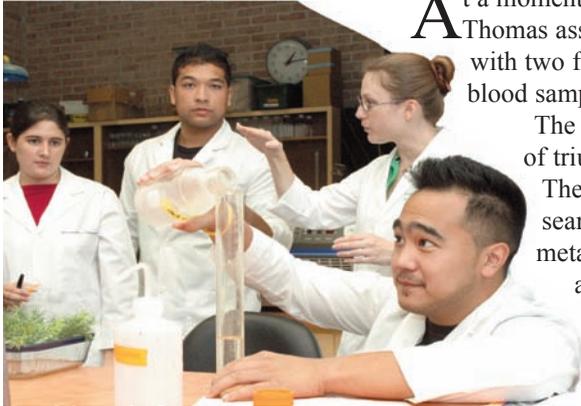


Dr. Simmons Collaborates with Students on Bovine Genetics Research



From left to right: Louanne Honrado, Steven Konstantin,
Dr. Alexandra Simmons and Jonathan Zalamea

At a moment's notice, Dr. Alexandra Simmons, University of St. Thomas assistant professor of biology, eagerly jumped in the car with two freshman biology students in hot pursuit of dairy cow blood samples.

The June 19 trip to a Prairie View dairy farm was a moment of triumph for the Venezuelan-born professor and her students. They had spent the better part of the spring 2009 semester searching for samples to conduct genetic research on a metabolic disorder called fatty liver disease, which adversely affects the health, milk productivity and reproductive performance of cows.

Simmons, who earned degrees in education, biology, chemistry and human genetics in Venezuela, came to Houston in 2006 to conduct postdoctoral studies at Baylor College of Medicine. She joined the UST community

as an adjunct professor in fall of 2008, teaching courses in general biology and genetics. In May, she accepted a position as a tenure-track assistant professor in the biology department.

Simmons says she finds the greatest joy when she can combine her love of scientific research with her love of teaching. That's why she didn't waste any time assembling an undergraduate research team in her first year at UST.

Simmons' research, simply known as the "cow project," is a collaboration with Dr. Carolina Rios Phillips, an ICUSTA scholar from Universidad Santo Tomás in Santiago, Chile. Simmons selected a team of four freshman biology students – Louanne Honrado, Jonathan Zalamea, Adriana Pozo and Steven Konstantin – to assist her with the research while they learn basic molecular genetics techniques such as DNA extraction, DNA sequencing and Gel Electrophoresis.

"In the era of genomics, it is of major importance that biology and medical students learn how to apply the techniques that are currently being used in the field of genetic diagnostics," Simmons said. "We are learning universal techniques, so what we are learning may also be applied to processing human DNA and for most organisms. This research will be good experience for whatever these students wish to pursue in the future." Read the complete story at www.stthom.edu.

Welcome Back



We are happy to welcome you back on campus. You have brought a burst of energy and enthusiasm to refresh us after a hot summer. We are pleased to have the students of the gifted class of 2013 join us. I ask everyone on campus to give them a warm welcome and encourage them as they learn about the challenges and opportunities of a St. Thomas education.

We will work together to achieve a unity of purpose as we continue our mission to educate leaders of faith and character.

May the good Lord bless us all in the coming year.

- President Robert Ivany

Upcoming Events



Italian Festival Comes to Campus

The 31st Festa Italiana is coming to the campus of the University of St. Thomas for three exciting days, **October 16, 17, 18, 2009**. Come experience Italy in the heart of Houston as the campus is transformed into the sights and sounds of Italy. The grounds will be lined with booths of authentic homemade foods such as baked ziti, meatball sandwiches and an array of desserts. The festival includes an educational stage, a culinary/tasting stage and a village market.

Entertainment throughout the weekend will be provided by local performers, while on Saturday evening the 2nd Italian American Idol contest will take place on the main stage. Admission is \$6 for adults and children under 12 are admitted free. Current UST employees and students are admitted free with valid UST ID. Visit www.HoustonItalianFestival.com for more information.



Celebrate the Mass of the Holy Spirit

Join the University in prayer and celebration of a new semester at the Mass of the Holy Spirit and reception from 12:45 – 2 p.m. Thursday, **Sept. 3**. The Mass is held in the Jerabeck Gym with a reception following in Scanlan. All are welcome. Principal celebrant is Fr. Mike Buentello, CSB.

This opening Mass of the 2009-10 school year will invoke the presence, protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit on all the studies, activities, and efforts of the UST community. This blessing includes the importance for each person giving themselves to their continued growth humanly and spiritually, with an openness to the Spirit's promptings in their lives. For more information, contact Campus Ministry at 713-525-3589.

UST Introduces New Faculty



Dr. Alexandra D. Simmons
Assistant Professor, Biology
Biology Department
Ph.D. in Human Genetics
Venezuelan Institute for
Scientific Research



Dr. Elmer Ledesma
Assistant Professor, Chemistry
Chemistry & Physics Department
Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry
University of Sydney, Australia



Mr. John O. Whitney
Professor, Business
Management
Burnett Family Chair in
Leadership
Cameron School of Business
Harvard Advanced
Management Program
Harvard University



Dr. Charles A. Stewart
Assistant Professor, Art
History
Fine & Performing Arts
Department
Ph.D. in Art History
Indiana University

UST Faculty Members Recognized for Excellence

Three faculty members will receive the 2008-2009 faculty awards for excellence in teaching, research and service at Faculty Study Day.

Dr. Rick Krustchinsky, professor of education, received the St. Thomas Aquinas Award for Excellence in Teaching. Krustchinsky has served on the UST faculty since 1981.

“Dr. K,” as he is known to his students, presents seminars throughout the United States on math and science, using his expertise to conduct “Tips for TAKS Seminars” in the Houston area. Krustchinsky and his students work with the Helms Learning Community, a Houston Independent School District school, which provides his students real-world experience.



Dr. Rollen Edward Houser, professor of philosophy in the Center for Thomistic Studies, is the recipient of the St. Edith Stein Excellence in Research Award. Recent works include translating and authoring *The Cardinal Virtues: Aquinas, Albert, Philip the Chancellor* and co-authoring a collaborative research project, *Aquinas and the Arabs*. Houser edited and wrote an essay for a festschrift, *Laudemus viros gloriosos: Essays in Honor of Armand Maurer, C.S.B.* His annual participation in the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo as session organizer has lead to a seven-volume series on each of the cardinal and theological virtues.

The late **Dr. Gustavo Wensjoe**, associate professor and director of the Center for International Studies, received the Joseph McFadden Excellence in Service Award. He served one of the most popular majors on campus as a devoted teacher who demanded the best out of his students. As director, Wensjoe revised the degree plan to meet demands of the global market place. He also devoted his time to help the poor of Latin America and his native Peru. See full story at www.stthom.edu.



Call to Holiness Evangelization Conference

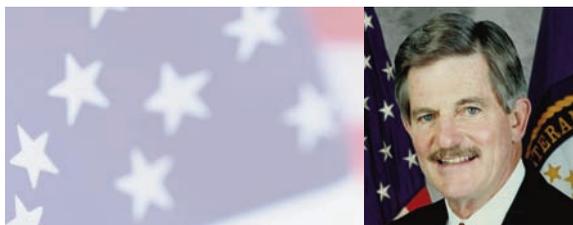
Several University of St. Thomas professors will speak at the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston's Call to Holiness Evangelization Conference to be held from **Sept. 11-12** at the George R. Brown Convention Center. The theme of this conference is "Responding to the Call to Holiness in Today's World." In a conference letter to attendees, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo notes that "In a world with so many things competing for our attention, we want to raise the level of consciousness about God's work in our lives as a means for a new evangelization in the everyday life of people and communities." The Archdiocese expects more than 3,000 attendees to participate in the theological symposium, the general conference, and the youth track program. On Friday, **Sept. 11**, UST speakers for the theological symposium include Fr. Donald Nesti, CSSp, Msgr. James Anderson, Fr. Leon Strieder, Dr. Jeremy Wilkins, Fr. Brendan Cahill and Fr. Bill Kelly. For more information, go to www.ct2009.org or call 713-391-3609.



CFC 'Twitter Twitter' Conference Explores Family and Relationships in the Age of Me

The University of St. Thomas Center for Faith and Culture will host the conference "Twitter, Twitter: Connecting and Loving in the Age of Me" from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Friday, **Sept. 25** and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26. This conference will cover how to integrate social, cultural, spiritual and psychological views of relationships, marriage and family in today's mentality. The focus will be on self-awareness and the capacity for meaningful relationships regardless of state or vocation in life. The speakers are Rev. Donald S. Nesti, CSSp, Dr. Catherine Barber, Dr. Joseph and Catherine Garcia-Prats and Dr. Prachi Shah.

The event is open to the public. The conference is \$10 for students, who are encouraged to bring friends, and \$15 for non-students, which includes continental breakfast and lunch. The conference will be held in Scanlan Room, Jerabeck Center, 4000 Mt. Vernon, and for more information, go to www.stthom.edu/cfc or call 713-942-5066.



Former U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See to Speak on Campus

President's Lecture Series presents the Honorable R. James Nicholson, at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, **Sept. 15**, in UST Jones Hall. Nicholson is the senior counsel for Brownstein, Hyatt, Farber, Schreck law firm. Nicholson served as the United States Ambassador to the Holy See from 2001 to 2005.

In this position, he became a well known advocate in Rome for the elevation of human dignity, giving special emphasis to human trafficking, religious freedom, starvation and bio-tech food, HIV-AIDS and international terrorism.

He also served as secretary of Veteran Affairs from 2005 to 2007, where he was responsible for a nationwide system of hospitals, health care clinics, benefit programs and national cemeteries for America's 25 million veterans.

This event is free and open to the public. For more information, contact Shawna Wallstein at 713-525-2160.

Summer Programs Benefit

UST Freshman

Over the summer, UST bridged the gap between high school and college for 69 incoming freshman through the Mendenhall Summer Institute and the Science and Math Summer Institute



The participants in both Mendenhall Summer Institute and the Science and Math Summer Institute comprise nearly 25 percent of the incoming freshman class. Students in both programs got an early start to their college education, received cohesive support through academic advising, mentoring, tutoring and counseling and made friends before the semester began.

In its second year, the Mendenhall Summer Institute was able to serve a greater number of students, expanding from 25 in 2008 to 44 in 2009. The program was directed by Dr. Elizabeth Maynard, and courses were taught by Dr. Sophia Esquiff Von Holden and Dr. Evelyn Potter.

The Math and Science Summer Institute, directed by Dr. Tom Malloy, was held for the first time this year. The Institute is designed to increase student success in entry-level science, technology, engineering and math courses, and is funded for two years by the Department of Education through a \$2.4 million grant under the Comprehensive College Access Act for Hispanic Serving Institutions. Courses were taught by Drs. John Starner, and John Palasota.

See full stories at www.stthom.edu.

Center for Faith & Culture Moves to Campus, Introduces M.A. Degree

The University of St. Thomas Center for Faith and Culture, formerly located at the School of Theology at St. Mary's Seminary, has moved to a new location in the former Education annex on campus on the corner of Sul Ross and Graustark.

With Fr. Donald S. Nesti, CSSp, at the helm, the Center welcomes two new members to the faculty and staff – Dr. Adam G. Martinez as associate director, and Rev. Jeffrey N. Steenson as the Carl and Lois Davis Visiting Professor in Patristic Studies. Jan Skrehot serves as the assistant director of administration.

Now, in addition to its outreach, the Center will be able to offer courses for other UST graduate and undergraduate students. The Center is announcing a new Master of Arts in Faith and Culture to be available in fall 2010. The M.A. program in Faith and Culture calls for a reflection on the roots of the American way of life which is historical, philosophical, political, legal, sociological and anthropological. This approach is meant to ground the M.A. candidate in the American cultural worldview especially in relation its understanding of the nature of the human person, its approach to religion, its values, norms of behavior and its symbols.

For more information, contact Fr. Donald Nesti at 713-942-5069.



Dr. Adam Martinez, Fr. Nesti and Jan Skrehot

UST Announces New Faculty and Staff Appointments

This summer, the University of St. Thomas has promoted several faculty and staff members to key positions: **Lee Holm**, acting director of Admissions to director of Admissions; **Fr. Joseph Pilsner, CSB**, associate professor and chair of the Theology Department, to dean of the School of Arts and Sciences; **Dr. John Palasota**, assistant professor of chemistry and associate dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, to associate vice president for Academic Affairs; **Dr. Jerry Kramer**, associate vice president of Academic Affairs, to writing program administrator; and **Dr. Virginia Leiker** assistant professor of education.



UST Lady Celts Begin 2009 Season

Coming on the heels of last year's successful season, University of St. Thomas Lady Celts will enter their fourth year of competition in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. The reigning Association of Independent Institution champions will start their season against Jarvis

Christian College on Friday, **Aug. 21**.

"After being national qualifiers and having a great season, our goal for the season is to advance in the national tournament," said Coach Jill Reynolds, 2008 All coach of the year.

Cheer on the Lady Celts for their first game of the season at 7 p.m., Friday, **Aug. 21** at UST Jerabeck Gym.

For schedule information, visit www.stthom.edu/volleyball.

Star View is published by the Office of Marketing Communications 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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