

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grad, undergrad students present at first UTRGV South Texas Industrial Assessment Center Symposium

By Deborah Fitzwater-Dewey

RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TEXAS – MAY 12, 2017

Members of the South Texas Industrial Assessment Center (ST-IAC), guests and students gathered at UTRGV on the Brownsville and Edinburg campuses for the first student assessment presentations to invited company representatives.

The ST-IAC Symposium this year was held in conjunction with UTRGV Earth Fest 2017. Dr.

Matthew Garcia, executive director of CEMG Consulting & Research, and Abraham Quiroga, division manager of Magic Valley Electric Coop, addressed the audience on “The Future of Energy and Advanced Manufacturing in the United States.”



Garcia introduced the students who presented to the ST-IAC partner companies, and participants heard from Earth Fest guest speakers: Humberto Sanchez, former NASA mechanical engineer (Sustainability and Space) and Dr. Isaac Azuz Adeath, from CETYS Universidad (Water Hydrology).

In December 2016, UTRGV was selected by the U.S. Department of Energy to house the ST-IAC, which provides industrial assessments at no cost to local small- and medium-size enterprises focused on energy management, productivity improvements, water and waste reduction, and cybersecurity and sustainability.

Dr. Alexander Domijan, dean of the UTRGV College of Engineering and Computer Science (COEC), serves as principal investigator for the project, and Dr. Hiram Moya is co-PI and associate director for the project. The center began in January 2017 and is one of only two centers in Texas.

This new program will provide opportunities for UTRGV students to learn essential skills in assessment, which they can then apply in real world situations. Administered through the Advanced Manufacturing Office, under the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at the Department of Energy, teams located at 28 universities around the country conduct the energy audits to identify opportunities to improve productivity, reduce waste and save energy.

IACs typically identify more than \$130,000 in potential annual savings opportunities for every manufacturer assessed, nearly \$50,000 of which is implemented during the first year following the assessment.

More than 16,000 IAC assessments have been conducted to date. Upon graduation from programs such as these, about 53 percent of IAC students obtain employment for which energy efficiency or energy management is a significant responsibility.

ST-IAC companies were invited to participate in this program because of the wealth of experiences and the range of opportunities their organization could provide. Each company was invited to attend the symposium to listen and interview prospective interns as they presented their work.

Local ST-IAC partners attending included Magic Valley Electric Coop, the Brownsville Public Utilities Board, Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center (TMAC), and AEP Energy.

This year's symposium presentation were:

- “Assessment on a Valves and Control Manufacturing Facility in Harlingen, TX”
Student presenters: Anakarina Do Faial, Luisa Espinoza and Ilse Denisse Lopez.
- “Assessment on a Cold Storage and Distribution Facility in Pharr, TX”
Student presenters: Ana Alfaro, Francisco Torres and Jessica Rivera.

IAC teams include graduate and undergraduate students from several departments. The graduate students – Do Faial, Alfaro, and Torres – led the student teams. Lopez, Espinoza and Rivera are undergraduate students in the Department of Manufacturing and Industrial Engineering.

ST-IAC encourages students to participate in internship opportunities. All engineering students who presented their assessment findings at the symposium are being reviewed as potential candidates for internships with ST-IAC partners. If selected, each intern will work for the company at the EIT rate for 12 weeks during the following summer session.

In the inaugural year of the program, several teams of students conducting energy assessments represented Hispanic women engineering students who, along with their peers, are on the leading edge of exploration and represent tomorrow's leaders.

The symposium was hosted by the College of Engineering and Computer Sciences in conjunction with the Office for Sustainability on the UTRGV campuses.

CUTLINE

UTRGV students (from left) Anakarina Do Faial, Ilse Denisse Lopez and Ana Karen Alfaro were presenters this year at UTRGV's South Texas Industrial Assessment Center (ST-IAC) Symposium, speaking on “Assessment on a Valves and Control Manufacturing Facility in Harlingen, TX.” (UTRGV Photo by Eva Larraga)

MEDIA CONTACTS

Deborah.fitzwaterdewey@utrgv.edu

Writer, Office for Sustainability

Marci.Caltabiano@UTRGV.edu

UTRGV Director of News and Internal Communications / 956-665-2742