

SKY-HIGH MINER PRIDE

One San Jacinto Plaza honors EMBA Cohort IX with special lighting



One San Jacinto Plaza illuminated its façade in UTEP colors to celebrate the graduation of EMBA Cohort IX, which completed the program in early August.

The UTEP Graduate Business Center has been located at One San Jacinto Plaza for more than a decade, offering a full portfolio of MBA formats – accelerated, full-time and executive – for students across a wide range of backgrounds.



MBA Program Ranked Among Nation's Best

Hispanic Network Magazine's review of programs again ranks UTEP's MBA

The UTEP MBA Program was recognized once again by Hispanic Network Magazine as one of the top programs in the nation as part of its yearly review of programs and industries.

A publication of DiversityComm, Hispanic Network Magazine seeks to create environments in which Hispanics and other minorities have access to business, career and education opportunities. In addition to naming its top MBA programs for Hispanics, the magazine also named its top picks for Employers, Supplier Diversity Programs, and LGBTQ+ Friendly Companies.

UTEP's College of Business Administration is the Paso del Norte region's only school accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business – the premier international accrediting body for business schools. The University's MBA program strives to provide a globally inspired experiential education for its students, including short-term faculty-led study abroad courses.

Through a variety of class formats and professional development activities, the UTEP MBA Program is designed for the modern student. From industry experts and established business leaders to full-time and transitioning students, the program gathers professionals across different industries – such as healthcare, engineering, military, manufacturing, and financial services – to create an interdisciplinary education experience for students at various stages of their career.

A Note from MBA Program Staff

Welcome to the Fall 2019 MBA Newsletter! We have some exciting updates for you.

Inside, Lisa Lavigne Saucedo, a 2019 Gold Nugget recipient and proud EMBA alumna, kicked off our fall Lunch and Lead series with career stories and advice for our current MBA students. You'll also hear from Claudia Lopez, another EMBA graduate, who combined her undergraduate degree in chemical engineering with an MBA to earn a top position at Veolia in El Paso.

On the program front, we've successfully launched two new cohorts of Full-Time and Accelerated MBA

programs.

We are also getting ready to begin a new community engagement project with our current EMBA cohort. This project connects nonprofits in El Paso with Executive MBA students. The experience and knowledge these students bring to the table can help our nonprofit partners launch capacity-building initiatives or data-driven projects for an organization.

You'll also find updates on our College faculty, including the addition of four new tenure and tenure-track professors to COBA, as well as a quick interview with Faith Xie, Ph.D., new Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

'DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASPIRE'

EMBA Alumna Claudia Lopez forges her own professional path

Claudia Lopez is a graduate of the UTEP Executive MBA Program. A chemical engineer by training, Lopez worked as Director of Business Coaching for the El Paso Chamber before accepting a position at Veolia as its new plant manager. She sat down with COBA News to discuss her time in the program, her career as an engineer and the importance of mentorship and advocacy.

Why did you choose UTEP's Executive MBA?

I decided to pursue my EMBA because I had been in my industry for about 10 years and I wanted the opportunity to surround myself with leaders and emerging talent [in their respective fields]. I wanted to be in a setting where I could be mentored and learn from other leaders. I had a lot of professional experience out of town, but I did not have a large professional network in El Paso. My Executive MBA cohort was my first true network in the region.

An attractive feature of the program was the five-year managerial experience requirement. I really liked that because it fostered a different type of learning experience. I gained a lot through my cohort. They really were the best.

What was your cohort experience like?

Going to school at Notre Dame, I had never really experienced higher education in El Paso, I just had a perception of it. I feel very blessed with my cohort because each person brought to the table their own experience, intelligence and worldview, which was what I was hoping and expecting when I enrolled in the program. This great group of people who – on top of being highly intelligent and motivated – were kind and driven in their work and personal lives. They are the people I like to associate with and I can call any one of them for anything.

Our [International Research Course] trip to Italy was a great experience that really bonded us. That bond began in class, developed and strengthened throughout the program, and continues to this day.

How have you faced challenges as an engineer?

A former boss once told me, "You are a female, you are Hispanic" and that



Claudia Lopez bolstered her undergraduate degree in chemical engineering by earning an EMBA at UTEP. She recently accepted a position at Veolia as one of its plant managers, overseeing day-to-day operations of the plant.

caught me off guard. Yes, those are all the things people see me as, but I told him if I counted all the things that could hold me back, I would not have come as far as I have.

You are alone sometimes – the first, in some cases – and that is OK. Sometimes you're the one walking in the wilderness, but you're quietly leaving a path for others in your wake.

One of my personal goals is to help people understand what can be done and help them see past the limiting beliefs we place on ourselves. It is our responsibility to lift each other up and, in my own way, I want to expose others to the concept that engineers do not have to fit into a certain role.

What's the most exciting aspect about your position as plant manager with Veolia?

I'm excited to dive back into the world of pure chemical engineering, because, until now, I had never fully been in that world. Previously, I had worked in food manufacturing, which is tangentially connected to chemical engineering. Now, I am in an environment that takes full advantage of my degrees and experience.

As plant manager, I work with a byproduct of the refinery process – and

Note: On September 6, 2019, Claudia Lopez gave birth to Camila Lopez a few weeks after her photo was taken. The UTEP MBA Program congratulates Claudia and her family on the birth of her daughter.

safely turn it into a liquid. From an environmental aspect, we work to make our processes safer and better. There is a high level of responsibility that comes with the role that is exciting. It's simply another challenge.

Mentorship and advocacy are very important to you in your personal and professional life. What advice do you have for undergraduates?

Don't be afraid to aspire. I was the first one in my family to leave El Paso; the first to get an engineering degree; and now, an MBA. People often think we are the product of your environment, but what I figured out is we are a product of your expectations. I think that if you believe in yourself enough, you will accomplish what you want.

I don't want my daughter to deal with the same things I deal with today. I want to help create positive and nurturing work environments as the normal standard, so even if I can make a small change and remain in [chemical engineering] for my whole career, I am really excited to do that.

WELCOME TO UTEP

*Four tenure-track faculty join
College of Business Administration at start of Fall 2019*

A new cohort of educators join the ranks of tenure-track faculty at the College of Business Administration. Check out their past experience and research interests below.



John Gibson

*Associate Professor, Department of
Economics and Finance*

Dr. Gibson comes to UTEP with a background in macroeconomic modeling, computational methods, and financial and monetary economics. His research interests include measuring the economic and social impact of public policies, such as infrastructure investment and public debt issuance, and investigating the important role played by real-world frictions related to both labor and credit markets.



Cynthia Halliday

*Assistant Professor, Department of
Marketing and Management*

Dr. Halliday comes to UTEP from Florida International University (FIU), with a research focus on leadership, workplace social exchanges, international human resource management, and gender and diversity. She has taught courses in Human Resource Management, Organizational Behavior, and International Management.



Yun Ke

*Assistant Professor, Department of
Accounting and Information Systems*

Dr. Ke comes to UTEP from Brock University, where he served as assistant professor at the Goodman School of Business. He has a teaching background in financial and managerial accounting, and a research interest in financial analysis and corporate governance.



Linh Rachel Thompson

*Assistant Professor, Department of
Economics and Finance*

Dr. Thompson joins UTEP from the University of South Florida, where she earned her doctoral degree in finance, and served as an instructor in the areas of Principles of Investment, Principles of Finance, and Advanced Corporate Finance. She is primarily interested in empirical corporate finance and behavioral finance.

Q&A with Feixue Xie, New Associate Dean at COBA

Feixue (Faith) Xie, Ph.D., recently added “Associate Dean” to her list of titles held at UTEP. The educator also holds the JP Morgan Chase Bank Professorship in the Department of Economics and Finance. Xie succeeds Fernando R. Jiménez Arévalo, Ph.D., as new Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at COBA.

She recently spoke with COBA News about her new role and why she chose to take on a new challenge.

When did you realize a career in higher education was the path for you?

In college, where I did quite well academically. I was amazed at how (and the way that) knowledge could be imparted (from my professors to students, and from me to others).

Why did you decide to take on this role at this point in your career?

I have done many years of teaching and research, and I think that I have achieved my personal goals in these areas at this stage of my career. Serving and helping the younger generation are new challenges that are also important to me, especially when I am needed.

What excites you most about serving in this role?

When I can help students progress in their programs and help achieve the mission of our College.

What is the best advice you received during your career?

Broaden your knowledge base or acquire multiple skills to have more options in the job market. Follow the money or follow the job opportunity in selecting courses/electives — or dissertation topics in my case. (I majored in Economics; my Ph.D. dissertation topics were in the Finance area, and now I am a Finance professor.)



Xie



NEW COHORTS BEGIN STUDIES

The MBA Program welcomes the Fall 2019 Accelerated MBA (AMBA) and Full-Time MBA (FTMBA) cohorts to the UTEP Graduate Business Center.

The new AMBA cohort (top) consists of working professionals with an average six years professional work experience across the industries of hospitality, education, healthcare, transportation and more.

This fall's FTMBA cohort (right) enrollment of 23 students exceeds the previous high set in Fall 2010. The balance of undergraduate degrees range from hotel management to sports management to construction management and others.



'NUGGETS' OF WISDOM

Gold Nugget recipient Lisa Lavigne Saucedo kicks off 'Lunch and Lead'

The MBA Program's "Lunch and Lead" speaker series for Academic Year 2019-2020 began with a special guest on October 1 at the UTEP Graduate Business Center. The event's speaker was Lisa Lavigne Saucedo. Saucedo was among the 2019 Gold Nugget recipients honored during Homecoming activities the same week. Saucedo serves as Executive Director at CASA of El Paso, an organization that advocates for children in the state foster care system, providing crucial support for these individuals.

Saucedo earned her EMBA in 2015 from UTEP. She described her time in the program, saying it bolstered her leadership skills alongside her diverse cohort, and shared these experiences with current MBA students. "Pursuing this degree really instills confidence and brings out your best attributes. It teaches you to think differently about everything, and that the work that we do, from a multimillion-dollar company to a local nonprofit, can make a difference in the world," Saucedo said.



EMBA student balances studies, new PR position

Victor Guerrero is currently earning his EMBA at UTEP while adjusting to his new role as the Administrative Director for Marketing and Communications for Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare system, which he accepted in summer 2019.

Guerrero took some time from his packed schedule to share how his position supports the hospital, why he chose to undertake an MBA at this point in his career, and how the program has helped him make more strategic decisions at work.



Full Interview: To read Victor Guerrero's full interview, please visit utep.edu/cobanews.

What is your new position and what does it entail?

I recently became the Administrative Director for Marketing and Communications at Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare system, which is owned by the Hospital Corporation of America – HCA for short. I provide strategic alignment for our service lines. I make sure the top priority service lines that impact the hospital's bottom line the most, such as emergency room services, are the ones that get the most attention of our marketing services.

seat at the table.

Have you used what you learned in the classroom to help you in your job?

The knowledge from the classroom can be directly applied to your work and it's helpful to make informed strategic decisions. Currently, I'm taking a statistics class – it's kicking my butt, by the way – but that transfer of knowledge helps sharpen these concepts in real time to make strategic decisions at work.

Has anything surprised you about the program?

When we were taking a communication course with Patricia Witherspoon – who was the head of the Communication Department when I was an undergrad – I found myself surprised and happy to see her face and learn from her again in this setting. That was amazing.

It drove a point home for me that there's a space in this program, for individuals who are leaning towards leadership positions in their companies to study and find value in communications. I'm glad the MBA Program recognizes this importance.

Sometimes when organizations have to adjust budgets, marketing and communications are usually the first to see cuts. For executives who may not be close to the area of a business that directly deals with communications, the coursework can help fill in the blanks. Reputation management is everything that falls under that umbrella and it's vital to an organization's survival.

Was an MBA always in the cards?

Earning my MBA was always part of my plan, I just didn't know when I was going to get to it. At some point, I was becoming too comfortable with where I was and wanted to grow professionally. I love working for HCA, but in the future I would love to be able to generate my own income and be able to work out of my own house – and spend a little bit more time with my dog.

At some point, the perfect job will involve bringing my dog to work.

Why the EMBA specifically?

I joined the EMBA program to become a more effective manager. [My undergraduate] communications degree utilizes the creative side of the brain more, but I also want to be a strategic manager. With that comes an understanding of numbers, statistics – not what I focused on when I was studying for my undergrad.

But the world is driven by numbers, especially corporations, and I wanted a

In Brief:

EMBA Program Kicks Off Community Engagement Project

This fall semester, representatives from several El Paso area nonprofits helped kick off the inaugural Executive MBA Community Engagement Project class. This new course allows EMBA students to work directly with area nonprofits on selected capacity-building projects. Nonprofit representatives discussed the nuances and challenges of managing in the nonprofit sector. This insight enabled EMBA students to map out the synergies and opportunities within management practices in the nonprofit sector.

Payne Named to Editorial Boards of *Energy Reports* and *Energies*

Active on a number of journal editorial boards, Dr. James E. Payne, Dean of the College of Business Administration and Paul L. Foster and Alejandra de la Vega Foster Distinguished Chair in International Business at UTEP, accepted in Fall 2019 editorial board appointments to *Energy Reports* and *Energies*. *Energy Reports* is published by Elsevier; *Energies* is published by MDPI.



Payne

Professors Gotti, Folsom Speak at Accounting Conference

David Folsom, Ph.D., and Department of Accounting and Information Systems Chair Giorgio Gotti, Ph.D., spoke at the American Accounting Association's Annual Meeting in San Francisco, California in August.

Folsom participated in a number of panels as both a moderator and panelist. Gotti also participated on a panel to discuss his article "Dark Tetrad Personality and Accounting Information Quality: The Moderating Effect of Corporate Reputation."



Gotti



Folsom