

# Star

# View



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## Graduation: Last Minute Details Count

As graduates and their families prepare for the big day, there may seem to be an infinite number of details to remember. Here are a few more to add to the list.

The Baccalaureate Mass will be held at the Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 16. Guests for the Mass may park in the Moran Center Parking Garage for free and take a bus to the Co-Cathedral. Buses will leave from Graustark in front of Moran Center.

The Baccalaureate Mass Reception will be held at 8:30 p.m. in the Campus Life Mall following the Mass. Tickets will be required for the reception and can be picked up at the Link-Lee Mansion during business hours. In the event of rain, the reception will be held in Jerabeck Center.

The Commencement will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 17 at Reliant Arena, located at One Reliant Park. Questions may be directed to Brenda Benkenstein at 713-525-3407 or Kia Wissmiller at 713-525-3117.

### 2008 Graduation Events

- Baccalaureate Mass – 7 p.m. Friday, May 16 - Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart
- Baccalaureate Mass Reception – 8:30 p.m. Friday, May 16 UST Campus
- Commencement Ceremony – 10 a.m. Saturday, May 17 Reliant Arena

For complete graduation information visit [www.stthom.edu/graduationinfo](http://www.stthom.edu/graduationinfo)

## UST Welcomes Todd Smith as New Athletic Director, Men's Basketball Coach

Todd Smith will join The University of St. Thomas as athletic director and men's basketball coach. Smith will develop and lead UST's new basketball team which is set to take the court in the 2009-2010 school year. He will assume his post at UST on June 1.

Smith served as the assistant basketball coach at Rice University from 1996 to 2007. Smith earned his bachelor of

science in physical education and communication from Valparaiso University in 1989. He and his wife Ketti (Rice '89) reside in Pearland, and have three sons, Turner, Tate and Jace, and a daughter, Sadie.

"On behalf of the University of St. Thomas community, we welcome Todd Smith and his family to campus," UST President Dr. Robert Ivany said. "After a lengthy search, we

believe that Todd has the ability and character to lead our athletic program. He has been

dedicated to the student athlete concept and understands our commitment to educate leaders of faith and character. Please join me in expressing our best wishes to Todd."



Todd Smith

## Anadarko CEO Jim Hackett to Address Graduates

Anadarko Petroleum Corporation Chairman, President and CEO James T. Hackett will deliver the University's commencement address entitled, "Success and Leadership." The ceremony will highlight the achievements of 350 undergraduate students and 425 graduate students.



James Hackett

Hackett and Trini Mendenhall Sosa will both receive honorary doctorate degrees at the ceremony. Longtime University benefactors, both Hackett and his wife Maureen donated the Hackett Athletic complex on the University of St. Thomas campus in 2006. The Hacketts were both participants in the highly successful Shining Star Capital Campaign which helped transform the campus. Hackett earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and a master of business administration from Harvard University.

Trinidad "Trini" Mendenhall

Sosa is a former UST board member and the former owner of Fiesta Mart Inc. Mendenhall Sosa recently donated \$4.5 million to the University to fund the Mendenhall Achievement Center, a program designed to help incoming freshman make the transition to college studies and prepare students for success.



Trinidad Mendenhall Sosa

The Vincent J. Guinan Distinguished Alumni Award will be presented in memory of Sarah "Sally" Landram who graduated from UST in 1954. Her husband Charles Landram will accept the award in her behalf. The Landrams have been active supporters of UST since the 1950s. Landram was the mother of eight children and worked as an educator in Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston for more than 35 years. She served as a department chair, assistant principal, principal, associate superintendent and superintendent.

## Learning and Writing Center Relocates To Crooker Center

The Learning and Writing Center will move from its current location in the Doherty Library to the Crooker Center. The LWC is expected to be open for business as of 9 a.m. on Tuesday, April 29. Regular business hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday.

A valuable tool for students, LWC has extended its tutorial conference services to more than 1,200 students in the 2007-2008 school year. An estimated 3,000 students have visited the LWC this year.

## SAVE THE DATE

### UST Jazz Ensemble Concert



Come hear the soothing rhythms of the Jazz Ensemble Spring Concert at 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 28 in Cullen Hall. The concert will feature the music of Thomas Borling, Paul Chambers, Rodgers Grant etc.

### Finals Stress Relief



Join the UST community as we all cast our worries away at the Health Promotion and Wellness and Disability Services Finals Stress Relief Noon Tuesday, April 29 in Crooker Center.

### University Singers Concert



The University Singers Spring Choral Concert will be held at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 29 in Cullen Hall. For more information, contact Sue Young at 713-525-3159.



Residence Life invites you to come meet and talk to Houston Grand Opera's Kathy Kelly and Baritone Daniel Belcher (Billy Budd) for a coffee talk at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 30 in Guinan Hall.

### Hispanic Forum on Conflict



The Center for International Studies and the Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council for the Americas will host a forum on conflict at 6 p.m. Saturday, May 3 in Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center.

## Student Commencement Speaker's Speech Teaches Perseverance

Derek Smith will take the stage as the student commencement speaker at the University's 85th commencement at 10 a.m., May 17 at Reliant Arena. Smith said his story is "testament to perseverance," and serves as an example for other students to never give up.

Smith enrolled at UST in the fall of 2001. He jokes that the journey to graduation takes longer for some than for others. Personal family tragedy, medical problems which required two semesters away from campus, an additional two semesters when he did not enroll, and even taking night classes while working as a full-time sixth-grade teacher were just a few of the detours on Smith's road to graduation. Nonetheless, he persevered and never lost the faith.

His speech entitled, "Keeping the Faith and Leading the Way," will remind the audience that "life is in a constant state of flux, yet



Derek Smith

Christ's teachings remain prevalent ... to do the right thing not just for yourself, but for the sake of those who are watching you," and "to thank all those who helped us along the way," Smith said.

Smith, a liberal arts major with a focus in communications and political science, was selected

from nine commencement speaker applicant finalists. He served as Black Student Union president, a Student Government Association senator, a Lector and a Eucharistic Minister. He was also a member of the UST rugby and baseball teams, Vee Jitsu martial arts club and participated in multiple intramural sports.

"It has all worked out in the long run. For me, it has been a very long run," Smith said. "I would not have made it this far without faith. I wouldn't have made it without the outstanding support of the faculty and staff at St. Thomas," he said.

Smith currently teaches sixth-grade at St. Joseph Catholic School in Baytown. After a few more years of teaching, Smith plans to pursue a master's degree in education.

## Espinosa Changes Her Global Perspective, the Course of Her Life

As a freshman, Claudia Espinosa thought she would spend college with her flute in practice rooms and performance halls. She never dreamed she would promote trade justice by distributing fair trade bananas, coffee and chocolate. She never imagined she would learn about social justice while traveling in Mexico and Argentina, or that she would grant micro-credit loans to struggling entrepreneurs across the world.

Espinosa changed her major from music to international studies, thereby changing the course of her life and her total global perspective. The daughter

of first-generation immigrants from Mexico, and the first female in her family to graduate from college, Espinosa will be honored as the Center for International Studies Outstanding Graduate.

"The classes I took really challenged me to think about the issues that are important to me as a Catholic, but that I had never really been able to sit down and think about before," Espinosa said. "My education at UST gave me a solid foundation for what I believe in and for the work I want to do. The Center for International Studies was such an amazing program. It really prepared me for graduate school."



Claudia Espinosa

She plans to attend either Georgetown University and pursue a master's in Latin American Studies, or the University of California at San Diego and pursue a master's in Pacific International Affairs. Eventually, she would like to become a professor and raise a family.

To read the complete story go to [www.stthom.edu](http://www.stthom.edu).

## UST Considers Developmental Micro-Credit Project in Petac, Mexico

Following the successful January 2008 launch, and subsequent international distribution of 72 micro-credit loans, the University of St. Thomas Center for International Studies Micro-Credit Program is eyeing a new loan project and possible study abroad location.

The Micro-Credit Program is a student-operated, nonprofit organization which assists micro-entrepreneurs living below the poverty threshold to start income generating businesses. The program seeks to promote freedom, fairness and democracy around the world by endorsing micro-entrepreneurship, self-employment, property rights, and wealth accumulation.

The project is still in the conceptual stages, but aims to develop alternative sources of income for the Mayan community in Petac, Mexico, a city on the Yucatan peninsula with a population of about 183 residents. UST hopes to not only help boost the economy of Petac, but also possibly establish a study abroad program where students could

observe the Micro-Credit Program in action.

“Students would not only be able to grant loans to entrepreneurs, but also help develop business strategies, measure growth and see the positive impact of the loan,” said Rogelio Garcia-Contreras, assistant professor of international studies.

UST’s work with the Micro-Credit Program caught the attention of Houstonians Chuck and Dev Stern, property owners in Petac, Mexico. The Sterns invited a group from UST to Petac to conduct a socio-economic and demographic study of the area to assess the possibility of establishing a Micro-Credit Program. Garcia-Contreras, Diana Garcia and four students – Annie Polo, Patricia Manjarrez, Amanda Duhon and Nina Nourian – traveled to Mexico in April and completed a survey.

The group identified three potential economic activities or market opportunities in Petac which could receive financing:



improving the practices and marginal profit of local stores, efficient production and commercialization of arts and crafts and the honey industry. Garcia-Contreras said they hope to begin by granting loans to 10 to 15 people in Petac. UST could begin granting loans as early as September 2008, Garcia-Contreras said.

“As a Catholic university, we have a moral responsibility to promote social justice around the world. This program allows us to do that in a unique way. It allows us to grant loans to entrepreneurs in communities like Petac where they have the idea, the enthusiasm and the initiative, but lack the resources,” Garcia-Contreras said.



### President Ivany, Fr. Hanna Represent UST in Mexico

**Dr. Robert Ivany and The Rev. Jack Hanna CSB**, traveled to Mexico City on April 14 to 15, to give a UST recruitment presentation to principals of Catholic and private high schools as well as to university professors from the area. The trip was organized by RoseMary Salum, adjunct professor of modern and classical languages. During the trip, Dr. Ivany and Fr. Hanna visited the sites including the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

*Star View* is published by the Office of Public Affairs as a means of informing the UST community about University and campus news. Call 713-525-3116 with questions and/or comments.

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