



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**University of St. Thomas International Studies Major
Receives Prestigious Internship in Washington, D.C.**

HOUSTON (May 18, 2007) – Developing leadership skills is second nature to University of St. Thomas sophomore Thomas Méndez. This International Studies major will complete a six-week internship at the Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute under the Ford Motor Company in Washington, D.C. this summer.

“I’m going to have the opportunity to work with a small group of people, something that I can relate to from working with the Student Government Association and Student Organization of Latinos,” said Méndez. “This will be a growing experience for me. I’ll have the opportunity to view the world from a larger perspective than I am use to as a student leader.”

The Ford Motor Company CHLI Leadership Program began in 2004 with the commitment to advancing the next generation of Hispanic and Portuguese American leaders. CHLI is a not-for-profit and non-partisan organization dedicated to creating a broader awareness of the diversity of thought, heritage, interests and views of Americans of Hispanic and Portuguese descent. The program consists of professional leadership development workshops, exposure to federal departments and agencies, national advocacy groups and important diplomatic and international organizations.

As part of the requirements, Méndez submitted a legislative analysis which he chose to discuss the Fair Minimum Age Act of 2007 saying, “This stepping-stone will hopefully provide more Latinos with the opportunity to pursue their own educational endeavors, ensuring a brighter future for themselves, their families, and their communities.”

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Méndez's passion for community service has pushed him beyond the call of duty as a student at UST. His freshman year, he helped organize the fair-trade sale of St. Basil's Coffee whose funds go towards Catholic missionaries in Latin America. And after noticing the lack of a large scale Hispanic group on campus, organized the return of the SOL to the University. He was recognized at the 2006 annual leadership banquet where he received the "Emerging Leader Award." He is also the newly elected vice president of the Student Government Association and has recently been given the promotion to resident assistant in Guinan Residence Hall.

"I believe that God has blessed me and things happen in my life for a reason," said Méndez. "I do not know where my path will lead, but I know that I want to make a difference in my community. I know that I want to make a difference in the larger Latino community. I know that I want to make a difference in the world. What I do not know is how I will do all this. I am comfortable with the unknown, because what I do know is that everything will fall into place and opportunities will present themselves that will pave the way for my future."