

Volume 60
Issue 2
Feb. 8, 2018

DATELINE: DOWNTOWN



UHD
in
Focus



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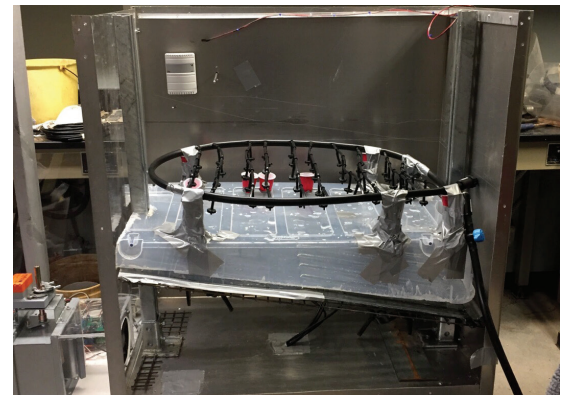


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Nazis

by Jesse Uppal

At what point is a person no longer liable for the sins of those before them? How long can someone repent for something their ancestor did before they even saw the light of day?

Poland asked this very question this year as they signed into law an extremely controversial bill that bans anyone from accusing the government from having a hand in the Nazi Regime during occupation. Many of the camps during WWII were situated within Poland and great many of the Jewish population that was executed hailed from the very same nation. The country was the first to be occupied by the Nazis in WWII, as the September blitzkrieg was the kindling that ignited the war in 1939. The nation would remain under occupation until 1941, when Germany turned its conquests back towards the east in a failed attempt to remove Stalin from power in Operation Barbarossa. The country would switch hands back to the Soviet Bloc during the Red March, after much of the damage from the Holocaust in Poland had already been carried out.

Nazi Germany annexed 22 countries during their conquest of Europe, and established concentration camps in half of them. The holocaust resulted in a record of 17 million deaths, over a third of which were of Jewish descent.

Half of the Jewish population that was executed were Polish with many of these atrocities being carried out at Auschwitz, located in Poland.

Poland's bill would effectively censor those who would speak about the atrocities within Poland. The bill was borne of concern that many Poles were not complicit in the Holocaust, with many aiding in the

escape of targeted individuals all throughout the war. The bill continues to iterate that Poles today were not responsible for what a minority population of theirs did 70 years ago and to continuously paint the country on the same canvas as their perpetrating neighbors is folly. The bill was formed by the extremely 'patriotic' right-wing based branch that currently holds majority over the country's politics, and has widespread support from those living within its borders.

People living without its borders on the other hand, are extremely opposed to the legislation and are vehemently urging Poland's government to consider revision before it is approved by their court systems. Israel in specific, has called the bill a "slap to the face" of Jews worldwide and all descendants of survivors from the diabolical era. The backlash has become so severe that Poland's position within NATO has even come under question, which would open them up to severe Russian Propaganda and a major ally in the Eastern half of Europe would be lost.

The Bill itself touches on two very specific subjects; should the Polish government (and by extension, population) suffer stereotypes and criticism

for acts carried out during the Nazi Occupation, and where does the line between nationalism and free speech become drawn. Poland practices democratic free speech just as most western countries, but reserves the right to constitutionally amend certain caveats to the rule. An example would be the anti-communist propaganda bill that was passed by multiple former Soviet nations in the late 1990s and early 2000s that prevents the people of the country from speaking about atrocities or crimes carried out during their inclusion within the Soviet Government. Many of these nations have iterated that since the Communist Party controlled everything that the current governments of these countries could not have been at fault for anything that happened from 1917-1991.

In the US, free speech is practiced in virtually every form except that in which violates criminal or civil law. A similarity of this to the Polish issue would be if someone spoke out today about the period of time following the Civil War, specifically about segregation. Whether the person that is speaking about this topic is factually correct or incorrect, they have the specified right to speak about it as they please. In Europe, speech specific to Nazis or Communists are prohibited by law in many countries.

The Holocaust may have happened in the 1940s, however the impact continues to be felt more than 70 years later today. Poland reserves the right to dictate their national free speech laws within their own borders, even when it may impact their international standings. Their policy is more directed towards denying Polish involvement in the Holocaust during WWII, rather

than the suppression of the ideas behind it. The US Congressional Primaries become a concern in this matter, as conspiracy theorists are constantly and consistently denying that the Holocaust ever happened. Many believe that the number of deaths were hyperbolic, or that they are an invention by the Jews. Arthur Jones, a candidate from Illinois, is an extreme proponent to these extreme conspiracies and a supporter of White Supremacy and the Confederacy.

The Holocaust was not only an extremely well documented historical event, the videos of the Nuremberg Trials have Nazi officers admitting to the event and gave detailed accounts of who was responsible for what, when they were responsible for it, and how they carried out their orders. Despite the irrefutable proof, conspiracy theorists continue to deny the entirety of the genocide with some even believing that is an attack on whites. The Nazis in the Trials "were just following orders". Just like Poland's bill, atrocities regularly begin as legal actions perpetrated by a government. Modern Poles did not have any culpability in the Holocaust, but to deny their country ever did is to deny those that perished.



New Course American Horror Stories analyzes Horror, American Culture, and U.S. History

by Michael Case

What horrifies you the most? Whether it is the spirits in the night, or a zombie apocalypse, America has produced some great horror stories to match its turbulent history. From the Salem witch trials to the brutality of slavery, the Civil War era to the Civil Rights era, the artists of America have used these circumstances to tell their terrifying tales to the masses. Some of their stories are based on true events while others are inspired, but one thing is clear; people want to explore their fears.

The culture of the United States and horror go hand-in-hand, according to Dr. Chuck Jackson. Dr. Jackson received his doctorate from Rice and has been teaching for 20 years, he is a scholar of horror. When he began teaching, he first designed course was on the American Grotesque. However, since last fall and up until a week for the Spring 2018 semester, he has designed American Horror Stories for UHD students. It is a study in literature, film, and the cultural history of the United States with a lens focused on horror.

This semester students will dissect everything from novels such as "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne and "Beloved" by Toni Morrison, to films like "Night of the Living Dead" (1968) and the celebrated recently released "Get Out" (2017). The horror genre has evolved over the years; 19th century gothic writers, 20th century

monster movies, books and films that aim to horrify and make one reflect on how society works. While students will not analyze Edgar Allen Poe or Stephen King this semester, nothing is off limits for the future in this course.

"Horror chose me," says Dr. Jackson, as he was vibrant and open during our interview about how the course was created and what interests him about horror and terror in media. Most individuals know the popular books and movie franchises that aim to horrify audiences. Dr. Jackson is currently researching lesser known works, experimental films of the 1970s and 1980s. Works that may not even be good or well-made, but still art in its own way. In this course, however, students will study all types of stories, some are more horrific than others and some are more popular than others but the goal remains to teach students about culture through literature and film.

Classes were full by the final registration date and if all goes according to plan, students will be signing up for not only American Horror Stories but all the great literature courses provided by the University in the future. UHD has its own Pushcart award-winning author in Daniel Peña along with dozens of other award winning and celebrated professors. The discussion of film and literary works is alive and well at UHD.

The Fashion in Business

by Angel Lopez

On January 29th, Marilyn Davies College of Business Career Center and UHD Career Development Center hosted Dress for Success in room A300 and presented the opportunity to learn about the importance of having to dress professionally when looking for careers and what dressing professionally actually means. The room was set up with two sets of chairs covering both parts of the room, and a table of food in one corner for people coming in before the event actually began. Before the models were presented to the crowd, the audience were given a small information session over what the purpose of Dress for Success was: to teach students about the proper attire they should wear when presenting themselves for the first time in an interview.

The Dress for Success event creatively presented their message through a fashion show. First to walk the stage were the female models, in order to show the audience what women should wear in the professional field that would present them as professional while still being fashionable. Each model wore dark colored shirts and

skirts that were appropriate in a business setting. Along with their dark colored shirts and skirts, they also wore matching shoes as well as jewelry they deemed acceptable since it would, once again, make it not just professional but fashionable as well. Most of the clothes each model wore and the accessories such as the handbags, were all donated. What Career Gear and Dress for Success do in order to give the individual a good and informational experience consists of two steps: first they are given a stylist who, for two hours, helps the student look for a professional outfit that best fits their liking. After the two-hour period, they

are sent to a training, where they are taught how to present themselves during an interview other than just their attire. Before exiting the stage, the audience were given a few tips when choosing their outfits and using them when looking for a job, such as: wear minimal jewelry and dark colors, one tip they emphasized the most was to never wear red.

Right after the women presented their professional clothes, it was the male models' turn to educate the audience on how they should present themselves during an interview. Just like the women, men are given a stylist, however, they are not given a two-hour period to choose a suit, they are given a stylist that finds a suit for them that

would best fit their physique. After choosing the proper suit they too are sent into a training that teaches them about the proper ways to introduce themselves that go beyond just wearing the proper and presentable clothes. Much like the women, men are given specific rules and tips about what kind colors they can and cannot wear: black and gray always work, however, a red colored suit shall never be worn

to an interview if their goal is to be taken seriously. Each model presented either a black suit with matching shoes and socks as well as gray suits with light colored pants.

Career Gear and Dress for Success acknowledge the importance of first impressions as well as wearing the proper and professional attire into a business setting, therefore, they gave each model, both the women and the men, a free suit for simply participating in the fashion show and helping them present what an individual should look like when seeking a job.



Photo by Angel Lopez

Scholar-in-Residence Spreads the Love

by Archie Gayle

Recently, the University of Houston-Downtown was graced with a series of insightful seminars meant to empower minority youth, provide new knowledge to the faculty, and change the conventions of how students are taught in the 21st century. During the week of January 30th to February 1st Dr. Bettina Love, an award-winning author and Associate Professor of Educational Theory & Practice at the University of Georgia, visited UHD to give a series of lectures on the importance of Hip Hop music in urban youth. Her goal was to enlighten the campus with her expertise in educational research, and by the reactions of the UHD students and faculty it is safe to say that she did more than succeed.

Dr. Love's lectures centered on the areas of art-based education, black and brown empowerment, Hip Hop, feminism, and queer youth. Her areas of expertise as well as the University of Houston-Downtown's student demographic, being a minority-serving institution, made her one of the most sought-after public speakers for the campus. The purpose of her lectures was to push the minority millennial culture forward. She spoke at length

about a the "civic gap" in low-income communities, where students are at an economic and societal disadvantage; in these communities of color, they are taught that in order to be successful one must work their hardest to get where they would like to be; throughout their school years, minorities are given hollow words of encouragement without the proper skills to truly succeed

in the world and be who they want to be. They look around in their community and see members who, no matter how hard they strive, never seem to advance in life. Dr. Love says that "They've always been taught that 'the system is always right.' But they were never taught to critique the system." Dr. Love challenges the way that children are taught in K-12 grades. The school systems cookie-cutter mentality, according to Love, drains students of any sort of individuality that they may come into school with. She argued that this approach to education is a major reason in why many black and brown students feel that traditional school is not for them. Throughout the week she gave several lectures where she critiqued the school systems and provided alternatives stemming from years of educational research. To the room of 200 students in UHD's auditorium, it was like someone finally acknowledged a feeling that had long been brewing in them ever-since their elementary days; to room of UHD professors, who received her lecture later in the week, it was a new view on education that more than likely made them think of their school days.

She spoke about the perseverance black and brown communities developed through free-form expression—Hip Hop culture. Modern Hip Hop has its roots in traditional African modes of expression. The only instruments were drums and percussions, over a repetitive beat with improvisation splashed throughout the song, and someone would tell a story over the

instrumental; these components still live on today in styles that have deviated in style but not expression. Dr. Love argues that magnificent abilities lie in the youth, all they need is an opportunity to express themselves. This philosophy encompasses her approach to community development—stating that members in low-income communities know how to fix community problems, they just lack the resources; it also drives her approach to education and the various programs that she has founded, such as her Hip Hop Civics Education program designed to nurture young minds. Faculty was given suggestions on how to let a student's creativity shine in the classroom, including improvisation practices; As Dr. Love says, "Improvisation is the clutch of creativity."

Dr. Love's lectures resonated with the students of UHD because it not only critiqued the flawed school systems, it also provided insightful alternatives designed to increase their productivity and critical thinking skills. After speaking to Estefania Henriquez, a UHD senior, how it felt for a student to see a professor advocating for the evolution of education at the Luncheon on Hip Hop-

Social Justice. "The moment I heard about the opportunity I was very excited because the first thing that grabbed me was 'Hip Hop culture.' And as a potential graduate student of hopefully youth culture and community dynamics, I was all about it. I was like 'I have to go to this and see what she's all about.' I was like 'this is interesting,' and the youth is definitely drawn to Hip Hop..."



Photo by Archie Gayle

People tend to underestimate the youth a lot, saying that millennials don't know what they're doing, that their lazy and don't want to work. But when [Dr. Love] speaks about it in terms of a culture that so much of the youth is drawn to, it gives so much gateway and perspective that we are more than what professors think of us; we are more than what the previous generations think of us when they generalize an entire population."

She continues to talk about how dance and art gave her a form of expression that provided moments of emotional healing. "Those are moments of emotional growth that you can't find anywhere in a textbook or in a therapist office. It's not something dictated by rules and regulations. These are kids being kids knowing that [artistic expression] is something that they need to heal. It gets me excited just talking about it, because she is a person that I aspire to be like. Not just Hip Hop culture, but with youth culture; and with the same kind of emotion as Dr. Love, who can draw people out like me who don't think that things like grad school are possible; then inspire them to think 'we know what we're doing. And we can't let rules, regulations or traditions stop us because that isn't how we're going to grow.'"

Broadening Your Horizons...Literally

by Helen Martinez



Photo by Helen Martinez

UHD had another Study Abroad Fair on January 30, and the start of a new year is an excellent time to start planning a trip to study abroad. As someone who has studied abroad and plans to continue to do so, I can say that it can be an incredible and life changing experience. It exposes students to new cultures and ideas and teaches them how to communicate with people from across the world, which is vital in many careers due to globalization. Even beyond the classroom, students learn not just about the culture they visit but also learn more about themselves along the way. It reminds us that there is a real world beyond our little bubble of reality and puts life into perspective. It is an experience that more and more students are excitedly embarking on, and in order to better prepare those students as well as encourage the more reluctant travelers, there are a few resources they should know.

There are a few different ways students can study abroad. One can take part of the UHD Exchange program, UHD Faculty Led trips, or use the services of one of UHD's many Affiliated Programs, all of which have their own unique benefits. It may seem overwhelming, but it just takes asking the right questions to figure it out, which I came to realize while at the Study Abroad Fair.

The Study Abroad Fair centered around the UHD Affiliated Programs who had representatives speak one on one with students interested in their programs. In attendance was the SOL Education Abroad Program, International Studies Abroad (ISA), School for International Training (SIT) Study Abroad, Academic Programs International (API), Center for International Studies (CIS) Abroad, Knowledge Exchange Institute (KEI), Instituto Cervantes with the Universidad Nebrija, University Studies Abroad Consortium (USAC), and finally the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS). All programs had wonderful customizable offers for students, including UHD specific scholarships. In fact, a few programs such as USAC, AIFS, and CIS stressed the significance of accessibility and affordability and took steps to ensure that students are able to get the financial support they need to study abroad. USAC, the only nonprofit program, specifically was very adamant about helping low income students experience cultural immersion in unique locations worldwide. Of course, all programs offer cultural immersions, sometimes in the form of free time to explore the surrounding environment and other times in the form of volunteering in the area. Either way, there are many other factors to look at, as SIT, ISA, and KEI pointed out. They emphasized quality in the classrooms and internships, while still others, such as the Universidad of Nebrija and SOL Education Abroad, focused on the experience of living in a foreign country. It all depends on what the student wants. There are options out there; they simply take some sorting out.

In addition to the UHD Affiliated Programs were the Faculty Led Trips. In general, these are recommended for those who are traveling abroad for the first time as they are led by the very professors from our school. Students can experience new environments and cultures with their peers and make life-long friends in the process. A few upcoming opportunities would be the Community Engagement trip to Ecuador this Spring Break. There is also the Children's Literature Tour of England, the UHD Trip to Cuba, and the College of Business Study Abroad in Switzerland in May. There has been a last-minute trip added to the list for May that was only recently approved. Dr. Blumberg will be leading a trip to Greece in late May for her Math 1301 students. Then this summer, there is the UHD trip to Ghana, West Africa, the UHD Social Work trip in Costa Rica, the CHSS Study Abroad in Italy this July, and the UHD trip to Costa Rica. Even here at our school, there are a variety of options for students willing to study abroad.

There was plenty of information offered, but for those who were unable to attend, each UHD Affiliated Program has their own website which is linked to on the UHD website on the Office of Study Abroad page. On this page, there is also more information for the UHD Exchange Program and the Faculty Led Trips. The Assistant Director of the Office of Study Abroad, Elizabeth Huskin, is also an excellent resource for questions on studying abroad, and her contact information is on the page as well. Any student even remotely considering studying abroad should search through the page for a wealth of information and links. It is a very good place to start. For one, there is even more information on all of these trips and on the UHD Exchange program in places such as France, Finland, Spain, and Poland.

Not only this, but there is also information on the UHD Study Abroad Travel Award, which is recommended for all students traveling abroad to apply. There is also an entire page of links for scholarships and grants specifically for studying abroad. The most popular one would be the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, which was mentioned by many representatives at the Study Abroad Fair, and requires that the student be a U.S. citizen, current Pell Grant recipient, and enrolled in a study abroad program that is at least three weeks in length. This is just one scholarship that could be used to fund study abroad.

A little research can work wonders for anxiety about studying abroad, even if the first step is glancing at the Study Abroad page on the UHD website. It is a process. Figuring out the logistics of studying abroad can be stressful but speaking with a representative of a study abroad program as well as students who have studied abroad before can help ease your mind and decide which trip is the right one for you.



Photo by Helen Martinez

Student Involvement Day

by Delia Leal

Every semester, the University of Houston Downtown has their annual tradition allowing for the student organizations to have their time in the spotlight. Our commuter school grants an opportunity to students to check out a variety of clubs, sororities, fraternities, and organizations. This spring semester came with a splash of fun especially with many rodeo references and it

works to remind students to look forward to the semester itself. The main attraction of the event was the mechanical bull giving you a chance to practice ahead of time before rodeo season. Yeehaw! Speaking of the rodeo, the International Business Association had a raffle going on to win a pair of Blake Shelton tickets. UHD is inclusive with



Photo by Delia Leal

Greek life by representation of the following:

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Omega Delta Phi Fraternity, Phi Alpha Sorority, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority. The Campus Activity Board keeps you socially engaged with many entertaining events. And our own Student Government Association remains present to help improve

campus life for students in any way possible. The Stand Out Organization brought awareness to promoting safe sex practices. Our Black Student Association was in representation of how diversity is essential to our growing city. The American Marketing Association showed their true colors with making sure our marketing majors are getting the best experiences. Engagingly, the Asian Student

sociation gave a ton of upcoming events such as Lunar New Year, which is a day of fun, prosperity, and love. Fandom UHD Organization has plenty of opportunity to become tuned in with anything involving comics to video games and even anime. The Professional Society of Criminal Justice Students emphasizes how important it is to

undergraduate students as an understanding in how our justice system plays a vital role in keeping our communities safe. The Pre-Law Association allows students to get on board with how to get into a legal career, and what it all entails to be a successful law student. Overall the event was a hit with tons of information for our gators.

Blood Drives on Campus

by Jesse Uppal

Blood drives at UHD returned for the first time after hiatus placed in 2016. 97 members from the UHD Campus came out and saved lives simply by donating a part of themselves for the greater good. Whole blood, platelets and plasma were all extracted by Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center with a variety of rare and/or universal blood types were identified.

SGA established the intent to host blood drives at General Assembly in November, a worked diligently in trying to make at least two happen during the spring

semester to make up for the time lost in the fall semester. SGA has set a tentative date for the beginning of April, and hope to confirm the official dates in the near future and begin marketing. In March, SGA will be hosting a health week that will hit a variety of different health topics that students are generally affected by, which will then be ended by a massive concert on the north deck. The week will take place just before spring break, with a significantly diverse number of speakers, fairs and other sessions taking place over the four day period.

The first day of the drive was held in C-100, with four donation cots set up. The second day took place in N-420 and received much more foot traffic, prompting the

Drive Center to set up an extra donation cot. The goal for the drive was to collect 25 donations on the first day, and 35 on the second day. With only six days to advertise the event, the drive was able to collect the target of 27 on the first

day and a whopping 70 donations on the second.

The donation process was a simple one, the student/staff/faculty would enter the room and sign up using a physical sheet. They would then go through a brief interview process that would get their height, weight, iron levels, and personal information that may

affect their donation status. The donors would then be sat down onto the one of the cots, laid back, and the needle would be inserted to begin the extraction. The process took an average of about 15 minutes, with an additional 15 minutes of rest that followed it. The donor would then be given snacks, drinks and a special t-shirt for their sacrifice.

Dean of Students Samuel Santos and Director of Student Activities Tremaine Kwasikpui were instrumental in getting the blood drives approved and processed in a timely manner. Thanks to their efforts, lives will be saved from the donations and UHD will be able to continue hosting blood drives to come.



Photo by Jesse Uppal

Tide Pods: The Forbidden Fruit

by Christopher Joseph

In this day-in-age, everyone wants to become famous. Some achieve fame through years of hard work and dedication, honing their talents until they get recognized by some major big wig. However, not everyone wants to work hard to become famous, some will ingest deadly chemicals all for the sake of fame.

Originally, starting out as a simple and harmless meme, eating Tide pods has become the new “challenge” among children, teens, and even adults. This “challenge” has teens put a Tide pod in their mouths and then biting down until the chemicals pour out from pod, thus spitting out the Tide pod while reeling in displeasure of the taste.

Since the laundry detergent device features vibrant colors and a squishy casing, it gives off an appearance of a chewable candy. Many have dubbed the detergent as the “forbidden fruit”. It is because of their appearance that so many people are eating Tide Pods.

Tide pods are incredibly poisonous, and it is common knowledge that they should not be played with, let alone eaten. According to Aleguas, Florida Poison Information Center, children and teens can aspirate on the liquid by inhaling it into their lungs, which will make them ill and cause major changes in their blood pressure and heart rate, losing consciousness, or giving them seizures. “This is what the world is coming to. We have to literally tell teenagers not to eat laundry detergent... This whole thing is just sad and dumb,” said UHD student Cory Simmons.

According to information from the American Association of Poison Control Centers, in 2017 alone, nearly 220 teens were exposed, and about 25

percent of those cases were intentional. Now in 2018, data shows that 37 cases have been reported of teens ingesting poison—half of them were intentional.

Glozell Green, a YouTuber who has amassed over 4 million subscribers and is known for doing these “challenges,” recently posted a video of herself eating a Tide pod and violently vomiting on video. YouTube quickly removed the video claiming that it went against their terms of service on harmful and dangerous content.

A spokesperson for Procter & Gamble, Tide’s parent company, said in a statement provided to TIME, “They should not be played with, whatever the circumstances, even if meant as a joke. Like all household cleaning products, they must be used properly and safely.”

Tide has been on a crusade to stop this “challenge” from spreading any further. In a twitter video posted by Tide themselves,

New England Patriots’ Rob Gronkowski is shown advising people the proper use Tide pods for laundry, and instructing that Tide pods are not to be eaten.

In an effort to stop more people from eating Tide pods, other companies have resorted into making edible “Tide pods.” There are Tide pod drinks with food coloring, cupcakes with frosting that resembles the vibrant colors of the Tide pods, and even actual edible candy Tide pods can be made. All of these alternatives are far safer and better tasting than eating laundry detergent. To report exposure to laundry detergent pods, call the national poison hotline at 1-800-222-1222 or text POISON to 797979 to save the number on your phone.



Flu Season

by Kara Moore

According to data collected by Walgreens, Texas leads the nation in flu outbreaks. With the recent deaths across the country due to a particularly potent mutated strain of influenza which made the vaccine this year only 10% effective, this means Texas is in for big trouble. According to the Houston Chronicle, five flu related deaths have happened in the region so far and according to the CDC, it has been killing around 100 people a week since mid-December 2017. Influenza, often brushed off and assumed to be something you can get over at home, needs to be taken more seriously this season.

The strain is called H3N2 and has been dubbed the “Aussie flu”. The reason it is deadlier than flu strains of the past is because each year influenza mutates and becomes resistant to the vaccine of the year before, which is why doctors recommend getting the vaccine every year. Even if you have the flu or have encountered it, getting the vaccine means that you are still at a lower risk than without it. One of the common misconceptions is that when you get the vaccine, you get the flu, but this is generally not true expect in cases of people with compromised immune systems who therefor do not receive any vaccines at all.

As the outbreak continues, there have been a lot of conversations surrounding the relevance of working

and going out while possibly infected. For example, the Washington Post published an article titled “Going to work with the flu isn’t rugged – it’s reckless. You know who you are.” With the flu killing mostly children and older people, as well as people with weak immune systems, if you can stay home while sick then you should. It is important to note that many hourly jobs do not include sick days and for

people living paycheck to paycheck, every day missed is necessary funds lost. Even then, please be aware of hygiene while at work and notify employers of any illness so that the appropriate decision can be made regarding whether a person should or should not work. The best way to avoid having to lose wages is to receive the vaccination, even at its currently low effectivity, because it can still reduce the severity of the

flu. It does not require insurance to receive the vaccination and it is relatively cheap, ranging anywhere from \$15 to \$40. You can get the vaccine at your family doctor or almost any pharmacy. Costco Pharmacy is often the cheapest and doesn’t require a Costco membership to receive.

At the UHD Health Clinic, you can receive the flu vaccination for only \$20, on a walk-in basis during regular hours. Considering flu season generally lasts through May, don’t wait Gators and get your shot today.



Water on the Red Planet!

by Delia Leal

Mars, also known as the red planet, has the potential to possibly be our second home or at least an emergency water source. Scientists have found ice buried beneath the surface of the planet, aligning well with its geologic history. A few billion years ago the planet unbelievably harbored oceans of water despite its current arid and dry state. At least that is how it appeared on the surface until NASA's reconnaissance orbiter found contrary evidence to the matter. Images of water flowing periodically through the planet has been captured. Quickly reinforcing the theories of water ice being sealed underground Mars, despite the average temperature is a more than chilly negative 81 degrees Fahrenheit.

While it is possible that NASA could plan a human mission to Mars for the purpose of extracting water from the environment, it can be challenging and extremely costly. NASA is constantly innovating their equipment and spreading that innovation to future leaders. UHD currently hosts a group of students creating a design of a bio inspired system to cultivate resources in a Mars-like environment for The NASA University Student Design Challenge. Keeping in mind that 96 percent of Mars's atmosphere is made up of carbon dioxide, the planet is far from being hospitable to humans and being able to maintain an ecosystem with usable vegetation. The NASA University Student Design Challenge is nationwide for junior and senior undergrad STEM majors in accredited universities. This year's group of students at UHD are taking on the Natural Science challenge as it best fits the group's overall interests. The challenge gives the scenario of it being the year 2050 and the earth is no longer sustainable therefore government wants to establish settlements throughout the solar system. The multidisciplinary view of the challenge allows the diverse group to be able to come up with an efficient and as an inexpensive design as possible to present.

Unfortunately, the cap is nine students to makeup the group but each student distinctly contributes to the challenge, individual puzzle pieces creating a master piece. The team ranges from three chemistry majors, a geoscience-chemistry major, a computer science major, a mathematics major, a software and electrical engineering major, a biochemistry biology major, and finally a biology major. Each student has their own specific role pertaining to their major to complete the challenge as efficiently and effectively as possible. Miguel Bustamante, one of the chemistry majors, has taken charge and manages the whole challenge to ensure that everything is running adequately to meet the deadlines. Moises Nunez (computer science) and Ignacio Hernandez (math) work together to test the sensors of the prototype. Records and photography's of the project are also handled by the Hernandez. Aside from Bustamante, Aaron Torres (chemistry) and Andrew Cline (chemistry) were assigned conventional roles. Torres has to focus on finalizing the power source in order to

maintain life on Mars. This involves figuring out different combinations of power sources such as nuclear power, solar power, biofuels, and power storage. Cline is in charge of discovering the best possible way to store the central gases in order to avoid a hazardous atmosphere. In order to keep a line of communication between Earth and Mars, Skylar Hoffert (engineering) intends to make it possible through the use of radio waves and antennas. Hoffert is also in charge of developing an electrical system. The plant development portion of the assignment was granted

to Jordyn Stanek (biochemistry) to ensure the plants are healthier for people and produce the best possible biofuel. For there to be vegetation, the environment must be stable which falls to Trung Le (biology) who is not only in charge of regulating plant growth but also the micro-environmental issues such as soil sustenance and

therefore general environment regulation.

There can never be too many environment regulators when dealing with such hostile conditions. In creating similar conditions to Mars, Julio Enriquez (geoscience) took the opportunity to travel to Peru to collect soil from the Sechura Desert, since it best resembles Mars' harsh conditions. The prototype currently stands as a greenhouse with its own irrigation system. The project is divided into two parts, theoretical design and the prototype design. The prototype design consisting of the actual reproduction of the Earth's biosphere on Mars through the use of the soil replicating Mars's conditions and the vegetation to be as similar to Earth's environment. The group is certainly commendable, as they work long and late hours to construct the prototype quickly. After all, time is of the essence since they need to have a growth time of at least two months with the plants.

Among the competition, UHD is the only public institution in Texas participating. UHD is also one of only seven that are participant in this nationwide challenge. This demonstrates UHD's team true dedication and perseverance in the rigorous task of the time consuming project. The experience gained is invaluable, as it sets them apart for having the abilities to run a research project commendably. This major opportunity can open many doors for them by giving them something to showcase that helps them stand apart from others. They have stepped out of their comfort zone by collaborating as a group to complete a rigorous project.

If you are a student with such interests it would be a great opportunity to acquire work experience and even knowledge of extraterrestrial life. If so you can reach the leader of the group at Bustamante.Michael320@gmail.com

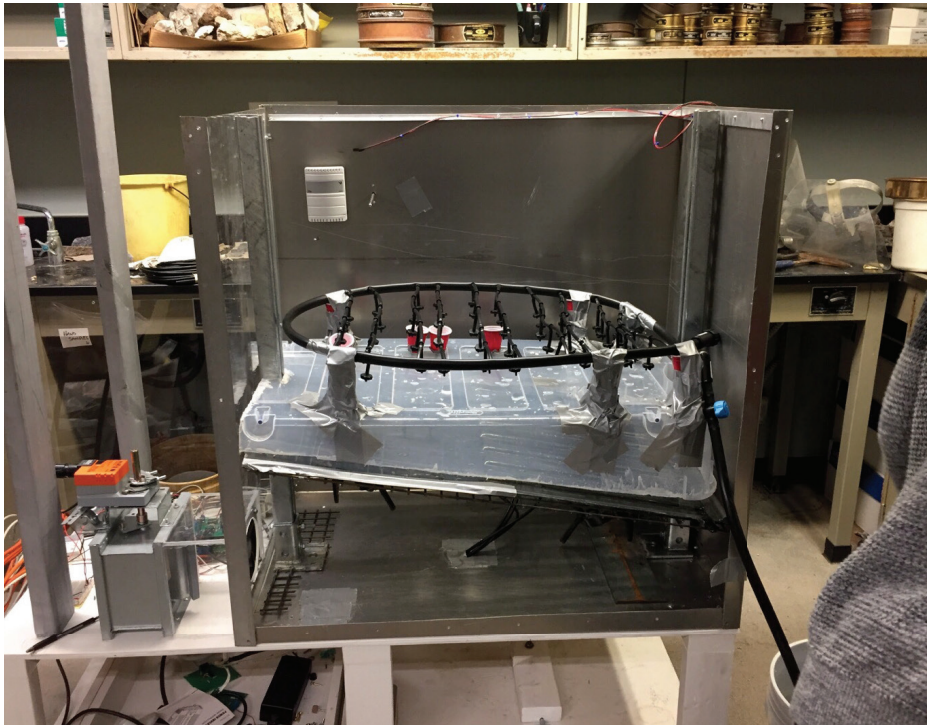


Photo by Delia Leal

State of the Union: New Legislative Proposals

by Paula Cano

The state of the Union, one of the most important speeches assigned to a president was full of anti-immigrant rhetoric. It was appalling to see President Trump use the pain of family members to justify his proposed immigration policies who have lost their children due to gang activity by MS-13. Trump used the state of the union as a platform to generalize the immigrant community as gang members, and discredit the dreamer movement referring to Americans as “dreamers too”. The anti-immigrant show put on by Trump at the state of the union obstructs the previous bipartisan negotiations before the government shutdown to come up with an absolute permanent fix for Dreamers while also giving in to border security talks. During his address to the nation, you had various attendees not clapping, or showing the president any type of gratification for his accomplishments during his first year in office. While gang activity is a problem, it should be immediately addressed and belonging MS-13 members should be processed according to the criminal justice system, it is not right to equate the immigrant community to the abominable Central American hate group. Trump described it as a ‘four-pillar bargaining bill.’ This bill of “love” includes a pathway to citizenship for childhood arrivals, or DACA, funding for his wall across U.S and Mexico border, and eliminating the lottery visa system and regulations to chain immigration. 1.8 million people would be granted a gradual amnesty, in this deal DACA recipients would have a ten-year to a twelve-year waiting period to apply for citizenship, if they hold a clean criminal record and paid taxes, sources claim. Appropriating funding for his wall comprises of a fee of 1.6 billion for physical barriers, and 1.1 billion for technical measures, such as screening, border access to roads. The bill would prevent Dreamers from legally from

sponsoring their parents for citizenship. This bill would also curtail the number of people who can apply for the lottery visa that aims to promote diversity and would instead create a new system of merit-based visas for underrepresented countries. These people would have to speak English, have an education and there would be a work requirement. He also encouraged Congress to unite and leave politics to the side, all the while using the border wall and the chain immigration limitation as policy tools to satisfy his political base. In truth, now is the time to see leadership among the Democrats. Questions linger if Democrats will give in too fast to this four pillar bargain instead of their initial focus which was the two pillar bill that included funding for the wall in exchange for a pathway to citizenship for dreamers who are also American, and deserve to stay in the only country they know. After hearing the Trump speech it was hard to add a humanitarian value to his proposed policies, although he went by the teleprompter and acted “presidential”. The message, the same message we have heard ever since his campaign trail was still burning, was charged with animosity towards immigrants, he was still able to transmit this in a “presidential” way. It is not just him behind this, it is an entire think-tank that his administration is equipped and they are aiming to put the immigrant community down. It is bittersweet for many Dreamers to realize the original Dreamers, their parents, are still going to remain in the shadows and would have no option but to either auto-deport or maintain an undocumented status. While many Dreamers reaction was to agree with his proposals at first glance, it will remain as an incomplete feeling, judging that with the elimination of the lottery visa, and strict regulations to chain immigration would fuel Trump’s radical immigration agenda

Estado de la Unión: Nuevas Propuestas Legislativas

by Paula Cano

El estado de la Unión es el discurso más importante que se asigna al presidente de los Estados Unidos. Se refiere a los logros obtenidos en el primer año de su administración actual; este año se reflejó un ambiente anti-inmigrante. Fue aterrador ver al presidente Trump usar el dolor de una familia estaba recientemente pasando el duelo de la pérdida de su hijo por culpa de actividad pandillera que son los MS-13 para justificar su propuesta migratoria. Trump uso este discurso como plataforma para generalizar como personas no gratas y peligrosas a la comunidad latina, también descreditando al movimiento de los soñadores manipulando la palabra ‘los americanos también tenemos sueños’, es un comentario fuera de texto sin bases y bajando la posibilidad de cumplir los sueños de los niños que llegaron a este país y todo lo obtenido es con trabajo y obstáculos pero con gran constancia y luchando por ser mejor ciudadanos.

El show político de Trump en el estado de unión es un paso atrás a las negociaciones bipartidistas para concluir un arreglo permanente para los soñadores que incluye seguridad fronteriza, algunos miembros de su audiencia no compartieron su discurso maquillado y no aplaudieron sus propuestas migratorias y ejemplos como anteriormente se mencionó. Sabemos que la actividad pandillera es un problema social y debería ser solucionado de inmediato y miembros de la pandilla MS-13 deben ser juzgado ante la justicia criminal y castigarlos con todo el peso de la ley. El partido Republicano ofrece una solución permanente a los soñadores que se basa en cuatro pilares que incluye un camino de la ciudadanía, y también invertir en el muro de Estados Unidos y México igual eliminando el sistema de visa de lotería regulando la cadena de inmigrante 1.8 millones sería otorgados una amnistía gradual que su tiempo sería de 10 a 12 años para obtener una ciudadanía, para el muro el presidente solicita 1.6 billones de dólares y 1.1 billones para adquirir tecnología para seguridad fronteriza. Los soñadores expresan su no acuerdo porque sus padres fueron sus pioneros y gracias a ellos están cumpliendo con sus logros, metas y con el sueño de obtener una carrera y el mejor ejemplo

de perseverancia y trabajo duro no van a tener la posibilidad de un permiso y amnistía y sabemos que se lo merecen. Esta acción legislativa puede disminuir ‘la visa de lotería’ el propósito de esta visa es promover la diversidad y ahora Trump propone que este modo de visa ahora debe ser a base de méritos y se le otorgaría a países menos representados con los requisitos, hablar inglés, una educación superior y con requisitos de trabajo. Trump presiona al congreso que trabajen unidos y no manejar la política, es un poco irónico porque el exigiendo condiciones como su muro y regulaciones a la cadena migratoria el está usando su política e ideas republicanas no permite avances bipartidistas.

Es tiempo de ver un líder demócrata, este partido se encuentra entre la espada y la pared si ellos compartieran las ideas de Trump se notaría un descenso en sus ideales y propuestas del partido, La propuesta inicial del partido demócrata era obsequiar un camino seguro para la residencia a los soñadores y asegurar la frontera. Es importante recordar que los soñadores tienen derecho de quedarse en Estados Unidos porque es el único país que ellos conocen, aquí han estudiado y le aportan con positivismo, respeto de sus leyes e historia. Fue difícil encontrar un valor humanista al discurso de Trump y sus propuestas que el mismo aplaudía. Muchos hablan que el actuó de un manera presidencial, cual nos deja saber que su gabinete de igual están detrás de sus propuestas y nos manifiesta que no esta actuando solo, su administración esta equipada con odio antinmigrante y con es aptitud baja la moral de la comunidad latina es dulce amargo para los soñadores saber que sus papas no van a tener una oportunidad legislativa para obtener un camino legal en este país por el cual vinieron a buscar un futuro mejor, aunque a primera vista esta propuesta para los soñadores suena como una buena opción pero sería un sentimiento incompleto considerando que la eliminación de lotería y regulaciones de la cadena migratoria va energizar la administración de Trump y sus ideas radicales antinmigrantes

Chains of Today

by Naomi Cardwell

According to the U.S. Justice Department, Houston is one of the largest hubs for trafficking in the United States, but the stories of trafficking aren't always what you would expect. On February 8, 2016 a couple was arrested for forcing a 38-year-old Nigerian woman to work as a slave. The couple named Chudy and Sandra Nsobundu, both in their 50s, were charged with forced labor, visa fraud, withholding documents and conspiracy after allegedly enslaving the Nigerian woman to work as a nanny to the couples five adopted children. In 2012, Mrs. Nsobundu contacted the victim who lived in Lagos, Nigeria, through a mutual friend. Sandra asked the Nigerian woman if she would come to the U.S to nanny her five children. The children ranged from 3 to 21. The youngest two both being 3 years old. The three oldest being 9, 12 and 21 years old. The victim signed a contract to perform the duties for what she thought was going to be the earnings of 100\$ a month. The Nigerian woman travelled using a fraudulent identification paid for by Nsobundus.

When she arrived to the home located in Katy, Texas the couple denied her of all her belongings and made her throw away all of her clothes. They made her sleep on the floor because they claimed she was "too stinky" to sleep on a bed. Her work day started at 5:30am and ended at 1:00am every day. She was allegedly not allowed to sit through out her work day and was only allowed to eat left over food or use the milk from left over cereal for her tea.

The victim was also physically abused by Mrs. Nsobundu who hit her for holding the children the "wrong" way. Mrs. Nsobundu also hit her in the face with her slipper because she dressed the two youngest children in the wrong socks. Along with physical abuse, she was also verbally abused and was referred to as an "idiot". She was not allowed to take a bath in warm temperature; Mrs. Nsobundu would go and check her water from time to time to make sure she was not using all the hot water and only using cold water.

In October 2015 the victim gained access to a phone

and called her bank in Nigeria and found out she had not been paid since the time she arrived in the U.S. The woman fled the house with assistance from a case manager from the YMCA International Trafficked Persons Assistance Program and was taken to a women's shelter after. The Nsobundus each faced a total up to 60 years in prison and \$1 million in fines. They were only recently sentenced in January 2018, to seven months jail time, seven months house arrest, and to pay the victim \$121,000 in restitution.

Speaking with Professor Pfeffer, who is an assistant Professor of criminal justice at the University of Houston-Downtown and researching this case of forced labor, it is understood the need for community awareness when coming to labor trafficking victims. Professor Pfeffer participated as a Research Associate at Northeastern University's Center for Criminal Justice Policy Research and managed two National Institute of Justice-funded studies about human trafficking. The first one being about the barriers to the successful identification and prosecution of human trafficking cases in the United States, and the other one was about the experiences of labor trafficking victims in this country. Professor Pfeffer made it a point to address that "The best thing students can do is to learn about human trafficking and to learn the signs of trafficking. A lot of people imagine that human trafficking is like what we see in movies like Taken or television shows where a victim is kidnapped and held by physical force and then forced into prostitution. In reality, human trafficking cases rarely happen this way. It is a crime that is significantly hidden, regularly in plain sight. You might not know a person is being trafficking just by observation alone, but there are questions you can ask to better understand whether they are a potential victim. You might ask whether they are paid a fair wage and able to keep the money that they earn, whether they are able to leave their job and do something else if they want to, and if they are not an American citizen, whether they have access

to their own visa documentation. Students should also know to call the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-3737-888 if they want to report potential victimization, even if they are not sure. This hotline is run by an antitrafficking non-profit, not law enforcement."

She also states that she would "hope students know that if anyone they know is being victimized, they have special rights under law to be treated as victims and not offenders. This is true even if they have been involved in illegal activity such as prostitution or being in the country without proper documentation. Therefore, do not be afraid to call the hotline if you know someone who has been victimized!"

There is a website that the city of Houston offers to educate people what they need to know about human trafficking and how to end modern day slavery in Houston and all over the world. This website is powered by Google Translate and is offered in several different languages. It also has videos, plans, toolkits, legal referrals, checklist, events and many other things in order to help victims of human trafficking and modern-day slavery, along with raising an awareness. The website is Humantraffickinghouston.org. University of Houston-Downtown students, there are ways to advocate for our city and the people in it. The first step in doing so, is learning. Do your part by learning about what is happening in our city and in our world. Let us all start there.

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Advice from Your Typical Student

“I have been a student at UHD for two years now and I told myself that I would get more involved this year. What are some clubs or organizations that you recommend?”

I know of a lot of great organizations on campus ranging from activist-based organizations such as the Texas Freedom Network (TFN) to organizations geared towards certain majors like the Professional Society of Criminal Justice Students (PSCJS). Finding an organization to become involved in depends on where your interests lie. Do you like to volunteer? Are you an animal lover? Is anime something that you find yourself thinking about often? All of these are questions that can jumpstart your journey into finding a club or organization that best suits you. Rather than suggesting some organizations without fully understanding your personality, I would like to challenge you to explore the numerous organizations that are on campus and find one that you think you'd be interested in.

You can find the majority of available organizations at UHD on Gatorsync, the website that the university uses to stay connected to its students. In addition to organizations, you can also find university updates, event announcements, and other helpful information. Word of caution: Some organizations may be listed on Gatorsync, but they may be inactive so be sure to check if the organization has been active lately. Other than that, the world of organizations is yours to choose from. You may even find that after doing some research that no organization on campus is exactly what you are looking for. Fear not, if there is no club that caters to individuals who like to cuddle with puppies while wearing onesies and watching Black Mirror, all at the same time, then you can make a club that does just that. All you need is five buddies, some onesies, some puppies to cuddle, a way to watch Black Mirror, and approval from Student Activities. Cuddling is non-negotiable.

On another note, I am very glad to hear that you are interested in becoming more involved with the UHD community. I know that it can be very easy to come to school, go to class, and then immediately go home once class is done for the day. Especially since this is a commuter campus. It takes a lot of willpower to not automatically start walking to your car once that last class of the day is done (if it is earlier in the day), but I think that once you become

more involved you will see that being involved can transform your entire college experience. Getting involved on campus and in your community, can:

- help you build a sense of community and find your place
- spark an interest that you didn't know you had
- further develop interests that you were already aware of
- increase your awareness and experience with diverse groups of individuals
- help you build networking connections with others

Research also shows that individuals who are more involved on campus and in the community, tend to do better in their studies. Why?

- they can sometimes make real life connections to classroom concepts (which is why some teachers push for service learning projects)
- since they make connections and form networks via engaging with their campus, those connections can act as a support system in hard times making it less likely for them to slack in their work, drop out, or transfer
- in connecting with their campus and community they might discover resources that they were previously unaware of
- being involved requires organization and time management, skills that apply to the classroom

So get out there and join that organization or start that club!

The world is yours and UHD organizations would be glad to have you. Note: You can sometimes find various clubs “tabling” or sitting in common traffic areas so that they can bring attention to their club. One suggestion would be to stop by that clubs table and see what their organization is all about.

Questions? Comments? Would you join a club that is geared towards individuals who like to cuddle with puppies while wearing onesies and watching Black Mirror (all at the same time)? Let me know at

typicalstudentadvice@gmail.com.

Signing Off,

Just Your Typical Student



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