, or mine told me, [that] time will go by fast. Well, it does,” Staples said, emphasizing the importance of spending time on something that one enjoys. “I can’t imagine getting up for 30 or 40 years and going to a job that I hated.”

Staples hopes that all of the students of UHCL will succeed in their endeavors and lead a life as fulfilling as he feels that his has been.

“This is my 38<sup>th</sup> year at the university and my 22<sup>nd</sup> year as president,” Staples said. “I am so thankful...to be able to do what I’ve done over the course of my life. It has truly been a privilege and an honor to serve as president of the university. That just doesn’t happen.”

“I have no regrets,” President Staples added. “[My life] has been as good as it gets.”

*Once he is retired, President Staples intends to travel with his wife, play golf and engage in volunteerism in the community. He is also joyfully looking forward to becoming a new grandparent to a baby boy, which will “keep [him] busy.”*





# Thank You

We want to acknowledge the contributions of the following individuals and groups:

Darlene Biggers

Taleen Washington

Lindsay Humphrey

Liz Davis

Erika Garcia

Ashley Green

Joanna Eleftheriou

John Tran

Kavya Erla

UHCL Spirit Squad

University Christian Fellowship

The Alfred R. Neumann Library staff

The Communications Department

The Student Life Office

The Environmental Institute of Houston

Last but not least – all of the UHCL Hawks!





