



LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS



WELCOME FROM OUR DIRECTOR

The year 2018 was a very special one for the Leadership Studies Program (MLS) for a couple of reasons: the program received very positive comments from external reviewer Sandra J. Peart, Ph.D., Dean of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond, Virginia. In her own words: “The program review reveals remarkable flexibility and resiliency as well a pattern of rapid and sustained growth .”

In addition, UTEP is now one of only 130 top tier universities among the 2,883 four-year higher education institutions across the U.S. to earn the R1 distinction in the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. To earn this recognition, UTEP was analyzed on the basis of factors such as research expenditures, undergraduate and graduate instructional programs, enrollment profile, amongst others.

Our commitment to our students, UTEP, Fort Bliss, and the El Paso-Juárez metroplex is to continue building a culture of leadership. Therefore, it is my great pleasure to present the first issue of the UTEP Leadership Studies Newsletter. Inside, “The Essence of Leadership” features an interview with UTEP President Dr. Diana Natalicio, where she highlights her views on what it truly means be a leader.

I invite you to review the newsletter and let us know your leadership stories.

Best wishes and Go Miners!

Areli Chacón Silva, Ph. D.

NEWSLETTER CONTENT

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PROGRAM REVIEW

A 2018 highlight was the septennial Master's Program Review for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The year-long review observes statistics on admissions, enrollments, retention rates, and degrees awarded, among other data, with a discussion on each area. The objectives of the study include both compliance with state laws and policy, and determining improvements to the program.

The offices of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the University Provost have to comment on and sign the review for it to be submitted to an outside, peer institution for an unbiased evaluation. The evaluator submits a report, which includes their comments for what is going well and recommendations for improvements.

The MLS Program Review evaluator was Sandra Peart, Ph.D., Dean of the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond in Richmond, Virginia. She commended the program for its flexibility, multiple formats for delivery, retention rates, and graduation rates.

Overall, the comments by the outside evaluator were positive and demonstrate the bright future the Leadership Studies Program is headed towards.

“The MLS Program has achieved much in the short time since it first admitted students, in 2005. None of the challenges it faces is insurmountable; none represents a severe failing on the part of the faculty or students. The program faculty and staff instead are in the enviable position of dealing with rapid growth and change.”

-Sandra Peart, Ph.D.,
External Reviewer

ANNUAL WINTER GATHERING



The Master of Leadership Studies (MLS), in collaboration with the Master of Public Administration (MPA) and the Master of Defense and Strategic Studies (MDSS), hosted its second Annual Winter Gathering on Jan. 18, 2019, at The University of Texas at El Paso's (UTEP) Centennial Museum in an effort to strengthen the connection between its military students and the UTEP pride they are now part of.

“Our military students from the U.S. Sergeants Major Academy had never visited the campus, so the event was made to bring them to campus and show them the history of UTEP and that they belong to it now.” Matthew Leal, MLS program advisor, said.

A group of 40 students and their guests arrived at the UTEP Bookstore and walked to the closest shuttle stop, where Beto Lopez, Assistant Vice President for the Office of University Relations at UTEP, and representatives of each of the three master's programs were waiting for them to tour the university and become familiar with it.

The tour ended at the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens, which is next to the South entrance of the Centennial Museum, where a catered meal was waiting for them inside.

While the group was having lunch, Areli Chacón, Ph.D., director of MLS, welcomed the attendees and thanked them for making the event possible. She was followed by Bradley Chilton, Ph.D., director of MPA, and Daniel Carey-Whalen, director of the Centennial Museum, who talked about the Latinos in World War II exhibit in the room where the gathering took place in.

Leal concluded that the event had been a “huge success.”



MEET THE TEAM



MARI YSELA NOOPILA, PH.D.

VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LEADERSHIP STUDIES

Mari Ysela Noopila, Ph.D., joined the Leadership Studies team in August of 2018. She holds a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration (2018), Master of Arts in Education Management and Development (2011), and a Bachelor of Business Administration (2006), each from NMSU.

She currently serves as a Visiting Assistant Professor for the Master of Leadership Studies program at UTEP and is dedicated to instruction, student success, research, education, and public service.

Noopila brings a wealth of knowledge and experience within the higher education industry. With over 10 years of professional experience in multiple roles within higher education, she has collaborated across colleges and universities to obtain and manage federal funding thought grants and contracts.

At the program level, she has assisted in the preparation for accreditations, revising and re-designing methods of accreditation preparation, she has led efforts for improved program evaluation and classroom assessment. Further, she has taught undergraduate and graduate students in multiple disciplines in online, face-to-face and hybrid classrooms.

Her research interests are in the area of equity in higher education. Her works range from financial aid, persistence, and degree attainment to organizational effectiveness and the professoriate. She partners with various colleagues across disciplines to identify barriers that exist for students, faculty and organizations.

Her most recent publication (Pichon, Guillaume, & Noopila, 2019) "Moving beyond Unresolved Fear to Socio-Academic Integration: Employing Engaging Coping Strategies for First-year Community College Students at a Four-Year Institution" Journal of the First Year Experience & Students in Transition, is in press and will be available Spring of 2019.

Currently, she is working on research and submissions in the areas of student financial aid and persistence, as well as the professoriate, and Hispanic Serving Institutions. Like with her previous work, she aims to promote equity within all areas of higher education.

ARTHUR A. AGUIRRE, PH.D.

VISITING ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF LEADERSHIP STUDIES

Arthur A. Aguirre, Ph.D., received both his Bachelor's (2007) and Master's (2011) of Arts in Communication from the University of Texas at El Paso and his doctorate in Communication from the University of New Mexico (2015). His research has focused on a variety of topics within communication including intercultural communication, organizational communication, public relations, conflict management, fantasy sports, and interpersonal communication.



After graduating from UNM, Aguirre spent time working as an adjunct instructor in the Communication Department at UTEP while also beginning his career as a communication consultant. In 2017, he worked as the Marketing and Customer Service Coordinator at the El Paso Zoo while still working in the Communication Department at UTEP.

"I've been fortunate enough to combine my academic background in communication and public relations with work experience as a consultant and marketing coordinator. I always try to emphasize that link for my students—between theory and practice," Aguirre said.

Recently, Aguirre has presented his work on fantasy sports at the 2018 International Communication Association Conference and his work on food and communication at the 2019 Western States Communication Association Convention. Both are being edited for journal submission. In addition to his research, he is also developing a course on Sports Leadership to be later added to the Master's in Leadership Studies Program course list and is serving on three thesis committees in the Communication Department.

He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the MLS Program and continues to work as a consultant through his own company Crowd and Town Creative.

Outside of academia and consulting, Aguirre loves spending time with his family, his dog Bronx, and recently competed in his first powerlifting competition.



STEPHEN 'STEVE' E. TELLESS, MA

PROGRAM MANAGER

Steve Telless earned both his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in Political Science from UTEP in 2006 and 2008, respectively.

Prior to entering UTEP as a student in 2004, Steve spent 27 years in the United States Army, achieving the rank of Command Sergeant Major. His final assignment brought him to El Paso in 2001.

Steve was first hired as an undergraduate Teaching Assistant in the the Political Science Department in January 2005. He became a Graduate Assistant in June 2006, and then an academic Advisor in the Master of Arts in Leadership Studies in August 2007 when hybrid classes were first offered to students at the United States Army Senior Noncommissioned Officer Leadership Center of Excellence / The United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Class 57. He became the program manager in the fall of 2017.

Steve was born and raised in southeastern Massachusetts and is a huge fan of the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots.

MATTHEW REY LEAL, MA

PROGRAM ADVISOR

Matthew Rey Leal graduated with a Master of Arts in Leadership Studies from UTEP in May of 2018. He attained the part time Graduate Research Assistant position at the Leadership Studies program upon his entry into Graduate School and, one year later, attained the full time position of Program Advisor. He has traveled to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and to the 2019 College Council on Military Educators Conference held in Austin, Texas as part of his efforts to better understand and serve our Military Student population.



Matthew is an El Paso Native and also received a Bachelors in Organizational and Corporate Communication with a minor in Theatre Performance from UTEP in 2016. He is a former Olympic-style Taekwondo fighter, holding a black belt and previously competing at a national level. Currently Matthew is an active member of The ManKind Project, a non-profit organization that seeks to help men worldwide gain emotional self-awareness and a positive mission in life.



NAYLA PAULINA BEJARANO CHACON

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Nayla Bejarano is a standing senior pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with minors in Biological Sciences and Chemistry.

She has been an Undergraduate Research Assistant for the MLS program since fall 2017.

Her projects include the submission of a grant proposal for the National Institutes of Health (NIH): “Dialogues on the Experience of War”, and the development of material for the master’s course “Border Leadership” by interviewing leaders from the border.

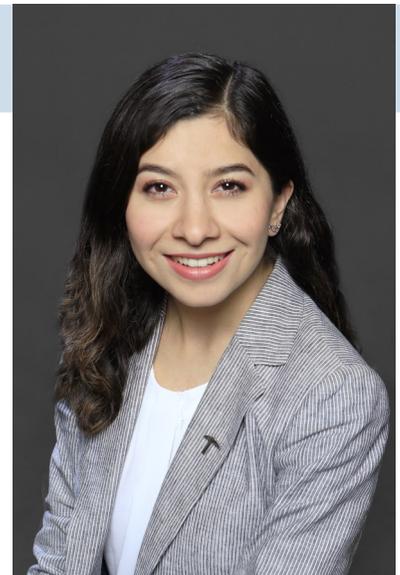
MARISOL FERNANDA CHAVEZ SOLEDAD

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Marisol Chavez is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Journalism degree with a minor in Legal Reasoning from UTEP.

She is the current newsletter editor for the MLS and previously concluded an investigation for the program that will be presented on the Western Social Science Association Annual Conference in San Diego, Calif., on April 25, 2019.

Marisol is also the Vice President of the civil association “Diálogos Juárez”, a photographer, and a writer.



RYAN MATTHEW LEON METZ

GRADUATE ASSISTANT

Ryan Metz is the Graduate Assistant for the Master of Leadership Studies program. He earned his bachelors degree in Mathematics with a concentration in secondary education at UTEP.

Aside from being a student there, he also played quarterback for the UTEP Football team for four years, and was nominated a captain for two of those years.

When he’s not playing sports, studying, or working, he enjoys watching movies and playing video games.



CURRENT STUDENTS



KAREN DEL RIO GUZMAN

PURSuing A MASTER'S IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES

BY KAREN DEL RIO

After becoming a single mom, my daughter reshaped my priorities in life and became a turning point in my personal and professional development. Once I earned my Health Promotion degree with both a minor in Nutrition and in Community Health it became clear that graduate school would be a next step in my professional development.

I am now enrolled in the Master of Leadership Studies (MLS) with two goals in mind: becoming an agent of change and a leader promoting health.

Life is about passion and doing what makes you happy; for me working with the communities is both those things. Through my experience working with the community I became coordinator for a research project that serves low-income populations in our region. Thanks to the uniqueness of the MLS, I can apply leadership models and enhance the effectiveness of my team to fulfill our goals and serve our community.

In addition, I am president and founder of a UTEP registered student organization. The Health Promotion Student Association (HPSA) enrolls students seeking a way to improve their personal, social, and professional lives by serving the community. The MLS program allows me to apply essential leadership skills and structure to the HPSA. We encourage our members to increase their experience working with local organizations and research programs.

I want to become a better leader so I can develop programs geared towards improving the health of our community. I know in my heart that being an agent of change and serving others is not only my passion, it is my call and I want to pursue what I love until the end.

If you would like to be featured on our next issue, email mlsprogram@utep.edu for more information.

OUTSTANDING STUDENTS

SPRING 2018

Hybrid Program

Brandon N. Golden

Robert R. Lilly

Lucas M. Pullen

Online Program

Christopher J. Shattuck

FALL 2018

Hybrid Program

Omar Antonio Gandara-Barron

Online Program

Dana Schubach Dalton

William B. Park

Clay Charles Usie

STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS

Each fall and spring UTEP graduation, the Master of Leadership Studies gives a total of four Outstanding Student Awards to students within the program. Two of these students are online only students who may be anywhere in the world during the duration of their exemplary performance in our academic program. The other two students are hybrid/in class students who have taken the majority of their MLS classes face to face with their instructors and peers.

The criteria for being selected as an MLS Outstanding Student is first a 4.0 GPA. Once the list of 4.0's has been completed, it is sent out to all MLS Faculty so that they can vote on their top selection. Once the votes have been submitted and the top four Outstanding Students have been confirmed, official letter's notifying and congratulating each of the receipts will be drafted signed by the MLS Program Director, Areli Chacon Silva, and sent by mail or handed to them in person.

The recipients will be notified in the letter that if they choose to attend the College of Liberal Arts Awards and Hooding Ceremony they will be recognized on-stage specifically for being chosen as one of the MLS Outstanding Students. To be chosen as an MLS Outstanding student is a great achievement that a student can be proud of for the rest of their lives.



RYAN MATTHEW LEON METZ

LEADERSHIP AND THE EXPERIENCES THAT GO WITH IT

BY RYAN METZ



Hi, my name is Ryan Metz and I am pursuing a Master of Arts in Leadership Studies. Many things have led me up to this point in my life, but the one that stands out has been my experience playing quarterback for the UTEP Miners. While there are many things in life you can put a price tag on, the experience I had here was invaluable.

In my time here I have been on the side of defeat and feeling helpless as I watched from the sideline. I have also been on the side of victory and being the guy throwing the game winning touchdown in a 5 overtime shootout. However, before all that ever happened, when I was coming in as a wide eyed freshmen I really didn't know what to expect. I had watched college football on TV for years dreaming of being able to play at this level, and now that opportunity was staring me in the face. The opportunity to be the guy leading the charge was, while a bit nerve wracking, the challenge I was looking forward to.

My biggest moment came on September 19th, 2015 when I helped orchestrate a 14 point comeback, twice, and threw the game winning touchdown in overtime. I felt that, on that day, in that moment, the leader within me blossomed. From the next four years I had been blessed with the chance to start a game and lead the team each year. With every game and every year that passed, I felt I grew as a leader both on and off the field. Maybe I never had the platform to truly show my leadership abilities before, or maybe I just needed a moment to show myself how much of a leader I could be.

Leadership is an ability that we all possess. For some it's natural but for others all it takes is an experience that allows us to truly understand our potential as a leader. Playing for UTEP was that experience for me.

If you would like to be featured on our next issue, email mlsprogram@utep.edu for more information. We always want to know more about our students and how they're positively impacting their community!

ALUMNI



AMANDA DANIELLE BARRAZA, MA

**GRADUATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT COORDINATOR
BBA-BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN MANAGEMENT
MA-LEADERSHIP STUDIES CLASS OF SPRING 2018
LIBERAL ARTS GRADUATE STUDENT MARSHALL
OUTSTANDING MLS STUDENT**

What circumstances about your life at the time took priority in making your decision to enroll in the MLS program?

At the end of the day, I wanted to earn a transdisciplinary degree that would be applicable across industries and that is exactly what the Master of Arts in Leadership Studies is.

How has the MLS program helped you in your career?

This program not only served as a developmental experience for me but can do so for others as well. The MLS program solidified the notion that before I can effectively and ethically lead an organization, I must first be sound in my own leadership philosophy and be able to lead myself.

What were the main challenges you faced?

My biggest challenge throughout the program was juggling a full course load and working full-time, as the majority of the students had to do. However, it was manageable because the course material and assignments were very useful and enjoyable at the same time. Additionally, the class schedules were extremely flexible and allowed me to create a schedule that worked for me. Because of this I was able to complete the program in just over a year.

Would you recommend the MLS program? Why?

I highly recommend the MLS program to anyone looking to further their education. Leadership studies is extremely applicable and transferrable to all industries and workplaces.

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COLE FREYTAG, MA

BA-IN COMMUNICATIONS

MA-IN LEADERSHIP STUDIES

UTEP FOOTBALL STUDENT ATHLETE (2012-2016)

OUTSTANDING MLS STUDENT



Before hanging up his football cleats in 2016, Cole Freytag was the UTEP Miners' top wide receiver. On the field, Cole led the team in receiving yards, and in the classroom, he led by example.

A star quarterback at Coronado High School, Cole attended UTEP on a football scholarship, which covered his undergraduate and graduate tuition.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in organizational and corporate communications in May 2016, Cole juggled football, fatherhood, his graduate coursework in Leadership Studies, and a full-time job to earn a second degree from UTEP in less than two years.

As a graduate student, Cole worked full time at Lone Star Title in marketing and business development and attended classes in the evenings. It was a tough schedule, but he says that being a good role model for his three-year-old daughter, Brooklyn, made the effort worthwhile.

Although he was a leader on the football field, Cole credits his graduate education with helping him to further develop his leadership and communication skills. He said if he were still playing football, his graduate studies would have made him a better player. He plans to apply the knowledge he has gained to a future career as a football coach.

Cole's parents always encouraged him to continue his education, and he intends to do the same for his daughter. He said he wants Brooklyn to have every opportunity to pursue her dreams too.

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THE ESSENCE OF LEADERSHIP: AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. DIANA NATALICIO

As part of the Border Leadership elective, offered by the Master of Leadership Studies, Visiting Assistant Professor Michael Lechuga, Ph.D., had the opportunity to interview UTEP President Diana Natalicio in an effort to understand, on a deeper level, the challenges and opportunities that arise from being a leader in the border.

The interview touches upon the subject of the uniqueness of the people on the border, with Natalicio saying, “One of the things you notice when you come from other places is that people here seem to be much more mellow about differences.” She continued, “I think people around here are much more tolerant and relaxed about differences in people than in many places.”

Natalicio talked about how she has been witness of how differences can divide a community and how an image of superiority for having a better social or economical status arises from that division. About El Paso, she said, “El Paso is just a place that doesn’t get all fired up about differences.”

After talking about her journey to her current leadership role as UTEP’s president, and the unexpected things that happened to her along the way, like defying gender roles by going to college and having a part-time job, Natalicio ended her interview by giving a piece of advice to any future leaders that work in the border area. She said, “The best advice is to be sure, before you speak out on something, or articulate something, be sure you know what you’re doing.”

She then added, “Be measured, don’t be a hotshot, don’t try to go for glory; go for substance. Think about what will make a real difference, not just façade, but a real difference, and work on that.”

Natalicio is expected to leave her leadership position on Sept. 1, 2019, almost 31 years after she first assumed UTEP’s presidency and 41 years after she first started working in higher education.

NEWS & PARTNERSHIPS

LEADERSHIP BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

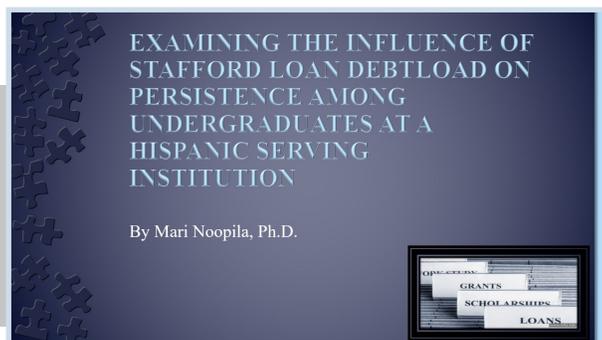


NMHEAR CONFERENCE 2019

Dr. Chacón, Dr. Noopila, and Dr. Aguirre represented the MLS Program in the New Mexico Higher Education Assessment and Retention Conference that took place in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on Feb. 21 and 22.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Dr. Mari Noopila presented and discussed her current research project to a group of UTEP students and faculty in an effort to promote interdisciplinary research and collaborations.



LEAD WORKSHOP: LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Arthur Aguirre facilitated the second edition of UTEP SELC's LEAD workshops: "Leadership Communications" on March 5th, guiding a group of 20 students in the expansion of their leadership skills.

SPRING 2019 GRADUATE FAIR

MLS participated in the Spring 2019 edition of UTEP's Grad Fair on March 12-14 to promote the graduate program and meet with prospective students.



HELP US GROW!



The MLS program is in continuous development, always striving to become the best in what we do and what we provide.

With the support of people like you, we could get even further!

Click [here](#) or go to <https://givingto.utep.edu/page.aspx?pid=1465> to make a donation of your choice to the program.

Make sure to look out for future editions of our newsletter to be updated on our achievements and stories.



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