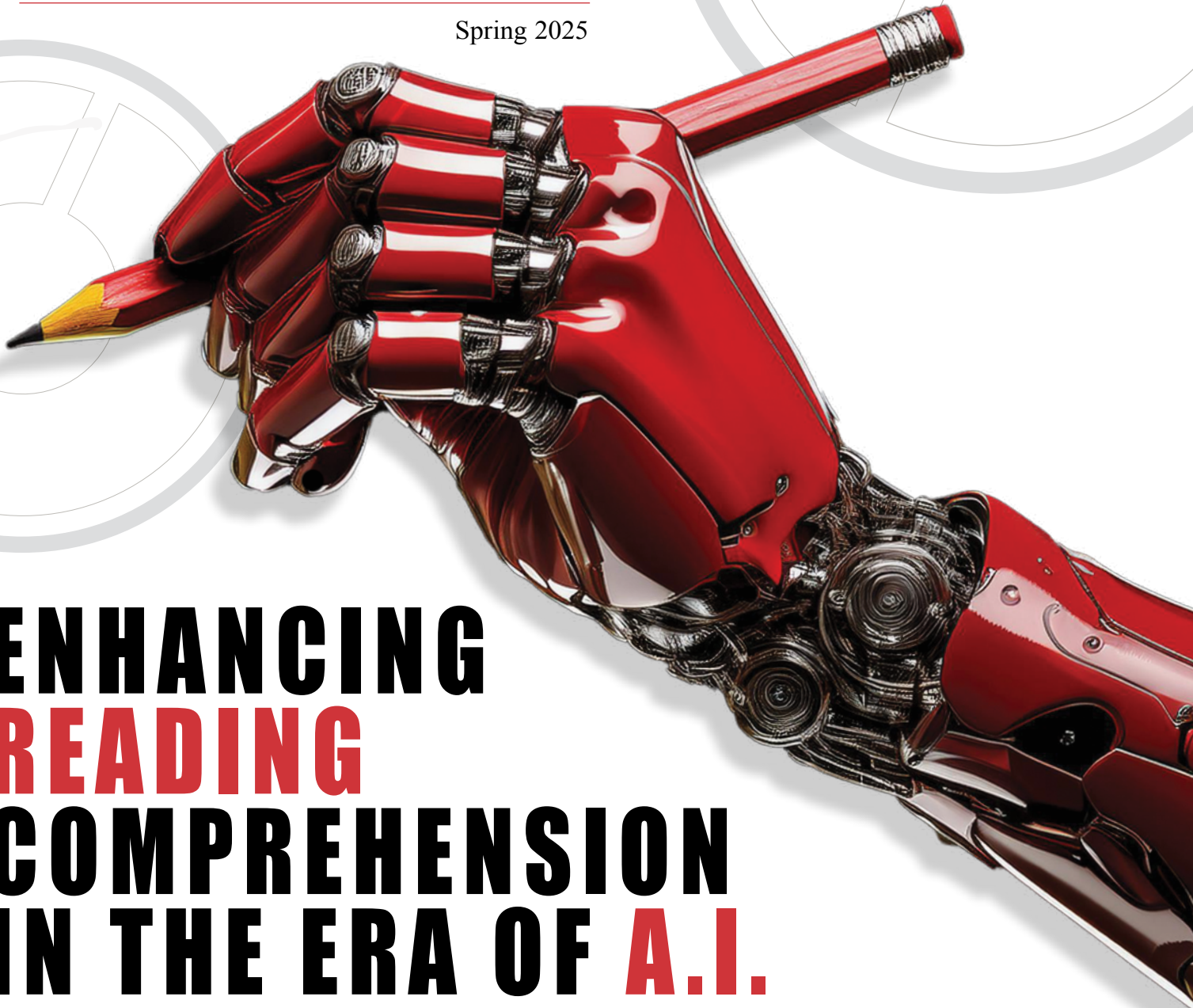


THE WORD

Spring 2025



**ENHANCING
READING
COMPREHENSION
IN THE ERA OF A.I.**





THE EVANS FAMILY FACULTY LOUNGE

On Thursday, Feb. 13, the Evans Family Faculty Lounge opened in the J.E. & L.E. Mabee Library on Broadway campus. A ceremony was held in which faculty members and staff gathered to witness the lounge's official opening and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque. Those in attendance prayed over the new area as it was blessed by Fr. Hector Kalaluka, OMI.

This space was given by Dr. and Mrs. Evans as a sign of their appreciation for the faculty's dedication to UIW students.

Follow the QR code and find out more. ▶



THE
WORD

Spring 2025

*A publication of the Office of
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ABOVE:
On Thursday, March 20, UIW President Thomas M. Evans, PhD, and Mrs. Lisa Evans hosted the second annual Cardinal Ceilidh in the McCombs Rosenberg Sky Room. The festive event, which honors the legacy of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, was attended by the Board of Trustees, President's Executive Council, Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and over 140 students.

ON THE COVER:
Designed by senior Graphic Design student Isabelle Shipley

Do you know someone interested in attending UIW? For more information on what UIW has to offer or to schedule a campus visit, go to uiw.edu/admissions





FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Welcome to the spring edition of *The Word Magazine*. In this edition, we highlight the innovative work done by our UIW students and faculty in this fast-moving era. Innovation is a core value, and it is thrilling to see how our community interprets and applies it in countless new ways.

In the coming pages, we will introduce you to UIW's Quality Enhancement Plan, or QEP, that focuses on strengthening our Cardinals' critical reading and thinking skills in the age of artificial intelligence (p. 4). An appreciation for A.I. and a strong UIW education in coding were key drivers of innovation for Eulises Franco. A student of Centro Universitario Incarnate Word in Mexico City and later of UIW, Franco developed a new system that supports the critical work of a local nonprofit (p. 12). We also introduce you to Erin Kraus, a third-year student in the UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine who recognized an opportunity to improve anatomy education and, in response, went to work on building impressive 3-D models that could have notable impact on clinical preparation (p. 6).

If these stories and the people behind them are any indication, the future holds immense promise as members to our Incarnate Word family contribute to advancements in their respective fields, pushing boundaries and forging new paths. We hope this issue not only highlights these groundbreaking innovations but sparks a drive within you to pioneer new ideas for a better tomorrow.

Praised be the Incarnate Word!

Thomas M. Evans, PhD
President

ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION IN THE ERA OF A.I.

UIW'S QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

by Stephanie Grote-Garcia, PhD

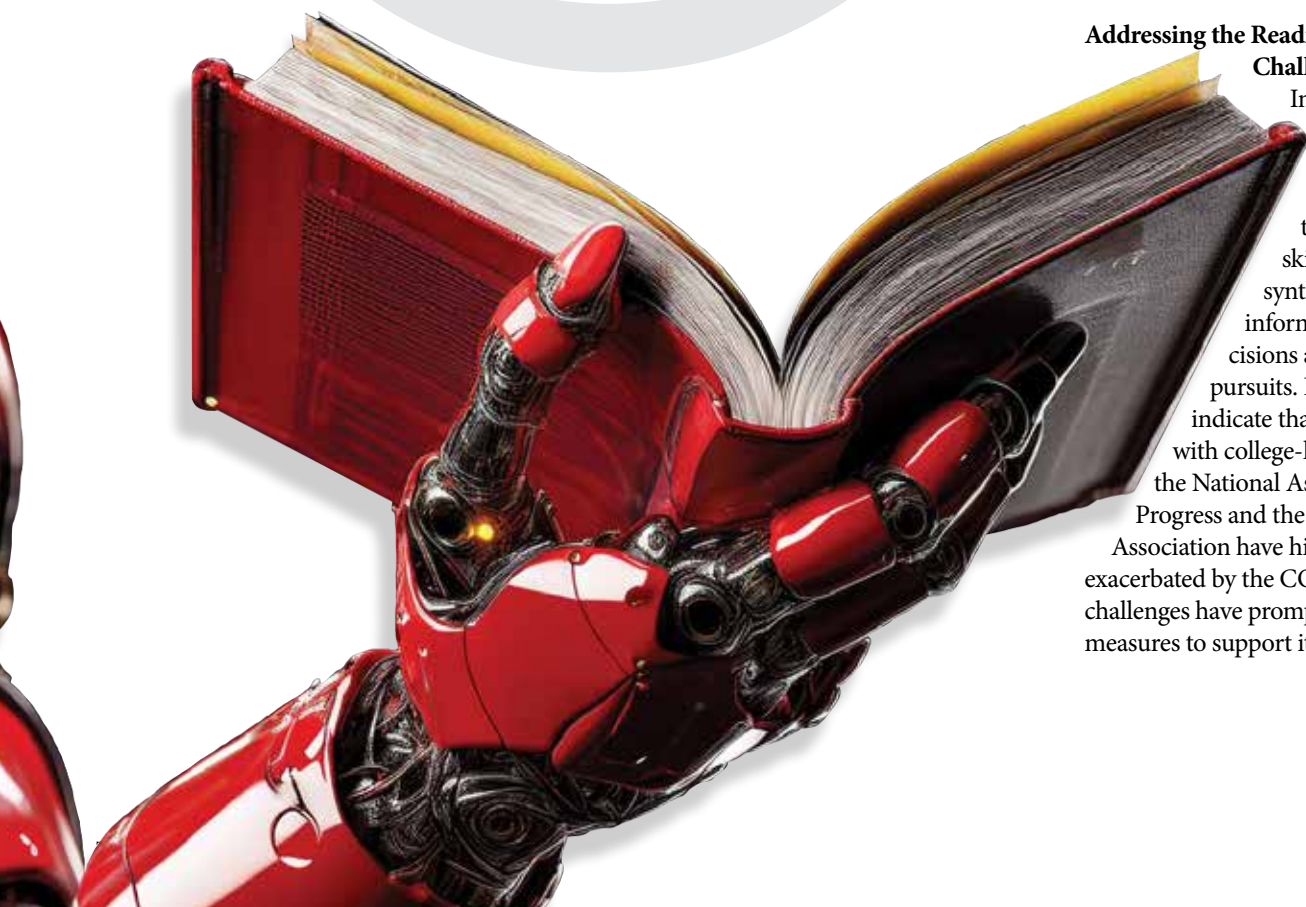
The University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) is embarking on an exciting journey to enhance undergraduate students' reading comprehension with the launch of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), titled Enhancing Reading Comprehension in the Era of AI (Artificial Intelligence). Set to begin in the fall of 2025, this initiative illustrates UIW's commitment to academic excellence and student achievement in an ever-evolving digital landscape. Vice President of Academic Affairs and Interim Provost Dimitri Tamalis, PhD shared, "We are building readers who don't just consume information, but who analyze, synthesize and transform it. UIW's QEP will use the era of AI to create critical thinkers for a complex world."

What is the QEP?

The QEP is a core component of UIW's reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. As part of the reaffirmation process, institutions must develop a QEP that focuses on enhancing student learning and success. The QEP is an opportunity for the University to identify a key area for improvement, implement targeted initiatives, and demonstrate measurable outcomes that align with the institution's mission and strategic goals. By engaging faculty, staff and students, the QEP fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, ensuring that UIW meets the evolving needs of its diverse student population.

Addressing the Reading Comprehension Challenge

In today's fast-paced, information-driven world, reading comprehension is more crucial than ever. Strong literacy skills empower students to synthesize vast amounts of information, make informed decisions and excel in their academic pursuits. However, national trends indicate that many students struggle with college-level reading. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress and the Northwest Evaluation Association have highlighted significant gaps, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges have prompted UIW to take proactive measures to support its student body.



A Multi-Tiered Approach to Success

To address these challenges, the QEP will implement a three-tiered approach designed to support students at every stage of their academic journey:

• *Tier 1: Campus-Wide Initiatives*

The foundation of the QEP lies in campus-wide integration of text-dependent assignments across disciplines. Faculty will incorporate evidence-based reading strategies such as previewing, summarizing and questioning to support comprehension. Additionally, UIW will provide accessible literacy resources through the QEP website and offer faculty professional development via the Center for Teaching and Learning.

• *Tier 2: Specialized Faculty and Peer Support*

Faculty will have the opportunity to participate in the Reading Academies, which provide discipline-specific support in embedding reading strategies into coursework. The program also includes a comprehensive peer tutor training initiative to ensure students receive the support they need outside the classroom.

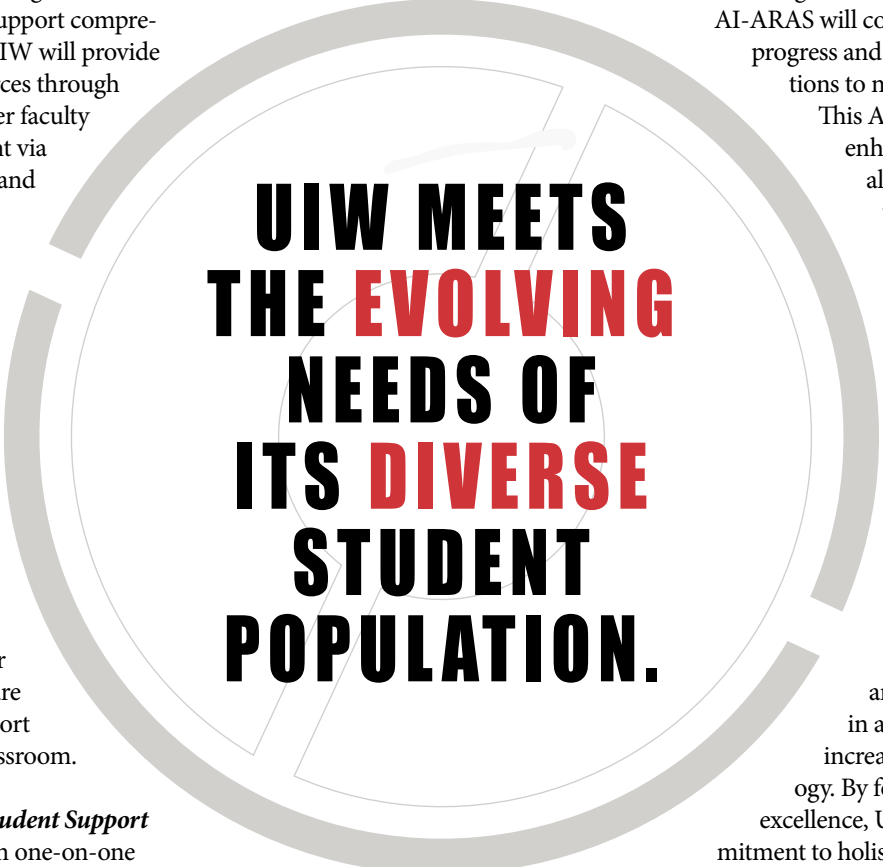
• *Tier 3: Individualized Student Support*

Students will benefit from one-on-one tutoring in the AI-supported Reading, Writing and Learning Center, which will be opening in the fall. The center will feature the UIW AI-Powered Academic Reading Assistance System (UIW AI-ARAS), which is being developed by Dr. Chunling Niu in the Dreeben School of Education. UIW AI-ARAS will serve as a reading coach and offer personalized feedback to students as they apply a variety of strategies while reading.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

The QEP aims to achieve two core student learning outcomes:

1. Students will develop the ability to read, analyze and synthesize complex texts for specific purposes.
2. Students will utilize a variety of reading strategies to enhance comprehension in both general and discipline-specific contexts.



**UIW MEETS
THE EVOLVING
NEEDS OF
ITS DIVERSE
STUDENT
POPULATION.**

To measure progress, the University will administer the Nelson-Denny Reading Test at key academic milestones: freshman year, sophomore year and senior year. This standardized assessment will provide valuable insights into students' growth over time, ensuring that interventions are effectively supporting student success.

Harnessing AI for Enhanced Learning

One of the most innovative aspects of the QEP is its integration of artificial intelligence. The UIW AI-ARAS will serve as a powerful tool for individualized reading support, guiding students as they navigate

complex texts. While students engage with their readings, the UIW AI-ARAS will actively coach them in applying reading strategies, offering real-time feedback on their use of these strategies. This dynamic support system will not only help students refine their comprehension skills but also provide personalized guidance on how to approach different types of texts, fostering deeper understanding. Through interactive features such as personalized goals, individualized coaching and adaptive quizzes, the UIW AI-ARAS will continually assess students' progress and adapt its recommendations to meet their evolving needs.

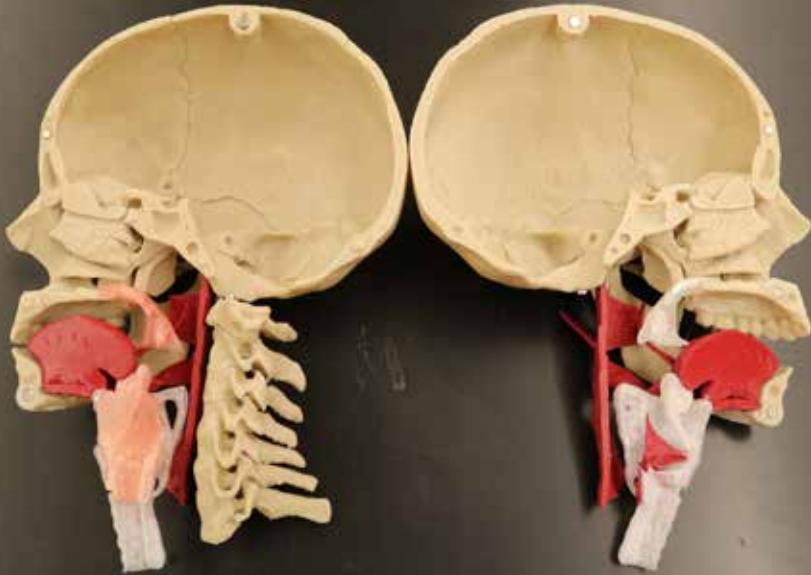
This AI-driven approach not only enhances comprehension but also holds the potential to transform individualized support, enabling a more tailored learning experience, and ultimately optimizing learning outcomes for students.

Looking Ahead

As UIW prepares for the fall 2025 QEP launch, excitement is building across campus. The initiative represents a significant step forward in ensuring that students are well-equipped to thrive in an academic environment increasingly shaped by technology. By fostering a culture of reading excellence, UIW is reaffirming its commitment to holistic student development and lifelong learning.



For more information on the QEP and its implementation, visit the official QEP webpage.



CREATING INNOVATIVE RESOURCES:

UIWSOM Student Doctor Creates 3-D Printed Anatomically Accurate Model for Medical Education

To transform learning communities with the ability to impact civic engagement, education, health and health care in the global community.

By: Devin Castillo

This is the vision of the UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine (UIWSOM). With each generation of aspiring healthcare practitioners that enter their doors, UIWSOM commits to improving the health and well-being of our local, national and global communities. “We bring together world-class researchers and faculty from diverse health-related fields to train our future osteopathic physicians,” shared Dean John T. Pham, DO. “Promoting culturally, linguistically and community-responsive care for all patients to enhance patient safety and improve patient outcomes are core principals of our mission.”

Within their brief yet pivotal four years of medical school, each student dedicates themselves to becoming the next pair of capable healing hands that will serve others and continuously consider how to better care for the world with its current and growing needs.

One of these remarkable students is Erin Kraus, a third-year UIWSOM student intending to specialize in Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery.

While pursuing her master’s degree in Cell Systems and Anatomy at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UT Health San Antonio), her thesis centered around building a 3-D model of the human head and neck, specifically the larynx, pharynx and skull, for anatomy education. Her mentors, Dr. Rekha Kar and Dr. Alan Sakaguchi, tasked her with creating this model to improve anatomy education for health professions students. Although learning 3-D printing required a great deal of work and patience, Kraus was eager to see how her model could come to fruition through a process not previously familiar to her.

“The biggest thing that drove me through the learning process (of 3-D printing) was that this was a step towards implicating a clear way to teach anatomy through a model,” explained Kraus.

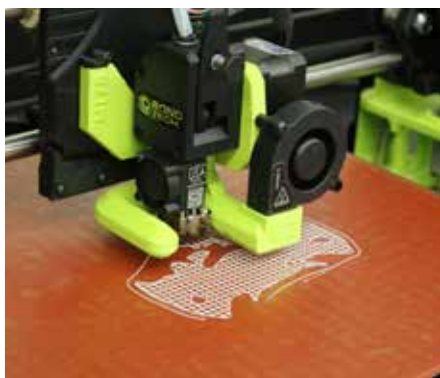


“Since 2020, I was inspired by my love for anatomy and was motivated by my ability to create something that could be a teaching aid to not only anatomy and medical students but also patients, residents and providers.”

Her days of learning and practice led to the production of her first model of the human head and neck that aided in the successful defense and acceptance of her master's thesis.

Upon graduating from the program, she was granted permission to further advance the model as a medical student to be used for anatomy education and use in clinical and patient education.

UIWSOM Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Dr. Earlanda Williams served on Kraus' thesis committee and recruited her to join the UIWSOM family in 2021. Kraus began by developing a virtual model using computer-aided design (CAD) software. She then imported the model into the 3-D printer's slicing software where it was sliced into thousands of layers. Finally, she oversaw the printer utilizing fused deposition modeling (FDM) to build the model from the foundation up using layers upon layers of melted plastic.



Kraus first started off at UIWSOM as an employee, where she was a part of the structures team serving as an anatomy teaching laboratory assistant. For a year, she was responsible for dissecting and preparing cadavers for UIWSOM's human gross anatomy courses. In 2022, she officially began her medical studies as a UIWSOM student.

“At UT Health, I collaborated with the school Librarian who completed the printing of my model. At UIWSOM, I



had the opportunity to personally create the model from start to finish. It was a bit daunting as I trialed and errored everything on my own.”

As she better familiarized herself with 3-D printing independently, she considered how to enhance the aesthetics and functionality of her head and neck model. She tailored it to have specific features that allowed for use in clinical training. For example, she added silicone for the mucosa of the upper airway and larynx, which could be used for procedural and clinical training.

Kraus hopes that her model will aid not only medical students in understanding the anatomy of the head and neck but also clinicians, residents and patients. These models have the potential to offer reliable visual aids to help patients' comprehension of their clinical procedures and provide artificial subjects compatible with medical demonstrations.

Additionally, she hopes her model will offer an anatomically accurate educational resource as an alternative to cadaver-based anatomy education, and for underserved schools without access to traditional gross anatomy educational resources. Kraus intends for the 3D files for her model to be offered as “open source,” meaning other institutions could freely access her coding to create copies of

her head and neck model for themselves. Although the model will require access to a 3-D printer to be created, it only takes an average low cost of \$30 in materials to build. This will allow other medical institutions to acquire a cost-effective resource that doesn't require the costs and laboratory equipment needed for a human gross anatomy lab, as the models are made from completely artificial materials.

“I think there were many extra things that I hadn't originally anticipated with the model, but it was really rewarding,” admitted Kraus. “To see the model come to life in front of my eyes with all its advances was fascinating. Understanding your patient's anatomy is important when treating them. Having this tool would be immensely helpful because we could tailor the model to specific teaching goals.”

In 2024, Erin was also given the opportunity to return to UT Health San Antonio to present on the recent state of her model to the Department of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery, highlighting how she has given significant consideration to the development of the model so it can be an effective tool across various platforms, and sharing her hopes for how the model will be utilized in the future. It was a moment to demonstrate to her alma mater the progress made on

her research and make her present UIW mentors proud.

"It has been an immense pleasure to mentor and support student doctor Erin Kraus in her anatomy research endeavors since her time as a graduate student at UT Health," expressed Williams. "Ms. Kraus has displayed resounding innovation, dedication and resilience as she initiated this project during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic and established opportunities to collaborate with UIWSOM to complete her project. Erin has continued to thrive as an anatomy educator and osteopathic medical student over the past four years. I am both proud and confident that student doctor Erin Kraus will continue to make significant contributions to the field of anatomy and medical education for many years to come."

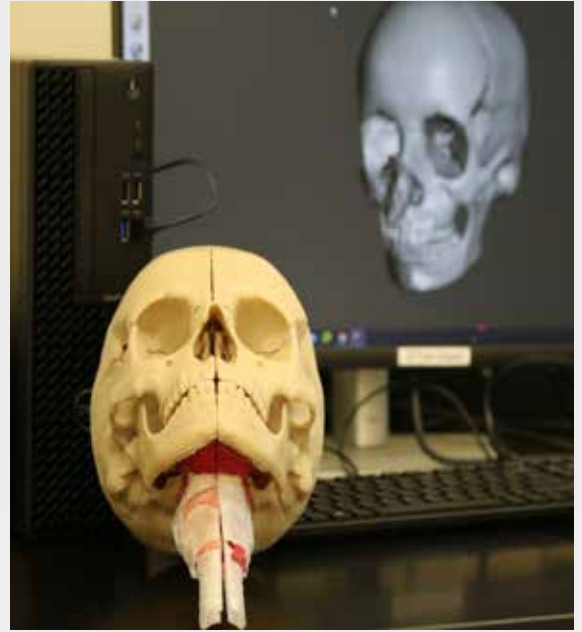
"Student doctor Erin Kraus is an exemplary role model for professionalism, integrity and dedication to excellence that characterizes the physician of the future, and the mission of the UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine," remarked Dr. Richard Holt, professor of Clinical and Applied Science Education who introduced Kraus to the field of Otolaryngology. "Her knowledge of human anatomy and the requisite ingenuity for developing open access, 3-D printed, anatomically correct models that will be available globally for medical education, particularly in developing countries, present an outstanding and altruistic educational advancement. Ms. Kraus' goal to become an otolaryngologist head and neck surgeon, is certainly one I fully support. I project that Ms. Kraus will continue to contribute to medical education, medical knowledge, simulation surgery advances and clinical innovations in her future academic career."

Kraus never imagined that this model would follow her throughout her educational career, but she is grateful for the opportunities it has offered and the people that it has unexpectedly ushered into her life. She is deeply grateful to UIWSOM and her mentors Dr. Earlanda Williams, Dr. Richard Holt, Dr. Yolanda Rangel and many more. She recognizes how everyone has believed in her, offering her an abundance of support, encouragement and guidance throughout these past few years.

Because of their support, Kraus has been able to develop several other novel projects involving 3-D printed models to support her peers and help them learn how to apply basic anatomy to complex clinical cases. An example of one of these projects is the printing of miniature, pocket-sized pelvis models that can be manipulated and used to demonstrate the biomechanics and positions of the pelvis. These were designed to help osteopathic medical students with understanding and demonstrating somatic dysfunction of the pelvis.

"My number one priority is to be a doctor," assured Kraus. "I hope that this head and neck model can follow me throughout my career and that I can expand further on it as I continue to become a physician. If I can incorporate the model in my training right now, that would be great. At the end of the day, though, I want to learn how to be a good doctor and help others to become good doctors."

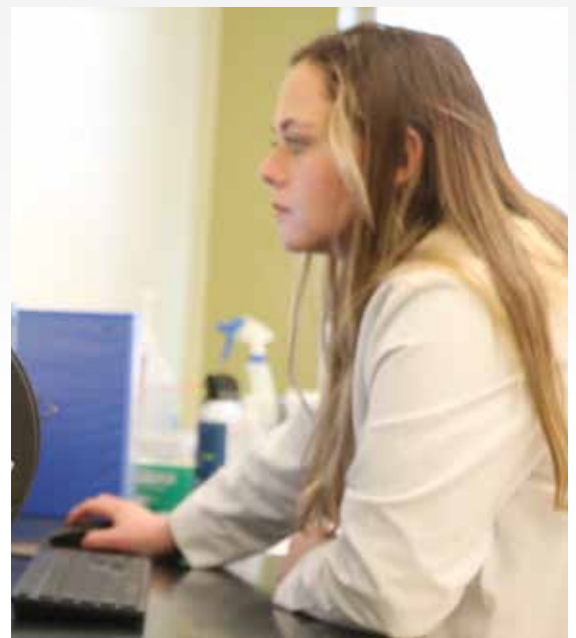
It is through the innovation, compassion and unwavering dedication of students that UIWSOM can see their vision come to life. Although students only spend a brief time at the school, it is undeniable that as they move beyond the Nest, they will be active contributors to a better world for all.



“

To see the model come to life in front of my eyes with all its advances was fascinating.

”



FAVORITE MEMORIES SHARED BY THE UIW ALUMNI BOARD



Cole Wick, BS '16

"I will forever cherish the difficult days where we had grueling

practices, spring and summer, with the brothers that I came to know on the football field. I was broke with far too much to do between class and football. I think back fondly on those days. Personally, my favorite memory is the beginning of my family starting at UIW. We met my sophomore year, her freshman year, both athletes, and both young and in love. We got married at UIW, in the tradition similar to her parents, and continue to support the University with our two little future Cardinals. UIW is more than a school to me, it's where mine and my family's stories began!"



Marco Vidaurri, PharmD '10

"Walking under the Clock Tower for first time. It felt like a 'rite of passage' that still awes me when I do it today."



Gabriel Durand-Hollis

"My daughter graduating and the ceremony in the Chapel. I think all of us would remember that and it marked the day on which she launched her career. UIW has been so important to her success!

The Christmas Light the way, each year brings delight, and we excitedly go to experience the event. More than a decade of memories.

The Swing In auction party, we meet so many friends and neighbors each year. We always look forward to the adventure and the results of helping our Scholarship recipients."



Chyna Lane, BS '22

"One of my favorite moments at UIW was my first Light the Way.

It gave me the feeling of home for the holidays, and I knew I made the right decision going to UIW."



Ann Islas, BA '08, MEd '10

"My favorite memory is being part of student life. I made so many friends and met so many different people by getting involved in campus organizations."



Martin Padron, BBA '11

"One of my proudest memories at UIW was leading the effort to open the first student-run credit union branch on campus as Chairman of the Student Board of Directors.

Partnering with the leaders of United Texas Credit Union, and collaborating with peers and faculty, we turned this groundbreaking vision into a reality, creating invaluable real-life hands-on with real-cash learning opportunities for students. That experience launched my journey from working as a teller and loan officer on campus to becoming a financial analyst, and ultimately a derivative trader for Marathon Petroleum."



Roland Trevino, BBA '98

"My favorite memory is that I was one of the original

14 students that started the ADCAP program (currently known as the School of Professional Studies, or SPS) back in January of 1995. Its a great program that is still strong today!"



Barb Quinn

"It was 2007 and I had just moved to San Antonio and that March I attended my first

UIW event-the Cutting Edge Fashion Show! The room was filled with excitement in anticipation of seeing the students fabulous fashions during the runway show, and the awards for the best designs. It was my first introduction to the UIW community, and their commitment to the students and community partnership - a day I'll always remember."



Rick Smith

"I love our Annual Swing-In Auction Party and Golf Tournament. It is always a great

way to spend time with UIW family, clients and friends.... Raising monies for a great cause."



Byron Miller

"My favorite memory, like I'm sure many others, is Light the Way. It's a wonderful time to come to campus and kick off the holiday season!"



Kate Crosby, BBA '96

"Favorite memories are definitely graduation and the Robert C. Crosby Spirit Bell Dedication that happened this past Homecoming."



Chris Dewitt, BBA '15

"My freshmen year I was a member of the 4x100-meter relay team along with Matthew Harris, Tommy Brown and Adan Narvaez. We went to the NCAA D-II National Championship track meet and

earned All-American honors, I remember that meet like it was yesterday and still hold a close relationship with those teammates."



Ana Sylvia Legarreta, BA '13

"Some of my best memories are staying up all night with my friends to finish our fashion design projects and meeting the people who became my closest friends."



Amanda Roberts, BS '10, PhD

"My favorite memories were as follows: (1) I was blessed

with opportunities that helped me win the UIW music scholarship and play my viola in the UIW Community Orchestra and Christian band; (2) becoming a Visiting Assistant Professor of Chemistry which provided me the opportunity to teach, uplift, and inspire students"



Rev. Trevor D. Alexander, BA '96, DD

"My Induction Ceremony is one of my fondest

memories. At one point of the ceremony, a staff or faculty member would light a candle and then light the candle of the person standing next to him/her. This process will continue until all the candles are lit. The idea is that we were all responsible for passing on our knowledge and the LIGHT of Christ."



Annie Sustaita, BA '19

"My favorite memory is arriving at the SPS Datapoint campus to find other working parents, just like me, attending

class nights and weekends in the pursuit of a higher education."



Carissa Collins, MBA '93

"My most cherished memory of UIW, when it was known as IWC, was walking through the hallways and being recognized by the faculty, even though we had only met once during student orientation. This made me feel confident that I had made the right decision to pursue my MBA program here."



Chris Prewit, BA '15

"My favorite memories from UIW happened while spending time with teammates and close friends on campus. I'm still very close with my UIW family and thank God everyday for all the connections I made."

Rick Molina, MBA '96

"My favorite UIW memory was engaging with a diverse group of professionals that were working full time, pursuing their MBA and bringing different work experiences and perspectives to the classroom and group projects."

Lisa Reagan

"Favorite UIW memory was when my husband Neill went up to speak about the US Open auction package during Swing-In. He got the crowd excited, and we ended up selling two packages! We look forward to this event every year; UIW is very near and dear to us both."



Designing Our Everyday World

UIW Graphic Design Student Recognized at 2024 American Advertising Awards

By Devin Castillo

At the UIW School of Media and Design, the Graphic Design department supports and educates designers to intentionally create the way people see and experience the world around them. By using their creative vision to manufacture specifically curated designs that convey thoughts, concepts and emotions, graphic designers are able to connect with others in unique ways. The program's curriculum is designed to "inspire every student to produce exceptional work in the hopes of producing award-winning students who become graduates with fulfilling careers (uiw.edu)." Senior Graphic Design student Isabelle Shipley is just one of these remarkable graphic designers who is demonstrating her skillset both to the University and to the city of San Antonio.

Shipley has been an artist her entire life. Wanting to pursue a career that allowed her to continue to express and showcase her creative skills, she explored various fields of study offered at the University. After her search, she concluded that an education in



Graphic Design was an excellent fit for her.

"I enjoy the creative process when starting a new project," said Shipley. "When I get a new assignment, I start out seeing it as a picture in my head. Then I get to put that idea down into a computer and really get to refine it to make it look like what I imagined. It's complicated to explain those early visions to others, so I especially like when I create something, and people get to visually

see my idea come to life in front of them." In summer 2024, Shipley was unexpectedly asked to help with a big project before the start of her senior year. As a proud Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) with 55% of its student population coming from Hispanic or Latin descent, the University hoped to showcase special graphic designs in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Knowing her experience in the program, they entrusted Shipley with creating the designs.

"It was a little nerve wracking, but I was also very honored to be asked to help," shared Shipley. "I was super excited and got to work right away!"

As a Hispanic woman herself, she was excited to work on a project that reflected a cherished part of her identity. Recognizing that the Hispanic and Latin cultures are complex, broad and diverse, she dedicated herself to researching extensively to ensure that she represented as many cultural details as possible in a limited number of graphics.

The final products were exceptionally created designs that demonstrated the





significance of Hispanic/Latin heritage from both wide and University-specific lenses. Her designs incorporated UIW staple pieces such as the Marjorie Jordan Carillon Plaza clock tower, the Gayle & Tom Benson Stadium football field and cardinal birds, including UIW's beloved mascot Red the Cardinal. Her design resembled Otomi embroidery and cards from the popular card game Loteria.

Shiplely shared that she enjoyed finding intersections between UIW and Hispanic/Latin cultures during the design process. It took a couple of trials and adjustments, but to see her intended representations come to fruition and be displayed across campus made her feel pleased with all her hard work.

Soon after, Shiplely was encouraged to submit her designs to the 2024 American Advertising Awards hosted by AAF San Antonio. The American Advertising Awards "honor innovation, excellence and the bold ideas that shape our city's advertising landscape. This year's theme, Keep It SA, pays tribute to the vibrant culture and creative spirit that make San Antonio truly one of a kind" (adfedsa.org).

In prior years, Shiplely had submitted her student graphic works to the competition during both her sophomore and junior years but had yet to receive an award. As a senior, she decided to compete again, submitting a number of her student works in addition to submitting her original His-

panic Heritage Month designs at a professional level given that they weren't designed as part of her class curriculum.

In the end, Shiplely was recognized with three awards: two awards for her student works and one professional award for her Hispanic Heritage Month designs.

"I could not believe that I won not one, but three awards," said Shiplely, wearing a gleeful smile. "I just kind of sat there for a little bit rereading the email to make sure it was correct. This accomplishment has definitely given me more confidence in my work and skills as a graphic designer."

The near future looks just as bright and exciting for Shiplely. In May, she will walk the stage at the Freeman Coliseum as a 2025 graduate of the University of the Incarnate Word. After she leaves the Nest, she intends to continue growing as a professional and learning all that she can in the field so she can be the best graphic designer she can be. One day, Shiplely hopes to demonstrate her leadership skills as a creative director in charge of her own team or to work in film production.

Although she is sad to soon leave the

University that has positively impacted her life for the past four years, she takes comfort in knowing that her designs will still be a part of UIW as it continues to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month in the future. "Even though I'll be gone, my work will always stay here and be a part of UIW, which is such an honor," shared Shiplely.

It is graphic designers, like Shiplely, who have the courage to believe in their artistry



and share their innovation with others that help to connect and unify others through their original ideas. Without them, everyday life would lack the added vibrancy, inventiveness and soul that their works contribute to the world. Shiplely is just one of UIW's living representations of the Word that will surely continue to leave her impact wherever she may go.





A PASSION

for **A.I.**

By Krystal Cantu-Cuate

CLASS OF
2021



Technology stands out as one of the most captivating innovations, continually evolving before our eyes, and for Eulises Franco, a 2021 UIW alumnus, technology has always sparked his curiosity. From a young age Franco was fascinated by computers and was driven to learn how they work. His passion for coding and problem-solving led to aspirations of becoming a software developer. Franco's current role as a Data Analyst at the Bexar County Health Collaborative, a nonprofit organization, was achieved through

his dedicated research into artificial intelligence (AI) and his discoveries during his time at UIW. His perseverance has enabled him to create a customer relationship management (CRM) system that keeps his company database updated and easily accessible.

Eulises' journey with UIW begins in Mexico City, where he spent 12 years of his life before moving to the states. During his senior year, Franco attended his high school's university fair in the hopes of finding the best fit for his education. Centro Universitario Incarnate Word (CIW) was one of the many participants in the fair, and it was CIW that offered Franco an opportunity to study in Mexico City. CIW does not offer a degree in computer systems, so Franco took it upon himself to book a tour of our Broadway campus, where UIW does offer a degree in computer information systems. It was during this visit that he fell in love with the campus and all the opportunities that UIW Broadway campus had to offer. Soon, Franco would be embarking on his American dream.

When reflecting on his time at UIW, Franco fondly recalled the deep friendships he formed and the influential faculty members who shaped his journey. UIW helped Franco improve his social skills, making networking and meeting people (both inside and outside of his regular environment) much easier. Ad-

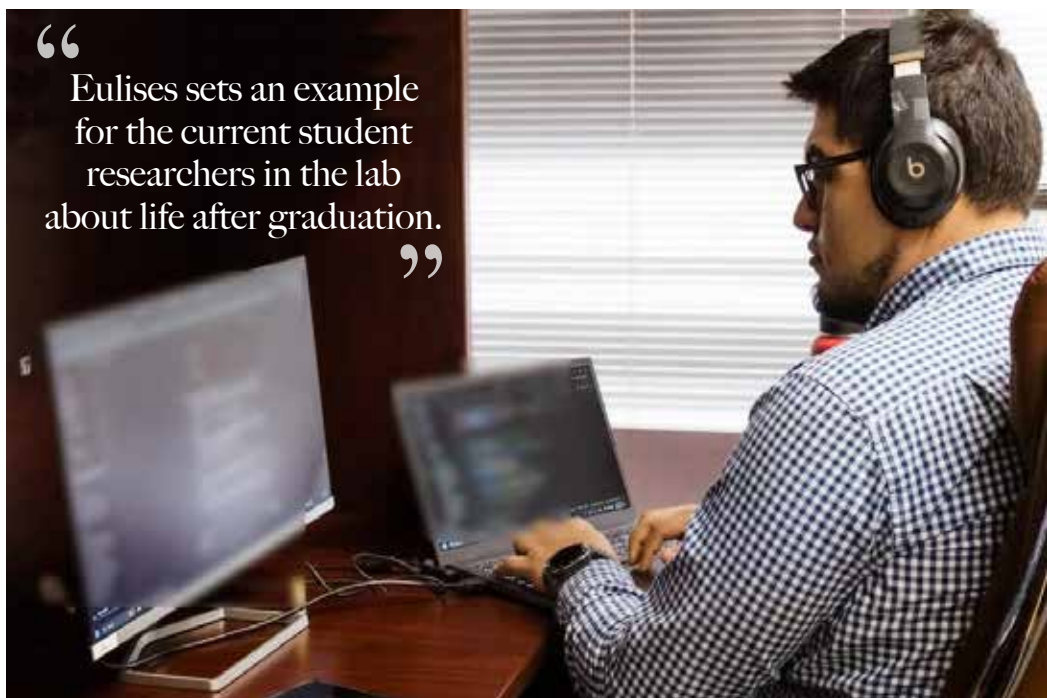
“Eulises sets an example for the current student researchers in the lab about life after graduation.”

ditionally, it was faculty such as Dr. Ronald Washington, Dr. Gonzalo Parra and Dr. Michael Frye who cemented Franco's love for coding, and his newly sparked interest in AI. AI and the advent of ChatGPT prompted Franco to have a significant career shift that drove him away from software development and towards data analysis. In a computer-driven environment, Franco felt UIW equipped him with the knowledge necessary to succeed. In 2021, Franco graduated with

his bachelor's in Computer Information Systems, with a minor in Management Information Systems.

In his spare time, Franco enjoys a good work out, spending time with friends and discussing the future of AI and its potential impact on our lives. Franco also gives back to UIW by helping current students who have similar aspirations. Dr. Michael Frye, one of UIW's most notable engineering professors recounts his time with Franco, emphasizing that “Eulises has been a valued member of the Autonomous Vehicle Systems (AVS) Lab and sets an example for the current student researchers in the Lab about life after graduation - including attending graduate school and giving back to UIW.”

When it comes to advice for aspiring professionals, Franco believes that everyone should find a personal project that they're extremely passionate about. Allow yourself to start building that project during your college years. This should allow you to find your classes more engaging, which in turn, motivates you to get better grades. Your project can serve as a stepping stone to securing a great job or even building your own company.





John B. Catts III

Chief of Police, UIW PD

was sworn in by UIW President Thomas M. Evans, PhD on Friday, Feb. 28. Catts previously served the UIW campuses as interim chief, but he was ready to assume the title of Chief officially. At the ceremony, officers dressed in ceremonial regalia and dispatchers stood proudly in front of Catts, recited their oaths of office and demonstrated their support as they welcomed their new Chief.

The community was led in prayer by Sr. Walter Maher, CCVI, vice president of Mission & Ministry. Guests joined voices to pray over Catts, asking God to watch over and guide him as he faithfully serves the University and its community. “Grant him courage when he is afraid, wisdom when he must make quick decisions, strength when he is weary and compassion in all his work,” prayed Sr. Walter.

“Catts comes to this role with a heart for service,” said Evans. “Here at UIW, he works to partner with our students and community members to maintain a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment where we all can thrive. To the men and women of our University Police Department, I want to express my gratitude. Your work is often unseen, but today, we take a moment to shine light on your dedication, your bravery and your commitment to your University ...

As you (Catts) assume this vital role, know that you have our full support.”

Follow the QR code for the full article:



Dr. LuElla D'Amico

Associate Professor, English
and

Dr. Sandra Guzman-Foster

Director, UIW Center for Teaching and Learning



received a \$1.25 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. The grant will be used over the next five years to fund the new, innovative creative arts program Artful Worship: Inspiring Children's Faith Through the Catholic Imagination. The program aims to create enlivening and contemplative programming that engages children in prayer and worship through the arts.

Artful Worship is funded through Lilly Endowment's Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative, a national initiative designed to help Christian congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational corporate worship and prayer practices.

“When I saw the Lilly Endowment call for the Initiative, I knew I wanted UIW to apply,” says Dr. LuElla D'Amico, UIW associate professor of English. “I've long dreamt about bringing a children's art program here on campus that could deepen the faith of our students and our local community. I believe deeply in Incarnate Word's Mission to develop the whole person, and I see our commitment to faith and the liberal arts as uniquely merging in this initiative. Through our faculty in English, the-

ology, arts, music and education, we will be able to nurture and form the Catholic imagination in our student body and local community in unique and exciting ways.”

In the Artful Worship program, during the academic year, UIW students will take classes centered on the Catholic imagination, sharing what they learn with children by taking ministry arts programming to parishes and parochial schools in the San Antonio Archdiocese. Some of the collaborative activities UIW students will engage in include: spiritual journaling, where children reflect on their faith journeys through writing and drawing; literature and poetry, where children can read and write about the lives of Saints and connect literature with spiritual truths; theatrical performances, where they bring stories from the Catholic tradition and scripture to life on stage; visual arts, where they can create religious art inspired by our South Texas region; and music, where they can express their faith through song.

“This initiative embodies the Mission of UIW by blending faith, education and community in a way that nurtures both the spiritual and intellectual growth of our children,” says Dr. Sandra Guzman-Foster, director in the UIW Center for Teaching & Learning. “Through the arts and culturally grounded worship practices, we are offering young people a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of Catholicism while staying rooted in the vibrant traditions of South Texas. We believe this program will help foster compassionate, thoughtful leaders who live out the values of UIW in every aspect of their lives.”

Follow the QR Code for the full article:



Dr. Yutaka Maki
Associate Professor, Rosenberg School of Optometry

was honored as the Educator of the Year by the Texas Optometric Association.

The award was announced during the 125th Texas Optometric Association Annual Summit held in Austin in February.

Maki has been with the Rosenberg School of Optometry for nearly 13 years. He says his goal as an educator is to foster both academic excellence and personal growth. Maki builds his teaching around three core pillars to achieve those goals: high expectations, accountability and support.

“I set clear, high expectations because I believe students rise to the level of challenge placed before them,” explains Maki. “However, expectations alone are not enough – students need accountability to stay engaged and focused. I assess students frequently, provide timely feedback, and ensure they understand their progress. At the same time, I offer strong support through open communication, accessibility, additional learning materials and individualized guidance. I encourage students to ask questions, seek help, and collaborate with peers. By balancing these three pillars, I create a learning environment where students feel both challenged and cared for.”



Dr. Doshie P. Piper
Associate Professor, Criminal Justice

received the 2025 Collegium Visionary Award at a special luncheon gathering

with her colleagues. Among the reasons for Doshie’s selection, UIW College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Dean

Javier Clavier noted the numerous ways she has brought Collegium home to her institution, including drawing upon the prophetic and sacramental imaginations to help re-vitalize the Core Curriculum at UIWTX by highlighting vital connections among the humanities, social sciences and professional schools.

Follow this QR code for the full article:



Ben Rueger
Chief Information Officer

has been named the University’s new Chief Information Officer and Vice President of Innovation and Technology. Rueger comes to UIW

from the Purdue University system. In his previous position, Rueger led a digital transformation, drove AI initiatives and policy, and revamped the student experience. In doing so, Rueger built collaborative practices working closely with faculty members and technology teams to ensure successful and clear change management. “I am truly honored to join the University of the Incarnate Word, a community where technology can bring us closer, enrich learning and support our shared mission of compassion and service,” says Rueger. “As CIO, I am excited to foster innovation and ensure that our digital tools uplift and empower every student, faculty member and staff member. Together, we will create a more connected, inclusive and transformative experience that reflects the heart of this incredible University.”

CLASS NOTES

Celebrate UIW success stories. Keep up with your class, and be part of *The Word* in print and online! Send your achievements to alumni@uiwtx.edu.

Photos submitted for Class Notes may be included on online alumni platform.



2010

Ann Islas, BA '08, MED '10

Now serves as the Director of Student Services for the UIW School of Professional Studies. Islas shares, "She is excited to have landed her dream job and can't wait to help students along their education journey."

1960s



Rita Shaw Reindl, BNS '60

Was honored to attend the 64th anniversary reunion for graduation from Incarnate Word College. Reindl wore her first-year beanie (circa 1956-57) to the Sunday Homecoming Mass and Brunch. Classmates who attended the celebration included Sr. Teresa Stanley, CCVI, Ruth Graf Kusenburger, and Lois Schrenker Criscione. All attendees had a wonderful time reminiscing.

2010s



Nicholas Garcia, BBA '16

Has been promoted to Lead Consultant Communications for AT&T at their Global Headquarters in Dallas, TX. Prior to this new role, he served as a College Recruiter, where he helped thousands of students and recent graduates join AT&T's dynamic workforce either through internships or a full-time development program. In this new role, Garcia serves as the Communications Lead for the Network Chief Team, being responsible for developing and implementing comprehensive internal and external communications strategies for AT&T's senior vice president for Network Planning & Engineering, senior vice president for Engineering & Operations and senior vice president for Access Construction & Engineering.



2020s

Kassandra Gonzalez, BS '22

Is proud to announce her engagement to Jose Gutierrez. Gonzalez and Gutierrez started dating during their last year of undergraduate studies and have been inseparable since. They love visiting campus for events such as Light the Way and enjoy being a part of the Cardinal community.



Jarod Spraggins,
BS in Athletic Training, 2015

Congratulations to Jarod Spraggins, who returns as Head Athletic Trainer of the Human Performance Squadron at JBSA-Lackland, a program he helped start as a UIW student employee ten years ago. The highly effective and successful Human Performance Squadron aims to help recruits overcome injuries during Air Force basic training. “Our mission here is a great one,” says Spraggins. “We get to be a part of thousands of individuals lives as they aspire to a military calling. I see my role as an enabler. It’s my job

to ensure the athletic trainers here have everything they need to perform their best clinical care.”

For more information about the Human Performance Squadron, follow this QR code.



*Eternal Rest Grant unto
Them, Oh Lord.*

- Margaret Cruz, Friend
- Glenda Cumbest, Friend
- Doretha A. Fields, BS '79
- Susie R. Garza, BA '74
- Nicola Ghawi, MBA '95
- Alan Gonzalez, BA '22
- Rosemary Kowalski, Friend
- Virginia D. Lester, MSN '90
- Patty R. Mainz, Friend
- Mattie C. Neff, BA '51
- Christopher N. Paris, MA '88, PhD,
Faculty Emeritus
- Beverly P. Poth, BS '58
- Victor A. Prosper, Former Employee
- Naomi M. Radke, BNS '75
- Lindsay B. Rodriguez, M Ed '01
- Lydia Y. Taylor, BSN '81
- Dianna J. Tison, BSN '64, PhD,
Faculty Emerita
- James E. Townsend, BBA '96
- Victoria Trinidad, BA '78

*Let perpetual light shine
upon them. May their
souls and the souls of all the
faithful departed, through
the mercy of God, rest in
peace. Amen.*



IN MEMORIAM

REMEMBERING ROSEMARY KOWALSKI

The UIW community mourns the loss of **Rosemary Kowalski**, a dear friend of the University. Throughout her life Kowalski’s influence touched many in our community. A graduate of Incarnate Word High School, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and their ministries were always near and dear to her heart.

Rosemary Kowalski founded Rosemary’s Catering, one of the largest and longest running catering firms in San Antonio, now known as RK Group. Rosemary’s Catering was a venture that Kowalski started with her late husband, Henry over 75 years ago. With her children and grandchildren taking active roles in the company, the RK Group has now grown into a global event and hospitality services company. Her son, Greg Kowalski, a member of the University of the Incarnate Word Board of Trustees, serves as president and CEO of RK Group. Greg’s son, Travis, and daughter Jennifer, hold leadership roles. Her daughter, Mary Carrington, serves as a trusted advisor.

Beyond her flourishing business, Kowalski was integral in establishing and supporting Hope for the Future, a tuition assistance program that helps families send their children to Catholic schools.

This great matriarch of the city of San Antonio will be missed, and we at UIW, extend our condolences to the entire Kowalski family.

CHANGING LIVES THROUGH FOOTBALL



THE UIW PROGRAM'S LASTING IMPACT

By Alexa Low

Nestled in the heart of San Antonio, the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) football program is a place that many from all over have come to call home. This football program that's only 15 years old, has always been more than a team, it's a place that shapes players, coaches and staff alike. For Ephraim Banda, Clint

Killough and Taylor Grimes, their time at UIW has not only impacted their careers, but also their personal lives in ways they could never have imagined when they first stepped foot on campus.

Banda took a chance on UIW, coming on as a member of the first-ever football team and is now working for the Cleveland Browns as a safeties coach "I was

there for the first team meeting as we walked across a field that wasn't even completed yet." His memories of the program's humble beginnings are rich with nostalgia, from the very first game to the friendships he forged with teammates and the lessons he learned along the way.

Banda firmly believes that his time at UIW helped shape the person he is today.

“I got to come in and work with people on a project from the ground up – the start of a football program. Not many get that opportunity,” he explains. His time with UIW instilled a mindset of resilience, teaching him to do a lot with a little and how to problem solve in any situation.

Looking back on his journey, Banda credits UIW with giving him the tools and opportunities to reach the highest levels of coaching. “I wouldn’t be a coach in the NFL and top college programs without UIW football. I know for a fact, I wouldn’t be in this space and this situation if it wasn’t for the people, the school and the opportunity to play college football,” he admits.

Banda experienced a full-circle moment when he spotted Gayle Benson, owner of the New Orleans Saints and namesake for the UIW stadium, along with her late husband.

“I was in New Orleans, and after the game, I saw Gayle Benson. I walked over and shook her hand. I introduced myself and told her, ‘My name is Ephraim Banda. You don’t know me, but I would not be here today if it weren’t for the generosity of you and your husband and the time and money you put into UIW football to help people like me get here.’”

His opportunity to speak with Gayle spoke to the life-changing impact of the UIW football program and the opportunities it created for him. “I 100 percent would not be here without UIW football, the coaches, the administration and professors. Period,” he says, his gratitude clear.

He proudly claims UIW as his alma mater and wears a smile on his face whenever he hears of the team and University’s successes. He’s even more thrilled to see a product of UIW football, Clint Killough, lead the program to even greater heights.

At the core of the UIW football program is a culture of winning with intention; intentional detail, love, trust and effort. Pillars that Killough and several before him have preached to shape this program into something greater than just football.

Killough came to UIW as a student-athlete and experienced firsthand how this program helps individuals grow both on and off the field. “UIW is a special place because it teaches you a lot about life,” he reflects. Having been a part of the first Division I

class, Killough knows what it’s like to face adversity and come out stronger on the other side. His perspective on life and coaching is deeply rooted in his faith. “You are where you’re supposed to be. God has a plan for everybody, and we just have to trust God’s plan,” he shares. His own journey from a student-athlete to working his way up the rankings and taking over at the helm of his alma mater is a testament to the sacrifices it takes to succeed – not just as a player, but as a coach and a mentor.

Through his leadership, Killough emphasized the importance of teamwork, discipline and sacrifice. “It doesn’t just happen,” he says, noting that the program’s success is a result of hard work and a strong support system. For him the UIW football program is about more than wins and losses – it’s about preparing players for life after football and empowering them to use their God-given talents for the greater good.

Killough has mentored and led countless players through the UIW football program during his 10 years as a Cardinal, including former wide receiver and current Offensive Quality Control Coach, Taylor Grimes. For Grimes, UIW provided him with more than just a successful college career. He was able to leverage his experience to play professionally and then come back to UIW to secure his first job as a coach. “This place has given me a lot, and I’m really grateful for it,” he shares, emphasizing that the University laid the foundation for his coaching career.

Grimes also spoke about the work ethic instilled in him during his time as a student-athlete at UIW. “This is a top FCS program and it’s a reflection of the hard work everyone in the building does, from coaches to players to staff, everyone from the top-down works hard.” Grimes also shares Killough’s and Banda’s sentiments about the transformative power of the UIW football program. “There are a lot of good people here that care about you,” Grimes says. “I was around many great coaches and teammates. The people here make this place go.”

So, what makes the UIW football program so special? It’s a place where life lessons are learned, and dreams are made possible – both on and off the field by people who truly care and want to see each and every individual succeed.



“
You are where you’re
supposed to be.
God has a plan for
everybody, and we
just have to trust
God’s plan.”

”

BEST FOR VETS



WEDNESDAYS ARE FOR VETS (WAFV)

Each Wednesday, UIW veterans are invited to gather for camaraderie. These casual events provide an opportunity for community building and support. Contact the UIW Military and Veteran Center (UIWMVC) to find out details about this opportunity or follow UIWMVC on Instagram.



@UIWMVC

CALENDAR

ALUMNI EVENTS

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS GATHERING HOUSTON

Thursday, May 29
The Grotto at the Galleria, 6 - 8 p.m.

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS GATHERING DFW

Saturday, May 31
Bar Louie in Irving, 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

SWING-IN DINNER & GOLF TOURNAMENT

- AUCTION PARTY
Thursday, May 15
McCombs Center
Rosenberg SkyRoom
- GOLF TOURNAMENT
Friday, May 16
Hyatt Regency Hill
Country Golf Club

GRADUATION

Saturday, May 10
Celebrate the Spring 2025 Graduates at Freeman Coliseum.

NPM ON THE ROAD AT UIW National Association of Pastoral Musicians

Mini Conference
Friday-Saturday, June 27-28

SPECIAL SERVICES

BACCALAUREATE MASS

Friday, May 9
Celebrating the Class of 2025 Graduates.

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL MASS

Sunday, May 25
Our Lady's Chapel, 11 a.m.

WELCOME MASS

Sunday, Aug. 24
Chapel of the Incarnate Word, 11 a.m.

MASS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Wednesday, Sept. 3
Our Lady's Chapel, Noon

9-11 REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Thursday, Sept. 11
Our Lady's Chapel, Noon

Please check the UMM Events Calendar for updates and information on additional services, times and locations.



Alumni Events



UIW Swing-In



UIW Mission and Ministry Website



NPM on the Road Registration

Ethics and Responsibilities in AI: *A Shared Journey*

By Chunling Niu, EdD, PhD
Assistant Professor, Graduate Studies,
Dreeben School of Education

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping our world, offering incredible opportunities to improve our lives and tackle complex challenges. Here at UIW, as we gradually embrace AI in research, teaching and everyday applications, it's essential to remember that technology isn't just about code and algorithms, it's also about people, values and the impact we have on society.

One of the key ethical challenges in AI is bias. Every AI system learns from data, and if that data reflects historical or social biases, the system can inadvertently amplify them. For example, an algorithm used in a hiring process might favor certain groups over others if it's trained on biased historical data. At UIW, where we value diverse perspectives and critical thinking, it's a reminder that creating fair AI isn't just a technical issue, it's a commitment to equality and respect for all.

Equally important is transparency. Many of us have experienced the frustration of a "black box" decision, whether it's a mysterious grade or an unexplained recommendation. With AI, understanding how decisions are made builds trust. Whether an algorithm is used for course recommendations or research insights, clear explanations help everyone understand why a particular outcome occurred. This openness not only demystifies the technology but also empowers us to challenge and improve it when necessary.

Accountability goes hand in hand with transparency. As developers, researchers and users, we must take responsibility for the systems we build and the decisions they influence. When something goes wrong, like an unintended consequence of an AI decision, it's our duty to acknowledge the mistake, learn from it, and make things right. This proactive stance is vital in ensuring that our work remains trustworthy and aligned with our shared values.

Another major concern in the AI landscape is privacy. AI systems often rely on vast amounts of data, much of which is personal. Just as we expect our own privacy to be respected in our daily lives, so too must we

protect the data that fuels our innovations. This means not only following legal guidelines but also adopting practices that prioritize consent, data security and the respectful treatment of sensitive information. In doing so, we honor the trust that individuals place in us and set a standard for ethical data use.

Embracing these ethical principles doesn't slow down innovation; in fact, it enhances it. When we incorporate fairness, transparency, accountability and privacy into our projects, we're not only preventing potential harm, but we're also paving the way for breakthroughs that benefit everyone. Ethical AI is not a burden but a guide that helps us create technology that truly serves society.

As members of the UIW community, we all play a part in shaping the future of AI. Whether you're a student experimenting with generative AI, a researcher developing new machine learning algorithms, or an administrator integrating AI into our campus services, your work matters. Every project is an opportunity to set a positive example of how technology can be used responsibly.

Looking ahead, the promise of AI is vast, from revolutionizing healthcare and education to enhancing our daily lives. But this promise comes with the responsibility to ensure that our innovations are just and equitable. Let's use our collective talent to build AI systems that reflect our values, promote fairness, and respect individual rights. In doing so, we help create a future where technology and humanity thrive together.

Consider how you can contribute to a culture of ethical innovation. The choices we make today will influence how AI shapes our world tomorrow. Together, let's ensure that our journey with AI is guided by a strong ethical compass, one that leads to a more inclusive, transparent and accountable future.





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UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD®

SWING IN

AUCTION PARTY AND GOLF TOURNAMENT

AUCTION
MAY 15, 2025

GOLF
MAY 16, 2025

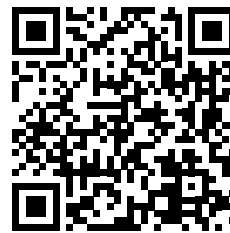
The Swing-In Auction Party and Golf Tournament is the University of the Incarnate Word's annual scholarship fundraiser.

MAY 15 | AUCTION PARTY

Join us in the McCombs Center Rosenberg Sky Room for live music, delicious food, an open bar and the opportunity to bid on amazing silent and live auction packages!

MAY 16 | GOLF

Meet us at the Hyatt Hill Country Golf Course for an 8 a.m. tee time. Breakfast and lunch are included. Expect exciting contest holes, a UIW Swing-In shirt and a hat!



Scan the QR code to register for the 48th annual UIW Swing-In Scholarship Fundraiser

University of the Incarnate Word
Office of Alumni Relations
4301 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas 78209
(210) 829-6014 | alumni@uiwtx.edu

The University of the Incarnate Word provides reasonable accommodation with adequate notice. To request disability accommodation for this event, please visit www.uiw.edu/ada