

# Vackar CHRONICLES

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley  
Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship



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*Faculty & Staff  
Achievements*

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*Student Success*

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*Community Engagement*

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*Alumni Success*

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## *November Greetings!*

With the semester well underway, we're thrilled to share the latest updates, resources, and accomplishments within our College. This month, we're celebrating academic achievements, highlighting exciting events, and sharing new opportunities for professional growth and collaboration.

As always, we deeply value your hard work and dedication to our students and our mission. We hope this newsletter serves as both an informative resource and a reminder of the impact we're making together.

Thank you for all that you do!

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# *From the Dean*

*Welcome to the Fall 2024 edition of the Vackar Chronicles, the first in my tenure as Dean of the College! It's a privilege to share the remarkable progress and accomplishments of the RCVC OBE. Our faculty, students, and staff continue to demonstrate the spirit of innovation and dedication that defines our college, reaching new heights in academic and professional excellence.*

*This fall, our faculty have achieved noteworthy recognition, publishing impactful research in prestigious journals and contributing valuable insights to academic and industry dialogues. These achievements underscore our commitment to thought leadership and the role of RCVC OBE as a knowledge hub that tackles global and local challenges.*

*Our students also shine brightly, excelling in national competitions, conducting innovative research, and deeply engaging in community service. The successes of our Enactus students at the World Cup, our Marketing students at the National Collegiate Digital Marketing Championships, and the impressive research projects of our Vackar Student Scholars are just a few examples of their talents and hard work. Through these achievements, our students are learning and leading in ways that will shape their futures and positively impact society.*

*Our dedicated staff also deserves special recognition. Their ongoing efforts ensure that RCVC OBE operates smoothly, fostering an environment where students and faculty can excel. This fall, we will honor those who have demonstrated service, teamwork, and customer support excellence.*

*We look forward to continued growth, innovation, and collaboration as we celebrate these achievements with our Advisory Committee members and all stakeholders in the Rio Grande Valley Community we strive to serve. Thank you for being part of our journey as we work together to fulfill our mission and positively impact our region and beyond.*

*Jaime Jotta*





Jose Elias Feres de Almeida  
Assistant Professor  
Accountancy

Changes in tax disclosure rules influence companies' willingness to innovate. The FASB issued a new interpretation (FIN48) that lead to more IRS scrutiny, since it requires companies to share more detailed tax-related information that affect recognition, measurement, and disclosure of unrecognized tax benefits. Because of this extra scrutiny, publicly traded companies (who must comply with FIN 48) became less likely to pursue certain types of innovation, especially smaller, incremental improvements that often have tax benefits. Researchers measured this by looking at patent applications and found that publicly traded companies filed significantly fewer patents compared to private companies and Canadian public companies after the rule change. This suggests that U.S. public companies may avoid some innovation projects if they think these will attract more attention from tax authorities.

Goldman, N., Lampenius, N., Radhakrishnan, S., Stenzel, A., & de Almeida, J. E. F. (2024). IRS scrutiny and corporate innovation. *Contemporary Accounting Research*, 41(1), 391-423. Accepted: 27 August 2023



Francis Andoh-Baidoo  
Professor  
Information Systems

Western-style digital crowdfunding platforms clash with Indigenous cultural practices when introduced to communities in Kenya. Using the Kenyan tradition of Harambee—a community-driven approach to fundraising—the study explores these cultural tensions and how Indigenous communities adapt. Through interviews, researchers found that digital crowdfunding often limits inclusive access, reduces community involvement, and weakens social bonds, reflecting a “colonial” influence on digital spaces. However, the study also highlights the resourcefulness of Indigenous users, who blend their cultural values and practices with digital tools to make crowdfunding more inclusive and culturally respectful. This work not only sheds light on how Indigenous knowledge can improve digital platforms but also offers practical insights for designing culturally sensitive crowdfunding systems that better support local communities.

Frimpong, B., Ayaburi, E. W., & Andoh-Baidoo, F. K. (2024). Harambee as a decolonial digital fundraising approach. *Information Systems Journal*, 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/isj.12559>.



Reto Felix  
Associate Professor  
Marketing

Emojis in marketing affects how consumers feel about brand messages. Specifically, it suggests that emojis can either represent ideas directly (iconic use) or stand for concepts symbolically, and this difference influences how clear and personal the message feels to consumers. When emojis are used symbolically (not just as decoration), people may find messages easier to understand and feel a stronger cultural connection to the brand. However, how well this works also depends on whether text accompanies the emojis and whether the marketer and consumers share similar backgrounds. This framework can help brands use emojis more effectively to improve message clarity and relevance for their audiences.

J Almaguer, R Felix, CM Harmeling. (July 2024).Emoji marketing: Toward a theory of brand paralinguistics. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*

Relationship-focused HR practices can boost teamwork, service quality, and reduce stress for employees—specifically nurses—in a healthcare setting. By creating a positive team atmosphere, these HR practices help employees feel motivated and connected, which improves their service to patients and helps prevent burnout. However, the study also found that nurses who feel a strong sense of purpose or “calling” in their work can maintain high motivation even if the team atmosphere is less positive. Using data from 742 nurses across 48 units in two hospitals in China, both before and after COVID-19, the research highlights how HR strategies and personal motivation interact to support well-being and performance. This insight has important implications for designing HR practices that enhance both employee satisfaction and organizational outcomes.

Li, P., Ou, Y. (E.), Li, M., Downes, P. E., & Wang, G. (2024). The effects of relational human resource management: A moderated mediation model of positive affective climate and collective occupational calling. *Human Resource Management*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22222>



Pingshu Li  
Associate Professor  
Management

Social comparison theory, which explores how people, teams, and organizations compare themselves to others. These comparisons can shape things like employees' self-esteem, team dynamics, executive decisions, and even a company's reputation. Despite its widespread use in organizational studies, there hasn't been a comprehensive summary of how the theory works and what it has uncovered. This review fills that gap by tracing the theory's background, how it operates, and highlighting issues in current research—like a focus on individual-level comparisons and neglect of subjective perspectives. The authors also offer a simpler model for understanding social comparisons and suggest ways to improve future research on this topic, making the theory clearer and more balanced in its applications.

Matthews, M. & Kelemen, T. To Compare is Human: A Review of Social Comparison Theory in Organizational Settings. *Journal of Management*. First published online August 26, 2024.

Divorce affects employees at work, a topic that hasn't been widely studied in organizational research. The authors bring together insights from various fields—like sociology, public health, law, economics, family studies, and psychology—to better understand how divorce impacts employees in the workplace. They identify three key areas of impact: how roles at work and home overlap, financial challenges that come with divorce, and changes in social dynamics at work. They also discuss common themes in the research and suggest ways to improve future studies on the topic. Lastly, they outline practical steps organizations can take to support employees going through divorce.

Kelemen, T., Matthews, M., Bolino, M., Gabriel, A., & Ganster, M. Understanding the Relationship Between Divorce and Work: A Conceptual Framework and Research Agenda. *Journal of Management*. First published online September 29, 2024.



Michael Matthews  
Assistant Professor  
Management

# High Impact Publications



**Giorgio Gotti**  
Dean  
College of Business

Gotti, G., Liu, L. J., Perez, R., & Yin, X. (2024). The Impact of Risk Disclosure Overlaps on Auditor Liability: Evidence from China. *Journal of International Accounting Research*, 23(1), 49-78.



**Jose Elias Feres de Almeida**  
Assistant Professor  
Accountancy

Almeida, J. E., & Kale, D. (2024). Firm life cycle and accrual quality. *Advances in Accounting*, 100762. Accepted 31 May 2024.



**Sedat Erdogan**  
Assistant Professor  
Accountancy

De Luca, F., Prather-Kinsey, J., Erdogan, S., & Phan, H. (2024). Cross-border listed firms' IFRS-based financial reports: Are they comparable? *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*, 45, 107207.



**Gautam Hazarika**  
Associate Professor and  
Chair Economics

Hazarika, Gautam (2024). The cultural role of rice cultivation in female workforce participation in India. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 226, 106698. Accepted August 5, 2024.



**Andre V. Mollick**  
Professor and Associate Dean  
Economics

Attílio, Luccas A., and Mollick, André V. Assessing the baseline model of WTI oil and stock returns under financial volatility and spillover effects. *Energy Economics* 2024, 135: 107643. Accepted May 18, 2024.



**Elisa Taveras Pena**  
Assistant Professor  
Economics

Taveras Pena, Elisa. An Unintended Effect of School Entrance Age: Pushing Children Ahead through Private School. *Journal of Population Economics*. Accepted October 6, 2024.



**Ghada Ismail**  
Clinical Assistant Professor  
Finance

Ismail, G. (August 2024). Awe of the blue minds: Location, corporate social responsibility, and firm value. *Financial Review*, 59 (3), 625-656.



**Monika Rabarison**  
Associate Professor  
Finance

Rabarison, M.K., Siraj., & Wang, B. (March 2024). Environmental Policy and Audit Pricing. *Journal of Business Accounting Finance*. (In-Press) and



**Siamak Javadi**  
Associate Professor  
Finance

Javadi, S., Masum, A. A., Aram, M., Rao, R.P. (Summer 2023). Climate Change Risk and Corporate Cash Holding: Global Evidence. *Financial Management*, 52, 253- 295.

Javadi, S., Osah, T. (June 2024). Credit Risk Correlation and the Cost of Bank Loans. *Forthcoming at Financial Management*.



**Murad Moqbel**  
Associate Professor  
Information Systems

Khaled, A., Moqbel, Murad, Merhi, M., Bartelt, V., & Alam, Maliha. The impact of cultural dimensions and quality of life on smartphone addiction and employee performance: the moderating role of quality of life. *Information Systems Frontiers*. Accepted September 10, 2024.



**Pingshu Li**  
Associate Professor  
Management

Li, M., Martínez-del-Río, J., Li, P., & Guthrie, J. P. (2024). Exploring the antecedents of green human resource management: A path dependence perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 181, 114743.

Li, Y., Cabano, F. & Li, P. How to Attract Low Prosocial Funders in Crowdfunding? Matching Among Funders, Project Descriptions, and Platform Types. *Information and Management*. *Forthcoming*.



**Wanrong Hou**  
Associate Professor  
Management

Su, T., Chen, Y., Yu, Y., Hou, W. On or Off: The Triggering Effect of Underperformance Duration on Cooperative Innovation. *Technovation*.



Reto Felix  
Associate Professor  
Marketing

Saravade, Swapnil and Reto Felix (September 2024). "Actor Opportunism, Social Capital and Coping Strategies in the Sharing Economy: Drivers, Outcomes and Marketing Implications." *European Journal of Marketing*, (ahead-of-print).



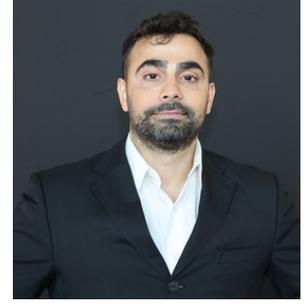
Arturo Vasquez-Parraga  
Professor  
Marketing

Poushneh, Atieh and Arturo Vasquez-Parraga (2024). "The Effect of Semiautonomous Augmented Reality on Customer Experience and Augmentation Experience." *European Journal of Marketing*, ahead-of-print (ahead-of-print).



Peter Magnusson  
Professor and Chair  
Marketing

Jung, Hyevoon, Peter Magnusson, Stanford Westjohn, Yi Peng, and Douglas Dow (2024). "Distance and Preference for Full vs. Shared Control: The Moderating Role of Decision-Maker Self-Construct." *Journal of International Marketing*, forthcoming.



Omar Itani  
Assistant Professor  
Marketing

Velasco, F., Itani, O. S., Cajina, P. C. (2024) Ecolabel Persuasion Effect Across Cultures: A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis. *International Marketing Review*, forthcoming.



Francis Andoh-Baidoo  
Professor  
Information Systems



Nan Xiao  
Associate Professor  
Information Systems

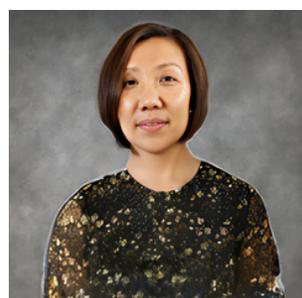


Xuan Wang  
Associate Professor  
Information Systems

Frimpong, B., Ayaburi, E., Andoh-Baidoo, F. K., Wang, X., & Xiao, N. (2024). Impact of Campaign Bundling on the Success of Donation-Based Crowdfunding. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 1-30.



Reto Felix  
Associate Professor  
Marketing



Xiaoqing Sheng  
Professor  
Marketing

X Sheng, R Murray, SC Ketron, R Felix (May 2024). "Effects of third-party observer empathy when viewing interactions between robots and customers: The moderating role of robot eeriness." *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 119, 103729



Steve Lovett  
Associate Professor  
Management

Lovett, S., Abraham, T., & Jung, J. Seven recommendations for managing projectification. *Business Horizons*. In-Press.



Joo Jung  
Professor  
Management

# High Impact Publications



Sergio Garcia  
Clinical Assistant  
Professor  
Information Systems



Chiquan Guo  
Professor  
Marketing



Russell Adams  
Associate Professor and  
Chair  
International Business



Clara Downey  
Associate Professor  
International Business



Esi Elliott  
Clinical Assistant  
Professor International  
Business

[Chiquan Guo](#), [Sudipto Sarkar](#), [Sergio Garcia](#), and [Russell Adams](#), A theory of innovation diffusion: a simulation study. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*. Accepted July 5, 2024.

[Tsetse, E. K. K.](#), [Adams, R.](#), [Elliot, E. A.](#), & [Downey, C.](#) Environmental sustainability and customer experience in emerging markets. *Business Strategy and the Environment*.



Michael Abebe  
Professor  
Management



Guadalupe Solano  
Visiting Assistant  
Professor  
Management



Mark Kroll  
Professor  
International Business &  
Entrepreneurship



Siamak Javadi  
Associate Professor  
Finance



Yu Liu  
Associate Professor  
Finance

[Abebe, M. A.](#), [Acharya, K.](#), & [Kroll, M. J.](#) (2025). It's time to speak up! investor reaction to CEO sociopolitical activism. *Journal of Business Research*, 186, 114966.

[Acharya, K.](#), [Abebe, M.](#), [Kroll, M.](#) & [Solano, G.](#) (In Press). The Executive Bully Pulpit: Drivers of CEO Sociopolitical Activism in the Wake of Social Movements. *Corporate Governance: An International Review*.

[Solano, G.](#), [Abebe, M. A.](#), & [Acharya, K.](#) (2024). CEO military experience and corporate restructuring strategies. *Journal of Business Research*, 182, 114808.

[Javadi, S.](#), [Kroll, M.](#), [Liu, Y.](#) (June 2024). The Dark Side of Competition: Evidence from Private Firms and SMEs. *Forthcoming at Financial Review*.

## Trail Blazer Award



Congratulations to **Fuat Firat, Professor of Marketing**, for receiving the **2024 Trailblazer Award from the Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators (ACME)**! Professor Firat was recognized with this prestigious award for his “lifetime of exceptional academic achievement and groundbreaking work” according to ACME. Professor Firat is an internationally recognized scholar whose research on the intersection of marketing and culture has made significant contributions to the field of marketing.

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## Khraiche Quoted in Wall Street Journal Article

**Maroula Khraiche, Associate Professor of Economics**, was quoted recently in a **Wall Street Journal article**. The spike in migrant flows at the border has attracted a significant increase in federal and state law enforcement presence. The article discussed the economic impacts of the surge in law enforcement presence at the border. Dr. Khraiche shared her expertise on the intersection between the flow of migrants at the border and economic activity. Dr. Khraiche served as the Director of the Center for Border Economic Studies (CBEST).



## Pingshu Li Honored with Associate Editor Role & Best Convention Paper Award



Congratulations to **Pingshu Li, Associate Professor of Management**, for being appointed as associate Editor of **Journal of Business Research**, a high impact journal in RCVCOBE’s list. Invitations to join an editorial team from top journals are often offered for faculty who have demonstrated excellent scholarly contributions and service to the journal. Dr. Li will be handling manuscripts in the Organizational Behavior/Human Resources section. **Pingshu Li** was also awarded the prestigious **Best Convention Paper Award at this year’s Academy of Management conference**. The award, sponsored by the Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies at Cornell University, recognized Dr. Li, along with co-authors for their paper, **It’s Different: Examining the Effect of Firm Employee-oriented HRM on Employee Downsizing Following Mergers & Acquisitions**.



### *Dr. Leon Schjoedt Recognized with Mini-Globe Award*

Business & Entrepreneurship department, was selected to receive the Mini-Globe Award from the International Council for Small Business (ICSB). The Mini-Globe award recipients represent ICSB members and non-members who are actively involved in supporting the mission of ICSB by engaging in various activities such as submitting their impactful research in ICSB journals (Journal of Small Business Management and Journal for the International Council for Small Business) and actively participate in the organization's events.

"This award recognizes individuals who, according to the website, "volunteered to help advance the principles of and, thus, the advancement of society."

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### *Economics Faculty Engage in Advanced Training at Duke University Workshop*



**Drs. Elisa Taveras and Jean Baptiste-Tondji**, Associate Professors of Economics, attended the Diversity Initiative for Tenure (DITE) workshop organized by the Samuel DuBois Center on Social Equity at Duke University. This workshop supports minority faculty's professional development. They presented their research during a three-day program in Washington, D.C., from April 2-4, 2024.



*Taiwo Abraham's Paper Included in AOM Best Paper Proceeding*



**Taiwo Abraham**, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Management, for having his paper included in the 2024 Academy of Management (AOM) Conference Best Paper Proceeding! The paper titled "Corporate Sustainability Performance and the Chief Sustainability Officer's Network Centrality" was coauthored with Gabriel Owusu and Dr. Xuan Wang. Inclusion in the AOM Best Paper Proceeding is very selective and only around ten percent of accepted conference papers in each division are selected for this honor by reviewers.

**High Impact  
Journal  
Acceptance**

Lovett, S., Abraham, T., & Jung, J. Seven recommendations for managing projectification. *Business Horizons*. In-Press.

*Showaib Sarker Received Best Paper Award at SWFA; Accepted a Tenure-Track position*



**Showaib Rahman Sarker**, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Finance received Best Doctoral Student Paper Award at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Finance Association meeting in Las Vegas, NV. The paper titled "CEO Cultural Heritage, CSR, and Firm Value" was co-authored with Dr. Ahmed Elnahas, Associate Professor of Finance. Showaib has also accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of Finance starting this fall at the University of Wisconsin-White Water.



*Md Ismail Haidar's Paper selected as semifinalist at the October 2024 FMA Annual Meeting*

Congratulations to **Ismail Haidar**, doctoral candidate in the Department of Finance. The paper by Md Ismail Haidar, co-authored with Dr. Nam Nguyen, titled "Environmental Policy and Corporate Default Risk: International Evidence," has been selected as a semifinalist for the Best Paper Award in the Corporate Finance category at the October 2024 FMA Annual Meeting.

Haidar, M. I., Hossain, S.I. (2024), Board Gender Diversity and Workplace Safety: Evidence from Quasi-natural Experiments, *Corporate Governance: An International Review*. (ABS High Impact).

Mollick, A. V., & Haidar, M. I., (2024). Carbon Emissions, Fracking, and Firm value of US oil and gas firms. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 33(3), 2462-2477. (ABS High Impact).

**High Impact  
Journal  
Acceptance**

## PhD Students with Journal Acceptances



**Krittaya Sangboon**, and Leon Schjoedt, Resilience and Small Business Performance: An Empirical Investigation, *Journal of the International Council for Small Business*, Accepted July 15, 2024.



**Doan, Gia Han**, with Chune Y. Chung and Kainan Wang, Local Environmental Organizations and Long-Term Investor Value Appropriation, *International Review of Financial Analysis* 95, 2024, 103506.



**Safzadeh, Mona** (2024), Towards a Sustainable Planet: Review of Global Environmental Politics by Kattang and Herman (2018), Markets, Globalization & Development Review (MGDR) *The Official Journal of the International Society of Markets and Development*, Vol. 8: No. 4, Article 4.



**Khaled, A.**, Moqbel, Murad (Associate Professor of Information Systems), Merhi, M., Bartelt, V., & Alam, Maliha (PhD student). The impact of cultural dimensions and quality of life on smartphone addiction and employee performance: the moderating role of quality of life. *Information Systems Frontiers*. Accepted September 10, 2024.

## Winner of Best Paper in Global Marketing Strategy Track



**Raji, Mustafa**, Peter Magnusson, and **Yuri Martirosyan** (2024), "How Emerging-Market Brands Can Overcome a Weak Country Image," accepted for presentation at the American Marketing Association 2024 Summer Conference, Boston, Massachusetts.

## Farzaneh Fouladi Received Best Reviewer Award



Congratulations to **Farzaneh Fouladi**, a PhD student in Management, for being honored as one of the Best Reviewers in the Organizational Behavior Division at the Academy of Management Annual Meeting!

## PhD Students with Conference Acceptances

[Click here to read about our amazing PhD Accomplishments](#)

*Celebrating Our 8 PhD Graduates: New Positions Await this Fall*



Md Zubair Zuven  
Accounting  
California State University  
Dominguez Hills  
*Assistant Professor*



Ai Nhan Ngo  
Marketing  
*Magnit Data Labeling Analyst*



Md Showaib Rahman Sarker  
Finance  
University of Wisconsin -  
Whitewater  
*Assistant Professor*



Suwakitti Amornpan  
Marketing  
Winston-Salem State  
University  
*Lecturer*



Deepak More  
Finance  
Le Moyne College  
*Assistant Professor*



Guadalupe Solano  
Management  
The University of Texas  
Rio Grande Valley  
*Lecturer*



Yondong Wang  
Finance  
Bowling Green State  
University  
*Lecturer*



Shuaijun Zhang  
Management  
Georgia Gwinnett  
College  
*Assistant Professor*



Societal impact is the effect that actions have on people, communities, and society. It is one of the key drivers of value creation for businesses and organizations, and according to a recent study by Deloitte Global, it can enhance brand differentiation, talent attraction and retention, innovation, operational efficiency, risk mitigation, and capital access and market valuation.

## **RCVCOBE FOCUS AREAS FOR SOCIETAL IMPACT**

Based on the socio-economic conditions in our region and the mission and strategic plan of RCVCOBE, we will focus our efforts on the following goals:

### **Focus Goal #1**

- “We are committed to fostering sustainable economic growth and development through mutually beneficial partnerships with our stakeholders.

### **Focus Goal #2**

- “We are committed to focus our efforts on UN Sustainable Development Goal #3 Good health and well-being because we recognize our responsibility to our community and our role as a vehicle for growth and good health by placing emphasis on initiatives that foster a healthy community.”

**[Societal Impact and Sustainability Annual Report 2024](#)**

# 2023-2024 Excellence Awards Ceremony

Robert C. Vackar College of Business & Entrepreneurship (RCVCOBE) Awards Ceremony was held on April 26th, 2024.

During this ceremony, the college recognized the innovative teaching, excellent scholarship, and dedicated service from our faculty. We also celebrated outstanding staff members. It was also special to recognize excellent students at the undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels.



# Faculty Excellence Awards

## Excellence in Research

Tenure Track - Geng Sun  
Tenured - Monika Rabarison

## Excellence in Teaching

Tenure Track - Xi (Marcie) Mao  
Tenured - Hong Qin  
Non-Tenure Track - Azucena Herrera

## Excellence in Service

Francis Andoh-Baidoo

## Excellence in Scholarly Leadership

Jorge Gonzalez

## Excellence in Societal Impact

Fuat Firat

## Doctoral Faculty Excellence Award

Michael Abebe

## Department

Dr. Deniz Atik (Marketing)  
Dr. Francis Andoh-Baidoo (Information Systems)  
Chef Marcel Fortuin (Hospitality & Tourism Management)  
Dr. Wanrong Hou (Management)  
Dr. Siamak Javadi (Finance)  
Dr. Sylvia Robles (Int. Business & Entrepreneurship)  
Delia Sanchez (Accountancy)  
Dr. Jean- Baptiste Tondji (Economics)





*Staff Excellence Award for Teamwork*

*Amanda Galvan*



*Staff Excellence Award for Customer Service*

*Marina Rodriguez*



*Staff Excellence Award for Work Ethic*

*Michael Ramos*



*Outstanding Undergraduate Student*

*Samuel Villarreal Yopez*



*Student Organization of the Year*

*ENACTUS*



*Outstanding Undergraduate Student*

*Fatima Mancian Mendoza*



*Outstanding PhD Student Research*

*Md Showaib Rahman Sarker*



*Outstanding Masters Student*

*Arnold Gomez*

*Masters Program Excellence Awards*

*Jesus M. Saldivar (MACC)*

*Marisella Sosa (MBA)*

*Peter Thrasher (MSGTM)*

*Luis A. Vasquez (MSBA)*

*PhD Excellence Awards*

*Khondoker Sayeed Hossain (Marketing)*

*Gabriel Owusu (Information Systems)*

*Md Showaib Rahman Sarker (Finance)*

*Guadalupe Solano (Management)*

*PhD Student Excellence Award in Teaching*

*Guadalupe Solano*

*Shuaijun Zhang*

## *NSF Grant Proposal Development Workshop*

UTRGV is focusing on enhancing its research capabilities by helping faculty secure external grant funding. To support this, RCVCOBE hosted a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant proposal development workshop. The workshop was led by Professor Tara Behrend from Michigan State University, who is also a former NSF Program Director. The day-long event covered the NSF grant funding process, steps for developing proposals, the review process, and examples of successful grant proposals.



## *UTRGV App Lab Hosts Swift Development Workshop*

On October 3, 2024, Oscar Ramos, the App Lab Manager, welcomed 13 UTRGV undergraduate students to the App Lab, located within the Center for Innovation and Commercialization (CIC). This engaging 4-hour workshop introduced students to the fundamentals of Swift development on iOS devices. They explored coding in Playgrounds, built projects in Xcode, and reinforced their knowledge through a Kahoot review session. The App Lab team was thrilled to host these students, many of whom were visiting the CIC for the first time. They look forward to welcoming them back for Intro to App Dev with Swift Level 2 in the near future. Let's Code!



## *First MDAISS Conference: Advancing Data and AI for Social Impact in Africa*

The First Annual Meeting on Data, AI, and Social Sciences (MDAISS) took place in Cameroon from June 17 to June 21, 2024. Organized by Associate Professor Jean-Baptiste Tondji from UTRGV and Dr. Marie Christelle Mabeu from Princeton University, the event brought together academics, entrepreneurs, and policymakers from various countries. They addressed challenges such as the lack of technical skills and inadequate digital infrastructure through discussions and workshops focused on sustainable business practices and data-driven decision-making in sub-Saharan Africa. Topics included AI tools for entrepreneurship, research presentations on data science, and training on AI implementation. The success of MDAISS has paved the way for future initiatives aimed at enhancing Africa's technological capabilities, driving AI-driven projects with social impact and cost efficiency. The event was supported by Princeton University, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, and the University of Yaoundé .



## *MSBA Program Innovations Highlighted at UTRGV Events*

At UTRGV's Third Annual Assessment Summit on September 27, MS in Business Analytics (MSBA) Director Murad Moqbel and Department of Information Systems Chair Bin Wang discussed how the MSBA program utilizes non-thesis assessment methods to evaluate student learning outcomes, drive curriculum improvements, and continuously innovate to deliver a cutting-edge curriculum that supports student success. Additionally, on September 20, Bin Wang, the Robert C. Vackar Professor of Business and Professor of Information Systems, was invited by the Center for Teaching Excellence to present as part of UTRGV's Teaching and Research Integration in the Classroom and Community series. In this session, she shared her innovations in the graduate curriculum, including the development of two new courses on social media analytics and her approach to integrating teaching and research through lifelong learning.



## *Xuan Wang Receives Grants for Global Collaboration and AI Research*

Xuan Wang, Associate Professor of Information Systems, was awarded a 2024 Texas International Education Fund COIL grant to foster global collaboration among students. She also received a 2024 AIM-AHEAD research fellowship to advance research on health disparities through the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning.

## Graduation Hooding Ceremony

The 2023-2024 master's hooding ceremony was held at the Student Union Theater on the Edinburg campus, celebrating graduates from the MBA, MACC, MSBA, and MSGC programs at RCVCOBE. This memorable event marked an important milestone in the graduates' academic journeys, with family and friends present to share in the celebration. Congratulations to all of our graduates—we couldn't be prouder of your achievements!





## *Second Cohort of Vackar Student Scholars Recognition*

The second cohort of the Vackar Student Scholars (VSS) program has successfully concluded their training in a poster presentation and recognition ceremony. The VSS program is designed to provide eligible RCVCOBE's undergraduate and masters students with an opportunity to conduct research projects along side faculty mentors. Students participating in VSS are competitively selected at the beginning of the academic year and conduct a research project with a faculty advisor during the academic year. They also receive a scholarship stipend. The program concludes with a poster presentation and recognition ceremony at the end of spring semester.



The VSS program is created to equip students with research skills and prepare them for a future career in higher education as well as private sector. This year's cohort include seven undergraduate and three master's students. Their research projects covered a myriad of topics including the impact of AI on learning and recruitment bias, financial literacy, management practices of small businesses as well as the link between corruption and economic growth. In preparing for their research projects, these students participated in several workshops on how to conduct literature reviews, the IRB process as well as foundations of statistical analyses. They were also introduced to the PhD program. Dr. Jennifer Welbourne serves as the coordinator of the VSS program. Congratulations to this year's VSS cohort and their faculty mentors!

## Vackar TalkX



RCVCOBE welcomed **Lynne Corvaglia** and **Christian Riquelme**, Costa Rican social entrepreneurs behind the social venture Wearsos in the Spring edition of the Vackar TalkX speaker series.



Wearsos, a company creating sustainable products from retired airline seats through Southwest Airlines' Repurpose with Purpose initiative, shared their journey in social entrepreneurship with UTRGV students, faculty, and staff. Organized by Assistant Professor of Practice Ms. Maria Leonard in collaboration with the UTRGV Office for Sustainability and VOICE, the event highlighted Wearsos' mission of empowering women from a rural Costa Rican community through training and employment.

This TED Talk-style event, facilitated through the collaboration of two dedicated RCVCOBE student organizations, brought together notable business leaders and entrepreneurs. Their stories and insights offered students invaluable opportunities for learning and networking, making it a standout event in the VCOBE calendar.

## SOA Held Annual Awards Gala



The School of Accountancy (SOA) hosted the annual awards gala at the University Ballroom on April 26th. The gala is organized by Dr. Christian Sobngwi, SOA's director, to recognize outstanding accounting students and celebrate their accomplishments along with their family, faculty and community partners. During the gala dinner, top undergraduate and graduate SOA students as well as those who received various scholarships were recognized. Local accounting firms and members of the advisory board were also in attendance.



Congratulations to SOA for bringing students, faculty and the community together and for continuing to support student engagement!



## *Marketing Students Shined at National Competition*



RCVCOBE Marketing students recently competed in the National Collegiate Digital Marketing Championships at Baylor University, achieving remarkable success under the guidance of Lecturer Michael Flores. Patricia Alanis Ramirez placed second in the individual competition, and the UTRGV team finished sixth overall, outperforming major universities like Missouri, Kansas State, Oklahoma, and Florida. Additional individual accomplishments included Kylah Cuellar's Top 4 finish in the Man vs. Machine event, Cassandra Ayala and Kylah Cuellar reaching the semifinals of the Quantum Quiz, and Patricia Alanis Ramirez winning the Instagram Viral Marketing event. Congratulations to these talented students and their mentor, Mr. Flores—we're proud of you!

## *AMA Chapter Ranked Among Top 10 in the Nation*

Congratulations to RCVCOBE's AMA Chapter for being included in the Top 10 Chapters by the American Marketing Association (AMA). The student organization was recently recognized with this prestigious honor at the AMA International Collegiate Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. We congratulate Karla Medrano-Faz (President), Ana Rosario (Vice President) as well as the other officers Emily Betran, Jocelyn Villarreal, and Brianna Martinez!



## *RCVCOBE Economic Review*

Founded this year, the UTRGV Economic Review quickly became the premier platform for showcasing undergraduate and graduate work in economics. Entirely managed by UTRGV students, it brought fresh perspectives and academic rigor to the forefront.



## *Financial Literacy Summit*



The 2024 Financial Literacy Summit, held on March 27, was organized by Dr. Jorge Vidal and Ms. Maria Leonard, both Assistant Professors of Practice at RCVCOBE. The event welcomed over 450 high school and UTRGV students, offering valuable insights into personal finance management from esteemed RCVCOBE faculty and community experts. Topics included budgeting, investing, and debt management, with the program aimed at addressing the region's high poverty rate by educating the RGV community on responsible financial practices and empowering citizens to make informed financial decisions.



Approximately 35% of the RGV population lives below the poverty line, with nearly 46% of individuals aged 18 and younger facing financial insecurity. These statistics underscore the critical need to educate RGV citizens, especially youth, on effective personal finance strategies. RCVCOBE student organizations, including ENACTUS, ALPFA, and the Economic and Finance Society, contributed to organizing this impactful event.



# RED GALA

The **RED GALA EVENT** is an unparalleled evening of celebration, designed to honor the incredible contributions and achievements of our student organizations. In the spirit of the Emmys, this exclusive event will bring together the diverse tapestry of clubs, societies, and teams that enrich our campus life, offering them a night of glamour, appreciation, and community.





## RCVCOBE STUDY ABROAD

### RCVCOBE STUDY ABROAD INITIATIVE

The College of Business at RCVCOBE encourages faculty to engage in a study abroad program to provide more international opportunities for students. This initiative is designed to enhance students' global business acumen by exposing them to diverse cultures, economies, and business practices. Participating in study abroad programs allows students to gain firsthand experience in international markets, develop cross-cultural communication skills, and build a global network, all of which are crucial for their future careers in an increasingly interconnected world.

### LOCATIONS

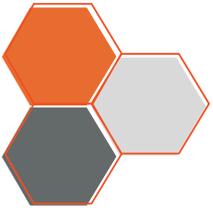


RCVCOBE's Study Abroad Program offers numerous global opportunities, engages multiple faculty members, and provides significant scholarships to support students' international business education.

The College of Business launched the RCVCOBE Study Abroad Award to encourage study abroad participation. Of the 46 eligible applicants, 27 college of business students received the \$1,000 award.

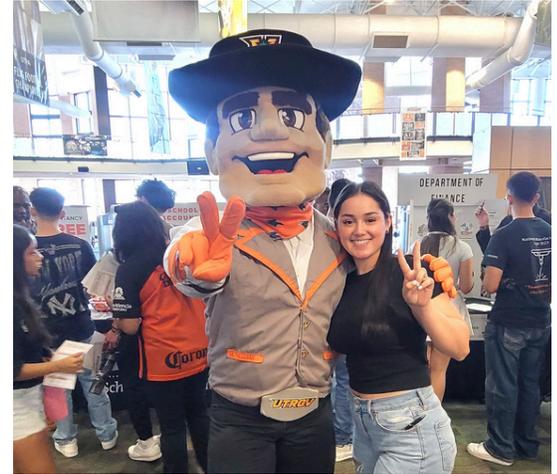
<b>Study Abroad Opportunities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Number of Faculty Advisors</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Students Enrolled</b>	<b>96*</b>
<b>RCVCOBE Scholarship Awards</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>RCVCOBE Scholarship Distribution Total</b>	<b>\$27,000</b>

## Student Success and Engagement Report 2024



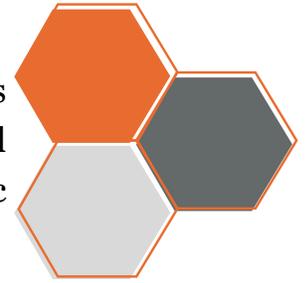
# Vaquero RoundUp

With over 1,100 attendees in Fall 2024, the Vaquero Roundup marked the final stage of New Student Orientation, connecting incoming students with RCVCOBE departments, student organizations, and university resources to set them up for a successful start.



## Welcome Week

This week-long series of activities helped students build connections with the VOICE office and start the semester with enthusiasm. A total of 157 students participated, making it a vibrant start to the academic year.



## Get Involved Fair

Drawing an impressive 431 students, the Get Involved Fair was the most-attended ever, inspiring participation in student organizations and fostering a stronger campus community.



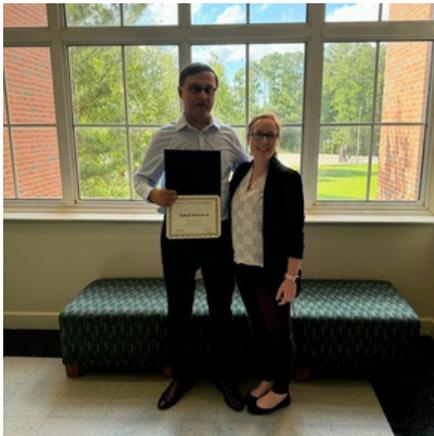
## Subhajit Chakraborty Joined Editorial Board of Elite Journal



Dr. **Subhajit Chakraborty**, a 2015 graduate of RCVCOBE's doctoral program with a concentration in Management, has joined the editorial review board of the International Journal of Operations and Production Management (IJOPM)—an esteemed journal on RCVCOBE's journal list. Dr. Chakraborty has served as an ad-hoc reviewer for IJOPM for several years and is currently an Associate Professor of Management at Coastal Carolina University (CCU). His research focuses on service quality, service design, and healthcare supply chains

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## Dr. Chakraborty Honored with Baxley Impact Award and Upcoming Service Recognitions



Dr. **Chakraborty** recently received the Baxley Impact Award, the highest applied impact honor at Coastal Carolina University, which recognizes outstanding contributions in service, research, teaching, and overall impact. Additionally, he is set to receive two more service certificates this year: one for chairing the Quality Management and Lean Operations track at the DSI National Conference in Phoenix, AZ, this November, and another for chairing the Healthcare Management, Public Sector, and Nonprofit track at the SEINFORMS Regional Conference in Myrtle Beach this October.

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## Bright Frimpong Published Multiple High Impact Articles

Dr. **Bright Frimpong**, a 2023 graduate of our our doctoral program in Information Systems, has published two articles in high impact journals. His first article titled "Frimpong, B., Mohammed, F., Larson, K. M., & Junior, H. A. (2024). Take my word for it! The role of projected certainty signaling and certainty alignment in reward crowdfunding outcomes" was published in **Journal of Business Venturing Insights**. His second article titled "Impact of Campaign Bundling on the Success of Donation-Based Crowdfunding" was published in **International Journal of Electronic Commerce**. Congratulations, Dr. Frimpong! Its wonderful to see you start your career strong!





## ABOUT RCVCOBE

[utrgv.edu/rcvcobe](http://utrgv.edu/rcvcobe)

### **RCVCOBE MISSION STATEMENT**

The Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship promotes student success and serves as a catalyst for innovation, knowledge discovery, and economic development in South Texas, Northern Mexico, and beyond. We do so by offering relevant academic programs, committing to impactful research, and fostering community engagement and sustainable partnerships in a way that supports the university's mission.

### **RCVCOBE VISION STATEMENT**

The Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship will positively impact its local and global stakeholders through the discovery, integration, application, and teaching of business-focused knowledge addressing the critical needs of society.

### **RCVCOBE CORE VALUES**

- Our Commitment to Excellence
  - Invest in our students' success by offering high quality and relevant academic programs.
- Our Dedication to Thought Leadership
  - Promote rigorous and high-impact scholarship. Improve the academic reputation of RCV
  - through impactful engagement with the scholarly community.
- Our Passion for Empowerment and Impact
  - Empower and support our students, faculty, and staff to make a difference in their communities through high impact teaching and learning practices.
- Our Role as Agents of Transformation
  - Cherish and support our positive role in the economic transformation of the Rio Grande Valley.

*Thank you for reading!*

<b>CONTACT US:</b>	  
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