

# THRUST TORQUE & G

POWERED BY AEROSPACE AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# THRUST & TORQUE

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# 2026 SO FAR!

The Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering Department continues to experience steady growth and impact across its programs. Over the past five years, enrollment has increased significantly from **1,231 students** in Fall 2020 to over **1,600** in Fall 2025 reflecting the growing interest and strength of our programs.

This growth is matched by consistent academic outcomes, with degrees awarded increasing to **273** in the most recent academic year. With a strong and stable faculty body, the department continues to support a growing student population while maintaining quality education and mentorship.

Our faculty and students are also engaged in a wide range of research areas, including advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, energy systems, and hypersonics, contributing to innovation and real-world impact.

273

DEGREES AWARDED

*Reflecting strong academic achievement*

1,633

STUDENTS ENROLLED

*Continued growth across programs*

847

ME STUDENTS

*Largest program in the department*

251

AE STUDENTS

*Growing aerospace engineering program*

125

GRADUATE STUDENTS

*Advancing research and innovation*

29

FACULTY MEMBERS

*Dedicated to teaching and research excellence*

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## AEROSPACE AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# FACULTY RECOGNITION

Today we celebrate three incredible members of our AME family!

Congratulations to **Dr. Arifur Khan**, **Dr. Alejandra Castellanos**, and **Dr. Angel Flores** on their well deserved recognition at the Tenure & Promotion (T&P) Dinner.

Thank you for your commitment, leadership, and the inspiration you bring to our students every day.



**Arifur Khan**



**Angel Flores  
Abad**



**Alejandra  
Castellanos**

### First-Time Principal Investigator Recognition

We are proud to celebrate **Dr. Jaeyoung Cho** for being recognized as a first-time Principal Investigator at the Pioneering Research Reception

His recent research grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Texas A&M Transportation Institute marks an important milestone in his independent research career.

Congratulations on this incredible achievement and continued impact in research and innovation!



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## AEROSPACE AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# STUDENT SUCCESS

Our students continue to make us proud with their passion and accomplishments in and out of the classroom.



### Women's Auxiliary Scholarship, Jimena Morales Perez

Congratulations to **Jimena Morales Perez**, a student in the Mechanical Engineering (ME) program, on being awarded the Women's Auxiliary Scholarship a prestigious full ride scholarship recognizing outstanding academic excellence.

This incredible achievement reflects Jimena's dedication, hard work, and commitment to success in engineering. We are excited to see all that she will accomplish in the future!



### ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

Celebrating the achievements of our PhD students and their dedicated faculty mentors. Through the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, these scholars are advancing their research and contributing to innovation in engineering. Their work reflects the strength of mentorship and the impact of academic excellence within our department.

**Cesar Moriel**

PhD Student

Faculty Advisor: Armanj Hasanyan

**Abdel Cruz**

PhD Student

Faculty Advisor: Anabel Renteria

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## AEROSPACE AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# EXCITING NEWS!

## EXPANDING AEROSPACE INNOVATION

UTEP continues to strengthen its leadership in aerospace research and education with a **\$2 million federal appropriation** to expand drone research and teaching at the Aerospace Center.

This significant investment will enhance **drone testing, training, and operational infrastructure at UTEP's remote research sites in Fabens and Tornillo**, creating expanded capacity for advanced work in uncrewed aerial systems (UAS). These improvements will support both ongoing research initiatives and the development of new programs that position UTEP at the forefront of aerospace innovation.

The funding will enable faculty and students to engage in cutting-edge research focused on **drone and counter-drone technologies**, contributing to advancements in areas such as national security, airspace safety, and emerging engineering applications. It also strengthens UTEP's role as a key contributor to the rapidly growing aerospace sector in the Borderplex region.



Beyond research, this expansion directly enhances the student experience by increasing access to **hands-on learning opportunities**, field testing, and real-world experimentation. Students will gain valuable experience working with advanced technologies, preparing them for careers in aerospace, defense, and related industries.

This milestone reflects UTEP's continued commitment to innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and workforce development. As the Aerospace Center grows, it will not only advance research but also empower the next generation of engineers to lead with creativity, technical expertise, and impact.

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### Sun Birds DBF Team Sponsored by Blue Origin (2026)

We're excited to share that the Sun Birds Design Build Fly (DBF) Team has received confirmed sponsorship from Blue Origin for the 2026 season. This support will help the team continue designing, building, and flying an aircraft as they prepare for the upcoming DBF competition.

In addition to sponsorship support, Blue Origin also offered to provide technical mentorship. More details will be shared next month as coordination continues.

Be sure to follow the Sun Birds DBF Team on social media for updates, behind-the-scenes progress, and competition highlights.



### MIGUEL LOYA DONATES \$30 MILLION TO UTEP FOR ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE!

UTEP proudly celebrates a historic milestone with a \$30 million gift from alumnus Miguel A. Loya, the largest donation in the University's history.

In recognition of this incredible contribution, the College of Engineering has been named the Miguel A. Loya College of Engineering, supporting a new scholarship program that will provide full-ride opportunities for outstanding future engineers.

This transformative investment reflects a powerful commitment to student success, innovation, and the continued growth of engineering excellence at UTEP.



# THRUST & TORQUE

## AEROSPACE AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

# RESEARCH & GRANTS

## SOBEL-DUNCAN BORDER HEALTH RESEARCH AWARD

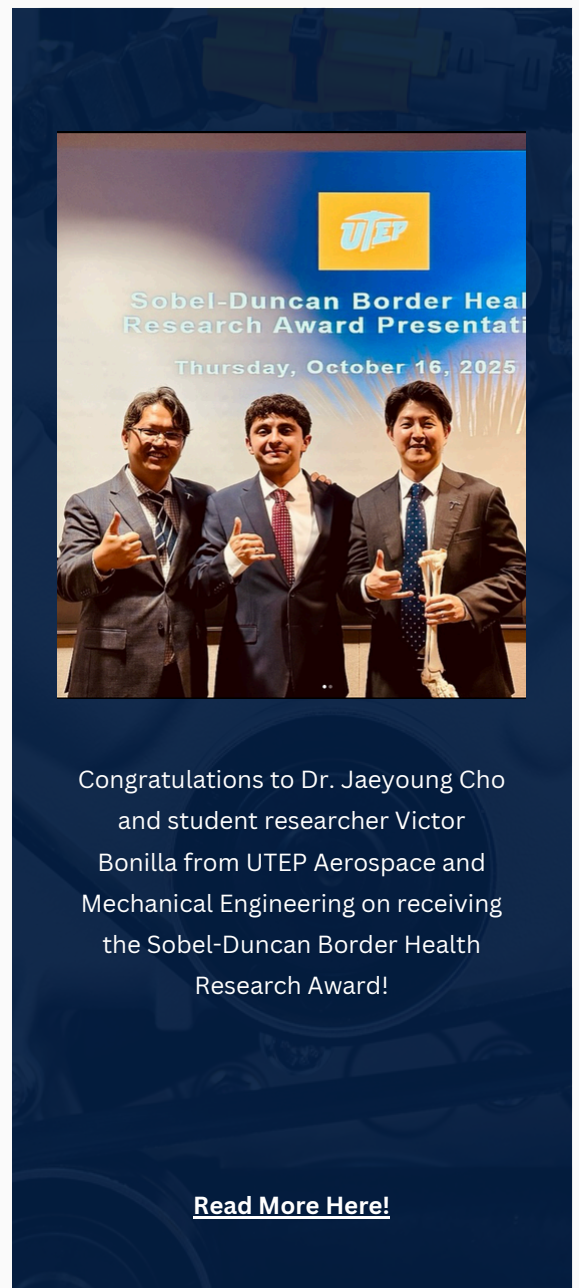
Congratulations to **Dr. Jaeyoung Cho** and student researcher **Victor Bonilla** on receiving the Sobel-Duncan Border Health Research Award.

This innovative research project aims to address disparities in the diagnosis and treatment of **chronic ankle instability among Hispanic populations**, a condition that is often underdiagnosed and can significantly impact long-term mobility and quality of life.

By integrating **artificial intelligence with smartphone-based biomechanical tools**, the team is developing accessible, low-cost technology capable of analyzing movement patterns and assisting in early, accurate diagnosis. This approach has the potential to expand access to advanced diagnostic tools in underserved and border communities, where specialized care may be limited.

In addition to advancing research, this project reflects the AME department's commitment to interdisciplinary collaboration, combining engineering, technology, and health sciences to solve real-world challenges. It also highlights the importance of providing students with meaningful research opportunities that create direct community impact.

This work demonstrates how engineering innovation can play a critical role in improving health equity and strengthening healthcare outcomes across the Borderplex region.



Congratulations to Dr. Jaeyoung Cho and student researcher Victor Bonilla from UTEP Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering on receiving the Sobel-Duncan Border Health Research Award!

[Read More Here!](#)

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AEROSPACE AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Here's a look at the exciting events happening this fall at UTEP. Be sure to mark your calendars and take part in opportunities to celebrate Miner spirit and connect with the community.

### APRIL

#### Coffee with the Chair – April 8, 2026

An informal opportunity for students to meet with the department chair, share ideas, ask questions, and enjoy a cup of coffee in a welcoming environment.

### MAY

#### Last Day of Classes – May 7

The final day of regularly scheduled classes for the Spring semester.

#### Dead Day – May 8

No classes will be held. Students can use this day to prepare and study for final exams.

#### Final Exams – May 11–15

Final examinations will take place throughout the week according to the university's official exam schedule.

#### Graduation Banquet - May 9

Join us as we celebrate our graduating students and their achievements at this year's Graduate Banquet.

#### Commencement – May 16

Celebrate the achievements of graduating students during UT

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Thank you for exploring the incredible accomplishments, stories, and upcoming events in the Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering Department.

We're proud of our students, faculty, and alumni who continue to inspire, innovate, and lead in and out of the classroom.

If you have any **suggestions, feedback**, or ideas for future features, we'd love to hear from you, your input helps us continue to highlight what makes our community so special!

Follow us for more updates, spotlights, and opportunities!

- 📷 Instagram: [@utep.ame](#)
- ✉ Email: [tellME@utep.edu](mailto:tellME@utep.edu)
- 🌐 Website: [utep.edu/engineering/ame](http://utep.edu/engineering/ame)

Let's keep building the future together.

See you on the next one!

If you would like to support student success and research opportunities, you can contribute.

[Click Here](#)