Welcome Note

The WFN Advancement and Achievement Committee exists to recognize women’s achievements and to facilitate activities to help women at all levels advance. In an effort to showcase the richness that exists among the female faculty at UTRGV, we are excited to issue the first UTRGV WFN Digital Newsletter. Inside, you will find descriptions of great accomplishments made by a group of fine female scholars, artists, instructors, and active members in our local communities during the 2016 summer and fall semesters. The newsletter has been divided in five sections: Research including Creative Works, Teaching, Service, Multiple Categories, and Highlights. These accomplishments are based on self-reported information to this committee by our members. We hope you enjoy this first issue.

Sincerely,

The WFN Advancement & Achievement Committee

All pictures and achievements were provided by individual participants.
Dr. Rosalynn Adeline Vega
Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Dr. Rosalynn Vega had two new articles published. The first is entitled “Commodifying Indigeneity: How the Humanization of Birth Reinforces Racialized Inequality in Mexico,” published in Medical Anthropology Quarterly. The second is entitled “Towards Sociocommunicative Justice: Multi-Sited Fieldwork, Transnational Theory, and Hyper-self-reflexivity,” published in Revista CONAMED. In addition, she presented on the politics of parenting, medical migration, citizenship, and rights to health care at AAA, PCCLAS, NAHLS, and NAS.

Dr. Sonia Alianak
Professor
Department of Political Science

Dr. Sonia Alianak recently published in the Health Care, the Arab Spring and After, Fall 2016, New Trends in Social And Liberal Sciences (NETSOL), 1(2), 1-25 (Online Journal).

Dr. Jameela Banu
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science

Dr. Jameela Banu was a guest speaker at the World Congress for Food and Nutrition in Kaoshiung, Taiwan in November 2016. Her presentation was on “Anti bone metastatic properties of fish oil and thymoquinone.” In this study, combinations of fish oil and thymoquinone were tested. It was found that the combination of fish oil and thymoquinone was effective in protecting bone from metastatic breast cancer cells. Animal models to study diseases associated with menopause were also presented.

Dr. Jean Braithwaite
Associate Professor
Creative Writing Program

Dr. Jean Braithwaite published a book on super-famous graphic novelist Chris Ware titled “Chris Ware: Conversations,” University Press of Mississippi. She also launched the Words+Pictures Group, a faculty group interested in comics.

Dr. Monica Clua-Losada
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science

Dr. Monica Clua-Losada co-authored the article entitled “Challenging the age of austerity: Disruptive agency after the global economic crisis,” published in the Journal of Comparative European Politics.
Dr. Maria Elena Corbeil co-edited the book “The MOOC Case Book: Case Studies in MOOC Design, Development, and Implementation” (Editors J. R. Corbeil, M. E. Corbeil and B. Khan), which placed 2nd in the AECT’s Division of Distance Learning (DDL) Book Award. The book received recognition for describing important aspects of distance education.

Dr. Ruby Charak had several accomplishments. First, she published a research article in the Journal Child Abuse and Neglect. In addition, she accepted the editorial board position at the Journal of Traumatic Stress, a 3-year appointment starting January 2017. Lastly, she was elected Chair of the Child Maltreatment and Interpersonal Violence Special Interest Group at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) Annual Convention. She presented her research work at the ABCT and ISTSS conventions.

Dr. Leyla Feize presented “A Theoretical Model of Cultural Competency in Clinical Social Work” at the International Research Conference, South Padre Island, Texas, in October 2016.

Dr. Evangelia Kotsikorou started research collaboration with a Canadian biotech company. The project involves the study of small molecules and their interactions with a specific receptor in the body. This collaboration may lead to new chemotherapeutics for diabetes.
Ms. Marilyn Carren's research agenda includes studying contemporary art practices that utilize alternative and historical photo processes. She weaves analog, traditional, historical and digital image-making skills throughout her work. Her images and other artworks have been included in international juried shows at the International Center for Fine Art Photography, Art Intersection, Colby Sawyer College in New Hampshire, PH21 Gallery in Budapest, Hungary, and Aurora Gallery in Sydney, Australia, among others. Ms. Carren has had her images published in national magazines such as Ladies Home Journal, Texas Monthly and Sculpture. She has been interviewed by the Los Angeles Times and was a featured artist on the syndicated television series “Extra.” Her other research interests include BioArt, Phototherapy and Literacy through Photography.

Dr. Susan Hurley-Glowa’s paper proposal “How Legends are Made: Building the Legacy of Cape Verdean Folk Hero Norberto Tavares” was accepted for the 44th ICTM World Conference, July 13-19, 2017 at the University of Limerick, Ireland. She thanks the UTRGV Faculty Writing Workshop and the Office of Sustainability ‘Project Sin Fronteras’ who helped facilitate this work. On November 2016, Dr. Hurley-Glowa presented “Fossil Fuels, Climate Change, and the Sustenance of Musical Communities” in Fairbanks, Alaska at the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting.

The American Anthropological Association featured Dr. Margaret Dorsey, and Miguel Diaz-Barriga’s short documentary on human migration on their website. The documentary is part of the American Anthropological Association’s “World on the Move” special initiative.

In collaboration with Dr. John VandeBerg, Dr. Annelyn Torres-Reveron received the UTRGV Internal Seed Research Program Grant for the amount of $20,000. The title of the proposal is “Sensorimotor and memory assessment in Monodelphis Domestica (laboratory opossum) as a novel tool for research on neurodevelopment abnormalities”. A proposal from Dr. John Thomas, also funded, will study developmental abnormalities caused by the Zika virus.

Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the Hispanic Culture and the great contributions of American citizens of Hispanic descent in the U.S. between Sept. 15th and Oct. 15th. For the first time ever, in 2016 the American Mathematical Society showcased the contributions of 31 Hispanic/Latino Mathematicians for Hispanic Heritage Month. Dr. Cristina Villalobos was featured on October 14th. To read about Dr. Villalobos’ recognition, the link may be accessed at http://lathisms.org/index.html.

Ms. Laura G. Silva is the first faculty from the School of Accountancy to receive a Service Learning designation for her Intermediate Accounting I course.

Dr. Aziza Zemrani has been accepted as a Fulbright Specialist. Dr. Zemrani received a letter of acceptance to teach and do research at the University Mohammed V Rabat in Morocco in the Department of Public Finances & Economics.
Dr. Gladys E. Maestre
Professor
Biomedical Sciences/Division of Neurosciences

Dr. Gladys E. Maestre is leading initiatives to build research capacity and new services for older adults in the developing world. This past December at the Brain Aging and Dementia in LMICs Conference in Nairobi, Dr. Maestre gave the Keynote Lecture on Dementia and Genetics in Latin America and the Caribbean, and also chaired the session “Risk Factors for Dementia.”

Dr. Beatrice Mendez Newman
Professor
Department of Writing and Language Studies

Dr. Beatrice Mendez Newman published an article entitled “Opening the Door for Cross-Disciplinary Literacy: Doing History and Writing in a High School to University Collaboration” featured in the November 2016 issue of The English Journal, a publication of the National Council of Teachers of English. The article presents a collaborative project spanning several semesters of cross-disciplinary work between Dr. Mendez Newman’s first year writing classes and high school U.S. history classes in Katy, TX.

Dr. Soma Mukherjee
Professor
Department of Physics

Dr. Soma Mukherjee co-authored the February 2016 paper in the Physical Review Letters on the discovery of Gravitational Waves. In addition, she was a co-recipient of the Physics Breakthrough Prize for in Fundamental Physics awarded to the LIGO-Virgo Scientific Collaboration for detection of Gravitational Waves 100 years after Albert Einstein predicted their existence.
Ms. Camilla Montoya recently published the article “Overcoming Impediments: The Influence of Culture and Gender as Obstacles and Catalysts in Leadership Development,” which was published in the Journal of Leadership and Management.

Dr. Sara M. Reyna, Assistant Professor in Research in the School of Medicine, received the UTRGV Internal Seed Research Program award from the Office of the Senior VP for Research, Innovation and Economic Development. This award provided research funds for her team’s work on assessing the protective mechanisms of the synthetic triterpenoid CDDO-EA in insulin resistance.

Dr. Rachel M. Schmitz published peer-reviewed articles in the Journal of Men’s Studies and Gender Issues. These articles were on men’s experiences taking Women’s and Gender Studies courses. Also, she published a collaborative article on college students’ drinking behaviors in the Journal of Substance Use. These projects used a combination of both qualitative and quantitative social science research methods.

In June 2016, Dr. Valerie Terry presented a poster at the 2016 Information Technology in Academic Medicine Conference, sponsored by the Group on Information Resources in Toronto. In September, she participated on the panel during The Beyond Flexner Conference-Social Missions in Health Professions Education. Also, Dr. Terry participated with Dr. Dingle in the poster sessions on the Learn Serve Lead, AAMC Annual Meeting.
In fall 2016, Dr. Diana Dominguez became Full Professor. She received the news during her summer family reunion, making the event especially rewarding. She also secured a book contract and received two UT System Teaching Awards. She wrote, “I learned finding balance is as important as setting goals.”

Ms. Marcela Hebbard received the UTRGV Inaugural Accessibility Achievement Award in October 2016. This award recognizes faculty who go above and beyond the expected in making the University accessible for all students.
Ms. Nicole Nicholson

Lecturer
Department of Writing and Language Studies

In the fall semester of 2016, Ms. Nicholson founded the InqSpot Reading Institute in collaboration with Writing Program lecturers. The Institute provides reading strategies to students who struggle reading complex texts. Ms. Nicholson organized a three-part workshop series on both campuses, with over two hundred students attending at least one. InqSpot also collaborated with the SU and TLC to create weekly opportunities for reading coaching in the Spring semester.

Dr. Mariana Alessandri

Assistant Professor
Department of Philosophy

On November 17th, Dr. Alessandri gave a talk on campus to the philosophy club titled “Taco Tech.” In this talk, she tried to uncover the meaning behind the school’s nickname as well as to evaluate the different ways its members can react to it, such as assimilation and non-assimilation. The talk was covered in the UTRGV Rider.

Dr. Lydia Aguilera

Clinical Associate Professor, Director
Cooperative Pharmacy Program

Dr. Lydia Aguilera, Director of the Cooperative Pharmacy Program, chaired an inter-professional health fair at the Alamo Flea Market on October 2, 2016. Faculty and students from Pharmacy, Nursing, and Clinical Lab Science provided free flu shots, health education and screenings for hypertension and glucose levels for over 100 community members. This was their seventh annual health fair.
The American Occupational Therapy Association named Dr. Shirley A. Wells one of the 100 Influential People in occupational therapy's 100-year history. She has been an advocate for cultural inclusion and diversity in occupational therapy through groundbreaking books on culture and occupational therapy; scholarly articles related to culture and health; her role as cultural liaison for AOTA; and contributions as Chair and Program Director of the OT Program at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Her most recent publication, where she served as co-editor, is entitled “Culture and Occupation: Effectiveness for Occupational Therapy Practice, Education, and Research” published by AOTA Press in Fall, 2016.

On November 2016, Dr. Bianca Cruz presented at the 12th Annual Conference of the Valley Advanced Practice Nurse Association on Antibiotic Stewardship. Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to public health.

During the Fall, The South Texas Environmental Education and Research (STEER) Program was selected as the 2016 Community Engaged Scholarship Champion with Dr. Beatriz Tapia as the Director of the STEER program.

Dr. Shirley A. Wells
Chair and Associate Professor
Department of Occupational Therapy
Dr. Nelda C. Martinez

Professor
School of Nursing

In spring 2016, Dr. Nelda C. Martinez was 1 of 125 faculty selected by the National Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) to serve as an on-site reviewer at nursing schools seeking initial or ongoing accreditation. In Fall 2016, Dr. Martinez completed a 3-day accreditation visit at a nursing school in southern California.

Dr. Susy Villegas

Assistant Professor
Department of Social Work

November 16, 2016, Dr. Susy Villegas provided an in-service training to the Teen Pregnancy Coalition. The presentation centered on common challenges faced by workers seeking to engage Latino teens and their parents in education programs on sexual and reproductive health. This was a volunteer activity by Dr. Villegas coordinated by the RGV Teen Pregnancy Coalition. Last December, Dr. Susy Villegas delivered the first part of an introductory training to CASA and DHS workers related to trauma and foster care. The volunteer training was coordinated through the Title IV-E Program of the Department of Social Work. The second part of the training was held on January 10. This is a volunteer training activity to assist CASA and DHS workers in the enhancement of their understanding of trauma informed care related to children placed in state care due to child maltreatment.
Ms. Erica Giles was inducted into the 9th Rio Grande Valley cohort in the Doctor of Philosophy Leadership Studies program at Our Lady of the Lake University’s Fall Convocation ceremony. Ms. Giles has been selected to serve as an official cohort leader and will act as a liaison between faculty and her fellow cohort members until graduation.

Ms. Giles’s research is focused on academic motivation of first year students, specifically studying the mediating role of psychological capital in the professor – student relationship.

Dr. Nancy Peña Razo was promoted to Associate Professor in Practice in September 2016. She works in the Department of Human Development & School Services in the College of Education & P-16 Integration. Dr. Razo started with UTPA in Fall 2012 as a Clinical Assistant Professor. She is currently the School Psychology Program Coordinator and Internship Director. Dr. Razo teaches courses in assessment of intelligence, achievement, and personality, as well as ethics and law in school psychology, psychotherapy for children and adolescents, practicum, and School Psychology Internship.
Dr. Sylvia Robles de Viera

Lecturer
Department of International Business and Entrepreneurship

(Research) During the summer and fall 2016, Dr. Sylvia Robles de Viera assisted more than 12 RGV startups by developing three hybrid courses through the implementation of the Business Model Canvas. In addition in collaboration with UTRGV, Center of Innovation and Commercialization, Dr. Roble de Viera promoted innovation, entrepreneurship and new venture creation affecting the RGV Business community.

(Service) In August 2016, she initiated the Ministry of Love under the Schoenstatt’s spirituality and coordinated the visits to the Brownsville Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center. In September 2016, Dr. Robles de Viera was appointed as the faculty advisor to the Collegiate Entrepreneurs’ Organization (CEO) and in October successfully launched the CEO chapter in Brownsville.

Creating a world of opportunity one entrepreneur at a time.
Dr. Hsuying C. Ward

Assistant Professor
Department of Human Development and School Services.

(Research)
Dr. Hsuying C. Ward presented two papers in the 38th International Conference on Learning Disabilities, which took place in San Antonio, Texas on October 13-14, 2016. The papers presented were: “RGV Special Education Research Consortium-Mentoring for Success” by Sale, P., Ward, H. C., & Chapman, A; and “LD Teacher Education Model for Developing ESSA Teacher Competencies” by Ward, H. C., Chamberlain, S., & Frias-Perez, P.

(Service)
Dr. Ward has been on CEP Bilingual Journal Editorial Board, CEP Unit Assessment Committee and a CEP Teacher Education Advisory Board Member. She has co-sponsored KAPPA Delta Pi Honor Society and has been the Advisor to special education student organization (SOUL), which own the TCEC Student Chapter Excellence Award at TCEC Summer Conference 2016. Dr. Ward was speaker for the Learning Disability for Accessibility Month. She volunteered in CCD for children with special needs at Holy Family Church.

(Teaching)
Dr. Hsuying C. Ward received UTRGV Inaugural Accessibility Achievement Award in October 2016.

Ms. Amy Frazier

Lecturer
Department of Writing and Language Studies

Ms. Amy Frazier presented her short story, “Brujeria in South Texas” at the National Association of African-American Studies and Affiliates Conference at South Padre Island in October 2016. Ms. Frazier is the sponsor for the Young Women for America, a new chapter at UTRGV. She served as the Cameron County precinct delegate and chair as well as a poll worker during the November 2016 general election. Ms. Frazier is also a board member of the Brownsville Beautification project.
Ms. Donna Mason Sweigart

Associate Professor
School of Art

(Research)
Ms. Donna Mason Sweigart’s latest achievements include:
UTRGV Internal Seed Research Program Grant (ISRP) “University of Texas Rio Grande Valley FabLab Fostering Research,” $20,000 in conjunction with Co-PI Computer Science Faculty;
Invitational Fashion Exhibition “Sumptuary” Tomorrowwear, Hollywood, CA, October 2016;
International Juried Group Exhibition- Rapid 2016 Contemporary Art Gallery, Rapid Convention, Orlando, FL; and Magics Las Vegas (Fall Convention @Magic Sourcing), Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV, “3D Printing for Fashion: Elevate Creativity, Elevate Productivity, Elevate Business, A Panel Discussion.”

(Teaching)
In conjunction with computer science students, Ms. Donna Mason Sweigart’s Game Design Class has gained enrollment momentum in its fourth year. It creates equal teams to collaborate with the Computer Science Students.
Dr. Marie T. Mora, Professor of Economics, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity, and Chair of the Women’s Faculty Network, was invited to the White House to participate in the Summit on “Fulfilling America’s Future: Latinas in the U.S.”, which was hosted by the White House Initiative on the Educational Excellence for Hispanics, on October 21, 2016.

Faculty featured in this newsletter

Aguilera
Alessandri
Alianak
Alvarado
Banu
Braithwaite
Carren
Charak
Clua-Losada
Corbeil
Couture Gagnon
Cruz
Dominguez
Dorsey
Feize
Filsoofi
Frazier
Giles
Graham
Hebbard
Hurley-Glowa
Keniry
Kotsikorou
Maestre
Martinez
Mason Sweigart
Mendez Newman
Montoya
Mora
Mukherjee
Nicholson
Peña Razo
Rawls
Reyna
Robles de Viera
Schmitz
Silva
Tapia
Terry
Torres-Reveron
Vega
Villalobos
Villegas
Ward
Wells
Zemrani

lydia.aguilera@utrgv.edu
marianna.alessandri@utrgv.edu
sonia.alianak@utrgv.edu
michelle.alvarado1@utrgv.edu
jameela.banu@utrgv.edu
jean.braithwaite@utrgv.edu
marilyn.carren@utrgv.edu
ruby.charak@utrgv.edu
monica.clualosada@gmail.com
mariaelena.corbeil@utrgv.edu
alexandre.couturegagnon@utrgv.edu
bianca.cruz@utrgv.edu
diana.dominguez@utrgv.edu
margaret.dorsey@utrgv.edu
leyla.feize@utrgv.edu
raheleh.filsoofi@utrgv.edu
amy.frazier@utrgv.edu
erica.giles@utrgv.edu
margaret.graham@utrgv.edu
marcela.hebbard01@utrgv.edu
susan.hurleyglowa@utrgv.edu
megan.keniry@utrgv.edu
evangelia.kotsikorou@utrgv.edu
gladys.maestre@utrgv.edu
nelda.martinez@utrgv.edu
donna.sweigart@utrgv.edu
beatrice.newman@utrgv.edu
camilla.montoya@utrgv.edu
marie.mora@utrgv.edu
soma.mukherjee@utrgv.edu
nicole.nicholson@utrgv.edu
nancy.razo@utrgv.edu
christina.rawls@utrgv.edu
sara.reyna@utrgv.edu
sylvia.roblesdeviera@utrgv.edu
rachel.schmitz@utrgv.edu
laura.silva@utrgv.edu
beatriz.tapia@utrgv.edu
valerie.terry@utrgv.edu
annelyn.torres-reveron@utrgv.edu
rosalynn.vega@utrgv.edu
cristina.villalobos@utrgv.edu
susy.villegas@utrgv.edu
hsuying.ward@utrgv.edu
shirley.wells@utrgv.edu
aziza.zemrani@utrgv.edu