# University of Houston DOCUMENTOWN DOCUMENTOWN Student run since volume one DOCUMENTOWN

## UHD Fall, Freshman Convocations of 2011-12

Fall Convocation focal points: finances and High Impact Learning

#### TAYLOR LUCE Staff Writer

The University of Houston–Downtown's (UHD) Fall Convocation speared by President Bill Flores highlighted deeper budget cuts to help the university become more efficient, the METRORail construction and the introduction of High Impact Learning.

David Bradley, vice president for administration and finance, entertained the crowd as master of ceremonies. Before introducing speakers, he discussed the major construction going on around UHD due to the METRO rail expansion, as well other ongoing construction projects on campus.

After speaking with METRO construction staff, Bradley indicated that the rail expansion may only take 12 months instead of 18 months. He also told faculty, in a joking tone, that he was to blame for the garage renovations going on right now.

Austin Allen, president-elect of faculty senate, encouraged faculty members present to join the senate and gave out meeting information. Elliot Ballard, president-elect of the staff council, backed Allen up by also encouraging the staff to join the council if they had not already done so.

After introducing various university administrators to the crowd, President Flores relinquished the floor to Bradley, who gave a presentation on the financial status of UHD. He entertained the crowd well, slipping as many jokes into his presentation as possible.

Bradley began by breaking down the five percent cuts to the overall UHD budget. He used real numbers (in million dollar increments) and compared the new budget for this



UHD President Dr. William Flores explains budget cuts and High Impact learning during the Fall 2011 Fall Convocation to attending students, staff and faculty. Photo by Randy Cypret

year to last year's budget in table form. While the state reduced a significant amount of support toward UHD, Bradley discussed how UHD was dealing with the cuts.

According to Bradley, 30-odd vacant job positions have been closed, and some faculty and staff benefits have been decreased. The university also expects to offset costs through revenue generated by increased enrollment at UHD. The Office of Institutional Research & Planning released a 20th day fact sheet on Feb. 14, 2011 noting a two percent increase in enrollment since Spring of 2010.

Although more cuts need to be made in order to account for the loss in state funding, Bradley feels the university is doing very well financially.

#### See Convocations, Page 3



Incoming freshmen enjoyed breakfast, had a chance to mingle with their peers and received priceless advice from faculty, alumni, returning UHD students and UHD President Dr. William Flores during Freshman Convocation. Photo by Taylor Luce



## Viewpoints

#### Sept. 5-19, 2011 Dateline : Downtown www.datelinedowntown.com

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## **Convocation Confabulation**

#### **EDITORIAL**

At a well-attended Fall University Convocation in the Cullen Auditorium on Aug. 30, the University of Houston–Downtown (UHD) administrators noted that the school is in the midst of important financial and instructional changes, while faculty senate and staff council leaders called for more participation and involvement from all.

Likening UHD to a "2007 Buick" – or financially a 6.6 on a ten-point scale between a Rolls Royce and a wreck – UHD Vice President for Administration and Finance David Bradley asserted that the university is in good financial shape and that he "would invest in it" if UHD were a stock-issuing company.

In academic terms, a 65 percent rating is a D. But, UHD does have a "rainy day fund" for emergencies and unexpected one-time expenses.

Bradley's presentation put a positive spin on the \$11 million shortfall in state funding for the current biennium.

"Funding is of 15 percent over 2010-2013," Bradley said, but if "anticipated income from growth" – 3.5 more tuition income from higher enrollments, amounting to \$1.7 million – becomes a reality, then UHD should be in "good shape."

This income is conditional on substantial near-term enrollment increases, beginning Jan. 2012. Currently, enrollment is about the same as it was in Fall 2011; actual figures will be available after Sept. 19, the new vice president for student success and enrollment, Lisa Montgomery, told the Faculty Senate last week.

After Bradley's wry slide show, biology

professor Jerry Johnson offered a rather less detailed presentation on a new university instructional plan, dubbed "transforming learning through inclusive excellence." This initiative from UHD President Dr. Bill Flores is designed to improve "on time" graduation rates and attract large numbers of new students by "incorporating high-impact practices throughout the curriculum." This proposed revolutionary approach to teaching remains in the conceptual stages, as a committee headed by Professor Johnson studies s "framework mechanism" to show off UHD's already quite diverse teaching methods and expand them to "all delivery formats," that is, all the ways in which courses are taught here.

Johnson said that "high-impact" teaching methods consist of first-year seminars, undergraduate research, "learning communities," diverse and global learning and "common intellectual experiences." Actual high-impact practices include writing-intensive assignments, capstone projects, internships, service learning and collaborative assignments and projects. While some UHD programs already make substantial use of such practices, the new initiative would extend this kind of work across the university as a whole.

To put these ideas into action will require external funding, Johnson said, and speaking for his committee, he concluded that they "will try to develop a mechanism for funding."

Funding seems to be the byword here and across the nation, but a presentation on the university's fund-raising activities was not on the convocation agenda. While all speakers recognized the continuing reduction in available state funds, there were no predictions as to when the financial situation, a result of the current deep economic recession, might improve.

## From



We want to know your thoughts on cancelled class notifications. Should it be mandatory for students to be notified via vista or text that class wil be cancelled, so we don't drive all the way up here just to see a class cancelled sign? We can't miss class without an excuse - what gives?

**Lauriston Brewster** You know D.D, you're right! The same level of accountability that we, as students, uphold should also be acceded by instructors. Professors have a duty to PROPERLY and FORMALLY inform their students that a class was cancelled. Teachers: Either find a better method of letting us know class was cancelled or leave a proper amount of Shell gas cards for your dismayed students to use.

## Ready, set, GOAL: Goal setting 101

#### LUCHA MORALES Managing Editor

I have not always been so goal oriented. My younger years were filled with rocky roads and daredevil nights. This all came to a screeching halt when I became a mother. There is no motivation like the grip of tiny fingers in your hand, and the beating of a tiny heart in sync with yours to get your rear in gear. Needless to say I devised a plan to conquer the world - well at least college. If you find yourself in a rut with no fairytale ending there is no need to cut the lights. All journeys begin with a little imagination and a lot of determination. Here are some things you can do to get your wheels turning.

It is never too late! No matter where you are in life you can always make it better. Take a moment to regroup and strategize. You can do some general goal mapping to find out what you truly desire. Not familiar with mapping? No problem - mapping is simple. Write down two or three goals and then draw circles around them. Now you can add tiny circles around your major goals that state how you can achieve your primary goals. Keep going until you have a clear picture of what you want and what you need to do to get it!

Turn on the coffee pot and put your running shoes on. In order to get motivated you need to have the right mind set. Your body is your temple. The best way to feel motivated is to put down that beer bottle or wine glass and stop with the late night keg stands. Also, put the cookies and cake down. Try exercising and eating right. Once you do these things you will notice how much more energy you will have.

People, People, People! You need to surround yourself with positive people.

The company you keep speaks volumes about your own character. Positive people give off positive energy and make for great company!

Just do it! There is a reason that Nike has grown into a commercial empire that is known worldwide...they just did it. Don't let any setbacks get in the way of your goals or dreams. By the way, Nike is a winged goddess and in Greek mythology she was known for victorious encounters. The Nike logo was designed by none other than a woman in 1971, and Nike founder Phil Knight first began selling Nike's from the trunk of his car. So whether you want to be the your family's first college graduate, or have a branding empire — all you need is a plan and some motivation.

Take time for you and your family. I know goal getting can take up a lot of your time. I have often over extended myself with meetings, reports and studying. While I always have my eye on the prize - I have to stop and take a break and remind myself why I started my mission in the first place. A hug from my beautiful baby girl and a great night with friends and family quickly reminds me why my running shoes are at the edge of my bed. If I finish at the top all alone - who will come to my awards ceremony? Even if they drive you nuts, spill milk on your proposal, over indulge in alcohol on holidays - family is all you have in the end...crazy or not.

The road to happiness is different for everyone. I try my best to make my road about what will make my family happy and how I can make my life easy.

Sept. 5-19, 2011 **Dateline** : Downtown www.datelinedowntown.com

## Convocations (cont'd from page 1)

Pres. Flores wrapped up the convocation and spoke about recruitment and university attendance. Preliminary UHD enrollment numbers conclude that 13,000 students are enrolled for the Fall 2011 semester. See Convocations (page 2)Flores discussed diversity found in UHD and how the university is in a prime position to become a leader in High Impact learning initiatives.

## **Freshman Lessons**

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) welcomed the class of 2015 to campus on Aug. 20 for Freshman Convocation and summer reading discussions.

Many students arrived early, sequestering themselves to chairs placed along the periphery of the room to wait for the breakfast table to open.

As more freshmen arrived, books in hand, volunteers and faculty members walked around the room handing out programs and writing nametags. Eventually, the stone faced freshmen began to liven up as they met with friends and mingled with the crowd. They participated in a raffle for UHD swag, and gobbled up breakfast pastries as well as advice from UHD Alumni and returning UHD students.

The recommendations given to them seemed to carry a similar theme; that of taking part in the community and relying on those relationships to help freshmen get through their college career.



(L to R) Jonathon, McRandall and Amber enjoy breakfast and small talk during the Freshman Convocation, held Aug. 20 for the UHD class of 2015. Photo by Taylor Luce

After becoming acquainted with fellow students and faculty members, the freshmen filtered in to the auditorium for the convocation.

UHD President Dr. William Flores spoke of the diversity found in the university.

"We are one of the only major universities that looks like the city we serve... 55 percent of our students are Hispanic, 24 percent are African American," said Flores.

UHD Alumna Ashley Miller and Tametria Jones spoke to the incoming freshmen about getting involved in campus activities, and encouraging the freshmen to seek out faculty members to help them with their goals.

The convocation ended with a speech



Allergies are a major problem in our area, causing irritation for people affected. Approximately 30 percent of adults experience allergy symptoms during the year. Not only are the allergies symptoms annoying, but annual treatment of allergies is estimated to cost about \$11.2 billion in the United States every year.

Many allergies are seasonal, caused by triggers known as allergens. Allergens can include any substance that can cause allergic symptoms, including substances such as pet dander, dust and pollens. Even substances not usually thought of allergens, including fungi and molds, can produce allergy symptoms.

Allergies can produce classic symptoms such as a runny nose, itchy eyes and a scratchy throat. In addition, some patients also suffer with headaches and fatigue.

Symptoms can be occasional or on a more continuous basis, and can be so severe that patients seek medical attention. One of the ways to manage allergies is to

## Stop the sneeze! Managing allergies

avoid the substance that causes allergies, if the substance is known. However, with some substances, such as pollen, it can be difficult to avoid exposure. Air filtration systems can help reduce the amount of pollen and other allergens in indoor air, but does not remove all of them.

Allergies are most commonly treated with antihistamines. Old antihistamines, such as Benedryl (diphenhydramine) can be purchased over the counter, but can cause significant drowsiness or dry mouth. Newer, less sedating antihistamines have become available without a prescription, including Claritin (loratidine), Zyrtec and Allegra. The newer antihistamines cause far less sedation, but are more expensive.

Another type of treatment for allergies includes the use of nasal steroids. Steroids stop the inflammation and allergic reaction in the nasal passages. The steroids are only very minimally absorbed, and have few side effects. The nasal steroids are all prescription only medications, but some have refrom UHD senior Enrique Tamez. "All the hard work is worth it...UHD is worth it... YOU are worth it."

Following the convocation, the freshmen scattered from the auditorium and made their way to pre-assigned rooms with the intent of discussing their summer reading assignment and essay on "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot.

The book outlines the struggle of the Lack's family as they strive to uncover the truth of what happened to Henrietta and the struggle of the author as she attempts to earn the trust of the Lacks so she may tell Henrietta's story.

In Room A316, Dr. Chuck Jackson and student volunteer Enrique Tamez led a dis-

cently been made available in generic form, which reduces the cost.

Lastly, for those difficult to treat allergies, a person may be sent to a medical doctor that specializes in allergy treatment known as an allergist.

### Mental+Physical Health = Academic Success

"One of my problems is that I internalize everything. I can't express anger; I grow a tumor instead." ~Woody Allen

Perhaps this is your first semester of college, you may be a returning or transfer student or you may be working on a second career. Wherever you are in the process it can be a lot to handle. Your body, mind, and spirit all face significant challenges during this time. Maintaining good emotional and physical health is essential for academic success.

You may not think there's a conspiracy plot in every newspaper article you read, you aren't hearing voices and you don't believe you're the reincarnation of Elvis Presley. But, are you really healthy?

Often when people hear about mental health or that someone is attending counseling, they think, "you have to be kind of crazy or something is wrong with you." Consider this: If you had physical symptoms that weren't getting any better, like stomach pains or headaches, most of us would probably tell someone about it or visit a doctor.

Mental health is the same. However, many students who need help do not seek cussion of the book with ten freshmen.

Using the essay assignment prompts as a guide, Dr. Jackson and Enrique slowly, but surely, coaxed an analysis or opinion out of each student. As the discussion came to a close, Dr. Jackson used the remaining time for a Q&A session, during which he explained how the students could log on to Blackboard Vista, and where they could find the writing center (located in S1067) if students have problems with a paper.

The essays written by the freshmen will be judged by the faculty discussion leaders to decide which will win prizes, with the best author being awarded \$500.

The winners are expected be announced this month.

If allergies are affecting your life, please discuss the issue with your health care provider to help stop the sneeze.

Robert Hanks, PhD, FNP-C, RNC Assistant Professor-Clinical

professional support or they wait until their situation is severe. Mental illnesses are medical conditions that can dramatically impact a person's thoughts, feelings, judgment and ability to function. These conditions can affect people of any age, but often first appear between the ages of 18 and 24.

Remember that your mental and physical health are connected, implementing positive practices will lead to personal and academic success.

If issues such as stress, anxiety, depression or other overwhelming feelings are interfering with your life and ability to get things done, speak up and get the assistance you need.

Getting help is easy, confidential, and best of all free.

Student Counseling Services can help when you want a new perspective on things, when you simply need to blow off steam or when you need help identifying available options and resources.

Students who feel they need help can call 713-500-3327 to schedule an appointment. All information and clients of the Student Counseling Services is confidential. -Jameca Williams, LPC, NCC

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<sup>4</sup> Arts & Leisure

## O'Kane Theater gets new production company

## **DAVID MELENDEZ**

Staff Writer

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The Landing Theatre Company (LTC)is the new professional company at the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) and was created through the university to present productions during a summer festival.

After great early successes, the LTC is continuing to work closely with UHD and the O'Kane Theater.

UHD Professor David Rainey is the artistic director for the LTC and anticipates working with UHD students to help ease students through the anxieties of first-time performers. The hope is to provide a professional acting theatre program to the UHD theatre department, just like the relationship between the Yale Repertory Theatre and Yale school of Drama.

LTC recently wrapped up their latest performance, a production of David Mamet's "American Buffalo" at UHD's University Of Houston-Downtown's (UHD) O'Kane Theater.

The story centers around three men: Don, Teach and Bob (known only by their first names throughout the play.

Don sells a nickel to a collector for much less than it is worth, but later begins to feel the collector has cheated him. Don and his accomplice, Bob, attempt to steal the collector's coin collection, believing he is away for the weekend.

Teach, another of Don's friends, tries to convince Don to release Bob from the heist job, feeling that Bob has been disloyal, and Teach also feels that Bob lacks experience to complete the job. The threesome is never able to collaborate effectively, and the heist is never a success.



Inexperience in robbery and a clash of egos thwart any plans to steal the coins.

After a failure in plans, and in desperate need of money, Bob tries to sell Don a rare 6-7 (both days).

nickel - a nickel strangely similar to the one Don initially sold to the collector. Teach gives Bob a good whack on the head because Teach has always believed that Bob betrayed Don in the beginning by stealing the coin that started all of the plans in motion.

The play gives rise to what may be important in today's society, and what perhaps has been overlooked over time. American Buffalo asks, "What do we value as Americans?"

Stage manager Lynn Sanders believes the play helps promote loyalty among friends. Sanders admits there is strong language in American Buffalo, but the audience will find mixed emotions and an entertaining experience.

LTC operates primarily during the summer and is already planning future productions.

"We are in the works to perform three plays this summer," says Sanders. "We would also like to eventually bring students in (to the plays)."

The ultimate goal for the LTC is to offer a summer festival of plays designed to combine the talents of top professionals with top students to produce quality productions.

The LTC encourages students to get interested in the performing arts and the importance of the Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts (BAFA).

For more information about the Landing Theatre Company and future productions, please visit http://www.landingtheatre.org or email info@landingtheatre.org. Information about current and future productions as well as a brief history and ways to donate are also available on the site.

The O'Kane Theater will be holding auditions for Equus and the student-directed One-Acts, 1:30-3:30 p.m., and 6-8 p.m., Sept.

## **Could there be hope for the Houston Texans?**

#### **RYAN DAVIS** Staff Writer

Major changes in the defense of the historically mediocre Houston Texans could mean higher expectations for Texans fans.

With three impressive preseason performances, fans are abuzz with talks of playoffs and maybe a Super Bowl appearance, which would be a first in the team's 10-year history.

Yet, all this talk is well deserved and to be expected; thanks to innovative changes on defense, courtesy of former Dallas Cowboys coordinator Wade Phillips, who has now joined the Texans as defensive coordinator.

Through some much needed assurances that wide receiver Andre Johnson can still catch, and running back Arian Foster can still run, fans are indeed seeing new potential within their team.

However, for all its positive aspects, this new potential still has drawbacks.

What are the Texans to do if this noticeably upgraded team merits little or no change in overall performance, especially



Houston Texans wide receiver Andre Johnson. Courtesy photo

as it relates to the win column? Would another mediocre season cripple the Texans for good?

While these questions are left unanswered until the team's season concludes, they remain on minds of fans, and the organization.

One thing is certain for the Texans; they

must win the American Football Conference (AFC) South division if they have any chance to make it to the NFL playoffs.

The AFC, the most competitive division of the league, is home to illustrious quarterback Tom Brady of the New England Patriots, Coach Rex Ryan's boisterous New York Jets, and of course, quarterback Peyton Manning of the overpowering Indianapolis Colts.

The Sept. 11 season opener for the Texans against the Indianapolis Colts could prove an accurate indicator of their ensuing success or failure.

The Colts Super Bowl winning quarterback, Payton Manning, may be unable to play in the game due to a neck injur and some claim this could improve the positive progress of the Texans.

With Manning out of the game the Texans are sure to have some temporary advantages, but this might hinder their ability to compete with high levels teams; no team gets better by playing below its capabilities. This holds true especially if the Texans hope to compete for a Super Bowl ring.

Some Texans fans have remained vigilant, looking forward to that day when the good guys finish first. The hopeful talk is punctuated with trappings of success, and the stellar offensive stats that indicate more than just obvious talent but absolute champions.

Until that day detractors will uphold their negative view of the Texans citing their history of disappointment.

Sept. 5-19, 2011

# Sept. 5 19, 2011 5 Dateline : Downtown 00 Campus Www.datelinedowntown.com 00 Campus UHD professor asks, "So, What's Your Story?"

## **LUCHA MORALES**

Managing Editor

"Your passion will represent your love for the story. Your heart will show your audience the reason they should love your story."

So, What's Your Story? Discovering the Story in You, is a book written and designed by Dr. Henry "Hank" Roubicek, a professor of communication at the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). The book was written to be a text for his COMM 1303 Storytelling course, as well as for leisure reading. Each chapter of the book outlines what questions to ask yourself and what to remember from each chapter. It is a funny and well written book that takes you on a journey through the fundamental aspects of storytelling.

The book is a great text for teaching sto-

#### storytelling.

"Everything that I remember that was good was in stories my grandmother told me. I remember them because they were good stories," said Roubicek.

Roubicek says that "your life is a blank canvas" and only you have the power determine the story within you.

ful things in our lives and sometimes things that aren't so wonderful," said Roubicek. Roubicek also feels there are benefits to

storytelling. "It teaches us about vocabulary, teaches

us about word use and sensory development. Storytelling teaches us to create an image in our mind and find the words to

"Your passion will represent your love for the story. Your heart will show your audience the reason they should love your story." -Prof. Henry Rubicek

From witty quotes his grandmother bestowed upon him regarding girlfriends and life, to theoretical approaches to storytelling, this book is definitely a step in the right direction for an innovative approach to teaching storytelling.

Roubicek captures his audience with a heartfelt tone that can make you laugh out loud or sigh with sympathy. His ability to take readers on a journey while teaching them the art of storytelling is a story in itself.

Roubicek has been a professor of communications at UHD for 26 years. He is well known for his work as a communication educator. He offers his specialized training in oral communication methods and techniques to institutions, which help to enhance leadership and communication skills. Roubicek is the host of "Storytime" a radio talk show for KPFT, which airs every 4th Friday of each month. He is also the presi-



rytelling, with a mix of Roubicek's own personal experiences that help readers understand why storytelling is important. Roubicek highlights that everyone is a storyteller, with unique experiences that can be weaved into a great story.

The first chapter reveals how Roubicek was first introduced to storytelling by his grandmother. Her innate ability to tell stories helped Roubicek to discover the craft of

The book is divided into 11 chapters that discuss topics such as: the power of storytelling, discovering the storyteller in you, constructing a lifeline, parts of a story, how to tell a story and symbolic speaking.

Roubicek believes storytelling is an important tool for communication. He believes storytelling can help people focus on what is important to them, and communicate it.

"Stories allow us to remember wonder-

paint that image."

The book also details how to "Be a Coach" to other storytellers, and not to focus on harsh criticism. The book is a complete guide for storytelling, which Roubicek feels has been somewhat overlooked due to ever increasing technological ways of communicating.

"Storytelling allows people to feel," said Roubicek.

dent of the Houston Storytellers Guild. His book is in its second printing now since its release on October of 2010. It is also in use at eleven schools.

To get your copy of "So, What's Your Story, Discovering the Storyteller in You" check with any authorized book retailer. You can also check out a copy of the text, which is currently available at UHD's library.

# Arts & Leisure

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## STRANGE BUT TRUE by Samantha Weaver

• It was Hungarian psychiatrist Thomas Stephen Szasz who made the following sage observation: "If you talk to God, you are praying. If God talks to you, you have schizophrenia."

• The world's most popular fruit is the banana. In the United States, people consume more bananas than apples and oranges put together.

• Thomas Jefferson was an inventor as well as a statesman, but he refused to take out patents on any of his ideas. He believed that inventions should benefit all of humanity, not just himself.

· According to those who study such things, the average American believes the ideal age -- that is, the best year of his or her life -- is 32. And when 30-somethings are asked when old age begins, the majority of men say it's in the late 60s, while more women believe old age begins in the 70s.

• That iconic symbol of the Old West, the Pony Express, was based on the mail system used throughout the Mongol Empire in the 13th century. However, the Mongol riders often covered 125 miles in a single day, which was faster than the best record held by a Pony Express rider.

• In Nazi Germany, it was illegal to name a horse "Adolph."

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## Weekly SUDOKU

## by Linda Thistle

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### DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: \*

★ Moderate ★★ Challenging  $\star \star \star$  HOO BOY!

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# Art & Leisure

## **Amber Waves**

by Dave T. Phipps



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