



UT San Antonio™
The University of Texas at San Antonio



URBAN EDUCATION INSTITUTE

UEI News

2025-2026 Issue 5

Welcome to Spring 2026!

I hope the start of this new year finds everyone healthy and productive (and warm)! We are excited to share in this newsletter the growth and activity of UEI and all the COEHD researchers and community partners with whom we are collaborating. In this issue, we also introduce two new faculty Fellows and share that UEI now has an esteemed Advisory Board of faculty and community partners who will help weigh in on UEI's mission, direction, and local impact. As always, I hope COEHD faculty continue to see UEI as a resource for research project collaboration and incubation. UEI also can serve as a resource hub for faculty looking for help administering their externally funded projects!

Sharon L. Nichols, UEI Director

UEI Mission

The Urban Education Institute provides equity-focused and impactful research, evaluation, and training in collaboration with community-based research-practice-policy partnerships on issues that inform and influence educational and workforce-related policies, experiences, and outcomes.

Key Research Areas:

- Texas educational accountability
- Education-to-workforce pipeline
- Postsecondary access, engagement, and outcomes
- Teacher effectiveness, retention, and mental health
- Urban, suburban, and rural contexts of educational access and opportunity
- Student engagement, motivation, mental health

Things We Do:

- Provide mixed-methods expertise to empower evidence-based decision-making for San Antonio, the region, community partners, and researchers.
- Provide training opportunities to students, fostering the development of quantitative and qualitative methodological skills through applied research experiences.
- Provide administrative support to help researchers develop and implement sponsored project proposals.

Why Engage With Us?

- To learn about the state-wide educational dataset available for researchers to study key research questions related to Pre-K-to-workforce pathways.
- To brainstorm ideas, co-design research/projects, and leverage UEI's expertise to enhance your research projects.
- **To seek support for grant submissions and administration.**

Don't Know Where to Start? Just Ask! Sharon.nichols@utsa.edu

UEI Project Updates

UEI Projects and Collaborations:

- Celebrate Dyslexia!
- City of San Antonio, Ready to Work Evaluation
- LonestarP3 Dual Credit study—Collaboration with faculty from Texas Tech, UTEP, and E3 Alliance
- UP Partnership—Middle school student advising evaluation project

UEI Fellows Projects and Collaborations:

- Spencer Foundation “Understanding Students’ Pursuit and Attainment of STEM Degrees Across Race and Gender Intersections” (Dr. Thacker)
- SEED Grant (T2) “Promoting Place-Based Climate Change Teaching Readiness for Educators in South Texas” (PBC-CREST) (Dr. Thacker)
- SEED Grant (INTRA) “Using Social Network Analysis to Study How Collegial Interactions Can Shape Teacher Learning and Implementation of AI Technologies” (Dr. Solis-Rodriguez)
- Subaward through Appalachian State University “Rural Talent Development & Attraction Laboratory” (Dr. Sansone)

New Grant Awards:

Congratulations to Research Fellow, Dr. Uchenna Emeha Miles!

- **National Science Foundation Robert Noyce Teacher Scholarship Program Track 1 Project (\$712,478) “Preparing Secondary STEM Teachers in South-Central Texas”**

Awardee: Uchenna Emeha Miles, Interdisciplinary Learning & Teaching

Congratulations to Research Fellow, Dr. Solis-Rodriguez!

- **Spencer Foundation through Virginia Commonwealth University (\$50,000) “Relational Networks and Knowledge Brokerage: How School Leaders use Social Networks to Improve Instructional Leadership”**

Awardee: Janet Solis Rodriguez, Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

UEI Announcements

We’re excited to introduce UEI’s newest research fellows, **Dr. Uchenna Emeha Miles (ILT)** and **Katherine McCance (ELPS)**.

Quant Group Update: Next meeting on April 3, 2026, at 1:00 pm. (for more information contact Dr. Kevin Hirschi at kevin.hirschi@utsa.edu)



Discover what we’ve been up to by visiting the UEI website!

Just scan the QR code and dive in!

State, Local, and Other Research Opportunities

We continue to check these websites regularly for new research opportunities:

State:

- [Office of the Governor](#)
- [Texas.gov eGrants](#)
- [Texas Education Agency](#)
- [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#)

City:

- [City of San Antonio](#)

Non-profit Foundations and Organizations:

- [Greater Texas Foundation](#)

- [San Antonio Area Foundation](#)
- [Charles Butt Foundation](#)
- [H.E. Butt Foundation](#)
- [The Meadows Foundation](#)
- [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#)
- [Russell Sage Foundation](#)
- [Texas 2036](#)
- [UP Partnership](#)
- [Communities in Schools](#)
- [The Center for Young Minds](#)

The Russell Sage Foundation has announced a new funding opportunity. They are currently accepting letters of inquiry (LOIs) for their core programs, which focus on Social, Political, and Economic Inequality (SPEI) and the Future of Work (FOW). Additionally, they have a special initiative addressing the implications of the 2023 Supreme Court decision to ban Race-Conscious Admissions at Colleges and Universities for Educational Attainment and Economic Mobility. The deadline for LOIs is March 11, 2026. For more information, visit their page here: <https://www.russellsage.org/apply/application-deadlines>

UEI Team

Sharon L. Nichols, Director, UEI
Han Bum Lee, Associate Director, UEI
Elisa Serrano, Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Rosa Arzola Hernandez, Business Service Specialist III

Current UEI Research Fellows:

Dr. Sofia Bahena, ELPS
Dr. John Davis, EDP
Dr. Alonzo Flowers III, ELPS
Dr. Kevin Hirschi, BBL
Dr. Hyejeong Lee, ILT
Dr. Katherine McCance, ELPS
Dr. Uchenna Emenaha Miles, ILT
Dr. Vanessa Sansone, ELPS
Dr. Janet Solis Rodriguez, ELPS
Dr. Ian Thacker, EDP
Dr. Victor Villarreal, EDP