



UTEP
WOODY L. HUNT
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Annual Report

Opportunity In Motion



2026

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1. A Shared Commitment

This past year marked another meaningful chapter in the continued growth and impact of the Woody L. Hunt College of Business. Guided by our mission to prepare principled, innovative, and globally-minded business leaders, we made significant strides in advancing academic excellence, student success, and engagement with our regional and international communities.

Our faculty demonstrated outstanding commitment to teaching, scholarship, and service. Through innovative curricula, impactful research, and strong industry partnerships, they ensured our students were equipped with the skills, adaptability, and ethical foundation required to succeed in a rapidly evolving global economy.

Our students rose to the challenge, earning competitive internships, excelling in experiential learning opportunities, and contributing meaningfully to their communities. Their achievements reflect both their determination and the robust support systems within our college and University.

As we look ahead, Hunt College remains firmly focused on continuous improvement and bold thinking. We will build our momentum by expanding interdisciplinary collaboration, strengthening ties with industry and alumni, and investing in initiatives that enhance student access and success. I am deeply grateful to our faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and partners for their dedication to our shared vision. Together, we are shaping a future enriched in opportunity, innovation, and impact.

John Hadjimarcou, Ph.D.

Rick and Ginger Francis Dean

Paul L. Foster and Alejandra De La Vega Foster

Distinguished Chair in International Business

2. Leading with Purpose

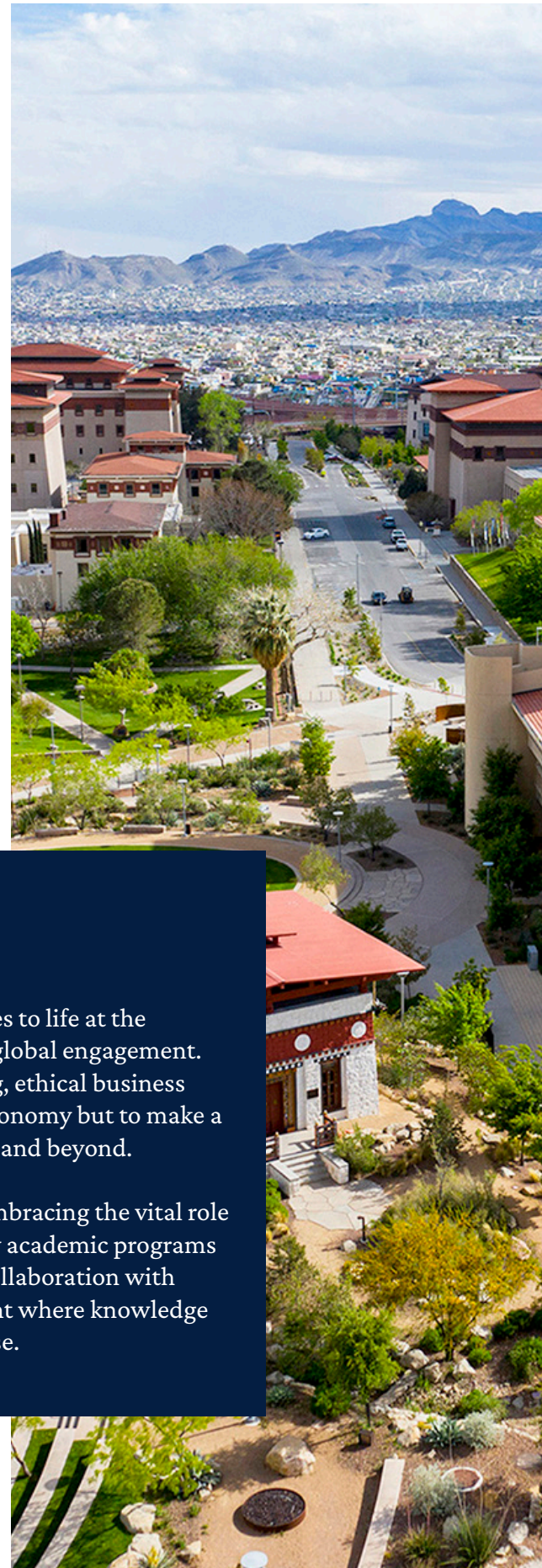
Hunt College is shaped by its place in the Paso del Norte region, where commerce, culture, and industry meet across one of North America's busiest trade corridors.

Through faculty expertise, research centers, Corporate Academies, and industry partnerships, the college connects classroom learning with applied experience and prepares students to lead in a regional, binational, and global business environment.

Mission

At the Woody L. Hunt College of Business, our mission comes to life at the intersection of education, innovation, a sense of place, and global engagement. We are dedicated to shaping students into forward-thinking, ethical business leaders, prepared not only to succeed in a complex global economy but to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the Paso del Norte region and beyond.

Our unique border location informs everything we do. By embracing the vital role of U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce, we deliver high-quality academic programs enriched by real-world experience. Through research and collaboration with community and industry partners, we create an environment where knowledge is shared, innovation thrives, and students lead with purpose.





Vision

We envision Hunt Business as a globally recognized leader in business education, one defined by its deep connection to the U.S.-Mexico relationship and its pivotal role in shaping trade, commerce, and the economic vitality of our region.

Anchored in the Paso del Norte region, our influence extends beyond borders as we prepare leaders who understand the power of collaboration, innovation, and global opportunity.

3. Impact at a Glance

From enrollment and graduation outcomes, to regional and binational influence, these highlights show how Hunt College turns education, research, and industry engagement into measurable impact.

ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Momentum that Moves a University

In Fall 2025, the Woody L. Hunt College of Business enrolled 3,995 students, its largest class to date and a 12% increase over the previous year. The milestone came as UTEP surpassed 26,000 students for the first time, marking a year of historic growth for the University and the region it serves.

The college's student body also reflected the community at the center of its mission. During the same semester, 3,304 Hunt Business students identified as Hispanic or Mexican nationals, underscoring the college's role in expanding access to business education in the Paso del Norte region.

Growth with Purpose

Hunt College is among UTEP's fastest-growing colleges, drawing students to programs that connect academic rigor with career preparation and industry relevance.

Fall 2025

Hunt Business Enrollment

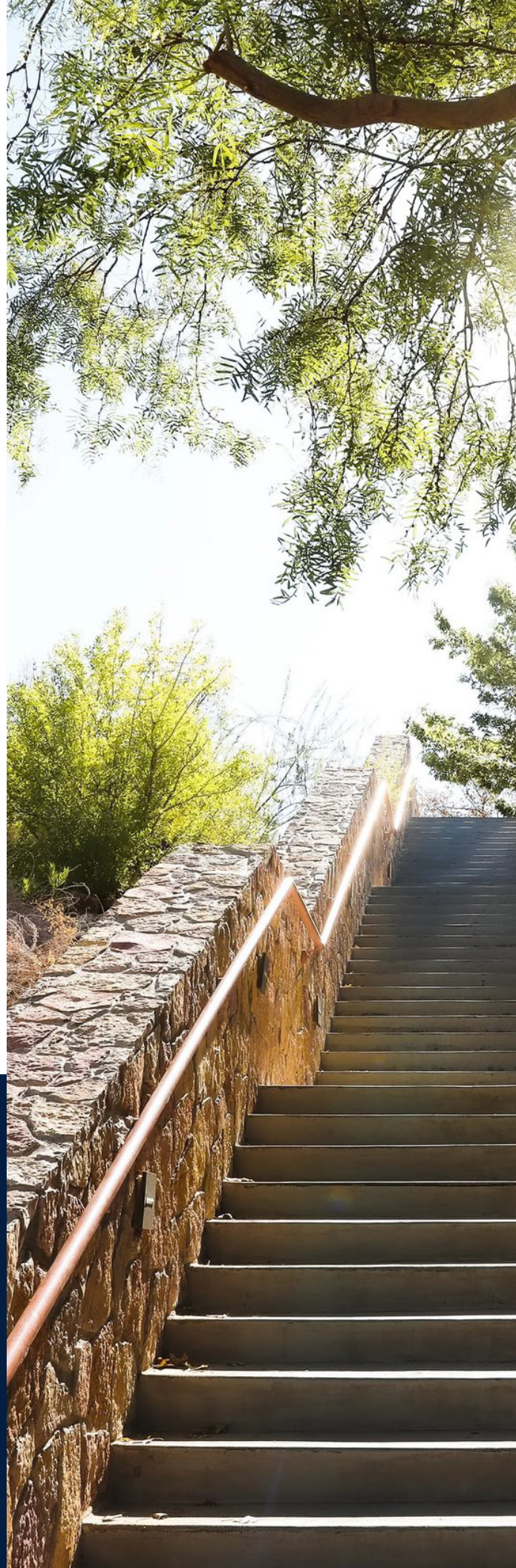
3,995 students

12%

Increase from
Fall 2024

3,304 students

Identify as Hispanic and/or
Mexican nationals





ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Built for Opportunity

Career-connected learning remained central to the Hunt Business experience in 2025. Through Corporate Academies in banking, enterprise resource planning, risk management, and human capital management, students combined classroom learning with industry exposure, professional networks, and applied learning.

The model continued to show strong results: More than 70% of academy participants secured full-time employment by graduation, reflecting the value of focused preparation and sustained industry partnerships.

Graduate programs also supported professionals at different stages of their careers. Hunt College's Professional, Online, and Executive MBA programs, along with the Master of Accountancy, M.S. in Economics, and Ph.D. in Business Administration, prepared students for leadership roles in business, policy, research, and academia.

Looking Ahead

As UTEP reached historic enrollment levels, Hunt College continued to build on that momentum. With growing academic programs, expanding industry partnerships, and a focus on the U.S.–Mexico business region, the college is strengthening its role as a pipeline for business talent and applied leadership.



UTEP
CORPORATE ACADEMIES
WOODY L. HUNT COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Current:

Banking
Enterprise Resource Planning
Risk Management
Human Capital Management

In Development:

Wealth Management
Real Estate
Entrepreneurship

Degree Programs

- Bachelor of Business Administration
- Master of Business Administration
Professional, Online, Executive
- Master of Accountancy
- Master of Science in Economics
- Ph.D. in Business Administration
Accounting, Finance, Management, Marketing

4. Accreditation





UTEP HUNT BUSINESS

AACSB ACCREDITATION

The Woody L. Hunt College of Business is accredited by AACSB in both Business and Accounting, an honor held by fewer than 2% of business schools worldwide.

This prestigious recognition reflects our commitment to excellence, innovation, and preparing students to lead the global business environment.



**SCAN TO
LEARN MORE**



**AACSB
ACCREDITED**



**AACSB
ACCREDITED**
Accounting



5. Educating Global Business Leaders

Hunt College programs are designed with the future in mind. From undergraduate foundations to graduate and executive education, our curriculum, cross-border learning, and industry-led projects prepare students to lead in trade, supply chain management, and international business.

HUNT BUSINESS PATHWAYS

Career Momentum from Day One

In Fall 2025, Hunt Business Pathways, a new experiential learning initiative, was embedded in BUSN 1301: Introduction to Global Business.

Designed to meet students where they are and prepare them for where they're going, the premise is simple: confidence, leadership, and professional identity should be developed early.

Within a single semester, students engage in leadership development, discover their strengths, earn industry recognized microcredentials, and begin shaping a professional brand using the same digital tools found in today's workplace.

“By helping students build strong résumés, earn microcredentials, and better understand their strengths, we give them the tools and confidence to succeed in the classroom and beyond.”

John Hadjimarcou, Ph.D.
Rick and Ginger Francis Dean

A Common Foundation for Every Student

By embedding the Pathways experience into a required course, Hunt Business ensures that every student, regardless of background or major, begins with the same essential toolkit. The program equips students with practical, marketable skills. It introduces leadership fundamentals, strengthens digital literacy, and builds a sense of belonging.

Five integrated components help students move from exploration to application. They activate their professional presence through Handshake, a career focused online platform, participate in the Miners Leadership Initiative, and earn a leadership microcredential. They uncover how they learn and lead through StrengthsFinder, applying those insights to team projects and presentations. They engage beyond the classroom by joining student organizations, building community, and practicing leadership in real settings.

Students also gain hands-on experience through industry-driven learning, earning credentials from organizations such as Google and IBM. The pathway culminates in professional branding, where students use AI tools like Microsoft Copilot to craft polished résumés and professional biographies.

Collaboration Across Campus

Hunt Business Pathways reflects a campuswide commitment to student success. The partnership included:

- UTEP Extended University
- The Division of Student Affairs
- UTEP Edge
- The Student Engagement and Leadership Center
- The School of Pharmacy
- BUSN 1301 faculty

Impact Felt by Students

For students, the experience is personal and transformative. Many describe discovering strengths they hadn't recognized before, gaining confidence in group settings, and realizing that leadership doesn't require a title, only initiative and self-awareness.

One student shared: "Everything is new, and this program helped make leadership feel achievable instead of intimidating."

Hunt Business Pathways promises to support, prepare, and empower students from the moment they begin their academic journey.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Business, But Make It Spanish

In Fall 2025, Hunt College launched SPAN 3358: Spanish for Business to address growing workforce demand for bilingual and culturally competent professionals in binational business environments.

The inaugural offering enrolled 17 students, reflecting promising interest in applied language instruction tied to professional outcomes.

Developed through a collaboration with the Department of Chicano Studies, Languages, and



"Our work with campus partners reinforces that these foundational skills matter for every student, regardless of major."

J. Rolando Nuñez, Ed.D.
*Assistant Dean for Applied Learning
and Workforce Development*

Linguistics, the course integrated discipline-specific business vocabulary, professional communication strategies, and cross-cultural frameworks relevant to U.S.–Mexico economic contexts. Students completed assignments focused on real-world business scenarios, strengthening language proficiency and intercultural competence.

The successful launch of Spanish for Business expands Hunt College's curriculum in workforce-aligned language education and establishes a foundation for future growth in interdisciplinary, bilingual programming.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Rethinking International Business for U.S.-Mexico Trade Leadership

For International Business majors, global business starts close to home.

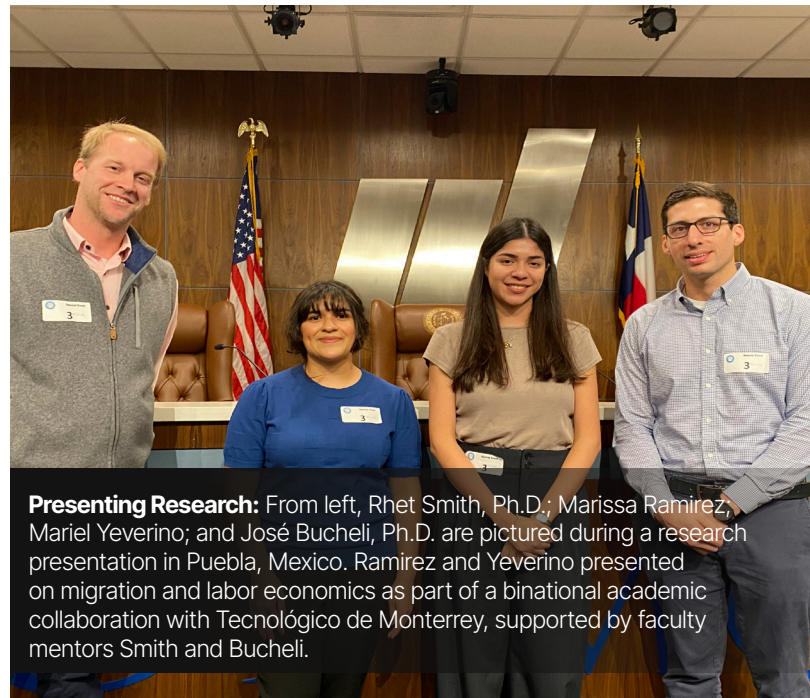
Hunt College has redesigned the major to focus more directly on U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce, aligning the program with one of the region's most important economic relationships and one of the strongest career pathways for students in El Paso.

The updated major places bilingual business communication at the center of the student experience. Students must demonstrate proficiency in business Spanish, preparing them to work across borders in settings where language, culture, logistics, contracts and supply chains are part of the same conversation.

About 180 International Business majors will now specialize in U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce. The change gives students a clearer academic path into careers tied to binational business, including trade, logistics, supply chain management, international operations, and multinational firms.

Led by José Ablanedo Rosas, Ph.D., and the Department of Marketing, Management and Supply Chain, the redesign connects academic preparation with economic reality. It recognizes that students studying international business at UTEP are not preparing for global markets in the abstract. They are preparing for one of the most active trade corridors in North America.

The result is a more focused International Business major built around regional strength, bilingual excellence and the growing demand for professionals who can work fluently across the U.S.-Mexico business landscape.



Presenting Research: From left, Rhet Smith, Ph.D.; Marissa Ramirez, Mariel Yeverino; and José Bucheli, Ph.D. are pictured during a research presentation in Puebla, Mexico. Ramirez and Yeverino presented on migration and labor economics as part of a binational academic collaboration with Tecnológico de Monterrey, supported by faculty mentors Smith and Bucheli.

NEW PERSPECTIVES

Students Take Research Across Borders

In November 2025, Hunt College undergraduate students Mariel Yeverino and Marissa Ramirez presented their work at a conference hosted by Tecnológico de Monterrey at Campus Puebla.

The project grew from a virtual collaboration with peers in Mexico, guided by faculty mentors Rhet Smith, Ph.D., of UTEP and Diego Canales of Tecnológico de Monterrey.

Their research brought economic analysis to cross-border questions in migration and labor economics, giving students experience in international collaboration, academic presentation and policy-focused research. José Bucheli, Ph.D., accompanied the students in support of their professional and academic development.

The collaboration reflects Hunt College's commitment to expanding undergraduate research opportunities and strengthening binational academic partnerships.

HUNT BUSINESS GRADUATE PROGRAMS

UTEP MBA Program Reaches Historic Enrollment Milestone

In 2025, the UTEP MBA enrolled the largest class in its history, welcoming 233 students across its Online, Professional and Executive MBA formats.

The milestone reflects growing demand for graduate business education built around working professionals. With three formats, the UTEP MBA now serves students at different career stages, from early- and mid-career managers preparing for advancement to senior executives and business owners strengthening their strategic leadership.

The 2025 cohorts also represented a broad mix of industries, including health care, technology, finance and engineering. Military veterans have become a growing part of the UTEP MBA population, using the degree to move into civilian careers in management consulting, entrepreneurship, and corporate leadership.

Recent program changes helped drive that growth. The UTEP Online MBA, launched in Fall 2023, expanded the program's reach to students across the United



“The growth shows that working professionals are looking for flexible, high-quality graduate business education that fits their lives and advances their careers.”

Sacnité Ramos
Director of UTEP Graduate Business Center

States and internationally. Flexible fall and spring admissions give working professionals more control over when they begin, while a streamlined curriculum helps students build business skills in a more efficient timeframe.

Together, those changes point to a program gaining momentum by meeting professionals where they are — and preparing them for where they want to go next.





Increasing Demand for Quality and Convenience

Launched in Fall 2023 with a single annual intake, the UTEP Online MBA quickly outpaced enrollment expectations and showed strong demand for a flexible graduate business program built for working professionals and nontraditional learners.

By early 2025, application volume and student interest supported the addition of a spring entry point.

The expanded format helped drive significant gains: MBA course registrations grew 205 percent, while MBA student credit hours increased 158 percent.

The growth positioned the UTEP Online MBA as a key part of Hunt College's graduate strategy, expanding access for professionals whose schedules, responsibilities and career goals require a more flexible path to advancement.

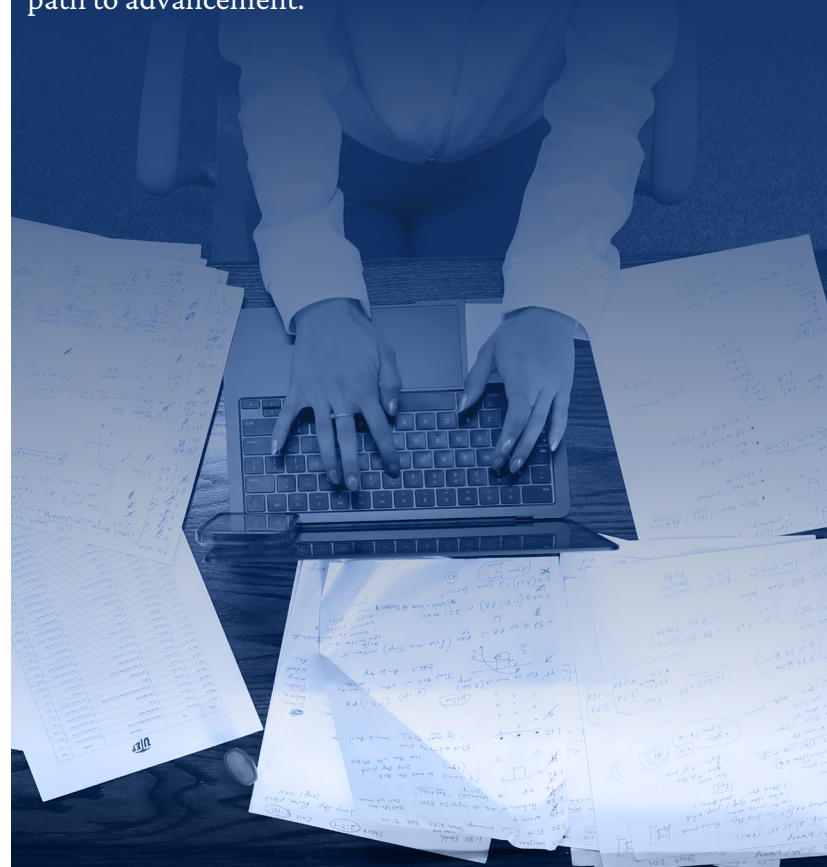


Recruitment and Referrals Double Program Enrollment

The UTEP Executive MBA program entered 2025 with growing demand from experienced professionals seeking a stronger network, sharper strategic perspective, and greater confidence leading complex organizations.

After welcoming nine students in Spring 2024, the program more than doubled its enrollment to 19 by Spring 2025. That growth was supported by targeted recruitment, clearer messaging around return on investment, and word-of-mouth referrals from students who became advocates for the program.

The result showed how a well-positioned graduate program can meet working executives where they are while giving them a clear path toward their next level of leadership.





Honoring Service: From left, veteran Executive MBA graduates Nicole Staggs, Francis Manalac, Gregory Gaines, and Johah Herd joined UTEP President Heather Wilson at the UTEP EMBA Hooding Ceremony.

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

Military Experience Meets Executive Education

The UTEP Executive MBA program continues to support military-affiliated students as they move from service into civilian leadership. That impact is especially visible in Cohort XV, the EMBA class with the largest number of military-connected students to date.

For active-duty and veteran leaders, the EMBA offers a structured path to translate military experience into business strategy. Students build on years of decision-making, team leadership and operational expertise while strengthening their skills in finance, strategy and executive communication.

In the classroom, military-affiliated students bring perspectives shaped by high-stakes environments, mission-driven work and leading under pressure. Their experience adds depth to cohort discussions and strengthens peer learning across the program.

Graduates often use the EMBA as a launchpad for civilian careers in management consulting, entrepreneurship, operations and logistics, technology and defense. As Cohort XV demonstrates, the program helps those who have served carry their leadership forward into the next stage of their careers.



INVESTING IN GRADUATE SUCCESS

New Career Development Manager Role Established

As graduate enrollment and program offerings grew in 2025, Hunt College welcomed Jazlyn Escobedo as Graduate Career Development Manager, expanding support for master's students balancing professional responsibilities with new career goals. Through individualized guidance in career exploration, job search strategy, networking, and employer engagement, Escobedo helps students connect advanced business education with targeted coaching, professional confidence and meaningful career outcomes.

ONE CLASSROOM, TWO COUNTRIES

Students Build Ideas Across Borders

A six-week virtual collaboration connected 46 UTEP International Marketing students with approximately 40 students from Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero, creating a shared classroom across the U.S.–Mexico border.

Led by Delfina Glenn, Associate Professor of Practice, the Collaborative Online International Learning project paired students from UTEP and UAGro's Guerrero and Acapulco campuses. Working in bilingual, cross-border teams, students developed business ideas using the Business Model Canvas framework, applying international marketing concepts to real economic and cultural contexts.

The project gave students a practical way to study global business without leaving their home campuses. Through virtual meetings, team discussions and professional Zoom presentations, students compared customer segments, value propositions, supply chains and revenue models while learning how culture, communication, and geography shape business strategy.



Cross-border classroom: Delfina Glenn, Associate Professor of Practice, led a six-week virtual collaboration connecting UTEP International Marketing students with students at Universidad Autónoma de Guerrero.

IN CONNECTING

86 students

Across two institutions, the project brought future marketers, entrepreneurs and business leaders into direct collaboration.

Students practiced international marketing through bilingual teamwork, cross-cultural discussion and real-world business model development.

6. From Classroom to Career

Student success is measured by seized opportunities. Through internships, employer partnerships, leadership development, and real-world experiences, often across borders, Hunt College students turn learning into careers — and ambition into achievement.



Cycle of Success: UTEP MBA graduate Sebastian Delgado is seen in class at the UTEP Graduate Business Center, and later at his hooding ceremony. Delgado earned his MBA while working full-time at Lockheed Martin.



Alderete Martinez



Lara



Mendez



Reynaga

PRUDENTIAL RISK MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

Graduates Step Into Risk Management Careers

At Spring 2025 Commencement, five students from the Prudential Risk Management Academy graduated with industry experience, employer connections, and full-time career momentum in risk management, insurance, and financial services.

Their success capped another strong year for the Academy, which reported an 80 percent full-time placement rate, up from 70 percent the previous year. Employers including Prudential, HUB International, Liberty Mutual, and USI Insurance Services continued to recruit Hunt Business talent through relationships built in the Academy.

Turning Access Into Offers

Mariana Alderete Martinez began her career with Prudential in Newark, New Jersey, after completing the company's mentorship and internship programs through the Academy.

Samara Reynaga joined HUB International as a Commercial Lines Account Manager, one of three

Academy students hired by HUB in 2025. Diana Lara started as an Actuarial Assistant at Liberty Mutual after passing two actuarial exams with support from Academy mentors. Ivana Mendez secured a full-time role with USI Insurance Services after meeting recruiters at an Academy-hosted networking event.

Each path was different, but the foundation was the same: preparation, mentorship, and access.

A Community Built Around Student Success

Students describe the Academy as both a career pathway and a support system.

Through industry-led workshops, networking opportunities, and personalized advising, the program helps students build technical knowledge, professional confidence, and direct connections to employers.

Support from the Spencer Educational Foundation further expands access. A second consecutive grant sent a larger cohort of Academy students to the RIMS RiskWorld Conference.

The results show the growing impact of Hunt Business Corporate Academies: students entering industry with experience, relationships, and a clear path forward.

APPLIED LEARNING

Hunt Business Students Take National Stage at HSI Battle of the Brains



HSI Battle of the Brains: Emily Sanchez, Missy Rivera, Viviana Zambrano, Edgar Loya, Sebastian Rendon Larrea, and Grecia Silva represented UTEP and the Woody L. Hunt College of Business at HSI Battle of the Brains.

For the first time, the Woody L. Hunt College of Business sent a team to HSI Battle of the Brains, a national championship and recruiting showcase for students from Hispanic-Serving Institutions across the country.

Six Hunt Business students traveled to Austin for the 24-hour competition, where teams were challenged to develop and pitch a comprehensive solution to a business problem under tight deadlines and in front of national employers.

The team brought together a range of strengths, building financial models, websites, and presentations while drawing on skills developed through coursework and student organization leadership. The experience tested their ability to communicate, collaborate, solve problems, and make decisions under pressure.

Students also connected with representatives from Dell, Thrivent, eBay, Capital One, and The Home Depot, gaining insight into career pathways, corporate

culture, scholarship programs, and postgraduate opportunities.

For Hunt Business, the competition marked a new national platform for student talent and a growing connection between classroom preparation, leadership experience, and career opportunity.

Three team members were awarded over \$9,000 in scholarships:

STUDENT	SPONSOR	AWARD
Sebastian Rendon Larrea	eBay	\$5,000
Emily Sanchez	The Home Depot	\$2,500
Edgar Loya	Dell	\$2,000

UTEP Real Estate Students Earn Spot on National Stage

In its national debut, UTEP's Real Estate Case Competition team broke into the final six at the ICSC Foundation Case Competition, placing Hunt Business students alongside some of the country's longest-established real estate programs.

The competition challenged students to reimagine Britton Plaza, a major retail center in Tampa, Florida. Competing under the name Star City Investments, the UTEP team conducted market and site analyses, built a comprehensive financial model and developed an investment proposal to reposition the aging center for long-term success.

Their work earned them an invitation to the final round in Las Vegas, where they competed with teams from Texas Tech University, the University of Alabama, the University of Illinois and the University of Southern California.

The 2025 competition drew students from universities across the country, including Baruch College, Indiana

"They set the bar high for every team that will follow."

Steven Gragg

*Assistant Professor of Practice
Economics and Finance*

University, Michigan State University, Southern Methodist University, the University of Connecticut and the University of Houston.

The inaugural UTEP team included Bryanna Alcantar, Edgar Hernández Granados, Emily Miller, Irving Ontiveros, Edgar Salas, and Gabriela Yopez.

Their national finish marked an important milestone for the college's growing real estate program and reflected the mentorship of Steven Gragg, assistant professor of practice, and Zifeng Feng, Ph.D., associate professor of finance.

In one season, UTEP moved from first-time entrant to national finalist, giving the program a stronger foothold in the real estate education landscape.



National Finalists: Edgar Hernandez Granados, Irving Ontiveros, Edgar Salas, Gabriela Yopez, Bryanna Alcantar and Emily Miller advanced to the final six in UTEP's debut at the ICSC Foundation Case Competition.



PROJECT MOVE 2025

Serving Together, Making an Impact

On April 5, 2025, approximately 75 students, alumni, faculty, staff and corporate partners from the Woody L. Hunt College of Business joined Project MOVE 2025, spending the day at El Pasoans Fighting Hunger to help prepare food for families across the region.

The Hunt College group was one of the largest college-led teams participating during the day of service. Working side by side, volunteers sorted, packed and prepared thousands of meals while learning more about the food bank's role in supporting local families.

For many students, the experience offered a direct connection between service and community need. Junior finance student Marla Chavez participated for the first time and said the day helped her better understand the scale of local hunger relief.

"It's been a great opportunity to connect with other students and serve the community," Chavez said. "El Pasoans Fighting Hunger showed us how many people rely on them — and why their work matters."



Watch a video
Scan to watch a video
recap of Project MOVE.

John Hadjimarcou, Ph.D., Rick and Ginger Francis Dean, said Project MOVE reflects the college's responsibility to engage beyond campus.

"It's important for our students, our staff and our faculty to engage in the community and give back," he said. "Success isn't only measured by academic or professional achievements. It's also about understanding the community we live in and finding ways to support those who need us most."

Participation spanned the college, with volunteers representing student organizations, academic and graduate business programs, professional societies, honor programs, and administrative units.

Through Project MOVE, the Hunt College community put service into practice, showing how leadership can extend beyond the classroom and into the El Paso community.



Packing with Purpose: Marla Chavez, right, helps prepare food at El Pasoans Fighting Hunger during Project MOVE 2025.

Generating the Future of Business



Applied Intelligence: Eduardo D. Villacis Calderón, Ph.D., helped launch Hunt College's first upper-level AI course, giving students hands-on experience building business-ready tools.

In Fall 2025, Hunt College launched its first upper-level course dedicated to artificial intelligence. Developed by Eduardo D. Villacis Calderón, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Information Systems, the course gave business students hands-on experience building, testing and deploying AI tools for real business workflows.

Offered under CIS 4399: Current Topics, the class moved beyond basic AI literacy. Students did not simply learn how to use ChatGPT or other generative AI tools. They built AI agents designed to complete organizational tasks.

“Employers are no longer looking for students who can simply use ChatGPT,” Villacis Calderón said. “They need graduates who can build autonomous agents that execute complex business workflows, augment human productivity, and deliver measurable ROI.”

Students worked in a production-like environment, provisioning virtual private servers, configuring domain names and deploying live AI agents to the web. They used AI-assisted development, often called vibe coding, while focusing on logic, workflow design and system structure.

They also built a professional development stack from the ground up. Using workflow orchestration tools and application programming interfaces, or APIs, students connected their AI agents to platforms such as Google Workspace, Outlook, Dropbox and Telegram.

The course replaced traditional exams with applied

“The primary gap we identified was the lack of strategic business thinking in AI education.

We wanted students to stop seeing AI as a novelty and start seeing it as a core driver of business models.”

Eduardo D. Villacis Calderón, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Information Systems



Builder's Stack

Students learn by constructing modern startup-style solutions from the ground up.

- Workflow Orchestration**
Integrate workflow tools to automate and connect business processes.
- APIs & AI Agents**
Connect application programming interfaces (APIs) to intelligent agents across real platforms.
- Low-Code Development**
Leverage low-code environments such as Google Workspace, Outlook, Dropbox, and Telegram.
- MVP Presentation**
Deliver a final minimum viable product (MVP) and pitch it in startup style.

deliverables, including technical labs, six structured project checkpoints, a Shark Tank-style pitch and a final minimum viable product presentation. In all, 92 percent of the final grade was tied to applied work.

“Success in this course is measured strictly by the student’s ability to build and deploy functioning systems,” Villacis Calderón said.

By the end of the semester, students had developed skills in generative AI, business process automation, prompt engineering, API integration and responsible AI use. The course also addressed legal, ethical and privacy considerations as students built tools for real organizational settings.

Several students from the inaugural cohort secured internships with SuperCity.ai, crediting the portfolio

and technical skills they developed in the course. Others began preparing their projects for public launch.

The course also connected student work to regional needs. In 2025, the Rio Grande Council of Governments recognized Villacis Calderón with its Best Organization Award for his role as faculty adviser to students implementing an AI-driven solution for the El Paso Dispute Resolution Center.

Villacis Calderón plans to work with colleagues to refine the course and propose it as part of a permanent program.

For Hunt College students, the course made the value of AI direct and practical: knowing how to use the tools matters, but knowing how to build with them matters more.

7. Faculty Driving Knowledge

Hunt College faculty strengthen the classroom while advancing discovery across business disciplines. Their research, teaching innovation, and thought leadership shape conversations in trade, logistics, management, accounting, finance, and border economics. Honored during the 2025 Newly Promoted and Tenured Faculty Celebration, these faculty members reflect the excellence driving Hunt Business forward.



Maria Fernanda Garcia, Ph.D.

**PROFESSOR OF
MANAGEMENT**

Studies diversity, ethics, and international human resource management. Her scholarship appears in leading journals, and her editorial service helps shape research in the field. She also directs UTEP's Center for Multicultural Management and Ethics.



Cynthia Halliday, Ph.D.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF MANAGEMENT**

Connects leadership research with real workplace experience. Her work on leadership, workplace dynamics, and diversity appears in respected journals, and her background with Nestlé and other multinational corporations informs both her teaching and scholarship.



José R. Bucheli, Ph.D.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF ECONOMICS**

Examines labor, migration, and public policy through a global lens. Published in top economics and policy journals, he was recognized as Outstanding Emerging Scholar in 2020 and continues to mentor students pursuing careers in academia, government, and industry.



Yun Ke, Ph.D.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF ACCOUNTING**

Brings global experience to accounting research and education. After earning his doctorate from the University of British Columbia, he taught at Brock University in Ontario before joining UTEP, where he helps strengthen the college's accounting program.



Zifeng Feng, Ph.D.

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
OF FINANCE**

Has earned international recognition in real estate and corporate finance. Named among the world's top 10 real estate scholars from 2021 to 2023, he also received the William N. Kinnard Young Scholar Award.



Sarah Robertson

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF
PRACTICE IN ACCOUNTING**

Brings more than 15 years of professional accounting experience in Texas and New Mexico. A Certified Public Accountant specializing in taxation, estate planning, and ethics, she prepares students to enter the profession with confidence and integrity.

Faculty Who Inspire

HUNT COLLEGE RESEARCH AWARD
Cynthia Halliday, Ph.D.

The Leadership Quarterly
“Gender and Evaluations of Leadership Behaviors: A Meta-Analytic Review of 50 Years of Research”

ACCOUNTING RESEARCH AWARD
Waymond Rodgers, Ph.D.

Accounting, Auditing, and Accountability Journal
“The Accounting Profession in the Twilight Zone: Navigating Digitalization’s Sided Challenges through Ethical Pathways for Decision-Making”

FINANCE RESEARCH AWARD
Chia-Chung Chang, Ph.D.

Journal of Banking and Finance
“Market Discipline and Policy Loans”

INFORMATION SYSTEMS RESEARCH AWARD
Jie Yan, Ph.D.

International Journal of Information Management
“Global Techno-Politics: A Review of the Current Status and Opportunities for Future Research”

FINANCE RESEARCH AWARD
Diego Leal, Ph.D.

Journal of Banking and Finance
“Economic Policy Uncertainty and Corporate Bond Liquidity”

MARKETING RESEARCH AWARD
Fernando Jiménez, Ph.D.

European Journal of Marketing
“Consumer Response to CEO Activism: An Impression Management Approach”



Border Exchange: Fernando R. Jiménez, Ph.D., welcomes UACJ and UACH partners for a new academic collaboration focused on cross-border business education and research.



UTEP
HUNT INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

RESEARCH SHAPING THE BORDER ECONOMY

Where Trade Meets Reality

At the Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness, research begins at ports of entry, along supply chains, and within the labor markets that keep the border economy running. Over the past year, the institute conducted targeted studies examining trade flows, logistics bottlenecks, supply chain dynamics, workforce conditions, and regional competitiveness along the U.S.–Mexico border.



**SCAN TO
LEARN MORE**

Projects like the Tornillo Port of Entry Assessment and in-depth labor market analyses in Ciudad Juárez examined how goods, people, and opportunities move through the region and where they get stuck. By identifying infrastructure gaps, logistical constraints, and emerging investment opportunities, this work provides decision-makers with clear, data-driven insights to strengthen one of North America's most critical trade corridors.



RESEARCH IMPACT

What 50 Years of Research Shows About Gender and Leadership

For decades, leadership research has returned to a central question: Do people evaluate men and women differently when they lead?

Cynthia Halliday, Ph.D., associate professor of management, examined that question by looking across 50 years of research from countries around the world. Published in *The Leadership Quarterly*, the work drew from hundreds of studies and thousands of leadership evaluations, bringing scattered findings into a clearer picture of how gender shapes perceptions of leadership.

The results challenge long-held assumptions.

Across decades of research, women were rated higher than men on effective leadership behaviors.

“Leadership evaluations shape careers. They affect pay, promotions, credibility and opportunity.”

Cynthia Halliday, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Management

What the Research Shows

Fifty years of evidence reveal consistent patterns in how leadership is evaluated.

- Leadership Effectiveness**
Women consistently rated higher on leadership across decades of research.
- Communal Behaviors**
Women were rated higher on supportive and ethical leadership behaviors.
- Agentic Behaviors**
Women were rated highly on task-oriented, structured, and leadership behaviors.
- Evidence at Scale**
Findings were drawn from thousands of studies and evaluations over 50 years.

They were rated higher on supportive and ethical leadership, often described as communal behaviors, while also scoring highly on task-oriented, structured and directive behaviors traditionally associated with leadership.

For Halliday, the finding matters because leadership evaluations affect careers.

They influence who is hired, promoted, mentored and trusted with responsibility. When evaluations are shaped by outdated assumptions, organizations can overlook talent already in front of them.

The research also gives businesses a practical way forward. Employers can use the findings to review how they evaluate, develop and promote leaders. Human resources professionals can examine hiring and training systems for hidden double standards. Employees can ask that leadership effectiveness be measured by performance rather than assumed through stereotypes.

Halliday's work is also part of how research reaches students at the Woody L. Hunt College of Business. By bringing questions about bias, evaluation and leadership into the classroom, she helps students see research not as something distant from business, but as a tool for understanding how organizations make decisions.

For students curious about research, her advice is simple: start a conversation. Reach out to faculty whose work sparks your interest. Ask questions. The research process often begins there, with curiosity and a willingness to look more closely at the assumptions shaping everyday decisions.



Understanding Leaders: Cynthia Halliday, Ph.D., brings 50 years of leadership research into focus, showing how bias can shape evaluations and cause organizations to overlook talent.



8. Investing in Regional Growth

In 2022, the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation made a \$25 million gift to UTEP, naming the Woody L. Hunt College of Business and advancing a clear ambition: to make Hunt College a leading institution for teaching, research and engagement in U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce.

That work began with listening. Following the gift, the college convened faculty, staff and community leaders to identify where Hunt College could make the greatest contribution.

Three areas emerged: academic programs and research, government and nonprofit collaboration, and industry engagement.

Across those conversations, one priority was clear: Hunt College had an opportunity to serve as a catalyst for regional economic development.

The college's location gives that work urgency and relevance. The Paso del Norte region sits at the center of one of North America's most important trade corridors, connecting El Paso, Ciudad Juárez and Las Cruces through a binational economy of more than 2.3 million people.

With Mexico among the United States' largest trading partners, understanding the U.S.-Mexico business relationship is essential not only to the competitiveness of both countries, but also to the long-term economic strength of this region.

Hunt College has begun turning that vision into initiatives. The college has reviewed and revised its international business major and minor to place greater emphasis on U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce.

Faculty-led study abroad programs, teaching collaborations and research partnerships with institutions in Mexico have expanded opportunities for students and faculty.

The college also launched research and teaching incentives, including summer research support, access to secondary data and seed grants, to encourage faculty work focused on U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce.

Together, these efforts mark the early implementation of a long-term investment in Hunt College's role as a hub for business education, research and regional impact.

The Hunt gift created a foundation for long-term work in U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce.

Through new academic programs, faculty research, industry engagement and student experiences, Hunt College is building capacity in an area central to the region's economic future.

Transformative Impact

Expands Hunt College's role as a leading center for U.S.-Mexico trade education, research and engagement.

Empowering Students

Supports scholarships, industry events, travel competitions, study abroad and access to faculty-led learning experiences.

Community and Economic Development

Connects students, faculty and partners to work that strengthens trade, entrepreneurship and cross-border collaboration across the Paso del Norte region. Through Hunt G.O., students gain direct exposure to venture creation and the skills needed to turn ideas into opportunity.

Long-Term Vision

Resources help build a sustainable future for the college, ensuring it continues to lead in U.S.-Mexico trade education and research, and in economic development, for years to come.

By supporting these efforts, new and existing donors can help shape the future of Hunt College, its students, and the region. Their investment will strengthen partnerships with industry, government, and trade organizations while advancing Hunt College's role in U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce, manufacturing, logistics, supply chains, policy, and regional economic growth.



**SCAN TO
LEARN MORE**



9. Innovation through Centers and Strategic Initiatives

Hunt College is home to centers focused on research, outreach, and binational initiatives. They bring together faculty, students, industry, and government partners to tackle real-world challenges.

APPLIED RESEARCH

The Hunt Institute: Data for a Modern Border Economy

The Hunt Institute continued to expand Hunt College's role in regional economic analysis and applied research in U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce.

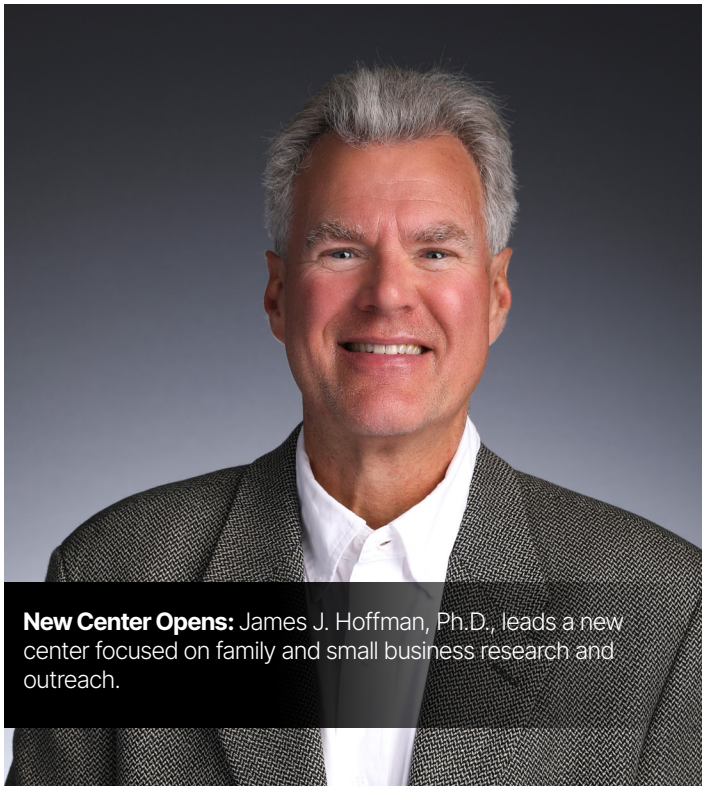
Led by Executive Director Mayra Maldonado, pictured above, the institute works with public-sector, nonprofit and community partners to study the economic issues shaping the Paso del Norte region. Its projects connect data and policy to real regional needs, from small-business recovery and infrastructure planning to workforce trends and cross-border economic development.

Several initiatives advanced that work during the year. The Business One-Stop Shop, the Business Preservation and Growth Initiative, and the Mission Trail Gap Analysis supported local partners with research designed to inform planning, investment and long-term economic resilience.

The institute also contributed to public understanding of trade, tariffs and employment through a series of white papers focused on border economies and North American supply chains. Publications including *Beyond Borders: The Strength of U.S.-Mexico Trade Ties*, *The Vital Role of U.S.-Mexico Border States in International Trade*, and *Bridges of Trade: The Importance of U.S.-Mexico Land Ports* examined the integrated markets and land-port infrastructure that drive bilateral commerce.

Additional research explored tariff pressures in the automotive sector, including the role of steel and aluminum in North American supply chains. The institute also examined labor-market changes through studies such as *Employment Shifts in Ciudad Juárez: Beyond the Numbers*, which looked at evolving workforce patterns across the border region.

Together, these projects positioned the Hunt Institute as a practical research partner for communities navigating complex economic challenges. By turning regional data into usable insight, the institute strengthened Hunt College's connection to business leaders, policymakers and organizations working across the U.S.-Mexico border.



New Center Opens: James J. Hoffman, Ph.D., leads a new center focused on family and small business research and outreach.

FACULTY RESEARCH

Inside the Decisions That Shape Small Business

Launched in Fall 2025, the Center for Family and Small Business brings together faculty research, community engagement and practical insight for small business owners and family enterprises. Through speaker programs and faculty scholarship, the center explores issues central to business continuity, leadership transitions and entrepreneurial well-being.

CEO Succession and Leadership Choice

In 2025, Zerui Chen, James J. Hoffman and Jianjun Zhu examined how CEO succession decisions affect firm performance in their paper, “CEO Succession: A Choice Situation Theory,” published in the *Journal of Managerial Issues*.

The study looks at how different transition types — forced or unforced, insider or outsider — interact with a firm’s strategic choices and business environment. The team found that firms often favor unforced

transitions and insider appointments, reflecting a broader preference for leadership continuity. In some situations, particularly when firms have maximum choice, selecting an insider can lead to stronger outcomes. In others, the choice between an insider and outsider has less effect on performance.

The research offers useful insight for executives and boards navigating leadership transitions by showing how context shapes both succession decisions and post-succession performance.

How Founder Mental Health Can Shape a Venture

A study by Andrew Fultz, James Hoffman and David Jiang examines how founders’ mental health can influence the organizations they lead. Published in the *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, the work argues that founder well-being is not only a personal issue but can also affect venture performance, culture and decision-making.

The authors developed a theoretical framework to explain how individual challenges can create firm-level consequences over time. They also identify factors that may help buffer those effects, including a strong board of directors, an experienced top management team and the age and size of the venture.

The research gives founders, boards and investors a clearer way to recognize risks early and build support systems that protect both leaders and the businesses they are working to grow.



LATIN AMERICAN POPULISM INDEX

Measuring Populism Beyond the Rhetoric

The Center for Free Enterprise launched the Latin American Left-Leaning Populism Index, a new research tool that tracks populist governance across 22 countries in Latin America.

The index pairs speech analysis with measurable policy and institutional outcomes. It looks at rhetoric often associated with populist leaders, including “us versus them” messaging and anti-elite appeals, alongside indicators such as government spending, economic freedom, judicial independence and threats to democratic institutions.

By comparing what leaders say with what governments do, the index helps researchers, policymakers and decision-makers see when political rhetoric aligns with institutional change. It also shows when countries move toward or away from populist governance and how those shifts may affect economic growth, institutional strength and democratic resilience.

For the Center for Free Enterprise, the index expands its research on markets, governance and public policy across Latin America.

Steve Forbes

Chairman and editor-in-chief of Forbes, spoke at the Center for Free Enterprise Speaker Series on the role of economic freedom and free enterprise in American prosperity. His remarks emphasized entrepreneurship, innovation and the risks of overregulation.



Skov Forum: Arianna Camargo presents her yearlong undergraduate research project on STEM female faculty in higher education.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

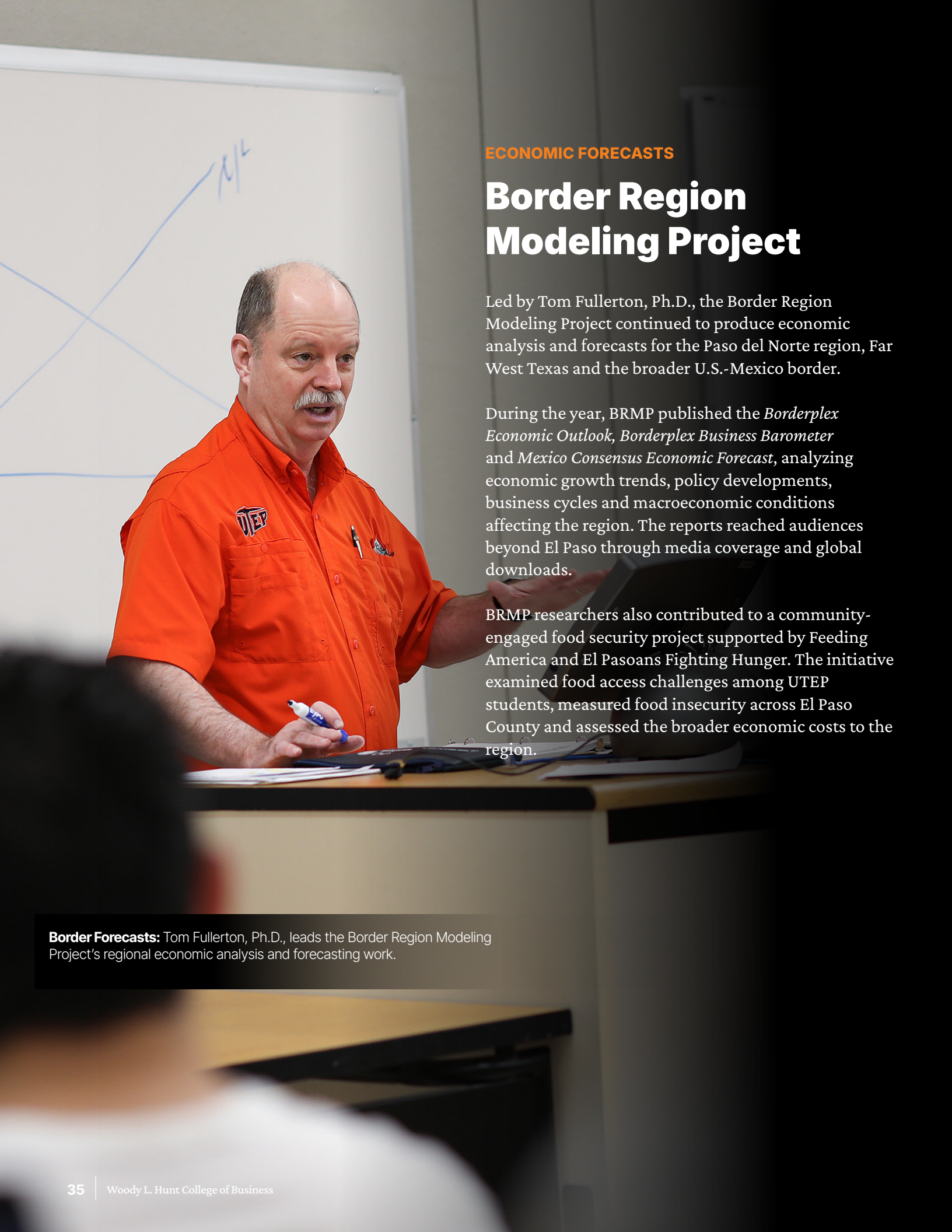
Students Explore the Questions Shaping Work and Academia

Under the direction of Maria Fernanda Garcia, Ph.D., the Center for Multicultural Management and Ethics supported faculty-mentored undergraduate research projects in ethics, equity, and human sustainability throughout 2025.

In Spring 2025, Beatriz Elias and Michelle Morales studied undergraduate students' perceptions of business ethics at UTEP. Francisco Raygoza continued and expanded the project in the fall.

Arianna Camargo completed a yearlong project examining female faculty in STEM higher education from a human sustainability perspective. Her work explored questions of inclusion, institutional support and sustainability in academic environments.

Together, the projects reflect the center's commitment to undergraduate research, ethical inquiry and the development of future scholars and leaders.

A man with a mustache, wearing an orange short-sleeved button-down shirt with a UTEP logo, stands behind a podium. He is holding a blue marker in his right hand and gesturing with his left hand towards a laptop on the podium. In the background, a whiteboard displays a blue line graph with an upward trend. The text 'ECONOMIC FORECASTS' is overlaid in orange on the right side of the image.

ECONOMIC FORECASTS

Border Region Modeling Project

Led by Tom Fullerton, Ph.D., the Border Region Modeling Project continued to produce economic analysis and forecasts for the Paso del Norte region, Far West Texas and the broader U.S.-Mexico border.

During the year, BRMP published the *Borderplex Economic Outlook*, *Borderplex Business Barometer* and *Mexico Consensus Economic Forecast*, analyzing economic growth trends, policy developments, business cycles and macroeconomic conditions affecting the region. The reports reached audiences beyond El Paso through media coverage and global downloads.

BRMP researchers also contributed to a community-engaged food security project supported by Feeding America and El Pasoans Fighting Hunger. The initiative examined food access challenges among UTEP students, measured food insecurity across El Paso County and assessed the broader economic costs to the region.

Border Forecasts: Tom Fullerton, Ph.D., leads the Border Region Modeling Project's regional economic analysis and forecasting work.



10. Community, Industry, and Binational Engagement

Hunt College thrives on collaboration. Corporate partnerships, small business support, entrepreneurial programs, and cross-border outreach reflect a deep commitment to serving the community and strengthening economic ties on both sides of the border.



Miner Welcome: Students from Universidad de Mondragón México pose with Paydirt Pete during a three-day Hunt Business visit focused on classroom interactions, business tours, and U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce.



BI-NATIONAL COMPETITION

At Negotium, Students Create for Two Markets

Negotium brought together 61 students from UTEP, New Mexico State University, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez and Tecnológico de Monterrey Campus Juárez to develop business plans for the U.S.-Mexico market.

Hosted Oct. 3, 2025, by the Mike Loya Center for Innovation and Commerce, the competition asked mixed intercollegiate teams to think across borders from the start. For a month before the final presentations, students worked remotely with industry mentors to research markets, study regulations, evaluate supply chains and design operating strategies that could work in both countries.

The event was coordinated by Kathy Towle, UTEP adjunct faculty, and supported by 20 faculty members across the participating institutions. Ten industry judges evaluated the final presentations and provided feedback grounded in real business conditions.

Arca Coca-Cola donated 10 laptops for the first- and second-place teams, adding a practical incentive for students developing cross-border ventures.

Across the presentations, one idea came through clearly: the border is not only a line between markets. It is a place where students can identify shared needs, test new ideas and build businesses with regional impact.

EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS

UTEP Connects with Women Business Leaders

Nearly 30 members of the Mexican Association of Women in Business met with Hunt Business representatives Sept. 11, 2025, to discuss U.S. market entry, cross-border partnerships and opportunities for business growth.

The session was led by Arturo Barrio, assistant vice president for international affairs at UTEP, with Alejandro Munoz Mendieta, associate professor of practice; Sacnite Ramos, director of graduate programs; Mauricio Gomez, director of undergraduate programs; and Fernando Jimenez, Ph.D., associate dean for academic affairs.

The group shared information about Hunt College programs and discussed practical considerations for entrepreneurs interested in doing business in the United States, including regulations, customer segments, market positioning and binational networks.

The conversation gave participants a direct connection to UTEP expertise while reinforcing the college's role in supporting regional entrepreneurship. For Hunt College, the visit also reflected a broader commitment to U.S.-Mexico trade and commerce: connecting knowledge, experience and opportunity across the border.



Winning Moment: UTEP student Valeria Ruvalcaba celebrates during Negotium, where her TechSafe team earned first place in a binational business competition focused on cross-border collaboration and entrepreneurship.

11. Alumni Advancing Business Across Borders

Hunt College alumni carry their impact far beyond campus. We celebrate their leadership, generosity, and commitment to giving back through mentorship, philanthropy, scholarships, and endowments that invest in future generations.





HUNT BUSINESS ALUMNI NETWORK

Claudia De La Rosa Grows Hunt Alumni Connections

Hunt College alumni carry their impact far beyond campus through leadership, mentorship, philanthropy, and professional influence.

Through the Hunt Business Alumni Network, alumni are strengthening connections among students, graduates, local businesses, the college, and the University.

For Claudia De La Rosa, MBA '14, president of the Hunt Business Alumni Network, that work begins with building stronger bridges between business leaders and students.

“We aim to build strong communication between business leaders and students to help prepare the next generation for success.”

The network offers alumni hands-on opportunities to organize events, lead regional hubs, share career advice, and mentor students as they prepare for professional life. Looking ahead to 2026, the group plans to expand networking mixers and social events, grow regional alumni hubs beyond El Paso, and host a signature homecoming celebration focused on networking, panels, and fundraising.

That engagement also extends to philanthropy. The Hunt Business Alumni Network Endowed Scholarship provides direct financial support to students in the college, reflecting alumni commitment to access, persistence, and long-term success. Through scholarships, endowments, mentorship, and named programs, Hunt Business alumni are investing in future generations while continuing to shape the college community that helped shape their own careers.

Alumni Connection: Claudia De La Rosa, MBA '14, president of the Hunt Business Alumni Network, speaks during the MBA Alumni Mixer about strengthening ties among graduates, students and the college.



Create Opportunity

Scan to support the Hunt Business Alumni Network Endowed Scholarship today.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Edgar Ortega Leads with Purpose at Chick-fil-A

Edgar Ortega came to UTEP with a clear vision.

He was drawn to the business program by the energy of marketing, the challenge of management, and the opportunity to lead a large organization.

“I wanted to work in a professional environment where I could make an impact through leadership and strategy,” he said. What he didn’t anticipate was how pairing his education with hands-on experience at Chick-fil-A would lead him to business ownership.

During his time at UTEP, Ortega learned how to turn theory into action. Management, marketing, and finance concepts quickly moved from the classroom into his day-to-day work. “I remember applying what I learned in class directly to my role, and that’s when my confidence as a leader really started to grow.” Serving as President of UTEP’s American Marketing Association chapter was another defining experience.

He learned how to lead teams, communicate with purpose, and represent something bigger than himself.





“UTEP helped me build the foundation for who I am today. Helping the next generation discover their potential is how I honor that impact.”

Edgar Ortega, BBA in Marketing; Management, '07
Chick-fil-A Owner and Operator

Shine Through Leadership

Edgar Ortega's leadership style is summed up by one word: SHINE.



Strive for Excellence



Have a Heart to Serve



Inspire Others



Nurture Dreams



Exceed Expectations

That realization reshaped how he viewed success.

A simple but powerful lesson from Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy was a turning point. “We’re not in the chicken business; we’re in the people business.” That quote transformed Ortega’s leadership philosophy and became the foundation of his personal vision: helping people SHINE—strive for excellence, have a heart to serve, inspire others, nurture dreams, and exceed expectations. “When I focused on growing my people first, everything changed,” he said. “Sales and profits became the natural result of a strong, healthy culture.”

One of the individuals who most significantly shaped Ortega’s path at UTEP was Professor Robin Grambling. She saw his potential before he did. By encouraging him to share his voice in her classroom and to step into leadership through the American Marketing Association student organization, she increased his confidence. “She showed me that my story mattered,” he said.

Today, Ortega sees being UTEP Alumni as an honor and responsibility. “It means leading with purpose, serving with heart, and lifting others the way UTEP lifted me.” Giving back is central to his mission. “UTEP helped me build the foundation for who I am today. Helping the next generation discover their potential is how I honor that impact.”



2025 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

A Lifetime of Leadership and Impact

Paul Dipp entered the family business as a teenager. At 16, a meeting with his father and a real estate investor led to his first property management assignment. Two years later, he helped formalize the family's asset management company.

UTEP gave structure to lessons he was already learning at work.

"UTEP provided a unique combination of education and a filter for understanding my real-life work experience," Dipp said.

His career has followed the growth of the family's companies, from real estate and asset management to wholesale grocery. During COVID-19, the family expanded its grocery business to El Paso's far Eastside, adding another test of planning, patience and follow-through.

Dipp traces that approach to a century of work by his family and team. He describes the business around a few constants: ethical service, product quality, competitive pricing and the belief that "People Count."

That same outlook shaped the family's role in preserving the Plaza Hotel and Plaza Theatre. Originally investments made by his father, the landmarks became part of a broader family effort to respect El Paso's history, architecture and civic identity. The properties were later sold to developers who recognized their potential and restored both structures.

Dipp sees El Paso's next chapter in the same practical terms: steady growth across Downtown, Central El Paso, Socorro, Horizon, Juárez, Santa Teresa and Las Cruces, supported by the region's binational identity and business creativity.

Guided by faith, integrity, service and respect for core values, Dipp has built a career around responsibility — to family, business and the community that shaped him.





2025 GOLD NUGGET

From a Tonka Truck to Cross-Border Logistics

Miriam Baca Kotkowski's story begins with a question she could not ignore: Why? As the youngest of five siblings, she noticed the difference between the freedoms her brothers enjoyed and the expectations placed on her. That imbalance stayed with her. Becoming the first woman in her family to earn a college degree became a declaration of independence, proof of ability and a way to honor the father whose respect she hoped to earn.

Kotkowski's path into logistics started with childhood games inspired by her father's cattle transportation business in Ciudad Juárez. She still remembers a red, beat-up Tonka truck with a white cattle trailer — a toy version of the work that shaped her imagination. Years later, that early fascination became a career.

In 1998, Kotkowski co-founded Omega Trucking, taking on the financial risk of building a business from the ground up. A trusted loan helped her begin, but discipline carried her forward. She repaid it with interest before taking money for herself, driven by a larger goal: creating opportunity for her children and building something that would last.

For Kotkowski, logistics means carrying a client's reputation, especially when Mexican-made products cross into the United States. Delivering on time means protecting that reputation and showing the quality, precision, and pride behind the work.

Kotkowski also helped open doors in an industry where women were often overlooked. When she began, she was sometimes the only woman in the room. Some officials would not even shake her hand. She kept showing up anyway. Today, she continues to champion women in logistics while mentoring future business leaders.

At Tecma Transportation Services, Kotkowski leads with opportunity, family values and pride in the work. She credits UTEP and Hunt College with shaping her leadership and commitment to giving back.



Raise Your Pick: One Day, Lasting Impact

Each year, Raise Your Pick Giving Day turns 24 hours into a campuswide show of support for UTEP students. Miners — students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents and friends — come together to invest in the colleges, programs and initiatives that shape the UTEP experience.

In 2025, the Hunt College of Business raised nearly \$32,000 through the campaign. That support helped fund scholarships, student assistance funds and high-impact academic opportunities that can make the difference between watching from the sidelines and fully participating in college life.

Across the University, donors can direct their gifts to dozens of areas, including academic departments, research efforts, athletics, scholarship funds, emergency support and student success initiatives. For Hunt College, that generosity helps meet students

at the point where financial need and professional opportunity often intersect.

One example is the Student Success Fund. Classroom instruction gives business students a strong foundation, but many of the experiences that prepare them for the workplace happen beyond the classroom: national competitions, industry conferences, employer site visits, certification programs and other applied learning opportunities.

Those experiences help students build confidence, expand their networks and connect directly with employers. They also carry costs, including travel, lodging, registration and certification fees.

For some students, those costs can determine whether they are able to participate.

The Student Success Fund helps close that gap. It allows more students to earn industry-recognized credentials, compete on national stages, attend professional events and take part in experiences that strengthen their résumés and open doors to internships and full-time roles.



Giving Day Energy: Ariana Carreon tables at the Raise Your Pick Block Party in Centennial Plaza, helping connect students with UTEP's 24-hour giving campaign.

The impact can be immediate. A conference can lead to an internship. A competition can reveal a new career direction. A conversation with an employer can become the first step toward a job offer. Donor support helps make those moments possible.

Emergency funds serve a similar purpose by providing stability when unexpected challenges threaten a student's progress. Together, these forms of support help students stay enrolled, keep moving and graduate prepared to contribute to the region.

Participation in Raise Your Pick Giving Day is intentionally simple. Through the official 24-hour campaign platform, supporters can give, share the campaign with others and take part in campus activities tied to the event. Each gift strengthens the campaign's reach, builds awareness of student needs and reinforces a shared responsibility for student success.

When the Miner community rallies around its students, the impact lasts well beyond one day.





12. Looking Ahead

The college was named in recognition of a generous donation from the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation. These financial resources will last well into the future and encourage us to envision transformational reassessment and redeployment. With the support of our students, faculty, staff, and the Hunt Business Leadership Council, we put forward a plan to guide Hunt College leadership for years to come.

Our Purpose

The Woody L. Hunt College of Business expands opportunity, develops talent, and drives economic vitality in one of North America's most dynamic and consequential regions.

At the center of the U.S.–Mexico border, one of the world's largest manufacturing and trade corridors, Hunt College is uniquely positioned to educate business leaders who understand global markets, cultural complexity, and the realities of cross-border commerce.

Our strategic plan reflects a clear commitment to deliver access to high-impact business education, while advancing knowledge, partnerships, and prosperity for the Paso del Norte region and beyond.

Our Promise

We prepare globally-minded, innovative, ethical business leaders by:

- Integrating applied learning at every stage of the student experience;
- Advancing scholarship that informs business, policy, and practice;
- Partnering with industry, community, and alumni to deliver measurable impact.

Four Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle I Educating Border-Ready Business Leaders

The Hunt College prepares students through experiential learning, professional readiness, and strong connections between the classroom and industry.

We emphasize: high-impact learning, communication, leadership, career readiness, corporate academies, student organizations, honors programs, and experiential pathways.

Our graduates leave with: industry skills, multicultural fluency, and clear pathways to careers, graduate education, and leadership roles.

Guiding Principle II Innovative and Relevant Academic Programs

Our academic programs evolve with workforce needs, regional priorities, and emerging opportunities.

Our portfolio includes: undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programs; flexible online and hybrid delivery; and new programs aligned with growth sectors.

We focus on: finance and wealth management, information systems and analytics, real estate, entrepreneurship, and professional certifications.

Guiding Principle III Knowledge Creation with Binational Impact

As part of a Carnegie R1 research university, Hunt College advances scholarship that matters across borders.

Faculty research has strength in: U.S.–Mexico trade and commerce, supply chains, logistics, manufacturing, economic development, and policy.

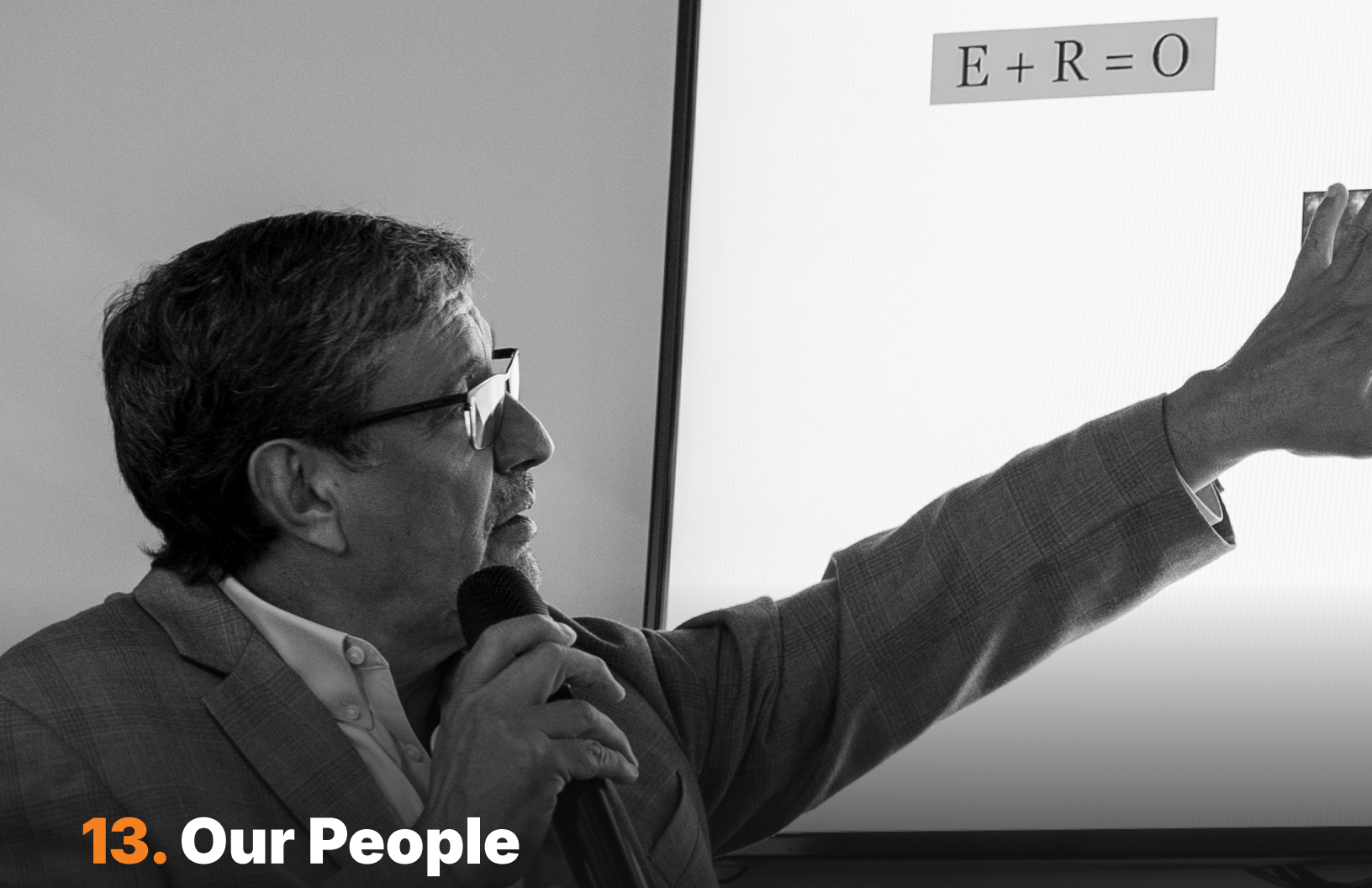
We invest in: faculty recruitment and retention, interdisciplinary collaboration, and graduate student research development.

Guiding Principle IV Partnerships that Move Our Region Forward

Impact is amplified through meaningful collaboration with corporate partners, community organizations, alumni, donors, and binational institutions.

These partnerships support: student success, career readiness, faculty engagement, thought leadership, and economic and social advancement in the Paso del Norte region.

We are committed to: transparent stewardship, meaningful engagement, and long-term relationship-building.


$$E + R = O$$

13. Our People

Hunt College's momentum is shaped by the people who advise, teach, mentor and lead. This section recognizes the Leadership Council and welcomes the newest faculty members joining the college.

Hunt Business Leadership Council

Roberto Coronado, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President And Senior Economist
Regional Executive For El Paso, West Texas,
Southern New Mexico
Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas

Paul Dipp

President
Economy Wholesale Grocers

Ed Escudero

President And Chief Executive Officer
High Desert Capital

Miguel Fernandez

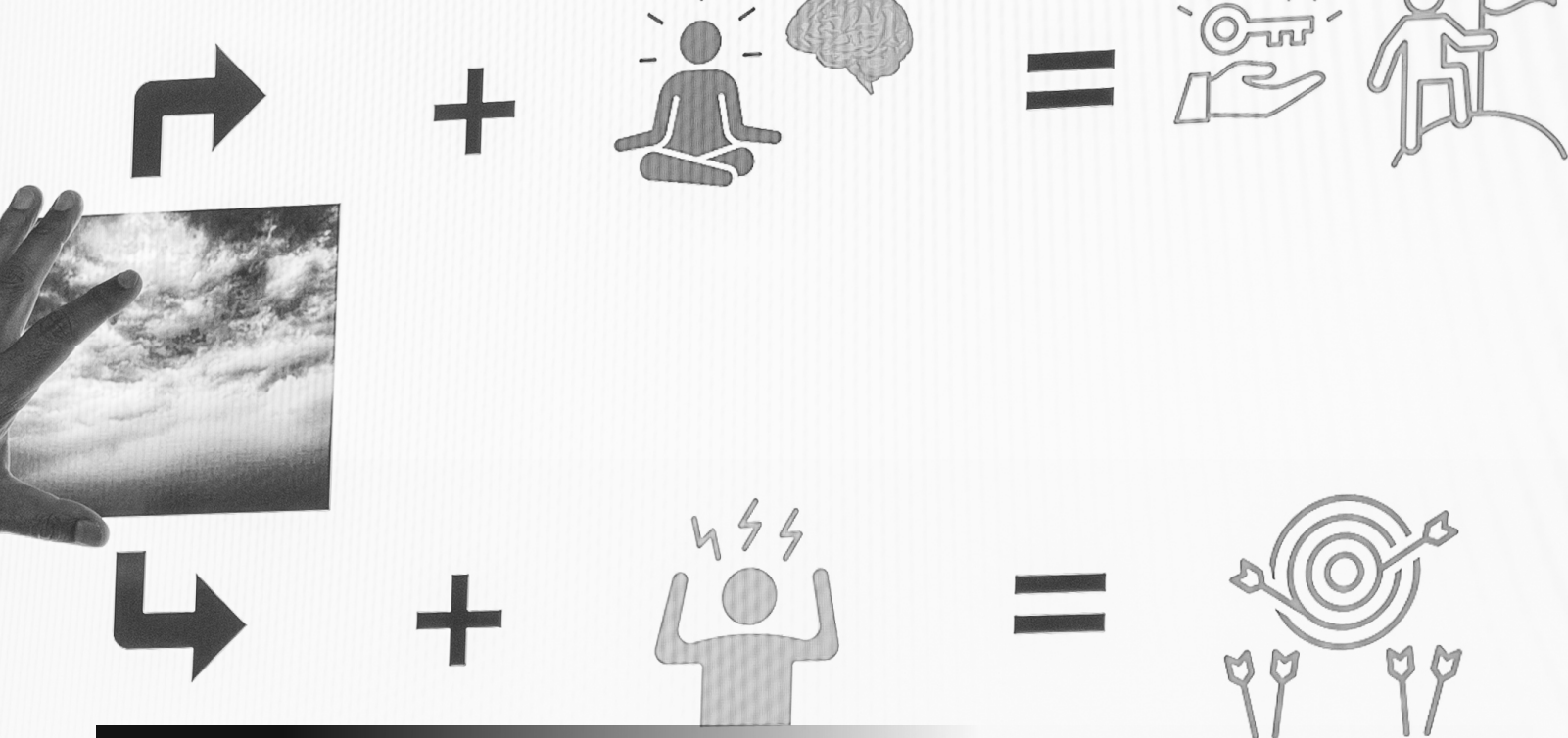
Chief Executive Officer
Flō Networks

John Hjalmsquist

Chief Executive Officer
Pizza Properties

Josh Hunt

Executive Vice President
Hunt Companies



Long Game Leadership: William Kell, Chief Operating Officer of Franklin Mountain Investments and Hunt Business Leadership Council member, served as the keynote speaker during The Long Game, a business student leadership retreat hosted at Topgolf in August 2025.

William Kell

Chief Operating Officer
Franklin Mountain Investments

Hazel Kennedy

Executive Vice President And Chief Lending Officer
GECU

Kathryn Marsman

Senior Vice President Of Global Alliance
Pax8

Miriam Baca Kotkowski

President
Tecma Transportation Services

Paul Porras

President And Chief Executive Officer
The Garick Group, Inc.

Margie Salazar

Chief Executive Officer
FirstLight Federal Credit Union

Linda Troncoso

President
Tre & Associates

Bob Wingo

President and Chief Executive Officer
Sanders\Wingo Advertising

Advancing the Hunt for Excellence: New Faculty Appointments



Anabella Donnadiu Bórquez, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MARKETING

Department of Marketing, Management and Supply Chain

Anabella Donnadiu Bórquez, Ph.D., joins Hunt College as an assistant professor of marketing. She earned her M.S. and Ph.D. in marketing from Washington State University.

Her research examines the experiences of minoritized and stigmatized consumers and how markets can better serve communities often overlooked in the marketplace. Her work has appeared in *Psychology & Marketing* and the *Journal of Product & Brand Management* and has been presented at leading academic conferences, including the American Marketing Association, Society for Consumer Psychology and Association for Consumer Research.

In the classroom, Donnadiu Bórquez emphasizes inclusive learning environments, diverse lived experiences and critical thinking. Outside of work, she finds inspiration in reading, theater and creative projects.



Partha Sarathi Mishra, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Department of Marketing, Management and Supply Chain

Partha Sarathi Mishra, Ph.D., joins UTEP with expertise in operations management and complex service systems. He earned his Ph.D. in operations management from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

His research examines how demand shifts and technological change affect supply chains, urban mobility and the post-pandemic retail landscape. Using empirical analysis and analytical modeling, Mishra has studied dual-sourcing strategies in transportation and operational changes in quick-service restaurants, offering practical insights for businesses navigating dynamic markets.

Mishra also earned bachelor's and master's degrees in manufacturing and industrial engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur. A member of INFORMS and POMS, he mentors undergraduate research assistants and supports students preparing for careers in industry or advanced study.



Alberto Hernandez Lopez, Ph.D.

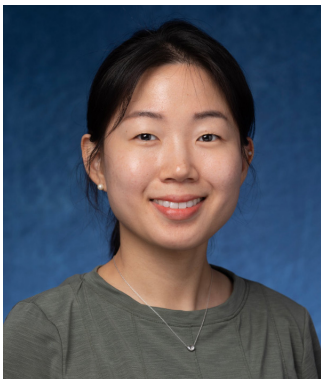
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MARKETING

Department of Marketing, Management and Supply Chain

Alberto Hernandez Lopez, Ph.D., brings global industry and academic experience to Hunt College's marketing faculty. Before joining UTEP, he worked at Ipsos GmbH in Hamburg, one of the world's leading market research firms, managing multinational projects across Europe, North America and Asia.

Lopez earned his Ph.D. in marketing from Tecnológico de Monterrey's EGADE Business School, where he served as an assistant professor of marketing and business analytics. He completed postdoctoral research in data analytics at The University of Texas at San Antonio and held visiting professor appointments in Germany, Spain and the United States.

His research examines how consumers adopt brands in an increasingly AI-driven marketplace. His work has appeared in *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* and *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*. At UTEP, Lopez strengthens Hunt College's focus on data-driven marketing and emerging technologies.



Hee Soo Kim, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

Department of Economics and Finance

Hee Soo Kim, Ph.D., is an empirical macroeconomist whose research examines how climate change and severe weather affect growth, unemployment and inflation. Using advanced time-series analysis, she studies how climate-related shocks move through the broader economy.

Her recent work, published in *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, analyzes the impact of severe weather on the U.S. macroeconomy over a 60-year period, bringing data-driven insight to questions of economic resilience and policy.

Kim earned her Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University, where she received an Instructor Award for Excellence in Teaching, a Lloyd Orr Dissertation Fellowship and a Graduate Top-up Fellowship. She also holds a bachelor's degree in economics and a master's degree in statistics from Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Republic of Korea.



Sadok El Ghouli, Ph.D.

**MARCUS JONATHAN HUNT DISTINGUISHED CHAIR IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS,
REGENT'S DISTINGUISHED RESEARCH PROFESSOR,
PROFESSOR OF FINANCE**

Department of Economics and Finance

Sadok El Ghouli, Ph.D., came to UTEP from the University of Alberta, where he advanced to full professor and interim associate dean for research. He is a leading expert in corporate governance, banking and international finance.

El Ghouli earned a Ph.D. and an MBA in finance from Laval University in Quebec. In 17 years, he has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications, cited more than 20,000 times, with an h-index of 54. Several of his articles have appeared in the *Journal of International Business Studies*.

His scholarship has been recognized with numerous international honors, including the Moskowitz Prize and best paper awards. In 2025, his research contributions earned the Yvan Allaire Medal from the Royal Society of Canada, one of the country's highest academic distinctions.



Jianjun (John) Zhu, Ph.D.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MARKETING

Department of Marketing, Management and Supply Chain

Jianjun "John" Zhu, Ph.D., brings expertise in marketing, technology and innovation. He previously served as head of the marketing department at New Mexico State University, taught at the University of Hong Kong and worked with multinational corporations. Zhu earned his Ph.D. in marketing and MBA from the University of Iowa.

Zhu's research examines how emerging technologies are reshaping marketing, including blockchain, crowdsourcing, crowdfunding, artificial intelligence, machine learning and immersive technologies. His scholarship has appeared in leading journals, including the *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Journal of Management*, *Production and Operations Management* and *Research Policy*.

At UTEP, Zhu teaches marketing strategy, digital and international marketing, and innovation management across undergraduate, MBA, Ph.D. and executive programs. He is an active member of the American Marketing Association.



Kevin Giang Barrera, Ph.D.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MARKETING

Department of Marketing, Management and Supply Chain

Kevin Giang Barrera, Ph.D., joins UTEP from Georgia State University, where he earned his Ph.D. in business administration with a concentration in marketing and an M.S. in marketing. He also holds an MBA from Fundação Getulio Vargas in Brazil and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Venezuela's National Experimental University of Táchira.

Barrera's research examines how emerging digital environments are changing the way organizations connect with consumers. His work on the metaverse and marketing has appeared in the *Journal of Business Research*, and his scholarship has earned national recognition, including best paper awards from the American Marketing Association Winter Conference and the Marketing, Strategy, and Policy Conference.

At UTEP, Barrera teaches digital marketing, social media intelligence, generative AI applications in marketing and marketing strategy. His commitment to student success was recognized with the 2024 GTA Teaching Excellence Award at Georgia State University.





Acknowledgments

As Dean of the Woody L. Hunt College of Business, I am deeply grateful to the many individuals and partners whose dedication, talent, and generosity made this year's accomplishments possible.

First, I thank our faculty and staff, whose commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service defines who we are as a college. Your passion for student success, innovation, and engagement, particularly with our unique border context, elevates Hunt College and expands its impact.

I am equally grateful to our students, whose resilience, curiosity, and drive inspire everything we do. You embody the future of business leadership at the U.S.–Mexico border and beyond, and your achievements are the truest measure of our success.

To our alumni and donors, thank you for your continued trust and support. Your generosity, mentorship, and advocacy strengthen our programs, expand opportunities for students, and ensure that Hunt College remains accessible and forward-looking for generations to come.

I also extend my appreciation to our industry, government, and community partners. Your collaboration enriches our curriculum, informs our research, and deepens our engagement with the Paso del Norte region, allowing us to translate knowledge into meaningful economic and social impact.

Finally, I thank the leadership of The University of Texas at El Paso for its unwavering support and shared commitment to excellence, access, and community engagement.

Together, we are shaping a college that honors its mission, embraces its border identity, and prepares globally engaged leaders to make a lasting difference.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "John", located at the bottom right of the page.



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