MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Greetings Colleagues,

First, and most important, thanks for inviting me to come! I’m looking forward to being with you and supporting you as you move through the search for Dean Kroll’s successor and onward. When I visited there with some of you a few weeks ago, the message was clear from senior leadership that momentum was to continue. My appointment letter from the EVPAA said this:

“Your primary responsibilities, among others, in the interim dean position will include increasing student recruitment and retention; increasing external research funding in coordination with the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research, Graduate Studies, and New Program Development; building and maintaining business and community relationships; increasing funding through philanthropy with the Office of University Advancement for the College; and maintaining the momentum in the college in the development of doctoral (PhD) programs.

As you know, student success is one of the highest priorities for UTRGV. As Interim Dean you will play a key leadership role in ensuring that every aspect of the students’ educational experience is aligned with and focused on their success at UTRGV.”

These all are visible in the strategic plan and are worthy tasks.

I expect to spend significant time at the various UTRGV/VCoBE sites and look forward to meeting each of you,

Wesley Balda, Ph.D.
Interim Dean, Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship
UPCOMING EVENT

Economic Forecast Event (January 18, 2019)
Come to learn expert assessment of the Rio Grande Valley and the Texas economic outlook and find out how it impacts you at this must-attend event. Learn more

NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS

Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Tourism Management
New to VCOBE is the Hospitality and Tourism Management Bachelor of Science degree program set to launch in spring 2019. This program will let students build a fundamental business foundation, and select from four concentrations: Lodging Asset Ownership and Management, Event and Destination Management, Restaurant Entrepreneurship and Management, and Healthcare Hospitality. A rigorous 600-hour internship and capstone course will further prepare them before graduation. A Minor in Hospitality and Tourism Management will be offered for students enrolled in other majors.

Accelerated Online Master of Accountancy Program
The School of Accountancy launched its accelerated online Master of Accountancy (MACC) program in fall 2018. The AACSB-accredited program satisfies the 150-hour requirement of the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy for the Certified Public Accountant examination. “All the program’s courses have undergone a rigorous state-of-the-art blueprinting design process using Quality Matters standards,” said Dr. Penny Simpson, interim director for the School of Accountancy. “The online MACC is especially convenient for accounting professionals who work full-time, who frequently travel for their jobs, or for those people who just cannot come to campus.”

Graduate Certificate in Business Analytics
The information systems department launched a graduate certificate in business analytics in fall 2018. The 12-hour certificate allows students to gain knowledge and hands-on experience in the high-demand area of big data and analytics. Click here to learn how the program can boost your career potential - quickly.

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VCOBE In the Press

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

ABDC A* Journal Publications


**ABDC A Journal Publications**


Yang, Z., Sun, J., Zhang, Y., Wang, Y. (2018). Peas and carrots just because they are green? Operational fit between green supply chain management and...


**Faculty Awards and Honors**

**Dr. Francis Andoh-Baidoo**, associate professor of information systems, was awarded the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship in summer 2018.

**Ms. Maria Leonard**, VCOBE ENACTUS faculty advisor, was elected to serve on the ENACTUS United States Faculty Advisory Committee in 2018.
Dr. Bin Wang, professor of information systems, received the 2018 UTRGV Faculty Excellence Award in Teaching in the tenured/tenure-track category.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

STUDENT AWARDS

Hazel Dadanlar, doctoral candidate in management, was awarded the prestigious Jess Hay Chancellor’s Graduate Fellowship in 2018. She was one of two fellows selected from all UT institutions.

Keshab Acharya, doctoral student in management, received the best doctoral student paper award in Track Careers/Social Issues/Diversity Issues/Ethics at the 2018 Southern Management Association (SMA) meeting in Lexington,
KY. His research is entitled “Wearing Their Thoughts on Their Sleeves: Nature and Consequences of CEO Outspokenness” and was done in collaboration with Drs. Michael Abebe and Mark Kroll. Joseph Simpson and Hazel Dadanlar, two doctoral students in management, received the best doctoral student paper in Track Strategic Management at the 2018 Southern Management Association meeting in Lexington, KY for their research entitled “Cleaning House, Jumping Ship, and Jumping on Board: Director Exits and Appointments.”

Kelvin King-Kizito, doctoral student in information systems, won the first place award among VCOBE graduate students in UTRGV Graduate College’s inaugural Graduate Research Symposium in spring 2018. MBA student Taiwo Abraham received the second place award among VCOBE participants.

MBA student Joe Shaver received the prestigious Texas Business Hall of Fame scholarship in Houston in November 2018. Dr. Akinloye Akindayomi, MBA Program Director, represented VCOBE at the event.
STUDENT PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS


STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

**Institute of Management Accountants**

The Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) Brownsville attended the Student Leadership Conference in St. Louis, MO from November 1 to 3, 2018. At this event, IMA students networked with many IMA members from across the country, learned interviewing skills, and applies for internship positions. During this three-day event, IMA students attended many sessions including a Certified Management Accountant (CMA) Jeopardy session on what the CMA exam would be like.

**Association of Information Technology Professionals**

The Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP), under the guidance of Dr. Jerald Hughes, offered the first-ever Cybersecurity
STUDENT PLACEMENT
Congratulations to our 2018 graduates for a job well-done! This is just the beginning of the endless opportunities and career success a degree from VCOBE presents to you.

Ph.D. in Business Administration

- **Juan Gutierrez** (Finance, California State University, Bakersfield)
- **Santosh Nandi** (Management, University of South Carolina Sumter)
- **Cindy Pham** (Marketing, Brooklyn College)
- **Corey Shank** (Finance, Dalton State College)
- **Shahil Sharma** (Finance, Texas A&M University, San Antonio)
- **Andre Vianna** (Finance, Ministry of Finance of Brazil)

Bachelor of Business Administration

- **Jorge Gonzalez** (Information Systems, Facebook)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Business Leaders Lunch
The Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship (VCOBE) hosted its third annual business leaders lunch on October 17, 2018 honoring three business leaders: **Robert L. Lozano, Gregorio Garza Uribe**, and **Randolph K. Whittington**. More than four hundred leaders from the business community attended the event with the proceeds supporting ten VCOBE student organizations. Click on the video links below to learn more about this year's honorees:
Young Entrepreneur Conference

The Pharr - San Juan - Alamo (PSJA) Independent School District hosted its third annual Young Entrepreneur Conference in partnership with the Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship and the U.S. Small Business Administration on Friday, November 30, 2018 on the UTRGV Edinburg Campus. The conference welcomed nearly eighty students from across all PSJA Early College High Schools and granted them the opportunity to hear from Bert Ogden owners Robert C. Vackar and Janet Vackar, attend entrepreneurship sessions, participate in a scavenger hunt to connect with university students, hear from a panel of PSJA alumni who are currently VCOBE business students, and participate in a business pitch competition sponsored by the Pharr, San Juan, and Alamo Economic Development Corporations. The purpose of the conference is to instill a sense of entrepreneurship among students and to connect with the university, cities, and business partners.

Center for Innovation and Commercialization Grand Opening

UTRGV Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship’s Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC), located at 307 E. Railroad Street in Weslaco, held its grand opening on Thursday, Nov. 29. The building is a collaborative effort between the city of Weslaco and UTRGV to serve as a regional entrepreneurial hub and catalyst for economic growth in the Rio Grande Valley. The state-of-the-art facility offers access to desk spaces, conference rooms, 3D printers and scanners, professional services like accounting and
marketing, and accessible mentors and educational opportunities. The CIC building will also be the new home to the VCOBE PhD program. “The CIC will provide entrepreneurial training and support for students, faculty and the community to create new ventures and bring their innovations to market,” said Laurie Simmons, manager of the CIC. Click on the image below to view the CIC grand opening video.

![CIC Grand Opening](image)

**Business and Tourism Research Center**

**SPI Survey:** The Business and Tourism Research Center is working with South Padre Island Convention and Visitors Bureau to conduct economic impact of event studies. The Center has completed a year of events for the Island and has involved 220 UTRGV students in eight student organizations on both the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses to administer onsite surveys. “Working on these events has given our students valuable skills in project organization, professionalism and in front-line market research while earning funds for their organizational activities,” said Center Director, Dr. Penny Simpson.
Winter Texans 2018: The Business and Tourism Research Center completed another study of the spending and activity patterns of Winter Texans in the Rio Grande Valley this summer. This year’s study of 744 respondents and 63 RV/mobile home parks estimated that 106,000 Winter Texans were in the region during the 2017-2018 season, an increase of 10.4% found during the last study. However, total spending of the Winter Texans was found to have declined 30.5% from $760 million in the prior study to $528 million.

Hospitality and Tourism Program

Dr. A.J. Singh, Founding Director for VCOBE’s Hospitality and Tourism Management program, conducted an educational panel discussion on “Asset Value Creation for Hotel Owners: The Role of Operational Excellence” at the leading hotel conference – the HX conference - in New York City on November 11, 2018. The panel participants included Christine Devers, Hotel General Manager for the Renaissance and W hotels in New York and Sean Hennessey, President of Lodging Advisors, a New York based investment advisory company. The key takeaways for the attendees were practices that increased top line revenue, processes that made hotels operations more efficient and increased flow through, the role of technology, optimal capital allocation, and various opportunities and threats facing the hotel industry today.

I-Corps Competition

The Department of International Business and Entrepreneurship hosted its first regional NSF I-Corps cohort in fall 2018. In conjunction with
manufacturing engineering department Drs. Pablo Rhi, John Sargent, and Sylvia Robles mentored both college and community teams to the successful completion of the competition, and all teams have been selected to participate in the national cohort ($50,000 each). Laurie Simmons and Russell Adams also continued their training as I-Corps instructors during the process. A special thanks to Pablo Rhi for managing the coordination of cross disciplinary courses and Laurie Simmons for hosting the event at the CIC.

BEDES 2018

The Department of Economic and Finance held its annual Border Economics, Development, and Entrepreneurship Symposium (BEDES) on November 28, 2018. BEDES is a collaboration with the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. This year our keynote speaker was Dr. Roberto Coronado, Vice President in Charge and Senior Economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, El Paso Branch. The title of his presentation was "A Primer on the Federal Reserve and Economic Update on the Rio Grande Valley Economy." More than two hundred VCoBE student attended the symposium.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS
Ngoc Cindy Pham, Ph.D. in Marketing, ’18, upon leaving UTRGV in August, wasted no time in applying her fashion marketing talent to promoting designer Omani Jones' show at the New York Fashion Week in fall 2018. Read more


**Monica Hernandez**, PhD. in Marketing, ’05, joined St. Edwards University as an associate professor of marketing in fall 2018.