Board of Directors' Update
by UA Hispanic Alumni Club Board of Directors

Saludos, UAHA!

As 2016 begins, the University of Arizona Hispanic Alumni (UAHA) board wants to let you know what’s been happening. For those of you who have been faithful followers of the club, we acknowledge and appreciate your support. If you would like to become a member or renew your membership, please go to arizonaalumni.com/membership.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the club was able to provide $546,000 in awards to 130 scholars. On behalf of these hardworking and focused scholars, we thank you. Your generosity has a profound impact on their lives. If you would like to donate, please go to uafoundation.org.

The club’s founders had the foresight to establish an endowment for the club. This year, the board recapitalized some of the endowment earnings, and the endowment is currently valued at about $1.4 million. Depending on earnings, the endowment generates about $60,000 in interest annually. Please don’t underestimate how critical this is to sustaining support for our scholars.

Los Universitarios are a group of first generation Latino college students who attended the University of Arizona in the ‘50s and ‘60s. Many of them have had highly impactful careers and lives, and some were founding members of the UAHA. The board voted to formally integrate their organization as a committee within UAHA. We anticipate this will be a mutually beneficial and rewarding relationship.

Winter Miracle: Diversity Latino Sorority led the way on taking the initiative to make a difference during the holidays.

Honorable Mentions: Meet our fellowship from the following honorable mentions: UAHA Alumni Spotlight, Meet our UAHA Scholarship Recipients, Congratulations to our December 2015 UAHA Scholars graduates!

UAHA Community Event with AARP and LULAC

#CatsGiveBack Campaign Results

UAHA Upcoming Events and Announcements

*Pictured above: Alex Miramontez (UA Engineering graduate) showed his UA spirit at his November 2015 wedding. Congratulations to Alex and Adriana Garibay, UAHA past scholar and UA Education College staff member!
Board of Directors' Update Continued...

This fall, the club re-established its annual luncheon. Dr. Skip Garcia was recognized and presented on Latino and Native American disparity studies. The luncheon was a huge success, and Dr. Garcia’s presentation was very informative. The club also recognized the outstanding achievements of two December graduates — Allison Flores and Jose Romero. The 2016 luncheon will be held in December. We hope to see you there!

Many have asked why the club is no longer participating in Homecoming? The club could not continue to sustain losses of about $3,000 annually that are now being directed toward academic support for our scholars. This year, we were very fortunate to collaborate with AARP who provided invaluable information to our Latino community about Social Security and Medicare. The club netted $3,000 from their sponsorship. This equates to a $6,000 swing in our financial position. Great stuff!

While the club fell short of its goal, it still raised over $2,000 during the Cats Give Back campaign. Thanks to everyone who donated!

Be on the lookout for our newsletter on a quarterly basis. The club will also launch its own website within the next six months. You can also find regular updates posted on our Facebook page. We truly value your engagement and will work hard to keep you informed.
Winter Miracle
Community Service by UA’s Gamma Alpha Omega, Beta Chapter

Traditionally, UAHA’s Homecoming Pachangas would welcome UA’s Hispanic diversity sorority and fraternity chapters, giving them the opportunity to meet and greet with UAHA members. UAHA is now taking the extra step to reach out to these clubs in order to better recognize their ongoing achievements.

Meet the Gama Alpha Omega sorority, Beta Chapter at the University of Arizona.

Before the holiday break, these students had a goal to help organizations in our community that were in need. Community service chair, Rochyl Windham, organizes the members and finds community service a great opportunity to “stay connected and involved for the community, and build our leadership and teamwork.”

They complete at least 50 hours of service a month.

For their Winter Miracle project, they raised funds for Big Brothers and Big Sisters. They provided enough financial support to provide holiday gifts and organize winter survival packs for over 10 families.

The main slogan is “Confidence. Courage. Commitment. Character.” This club naturally follows UAHA’s footsteps as a hard-working non-profit organization, achieving goals that push UA Hispanic students to not only maintain high academic standings, but to serve our community.

UAHA is proud of all your achievements! Keep up the great work!
Melba Jaramillo spends almost every day on the fifth floor of the Arizona Health Sciences Center on the University of Arizona campus. She’s in the laboratory trying to develop a promising blood cancer treatment that attacks abnormal cells but protects healthy ones.

On Dec. 1, 2010, Jaramillo received her doctorate in cancer biology from UA’s College of Medicine. It took her less than five years to finish her doctorate, a process that takes most students five to seven years. She received her Ph.D. through the Cancer Biology Graduate Interdisciplinary Program, which trains future cancer researchers.

"I never imagined that I would reach this point," Jaramillo said. "Obtaining a Ph.D. was something that seemed like a star too far out of my reach, but it’s a blessing to have been able to accomplish this goal."

Growing up

Jaramillo, 27, was born in Tucson. As a child, she showed signs of brightness. "She started walking at less than 9 months and started school when she was only 4 years old at Ochoa Elementary School," said her father, Alfonso Jaramillo.

Spanish was her first language. From kindergarten to third grade, Jaramillo spoke only Spanish in school as well as at home.

When she switched to Warren Elementary School, her teachers stressed to her parents the importance of learning English. Jaramillo’s father read books to her in English and taught her how to pronounce vowels and consonants. Her mother continued to read and speak to her in Spanish.

Jaramillo’s parents believed that speaking Spanish and knowing her Mexican culture was important. Almost every weekend until Jamarillo was 10, she and her family visited relatives in Turicachi, a village in Sonora, Mexico. Her parents owned a small dairy farm there, and she and her sisters, Evelyn and Diana, helped make cheese. They would sell it to local stores or on the side of the road.

"Her mom's culture is very traditional, and her roots are from Mexico," Alfonso Jaramillo said. "We’ve always been in the Mexican tradition, and I didn't want her to forget her culture."

With her father's help, Jaramillo began to speak and read English. Her third grade teacher was impressed. She told Jaramillo’s parents that the little girl was smart and could go to college. From then on, her parents nurtured her potential.

In elementary school, Jaramillo participated in Gate (Gifted and Talented Education), an advanced placement program. She was one of the top students, her father said.

Jaramillo attended University High School, a college prep school for gifted students. Jaramillo’s parents encouraged her to study instead of working part time.

"We decided that her books were more important that anything else," Alfonso Jaramillo said. "We told her your job is to go to school and finish your schooling."

When it came time for college, Jaramillo received applications from several universities but decided to attend the University of Arizona.

"She knew if she moved away, she’d get depressed and miss us," Alfonso Jaramillo said.

Jaramillo became the first person in her family to go to college. Her father had earned his high school diploma, and her mother had attended elementary school.

In December 2005, Jaramillo received her bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona with a double major in linguistics and molecular and cellular biology. She applied to medical school and the Cancer Biology Graduate Interdisciplinary Program. She was accepted
by both but decided to get her Ph.D. first. The Cancer Biology Graduate Interdisciplinary Program allows students to skip the master's degree with the director's approval.

"All through my undergraduate years, I did research and ran into people who said I could get a Ph.D.," Jaramillo said. "They told me if I wanted to succeed, I needed to get a Ph.D., and being a minority and a woman would stand out."

Cancer researcher

Jaramillo studied blood cancers such as leukemia and lymphoma in the Briehl/Tome lab run by Dr. Margaret Briehl and Dr. Margaret Tome. A research assistant professor in UA’s pathology department, Tome was investigating the effects of a class of drugs called porphyrins on cancer cells.

Jaramillo’s job was to determine whether these porphyrins could attack cancer cells but not harm healthy ones. She found that a manganese porphyrin could kill cancer cells and also protect normal cells from the toxic effects of chemotherapy.

"We’ve tested it on human cells and know that it does work," Jaramillo said. "In the lab we take human cells and plate them in flasks, treat the cells with the manganese porphyrin and then test the effect of it."

Role model

The medical field needs more people like Jaramillo.

"She's a role model," Briehl said. "Hispanic women are one of the most underrepresented compared to Caucasians who get their Ph.D.s."

When Jaramillo entered the Cancer Biology Graduate Interdisciplinary Program, she was the only Hispanic working toward a doctorate. Now, of the 25 students in the program, two others are Hispanic, Briehl said.

"I think she (Jaramillo) is definitely someone the younger students can look up to and see that there are Hispanics in the medical field," Centuori said. "She's definitely a role model by doing community service and really trying to make time to do everything."

Jaramillo is a past UAHA Outstanding Senior Honoree of 2011 and a current role model and mentor to our pre-medical UAHA scholars. In the past, she has volunteered to rock premature babies in the nursery at the University Medical Center.

The future

Eventually, Jaramillo wants to be a research physician, working with patients in the hospital and conducting research in the lab. She also wants to teach.

"Being a mentor to students who want to study science would be very rewarding because I’d feel like I was giving back to the community," she said.

Jaramillo has her family to thank for her achievements. She believes her family is more important that anything she has learned in school. She can always count on them, she said.

"It isn't about the paper (degrees) I get at the end of this," she said. "The satisfaction is the smiles on my parents' face and how proud they are of me."

Jaramillo currently continues to work on research at the UA Cancer, completing her fellowship as Postdoctoral Research Associate, and is a candidate to a medical doctoral degree.
Meet our UAHA Scholarship Recipients

Liliana Saldaña '15

‘Your support means a lot to me and to the Hispanic community. Thank you for believing in me and being part of my journey.’

Liliana Saldaña graduated this December from the University of Arizona from the College of Engineering, majoring in mechanical engineering. Due to the UA’s great research program and competitive engineering program, Liliana was naturally meant to be a Wildcat! We asked Liliana to share some of his experiences with us:

Background

I was raised in Obregon, Sonora, Mexico. I attended the Industrial, Technological and Service Center No. 37 (Acronym in Spanish CBTis 37). During high school, I volunteered as a math tutor. During the summer of 2009, I volunteered in a camp for kids organized by the Sonora Institute of Technology (Acronym in Spanish: ITSON) in which I lead a group of 15 children. After I graduated, I came to Tucson and am currently pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering

Professional Journey as a Mechanical Engineer

I had summer internship with Raytheon and I had an exceptional intern experience in which had to apply my engineering skills while working in a learning environment. Working on the Arizona NASA Space program was a wonderful experience. I earned strong research skills and the opportunity to network with faculty members and my fellow researchers.

Extracurricular activities

I am member of SHPE Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers University of Arizona Chapter. We do a lot of outreach events to promote science and technology. We host various outreach events such as Science Day and the Advancement of Latinos in Engineering and the Young Latina Forum (ALE/YLF). The purpose of these events is to promote STEM fields among younger students and inspire them to attend college. La Familia is an event design to give adults of the community the opportunity to experiment with technology. The objective of this event is to remove the technological barrier and give them the opportunity to learn computer skills. The workshops are offered in both English and Spanish.

I am part of the Honors College. I am working with Dr. Bayly from the Mathematics Department in an Honors project. I am building a mathematical model of the Theo Janson Mechanism by using the theory of linear algebra analysis of mechanical structures. This is an interdisciplinary work that links math to mechanical engineering and design.

In the Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering Department I am part of Dr. Little’s research group. We conduct research pertaining active flow control for both subsonic and supersonic applications. I have been part of Dr. Little’s research group for more than a year. My particular research project is on subsonic active flow control using surface plasma discharges. I was awarded the NASA Space Grant for the 2014-15 academic year.

https://spacegrant.arizona.edu/opportunities/internships/2014

Awards and Honors

- College of Engineering: Departmental Honors for outstanding achievement (Academic year 2013-14)
- College of Engineering award for academic distinction (Academic year 2013-14)
- College of engineering award for academic distinction (Academic year 2014-15)
- Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering Outstanding Senior in the Mechanical Engineering major
- NASA Space Grant
Role model to the Hispanic Community

As Hispanic female in engineering, I am part of the minority. My academic engagement as well as participation in extracurricular activities has impacted the campus community in a positive way. Through the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers I have impacted the community by engaging middle school and high school students to pursue STEM fields and by helping adults to use everyday technology such as computers. I also impacted the community with my contributions to research in the Aerospace field.

UA Hispanic Alumni scholarship experience

The UA Hispanic Alumni was a key component of my success as undergraduate engineering student. They provided the resources and support needed to achieve my goals as an undergraduate engineering student.

Future Goals

My future plans are to work for Raytheon and get my master's degree in mechanical engineering.

Xavier Rivera '16

'I cannot thank the Hispanic Alumni enough for providing, not only me, but countless other Hispanic students the resources and support to allow us to flourish within the stressful and challenging university environment.'

Xavier Rivera is a current UAHA scholar majoring in microbiology in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and is currently in the interview process of his application to medical school. Born and raised in Tucson, he grew up wanting to be a Wildcat. As he got older, he began to look into all of the amazing science and research the University was conducting. Aside from his commitment to his studies, which has earned him the Wildcat Excellence Award and placement on the Dean’s List, he also works in the clinical trials office of the UA Cancer Center as a research assistant for the lymphoma team. We asked Xavier to share some of his experiences with us:

Extracurricular Activities

One of my goals is to help enhance health care among our Hispanic population. Currently, in cancer research, there are few Hispanic participants to help us improve care. Therefore, I have helped create a Latino Clinical Trial Awareness Outreach club to help increase awareness about clinical trials.

I am also an assistant head coach for the La Mariposa Club Swim Team and a volunteer certified lifeguard for any community pools or events needed.

I volunteer for various programs and am a math and science tutor, a UA Hispanic pre-med mentor, and Banner University Medical Center student volunteer.

Awards, Honors, and Publications

- Dean’s List and College Academic Distinction (Academic year 2012-15)
- Novel Targeting of BCL2 and MYC DNA Secondary Structures In Diffuse Large B-Cell Lymphoma (DLBCL)

UA Hispanic Alumni scholarship experience

It has helped me find who I am today. With programs like the toast master, I learned to be confident and speak in front of crowds of strangers, even if inside I was terrified. I came from a very small high school here in Tucson with very little diversity and so to have the opportunity to meet with fellow Hispanic students and develop so many lasting relationships in my new familia, was a great experience.

Future Goal

My goal is to become a physician for our community.
On Saturday, Nov. 21, UAHA partnered with AARP and LULAC for an educational presentation on Social Security, Medicare, and additional retirement programs for the community. AARP provided a generous sponsorship to UAHA from this event.

The UA Alumni Association #CatsGiveBack Scholarship Campaign was a month-long fundraising campaign from Oct. 21 to Nov. 21, 2015. The campaign’s goal was to raise $50,000 for UAAA scholarships, and with the participation of 400 donors, the total amount raised was $70,217.

A total of 34 UAAA chapters and clubs participated. UAHA’s goal was to raise a total of $3,000 for the campaign. We made 73 percent of that goal, raising a total of $2,205 by the deadline. We appreciate everyone who participated in this campaign.
Upcoming Event:

Saturday, April 23, 2016

We proudly recognize those who founded UAHA in 1982

2016 Portraits of Excellence Honorees

Dr. Henry Koffler
UA President Emeritus

Anna Marie Chalk
Administrative Associate and UAHA Member

Kent Rollins
Director, Alumni Office
Announcements:

STUDENTS!

The UAHA Scholarship Applications for academic year 2016-17 are now available online!

Stay Connected!

HISPANIC ALUMNI


Undergraduate deadline: Jan. 29, 2016
Graduate deadline: Feb. 29, 2016

NOT A MEMBER OF UA HISPANIC ALUMNI?

You can join now by signing up for UA alumni membership. Make sure you select UA Hispanic Alumni as your preferred club. That will automatically enroll you as a member.

WANT TO MAKE A GIFT TO UA HISPANIC ALUMNI?

You can make a secure donation to UAHA through the UA Foundation's website.

Questions?
Contact Marc Acuña, director of Chapters, Clubs and Student Relations, at Marc.Acuna@al.arizona.edu