



## More Than a Dozen New Research Facilities Included in University's New Master Plan

Over the summer, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi unveiled its new master plan that writes the script for development of both the Island and Momentum Campuses. The plan will maximize available space to accommodate growing enrollment and evolving academic and research plans.

"This blueprint for the next ten years is essential as we begin to forge a new direction for programs at the University," said Dr. Flavius Killebrew, President/CEO at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

"Keeping the academic buildings as well as the research facilities together on the Island Campus creates more

opportunities for engagement among students and faculty, which research has shown leads to successful outcomes," said Dr. Killebrew. "Having the Momentum Campus for sports, auxiliary functions and additional housing makes this possible, and we are grateful to the City of Corpus Christi for having provided it."

The master plan makes room on the Island Campus for 39 new buildings and four new parking garages. The new buildings would include a life sciences research building, an arts and media building, an expansion of the Mary and Jeff Bell Library and a new Aquatics Center. 🌊



The three main goals of the master plan are:

1. Keep research and academic buildings together on the Island campus
2. Use the Momentum Campus for student auxiliary functions and housing
3. Enhance "green space" with strategically-located "spine" walkways



## Dugan Stadium Opens

Friday, Aug. 23 was a night of celebration for Texas A&M-Corpus Christi as the Dr. Jack Dugan Family Soccer & Track Stadium opened its doors for the first time.

The Island University is proud to partner with Dr. Jack Dugan, the principal sponsor of the new soccer and track stadium. The approximately \$9.6 million, state-of-the-art facility is home to the newly-established Islanders soccer program, and the record-setting Islanders track team. The 15,300-square-foot facility, which includes a soccer field enclosed by an eight-lane track, will host Southland Conference competitions as well as non-conference games and tournaments featuring nationally-prominent programs.

Dr. Dugan is continuing a long tradition of commitment to the Island University and to education. He previously honored the memory of his late wife, Susan Dugan, through a scholarship endowment and by providing the lead gift to build the Dugan Wellness Center on campus. 🌊

The Dugan Family Soccer and Track Stadium opened on Aug. 23 at the inaugural Women's Soccer Game, in front of nearly 1,200 Islanders fans. Follow Islanders Athletics at [Gol Islanders.com](http://Gol Islanders.com).

## Professor Takes the Business of Learning into the Real World

Dr. Ben Blanco does more than teach Retail Management in a classroom, he takes his students out in the real world of business.

In April, that included a visit with Sam L. Susser, President and CEO of Stripes convenience stores. As part of the tour of the Stripes support center, students received an invaluable lesson on success from a man who has “been there and done that.” Part of that lesson included a marketing tip students might not learn in a textbook.

“Your reputation is everything,” said Susser. “Think about how you look, how you dress, and how you handle yourself. It is not fair, but people judge books by their covers.”

## College of Business Honors 2013 Kirkland Distinguished Visitor

The College of Business honored Edward A. Martin as the 2013 recipient of the G. Russell Kirkland Distinguished Visitor in Business Administration Award on April 17.

Martin, President and CEO of Berry Contracting, a local construction, fabrication, and maintenance company, spoke to a crowd of more than 300 people about the elements of success when running a business.

“You cannot succeed, if you don’t fail,” Martin said. “Always do the right thing by your employees, even if it doesn’t end in high profits.”

Martin is the 14th recipient of the annual award. Recipients are chosen for their personal accomplishments and contributions to the success of students, faculty, the University, and the community.

## U.S. Senator Awed by University Business Incubator



lebrew, along with CBBIC Director Bill Cone, gave Cornyn a tour of the facility and its businesses. Those companies include one led by Dr. Magesh Thiyagarajan, who says the senator’s visit gives his business and the others an opportunity to take what they have created in the lab and make it into

an arm for job creation and economic growth.

“Research is good, but if research can be scaled into a company or an actual commercialization of the technology, we are talking about job creation,” said Thiyagarajan. “We need somebody to build these products. And to do that, we need an inflow of money for the funding of research.”

The CBBIC, which opened in 2009, has created 396 full and part-time jobs, generates over \$2.6 million in annual salaries, and has helped to build over 40 new companies.

Cornyn promised to take the message of innovation, technology, research, and job development back to Washington.

“One thing the government can’t do is to grow the economy. Economic growth takes work from the private sector and the kind of innovation and partnerships that we see at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi,” said Cornyn. “This is where the engine of job growth begins.”

**Innovation and technology combined with business and the entrepreneurial spirit have gained Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi’s Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center (CBBIC) the attention of U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX).**

Cornyn visited the center in May to talk to business owners who are part of the business incubation program. What he saw amazed him.

“It’s the thinkers, the innovators, the risk takers, the people whose ideas are being facilitated here, because of the great support they are getting at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, that are creating the economic opportunities and the jobs of the future,” said Cornyn.

The CBBIC is a small business “incubator” supported by the University’s College of Business. Business incubators are programs designed to support the successful development of innovative companies through an array of support resources and services. By participating in this type of program, research shows, new businesses are twice as likely to succeed.

University President and CEO Dr. Flavius Kil-



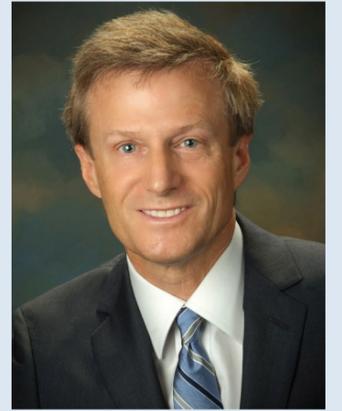
## New College of Business Dean Named

Dr. John E. Gamble took over as the new Dean of the College of Business in July. In his new role, Gamble will foster new partnerships with the local business community, nurture existing relationships, and articulate a vision that generates investment and support from the community, private donors and alumni.

“I look forward to setting a strategic course that further engages the Coastal Bend business community, supports faculty

research initiatives, and expands business education programs that prepare students for rewarding careers in business,” said Gamble.

Gamble received his Ph.D. in management in 1995 from the University of Alabama. Gamble came to the Island University from the University of South Alabama where he was a Professor of Management, Director of Graduate Studies and the Interim Associate Dean.



## University Students and Small Business Owners Work Together to Achieve the American Dream

Own a small business is part of the American dream. These days, even more students are helping make that dream a reality at the Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center (CBBIC), while getting hands-on experience in the real world of business.

In addition to four graduate assistants and four research assistants, the CBBIC now has four interns. Juan Sebastian Garzon, who started at the CBBIC over a year ago as a volunteer, now works as a graduate assistant in the Center. He helps business incubator clients in the areas of marketing, finance and accounting. Garzon says the internships give students something that their counterparts at other universities don’t have.

“Students from other schools learn the same concepts and theories that we learn, but they don’t get the real world experience provided to us through the Innovation Center,” said Garzon. “Here, students are making relationships with CEOs and business owners who may someday be their future employers.”

One of the 29 businesses that currently benefits from the assistance of students, like Garzon, is Coltarus Halo; an emerging IT company that’s currently in the CBBIC’s incubation program.

Julius Cavazos, CEO of Coltarus Halo, says the students are always there



to lend a hand, whether it is helping them explore ways to get financed or just as someone to bounce ideas off of.

“One way they have helped us is in trying to find new ways to pitch ideas to our clients,” said Cavazos. “We sometimes phrase things too technically. The students will help us reword our proposals to make them easier to understand.”

Garzon, who graduates in December with a master’s degree in Business Administration, says each internship lasts two to three months and each intern has a specific project to work on during that time.

“One intern is working on an investor package that all of the clients can use, while another is making videos for four clients,” said Garzon. “We set our standards really high, so we get the best

students at the University.”

Garzon says those high standards ensure that the small business clients of the CBBIC are getting the highest-quality assistance available.

Incubation Center Manager David Fonseca agrees with Garzon. He credits the students with serving a valuable purpose for these startup companies by providing research with copyright laws, client testing, marketing data, and finding affordable manufacturing.

“The Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center is here to help diversify the business community around us, while helping to create jobs,” said Fonseca. “We are striving to make a better overall quality of life for, not only our students, but all stakeholders involved in the process.”

## University Professor Receives Exemplary Field-Based Program Recognition

A recent submission by Dr. Rodney McConnell, Assistant Professor in the College of Education, has been selected to be recognized as an Exemplary Field-Based Institutional Practice by the Center for Research, Evaluation and Advancement of Teacher Education. McConnell submitted Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's practices for the "Quest for Quality: Teacher Preparation in Texas" initiative.

The program allows pre-service teachers to participate in field-based experiences early in the teacher education program, where they complete observations and teach lessons in preschool through 12th grade classrooms. Field-based students typically spend two, full days each week at their assigned Corpus Christi (CCISD), or Flour Bluff (FBISD) elementary, middle, or high school. More than 100 of the University's graduates have been nominated and/or selected "Teacher of the Year" in CCISD and FBISD since 2006. 🐦

## Graduate Counseling Programs Receive Rare Eight-Year Accreditation from the Council for Accreditation

All graduate programs in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology (CNEP) were recently reaccredited by the Council for Accreditation. These programs include the Doctoral Program in Counselor Education. The full, eight-year accreditation is rare among today's graduate programs.

The CNEP is the first in the country to have a fully-accredited Addictions Counseling Program to meet the need of epidemic addictions problems around the world. In addition, the doctoral program in Counselor Education is the national leader in graduating Hispanic doctoral students entering faculty positions in Counselor Education across the country. In addition, the department granted the University's first Ph.D. degree. 🐦

## San Antonio Elementary School Classroom Adopts the Island University

**In an effort to help children better understand the concept of college, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi alumnus Ashley Elizalde and her fourth grade class at Dr. Martha Mead Elementary School in San Antonio recently adopted the Island University.**

Elizalde, who earned her Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies and Master of Science in Educational Leadership at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, chose the Island University to help her students learn more about higher education. She also hopes to bring the Islander culture into her classroom to inspire students to continue their education.

"As a part of rebuilding a positive, college-bound culture, each classroom has adopted a university that students can learn about as an option for post high school education," said Elizalde.

Eighty-five percent of the students

at the elementary school, located within the Northside Independent School District, come from an economically-disadvantaged background or are considered English-language learners. In all, there are about 35 classrooms participating in the school-wide plan. Each teacher was able to select a campus of his or her choice to share with the class.

"College readiness is not the belief that every student will go to college," said Principal Annette Lopez. "College readiness is the idea that every student deserves the opportunity to be educated in a way that prepares him or her, if he or she chooses to attend. We firmly believe that college begins in kindergarten!"

Just as the University is adopted by the classroom, the classroom is also adopted by the University. This entails the campus sending Elizalde and her class, not only 100 percent support, but also items such as pennants, pencils, folders, T-shirts, and flags to decorate the classroom, showcase the University, and also reward the students for perfect attendance and honor roll. 🐦



## Dr. Corinne Valadez Selected as One of Top 14 Hispanic Professors in Texas

Because of her expertise in the field of education, Dr. Corinne Valadez was recently named one of "14 Hispanic Professors Making a Huge Difference in Texas" by Online Schools Texas.

The Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction has also received a Texas A&M University System Student Recognition

Award for Teaching Excellence.

After receiving her degrees, Valadez taught for nine years in elementary school, grades first through fourth. Currently, Valadez teaches doctoral, graduate, and undergraduate courses in children's literature, multicultural literacy, and fundamentals of reading instruction for both elementary and secondary levels.



## Mother and Daughter Graduate Together, Despite Life's Hard Lessons

When Virginia Rodriguez graduated from the University this summer with a master's degree in Special Education, her entire family was cheering her on, with the exception of her mother, Judith Rodriguez. Judith was, instead, sitting right next to her waiting to receive her own diploma; a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies.

It takes hard work and dedication for any student to make it to graduation. But for Judith and Virginia Rodriguez, the path to a diploma was littered with even more obstacles than usual.

"I grew up with dyslexia, was diagnosed with A.D.D. and have an auditory learning disorder," said Virginia. "My mother never told me I had a problem. She knew, with coping mechanisms, I could overcome my problems."

Virginia says, growing up, her parents told her that these disabilities did not control her life; she controlled her life. It was that advice and living her entire life with her aunt, who had Down syndrome, which made her decide to pursue a degree in Special Education.

"She grew up in a family where disability was not unique; it was the norm," said Judith.



Judith was one of seven children and her mother died when she was very young. She took a few college courses right after high school, but put her education on hold when she started a family. She decided to go back to school when her two children were grown, but was very anxious about starting over.

"She thought she was going to be the oldest person in the class," said Virginia. "I walked my mom to her first class on her first day. It was a total role reversal."

But as Judith pursued her bachelor's degree and Virginia worked on her master's, another storm to be weathered was on the horizon for this mother-daughter duo.

"My dad, who is a gulf war veteran,

started to become very ill; to the point where the doctors said he might not make it," said Virginia.

Judith says her husband had a lung disease that he contracted while serving in Kuwait. Mother and daughter then took turns going to class and staying at the hospital, so he would never be alone.

"With the help of the people at the University, I was able to continue at school," said Judith. "The University had my back."

Judith says she plans to now pursue a master's degree in Counseling at the Island University. Virginia has been hired by Sidney Lanier High School in San Antonio as a special education teacher. 🐦

## Book of Poems for Sale as Final Tribute to Dr. Robb Jackson

A new book of poems titled "Open Heart" was recently published by friends of Dr. Robb Jackson as a final tribute to the late University English Professor. All pieces are original works by Jackson.

Since Jackson began his career with the University in 1988, he enriched the lives of students, colleagues, and area residents through his teaching, public service, and faith. He also worked with disadvantaged individuals in underprivileged neighborhoods, and with men and women battling drug addictions; bringing them healing through poetry therapy.

Copies of "Open Heart" may be purchased for a minimum donation of \$10 by calling 361.825.3457. All proceeds go to the Robb Jackson Scholarship Fund benefiting undergraduate English majors. ☞

## Students Extend Theatre Knowledge during Study Abroad Trip to London and Scotland

Island University students traveled to England and Scotland for a month-long study abroad trip to further their theatre knowledge and gain college credit. Seventeen students traveled overseas to explore their interests in theatre.

"Students participated in theatre workshops and had private tours of theatres and opera houses such as the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company," said Alison Frost, Assistant Professor of Theatre. "They now have 'increased cultural awareness' to add to their resumes when seeking employment and graduate school."

The students visited the Tower of London, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Stonehenge, and Edinburgh; and toured the famous Leavesden Studios, where the Harry Potter movie series was filmed. ☞

## Campus Community Celebrates the School of Arts, Media & Communication



**More than 40 awards were presented to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members during the inaugural School of Arts, Media, & Communication (SAMC) Awards "A Night of Celebration and Performance" held April 28 at the Performing Arts Center.**

The award recipients were selected by the faculty and staff of each department, honoring up to 10 students for their distinguished contribution to the University.

Nearly 500 members of the campus community enjoyed a variety of entertainment, such as performances by the Lichtenstein String Quartet, the only student quartet in South Texas, a special performance of "For Now" by the cast of Avenue Q, a special tribute to Broadway by the Island Dance Company, a special performance by alumni artists Jake and Brandy Raper, an artist showcase, and a film montage.

Graduate students from the "Public Relations in Action" class planned and executed the event as a successful class

project. Those involved were Angela Chang, Amanda Garza, Amy McClendon, Jaren Palmer, Jeff Riddle, and Shad Tyra.

The SAMC, which is part of the College of Liberal Arts, opened last October as a way to support interdisciplinary programs that have nearly doubled in majors since 2002. The purpose was to develop and promote collaboration, innovation, and creativity among students and faculty in visual arts, music, theatre, dance, media, and communication.

Throughout the year, the University welcomes the public to experience iron pours, printmaking demonstrations, student-directed one-act plays, and an array of other free attractions.

Dr. Kelly Quintanilla, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Director of SAMC, transitioned the school from dream to reality, working one-on-one with dedicated faculty and staff, and University President Flavius Killebrew.

The Island University is also promoting arts education in the community through the SAMC with youth summer camps, plays, dance festivals, concerts, art exhibits, and film festivals. Students also participate in service-learning projects that benefit local non-profits. ☞

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## Dance Students Grace the Stage at Island Dance Demo

Spectators watched students dressed in elaborate costumes bounce, leap, and twirl across the Warren Theater stage on April 24 during the spring semester Island Dance Demo.

The performance was a "Salute to Broadway" as the Department of Theatre and Dance targeted some of Broadway's most famous musical numbers. Performances included show tunes from "Carousel," "Mary Poppins," "Chicago," "Rent," "A Chorus Line," "Anything Goes," "Gypsy," and many more.

The Island Dance Demo series is showcased every semester by students in the University dance courses taught by Jilissa Cotten, Assistant Professor of Dance. Students from each class performed a representation of what was learned throughout the semester. The fall Island Dance Demo will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 3, at 7:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center. ☞



## University Grant Writing Class Raises \$40,000 for the Food Bank of Corpus Christi

The University's Grant Writing Course recently added a new \$40,000 grant to the more than \$500,000 the class has secured in grant monies for several non-profit organizations in the Coastal Bend since 2005. The newest grant money will benefit the Food Bank of Corpus Christi.

During the spring semester, Dr. Charles Etheridge's class worked with the Food Bank of Corpus Christi to write a grant for Feeding America as part of its "Fighting Hunger Together" program. Wal-Mart, the company providing the funding for the winning grants, awarded \$40,000 grants to groups who garnered the greatest amount of Facebook votes.

Etheridge said everyone in the class worked together to make securing the grant a top priority.

"I'm proud of these students; they deserve 'the win,'" said Etheridge, Associate Professor of English. "The funding they received will provide backpack meals to homeless children, many of whom only receive reliable meals while in school and who often go hungry on nights and weekends."

This was also the first time any of his classes participated in a social media



campaign.

"This was something none of us had ever done together and we just dove in and got it done," he said.

Each semester, the students in the class work with organizations who are interested in applying for a particular grant. Following the guidelines of the given organizations, the class researches, writes, and edits a grant for the group.

The next step is to have the grant reviewed by a committee to determine its ability to meet the funding criteria. When accepted, the grant becomes eligible to be selected to receive funding.

The Fighting Hunger Together grant is the most recent in a string of successes for University grant writing students.

Other student successes benefitting the Food Bank include an award from Kraft Foods for the construction of a room-sized refrigeration unit, a grant from the Kenedy Foundation to fund a demonstration kitchen, a grant from the Ed Rachal Foundation to fund a children's diabetes initiative, and other Food Bank-related projects.

Other student-written grants have included a Texas Department of Health grant to fund health education in the colonias, a grant from the Dr. and Mrs. Hugh Kennedy Foundation to begin a writers' camp for homeless children, and grants from the Coastal Bend Community Foundation to fund scholarships for the Young Authors' Camps. ☞

## College Dean Selected for White House Forum

Dr. Mary Jane Hamilton, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, participated in the White House Forum on Military Credentialing and Licensing on Monday, April 29 in Washington, D.C.

Hamilton participated in the Advanced Medical Operations Industry Roundtable, which focused on developing strategies to transfer military training and experience into credit toward nursing and physician assistant certifications and licensure.

"We're pleased that the White House chose our program as an example for other institutions," said Hamilton.

Since its inception in 2011, 427 military service members (60 percent veterans and 40 percent active duty) have enrolled in the eLine Military program. ☞

## eLine Military Program Wins Prestigious Award from AACN

The eLine Military Nursing program is the recipient of the 2013 American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award.

The AACN chose the Island University for this award out of the more than 700 schools the organization represents. This prestigious award was presented at the association's fall semi-annual meeting in Washington D.C. on Oct. 28.

Innovation awards are given annually in four institutional categories: Small Schools, Academic Health Center (AHC), Private Schools without an AHC, and Public Schools without an AHC. The Island University has been selected to receive the award in the Public School without an AHC category. ☞

## Culture Shift has Chinese Looking to Island University for Help



Dr. Paul Meyer greets delegates from Weifang College.

**The population of the elderly is skyrocketing in China, causing a problem that has officials from China's Weifang College looking for an answer at the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.**

"In traditional Chinese society, the elderly would live with one of their children and there was no need for senior care facilities," said Dr. Elizabeth Sefcik, Professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. "That family structure is changing because of family planning laws implemented 30 years ago that limit the number of children a couple can have to one."

There are currently over 128 million senior citizens in China, or one of every ten people. The number of senior citizens is expected to be over 487 million by 2050, or 35 percent of the population, according to the China National Committee on Aging. People who were limited to one child 30 years ago are now approaching retire-

ment age, many with no one to care for them. This has made the need for elderly, assisted living facilities huge in China. In a country where families have historically taken care of the elderly without nursing homes, that need has created another shortage.

"They don't have a workforce equipped to handle that need," said Dr. Mary Jane Hamilton, Dean of Nursing and Health Sciences. "Weifang College is trying to change that and we can help by providing their students with the type of specialized education needed to care for the elderly."

A delegation from Weifang College, which is located near Beijing, visited the Island University in July. They want to send 200 of their nursing students to A&M-Corpus Christi to study and attain a degree in Nursing.

"We hope to start with 20 Chinese students and offer internet courses to others, while implementing a plan to increase the number," said Hamilton. ☞



## eLine Military Program Receives President's Silver Wave Award

The eLine Military Program (ELM) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi was recognized with the 2013 President's Silver Wave Award on August 26, during the President's Fall Faculty/Staff Meeting. The award was accepted by Dr. Mary Jane Hamilton, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences.

The program was highlighted in a White House report prepared by the National Economic Council and the President's Council of Economic Advisers. Hamilton has been invited to share the stage with First Lady Michelle Obama and attend White House briefings.

The eLine Military Program is the seventh recipient of the Silver Wave Award, which was started in 2005. The award is presented to a person or program that brings national attention to Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. ☞



## First Graduates in eLine Military Program

The first Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi eLine Military (ELM) students graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing on August 10. This one-of-a-kind program gives college credit to members of the military and veterans for their medical experience in the service. These students can then finish their degrees online, from anywhere in the world.

The first three graduates are Irene Singles, an Air Force veteran who began the program while stationed in Colorado; Randy Ramirez, who is currently serving in the Navy; and Nathan Parks, an Army veteran who lives near Dallas.

Singles started the program in 2011; right before her husband, who is also in the military, was deployed to Bahrain.

With her previous experience and by learning online, Singles was able to complete her nursing degree in about two years.

"When you deploy, you get a lot of trauma experience. You get a lot of critical care experience," said Singles. "Now, I will also have an accredited degree. I am ready to be a nurse."

The ELM program started in 2010 with a federal grant. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, vets average an unemployment rate about two percent higher than the general



population. One reason given is that, often when people leave the military, their training and experience doesn't translate to civilian life.

"They come back to civilian life and the only work they are allowed to do in a hospital is that of an orderly or an aid," said Dr. Mary Jane Hamilton, Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. "These are people that have been deployed giving medical care in combat situations."

The White House and the Department of Defense are looking at the

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's ELM program as a model that can be used for other nursing schools across the country as well as other professional programs such as computer science and engineering.

"We want to prepare individuals for a lifetime of service, not just service in the military," said Hamilton.

By putting nurses in the workplace faster, the ELM program also helps address the nationwide nursing shortage, which is expected to exceed 70,000 in Texas alone by 2020. ☞

## NSA Certifies Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Program Aimed at Cyber Security

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students will be on the front lines, training to fight the war that is waged online.

The University has been designated as a National Center for Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education, for the academic years 2013-2015, by the National Security Agency (NSA).

According to the Department of Defense, reducing vulnerabilities in national information infrastructures requires much more than leading-edge technology; it requires well-trained, skilled people. The NSA accreditation is given to only a limited number of universities with strong academic programs, faculty credentials, and outreach programs.

The University's computer science projects focus on research and development in all aspects of information security and represent a response to this fast-growing, national need.

## Killer 'Superbugs' are No Match for University Researcher

While antibiotics can't kill deadly "superbug" bacteria, Dr. Magesh Thiyagarajan has developed an amazing technology that can. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) says antibiotic resistant "superbugs" are the single greatest health threat of our time. Just one of the so-called "superbugs," MRSA, kills more Americans every year than HIV/AIDS, emphysema, Parkinson's disease, and homicide combined.

Using new "cold plasma" technology developed in the University's Plasma Engineering Research Lab, Dr. Thiyagarajan is stopping these killer bacteria, before they find a host.

"This is an extremely powerful technology that produces what are called reactive oxygen species," said Thiyagarajan. "They react with bacteria pathogens, killing them in a matter of seconds."

Cold plasma technology can also be used to sterilize foods ranging from poultry to produce. ☞

## Neuroscience Lab Investigates Link between Fear and Appetite

**It may be difficult to imagine that marine snails and humans could share something in common. But when it comes to neuroscience, you may be surprised to learn that the brain of a marine snail shares similar nerve cell functions to those of a human brain. During the past few years, Dr. Riccardo Mozzachiodi and his laboratory assistants have been studying how the brain responds to fear.**



decision-making ability.

"In essence, the brain had to budget its function," he said. "While it was afraid, the cells that were more active were those dealing with awareness of danger. This defensive state came with the price of reducing other functions, including eating."

Mozzachiodi says this neuroscience research can help us gain a better understanding of the relationship between fear and appetitive behaviors. He calls the study a "building block for further biomedical research" in areas such as post-traumatic stress, eating disorders, and mood disorders.

The study was recently published under the title "Effects of Aversive Stimuli Beyond Defensive Neural Circuits: Reduced Excitability in an Identified Neuron Critical for Feeding in Aplysia" in the January issue of "Learning & Memory," which is ranked within the top 25 percent of journals in the area of neuroscience.

The study, sponsored by the National Institute of Health, the National Science Foundation and the Texas Research Development Fund, is authored by two graduate students, Maria Shields-Johnson and John Hernandez; two undergraduate students, Cody Torno and Katherine Adams; and by Dr. Mozzachiodi's collaborator, Dr. Marcy Wainwright. ☞



## University Gets New Facility to Study Genetic Makeup of Organisms

A new core genomics facility at the Harte Research Institute will use new technology to study the genetic makeup of organisms that have never before been mapped along the Texas coast. These include invasive lionfish, Texas oysters, and red snapper. Learning about their DNA will enhance ocean management and the understanding of the food supply chain.

Drs. Chris Bird and Derek Hogan, Assistant Professors of Biology, and

Sharon Furiness, Genomics Lab Coordinator, are studying the genomes of several different organisms.

Recent technological advancements have made genomes easier to study. Before, it was only realistic to study the genomes of humans and a few other model species.

"We must emphasize the variety of samples we can work on," said Hogan. "This technique can be applied to the studies of bacteria, viruses, fungi, and other organisms." ☞



## New UAV Command and Control Center Unveiled

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi unveiled its new unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) command and control center during an event held on Tuesday, Oct. 1.

"We are in 'phase one' of the development of the command and control center," said Dr. Luis Cifuentes, Vice President of Research, Commercialization and Outreach. "Eventually, it will control all of the UAV test ranges around the state."

The University's Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft Systems Initiative is in competition to be named one of six Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) UAV test sites. The Island University leads the only proposal from Texas

being considered by the FAA, and has the backing of Governor Rick Perry.

The state of Texas has a big stake in the FAA test site designation. The Association of Unmanned Vehicles Systems International published an economic



impact study projecting, once airspace is opened to UAV's, the economic impact on Texas alone would be around \$8 billion over the next 10 years.

"With the center of that being the Coastal Bend area, the economic impact here would be absolutely significant," said Joe Henry, with the Camber Corporation, a partner in the University's proposal.

Cifuentes says this command center will be necessary even if Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi isn't chosen as one of the sites.

"We still have airspace that everyone else is going to want, and we will partner with anybody who wants to use it," said Cifuentes. ☞

## CBI Ensuring Safety Along Texas Gulf Coast

From South Padre Island all the way up to Port Arthur, thousands of residents get weather warning forecasts with the help of data from the Conrad Blucher Institute for Surveying and Science (CBI).

The CBI recently expanded the Texas Coastal Ocean Observation Network with five new monitoring stations funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The new stations are located at High Island, Galveston Railroad Bridge, Matagorda

City, Sargent, and Aransas Wildlife Refuge.

The instrumentation, which will collect information on water level, wind speed and direction, barometric pressure, air temperature, and water temperature, will operate and transmit data every six minutes, even through storms and hurricanes.

"This information will help officials make the best decisions regarding the flooding of evacuation routes, low-lying areas, community

infrastructure, and public safety," said James Rizzo, CBI Assistant Director of Operations. "The data will also assist researchers from the National Ocean Service, the National Weather Service, the National Hurricane Center by providing accurate, federally-approved data used in water level and storm surge forecasting."

The new monitoring stations have been installed approximately 15 feet above sea level to protect equipment from high-water events. ☞

## Expansion of the University Center is Underway

Construction on the University Center (UC) Expansion project kicked off Sept. 10 with a groundbreaking just prior to the annual President's Picnic.

The UC was built in 1999 to accommodate 6,500 students. In Fall 2013, the University has an enrollment of nearly 11,000 students, and our master planners say we will have 18,500 by 2020.

The 35,000 square-foot expansion will include a lounge area, an outdoor patio, a new ballroom, a renovated convenience store that will stay open late, and bigger kitchen and dining areas.

Last year students at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi approved an increase in student fees that will fund the project.



## New Dining Hall to Enhance a Successful Academic Environment

Construction has begun on a new dining hall on campus, adjacent to the new residence halls that opened this fall. The 18,700 square-foot dining hall will include indoor and outdoor seating for up to 400 students and will become the seventh dining facility on campus.

Meals served at the dining hall will feature one price for "all-you-care-to-eat" and a Grab-N-Go area when students are in a hurry. Other highlights include vegetarian options, extended operating hours and a variety of meal plan options to ensure students have access to quality, affordable meals.

"This facility will better serve our students who are spending more time on campus and those who are moving away from home for the very first time," said University President/CEO Dr. Flavius Killebrew.

The dining hall is expected to open in August 2014.



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