

# **Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi**

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Coastal Bend Innovation Center Presents First Innovation Awards**

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – The Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi presented the first “Innovation Center Awards” during a recent advisory board meeting. The awards were presented by Dr. Moustafa Abdelsamad, dean of the College of Business and the chairman of the Center Advisory Committee, and Corpus Christi Mayor Joe Adame.

In 2009, the University’s College of Business established the Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center to stimulate job growth by encouraging entrepreneurial economic development of companies that, once established, are committed to remaining in the Coastal Bend. The awards will be presented each year to recognize extraordinary effort and contribution in the goals of the Innovation Center by faculty, students and clients.

The “Faculty of the Year” award went to Dr. Janet Tillinger, an accounting professor and the University’s former Ennis S. & Virginia C. Joslin Endowed Chair in Accounting, and department chair at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. Throughout the year, the Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center’s client companies benefited from Tillinger’s expertise in the development of various funding applications. During the past year, she assisted in the submission of more than \$1 million in grants and \$695,000 in private funding for Innovation Center clients.

The “Student of the Year Award” was shared by Etienne Couret, Master’s in Business Administration, and Gabriela Manciu, Master’s in Accounting. Both graduate assistants, the first hired on by the Innovation Center, played a critical role in setting the standards by which all subsequent students have had to follow. Manciu has accepted a position with a local tax CPA firm and Couret is moving to Chicago, Ill., to work in international business while his wife completes her law degree from Northwestern University.

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“Both Couret and Manciu put forth outstanding effort and collaborated with other students throughout the year assisting client companies and process development for the new Innovation Center,” said Richard Bell, interim director of the University’s Business Incubator.

Student volunteers or students who started out with the Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center as volunteers were also recognized with certificates of appreciation. Student volunteers play a critical role with the center, assisting clients and gaining valuable work and educational experience. Volunteers recognized were Ahmet Koksal, Irem Evsen, David Fonseca, Gizelle Riss, Zach Corcoran, Deepa Gopal, John Soto, Clara Light, Natasha Gumbo, Sebastian Garzon, Byron Eakin, Bryan Edin, and Whitney Jump.

For more information on the Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center, go to [www.coastalbendinnovation.com](http://www.coastalbendinnovation.com); or call 361.653.2575.

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