



# sentinel — 2014 —

North American University

Volume 3



- NAU held their first Annual Choice Awards Banquet

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- What next? Master's or PhD?

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- Interview with our Valedictorian: Ms. Murrikova

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# From the Office of President

Dear NAU Friend:

While we approach the end of the academic year of 2013-2014, we have experienced many positive changes such as a new university name, a new master's program, a new student center with a great dining facility, new accreditation to Intensive English Program, and have had numerous new activities here on campus. Not only does our new Student Center house a new dining facility, but it also holds new ESL classrooms and new offices for Admissions, Registration, Financial Aid, International Students, Human Resources, and Student Services. We are dedicated to creating the best environment for our students and look forward to the continued growth of our staff and faculty.

I would like to thank our outgoing Student Government Association (SGA) officers for their great work and congratulate the new and upcoming SGA officers for their mission on ensuring our students have a nurturing learning environment and a vibrant student life on campus.



As one of the youngest and most dynamic non-profit, non-denominational universities of Houston, Texas, we value our students and their education. What makes NAU different than other universities is (1) our faculty and staff inspire and innovate our students offering a student centered and individual attention for their academic success, and (2) provide an open door policy for students. Our enhanced dormitories and quality dining services also make the NAU campus a second home to our students. We offer an affordable university education in Houston with specifically trained faculty members that have strong expertise in their fields.

Our Intensive English Program (IEP) was recently accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) to promote excellence in ESL. We have recently made substantial progress on updating many of our policies and procedures as well as recruiting the next generation of superb faculty members in Business Administration, Computer Science, Education, and ESL programs.

Our new master's program in Educational Leadership is steadily growing with more attention from many professional teachers in Houston. Our ongoing contribution to the State of Texas for providing higher quality of mathematics, physical science, social science, and English teachers as well as K-12 administrators through our graduate program is commendable. We are now hearing success stories of our new graduates at the national teaching certificate exams and opportunities for internships and jobs in major U.S. corporations in Texas.

NAU will continue to maintain faculty excellence and offer a student centered and caring education to our students while promoting the highest quality of education. We are proud of being a good source of passionate university graduates for future local and global employers. Please have a wonderful summer and I look forward to seeing and welcoming all of you in Fall 2014.

Very best wishes,  
Reg Pecan, Ph. D.  
President & Professor





# First Annual Banquet

by Nimet Gorur & Fatoumattah Jaitah

North American University held their first Annual Choice Awards Banquet on April 25th, 2014. It was a fabulous event hosted by Britany Lovett – NAU's Executive Assistant to our President Dr. Reg Pecen and Vice Presidents. Dr. Pecen made an opening speech and our former president of the Student Government Association (SGA) Scott Tebebi gave a welcoming speech and introduced our new elected president for the SGA - Adriano

Andriamanaritsoa. He introduced North American University's club members and their presidents.

After these welcoming speeches, Journalism were awarded and the president of Journalism Club Muleyke Fidan gave a lovely and memorable speech about her North American University experience and how much the university has grown since 2010. She then awarded the journalism club members that had contributed to the Sentinel magazine. Our graduate Elif Beyza Aslaner was awarded first Texas certified teacher of 2014. Amyra Farr awarded volleyball club member Jasmine for being the most improved athlete on North American University volleyball team. Candelaria Baranda Vargas was awarded for Outstanding Student of the year. Antera Schultz - the Registrar for NAU - was elected as the school's Ombudsman. Hispanic Club was awarded for being the most active club in NAU.

The atmosphere was flamboyant. People attended the Baquet with their families and friends. There was music, balloons, and food such as lasagna, garlic bread, salads, desserts, drinks etc. The tables were decorated with beautiful blue table cloth with thin black vases that held face masks and glitter. Like the French would have said "Les visages illuminaient de joie," which means faces were lit by joy.

Everyone looked elegant, chic, handsome, and sharp. The ladies wore beautiful long gowns that sparkled. Each lady wore beautiful colors from red, white, green, black, mint green, pink, and blue. The gentlemen looked very handsome and sharp in their black suits. Britany Lovett gave the closing speech and then we all proceeded to the dance floor with our friends and danced the night away. Camera flashes were everywhere; people were smiling and hugging. It was a fabulous evening.



# International Cultural Day 2014

by Medina Colic

WHOSE  
CULTURE  
HAD THE  
BEST  
DANCE  
PERFORMANCE?

February 27, 2014 was the third International Cultural Day at North American University. Beauty and diversity from numerous different cultures were seen and enjoyed that day. The event was held in the common area of the main building. Students gave their best to promote their cultures in the best way. Photographs, traditional clothes, food, music, and art were all elements which helped to promote different cultures and diversity of our small university. From 12pm till 5pm students and visitors had a chance to enjoy different music, free food and positive spirit of our students. Countries that were represented were Albania, Bosnia, Kirgizstan, Kazakhstan, Peru, Japan, Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, Mexico, Turkey and several others. After enjoying free food and music, there was a dancing competition between the groups representing the African, Mexican, and Turkish cultures. At the very end, it was a tie between the African and Mexican dance groups, but the audience decided to award the group representing Africa.







# TED TALKS

## Ralitsa Gbaguidi

On Tuesday, March 18th, the students of North American University attended another one of the Presidential Lecture Series in the main building auditorium. The seminar was a lecture about leadership, but it was also part of a set of conferences called “TED Talks”. TED is an organization that arranges speeches by the most inspiring people, records the event and then shares these talks online in order to make them available for everyone to watch, under the slogan “ideas worth sharing”.

Our guest was the highly acclaimed professor, author and professional speaker Dr. Todd Dewett. He specializes in leadership, as he has written a book on the subject and is a particularly sought after speaker in companies that are looking to improve their teams. The seminar was widely advertised at North American University and as a result, the auditorium was full with approximately a hundred people, and everyone paid attention to Dr. Dewett’s inspirational talk about work

and life.

The purpose of the seminar was to teach us about leadership, but Dr. Dewett did not just start talking about what leaders should and should not do, but he captured the attention with some stories that everyone could relate to, which made it easier to retain the lessons he was trying to convey. He explained that in today’s working environment, good communication skills are the number

one requirement to success.

A high GPA by itself will not get a potential candidate hired if the applicants cannot convince the interviewer that they could be an asset to the company. He told us about a student of his, who became a team leader at his job, and was looking for a way to connect with his team. The latter repeatedly made the mistake of



assuming that his teammates would enjoy the same things he did, until he realized that this was not the case, and worked on figuring out how he can make everyone happy. He learned how not to project himself on other people, and became a part of his team as well as a leader. The second story was about his son who had to learn that rewards had to be earned rather than taken for granted. He also repeatedly told us to remember that “reward should be associated with the production of excellence”. That reminder is particularly valuable, because if kids or workers get rewards for doing nothing, they will not work hard to improve themselves, and will probably never reach the best of their abilities. “His third and very sad lesson was about his father, who found out that he had cancer, chose to enjoy his last days on this earth not being angry, which led to him living two more years instead of the three weeks predicted by his doctors.” This anecdote emphasizes the importance of positivity, because remaining positive keeps people from giving up, and makes them try harder until they get it right. Dr. Dewett’s last story was an example of how easily people can turn on others when their friends do something they do not like. Popularity is not permanent, and leaders should work on gaining their teams’ respect instead of aiming to be popular with the crowd, because respect is more likely to last longer than popularity.





# Different Colors and Cultures

## “Turkish Olympiads”

by Selma Barin  
photographs by Enes Sonmez



“On Saturday, February 15, 2014 the Turkish Olympiad took place at the Hobby Center in downtown Houston.” About three thousand student, parents, teachers and guests enjoyed live performances in different languages. Students sang and presented poetry in Turkish, English, French, and Spanish and performed many multi-cultural dances. The students received awards from the Mayor of Houston Anise Parker for their hard work and she also proclaimed that February 15 was to be known as Turkish Culture and Language Day.

I believe Turkish Olympiad is a chance where all students from different countries can remind others the importance of cultural interaction and differences. Turkish Olympiad is an event where all groups of people that derive from different countries with different traditions and religions unite together as brothers and sisters. It is a great opportunity for students to improve their language skills and become more open minded to unfamiliar ideas.

Indeed, the Turkish Olympiad was a successful and fantastic event. The Turkish Olympiad gave North American University a chance to enjoy a fun and wonderful atmosphere with friends and family. I was one of the guests at the Turkish Olympiad and I really enjoyed everything about it.



Aldine Independent School District  
Producing the Nation's Best

# Future Teachers under training with *Aldine ISD*

by Muleyke Fidan

It's a very common saying that "behind every great man there is a great woman." Wouldn't it also be proper and courteous to alter the phrase to "behind every successful person there is a dedicated educator"? Being an educator requires passion, patience and proficiency which will lead to his/her blossom in the long run. Training someone to be an educator is as critical as being one. Aldine Independent School Districts (ISD) offers a valuable program that is designed to provide on-site experience for a semester to the teacher candidates. Student teachers of North American University also had the opportunity to be able to feel how it is to be a teacher. North American University's journal The Sentinel had the opportunity to interview Nathan Boughton, director of Human Resources at Aldine ISD. I asked about education and Aldine ISD and he responded;

• ***Can you briefly tell us about yourself, and how would you describe your role in Aldine ISD?***

I'm one of the four human resource directors at Aldine ISD and I am also responsible for student teaching program as well.

• ***How would you describe Aldine ISD and its achievements? What is special about Aldine ISD compared to other School districts?***

Aldine is a growing district that holds around 68 thousand kids. We are a high minority school district with approximately about 70% Latino and 30% African American, which the majority of our students below poverty line. Our district works with a different population of Houston city. Our kids have every opportunity to learn, grow and become a productive citizen for our country.

• ***What makes Aldine Districts student teaching program stand out?***

We do have the student teaching program that is customized for each student teachers needs. Our student teaching program actively searches out for the best student teachers throughout the state and the country. Our goal is to ultimately seek and provide the very best teachers in America to our kids. We spend a lot of time with our student teachers, to produce teachers who are effective, compassionate, and successful. I do not know any other school district that has the weekly seminars we have and there is a huge benefit offered with those seminars. With those seminars and student teaching programs, the knowledge you have is just being reiterated and being put into practice. Wednesday seminars also give the human resources a chance to be acquainted with our student teachers and meet their needs. It enables us to be aware of problems and gives a chance to react very quickly to student teachers needs. We respond to their needs quick as possible to provide them with a smooth experience.

• ***When hiring, what criteria stands out in applying candidates? Being diverse? Having a big stack of lesson plans in their portfolio, references? Observing them and their strategic answers during the interview?***

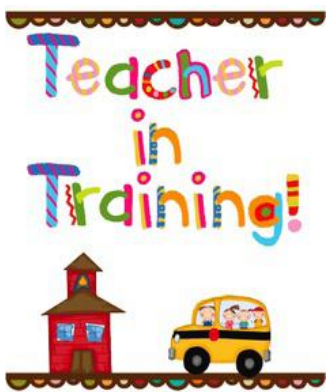
It's an accommodation of all of the above. Our method is a fair one where one might not be the greatest interviewee of the world, but would be capable of being a great teacher. Therefore it's important to look at all of the criteria.

• ***How do you deal with the weaknesses and alter them to become strength?***

Having a weakness is part of being a human. In the leadership world, listening is the key to success. Listening to the advice of other is what leads to success. We have a lot of practitioners in our district who are reflective and ready to change according to feedbacks. I think this is what makes our district unique as well.

• ***How do you prefer placing your student teachers with mentors? Do you place them according to prospective student teachers' needs or do you place them randomly?***

It's a little bit of both. First, the university sends me all the prospective student teachers names. All the names get distributed throughout the district equally and every school is grateful to have student teachers. Once the school is decided, the principles takes charge of who to assign as a mentor. They try to pick their perfect teachers who could be a great mentor. Some of the most effective highly regarded teachers may not always be the best mentor; therefore it is equally important to select the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher has to volunteer for this.







- ***Do you believe Aldine ISD School's faculty represents diversity?***

Aldine ISD has 30% Latino, 30% African American, and 30% Anglo and other ethnicities in the mix. We are also different culture wise. Our faculty is from all over the United States; some of us are from the North East, Midwest, and some of us are here from Houston. Besides all of this, some of our staff had been through a traditional program and some went through an alternative certification program. We have a rich teacher body.

- ***Which teaching field is Aldine striving to find qualified teachers for?***

Aldine ISD needs highly qualifying teachers in every field, and there isn't a discipline where we do not want the best. There is a shortage in Texas in Math, Science and Bilingual areas in general. However, Aldine District are always looking for teachers who are proficient at their jobs.

- ***Our university is a diverse school with more than forty different nationalities; therefore English is their second or third language. Would this be a struggle for the teacher candidate or would it be a positive for them to hold a different national background when being interviewed?***

Aldine ISD has an incredibly diverse staff when it comes to culture, ethnicity, gender and age wise. A university produces diversity within their student body would not be a struggle but a positive [experience].

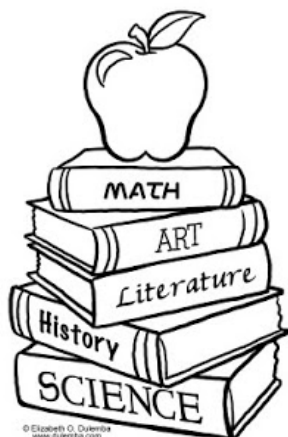
- ***Technology most probably cannot ever totally replace teachers. Do you believe those teachers who are well-rounded with technology might replace those who are not?***

Technology plays a very strong role in our classroom and we have to maintain technology and be up on it. Kids are raised different[ly] than twenty years ago. I believe there is a place for everybody. However, as we move forward it's obvious that the technical skills are more effective with the students. A university definitely needs to produce teachers who are well rounded with technology; someone who knows more than just Power Point, [who] makes it more interactive and is aware of all other different programs that are out there. We also value our partner universities like NAU for producing teachers who are qualified in technology.

- ***Is it easier to be teacher who has certain amount of students throughout the year, than to be at your position and supervise administrators, principals and teachers?***

Each has its own challenges in their own way. It's very difficult to [be] an effective teacher in today's world. The balance between the curriculum, the instruction, the kids' emotional states, the classroom management, [and] the demands of high stakes testing and yet still providing them with the education that they will take with them after graduating is tough. The higher administrators also have tough role where they have to step in and demonstrate and put it into practice for the teachers. In my opinion, being an effective teacher is the most challenging one.

As Sentinel Magazine, we are thankful to Mr Boughton for kindly accepting our request to interview us.





# What is next ? Master's or PhD?

*Berina Suljic*

Beginning of the senior year at college is when many students' nightmares begin. It is the time period when application deadlines for graduate studies are approaching and as days are passing, less time is left for making decisions. Unfortunately, things get worse as many students do not know which path to select.

Every student should approach the issues in a strategic way and find the answers for these two questions:

- 1) ***What is my goal?***
- 2) ***Do I know enough about graduate studies?***

Choice is made. First and foremost factor in deciding which direction to go, is creating a clear the career goal. Once the choice is made, finding the best match for graduate studies will be much easier. Consequently, it will be much easier to decide which job skills are the most desired and what should be displayed on a resume.

For students who aim to learn more about the career of their dreams and apply the knowledge in practice, master's degree is probably the best choice. Lasting from one to three years, master's degree will provide solid education in a specialized field. Master's degrees are classified as professional and terminal. Professional master's degree teaches students the skills they will need in their respective fields whereas terminal master's degree represents the highest academic degree in a certain field.

On the other hand, for students keen on researching, contributing to the academic knowledge pool and teaching at higher learning institutions, PhD would be the best option. Getting a research master degree beforehand is one option; however, one can directly pursue a PhD degree. Taking required coursework and passing exams is a very important part of PhD but writing a dissertation is definitely its culmination and one of the main reasons why it takes a lot of time to graduate. Generally, it takes from four to nine years to attain the "doctor" title. Despite the lengthiness of PhD programs it is surprising that they are more often easier to finance than master's programs. The reason behind this is that PhD students are more eligible to get research and teaching assistantship which help them reduce the tuition expenses.

It is important to note that within some programs, students pursuing a PhD have the opportunity to get a master's degree instead if they decide that academic lifestyle is not the right choice for them.

With one of the best graduate and post-graduate education systems in the world, U.S. is a country full of opportunities for every diligent and hard-working student. Applying this short analysis together with detailed touch of personal preferences should be a winning combination for every student. Good luck!

**"A man without a goal is like a ship without a rudder..."**

**Thomas Carlyle**







# The Student Government Association Elections

By Ralitsa Gbaguidi

The second annual elections for the Student Government Association (SGA) took place this Spring Semester at North American University. The SGA's role is to be the voice of the students and to help improve their experience at NAU. During this past year, this role has been greatly held by our outgoing President, Mr. Scott Tebebi, who stated that the best thing about being the Executive President is that he had "a big part in helping to improve the social life in a school that is still in its early years". Before the voting day, the students had the opportunity to attend the SGA debate, where all candidates provided ideas on how they planned to improve NAU. The students also had the chance to ask SGA candidates some important questions and to share their concerns. A special congratulations goes to the new SGA members: Adriano Andriamanarintsoa who was elected as executive president, Busra Yucel elected as vice president, Kerime Hacer Sari as VP of Finances, Cande Baranda as VP of Administration and Enes Ergin as VP of Unity and Social Justice. They are certainly looking forward to help make NAU prosper and grow.



# “Feel the Burn” Jalapeno Eating Contest

By Yadira Deleon

North American University is known for their different cultures, different languages, different religions, and different foods. At NAU, everyone seems to have a big appetite for spicy foods. At NAU, everyone seems to have a big appetite for spicy foods but can they demolish a bowl of jalapenos in fifteen minutes or less?

On March 6th, 2014 The Hispanic Leadership Society hosted an event called the Jalapeno Eating Contest. The event was a phenomenal sensation for those who watched, those who participated and those who coached. The rules to the contest was to see who can finish a plate of fifteen jalapenos in fifteen minutes. Contestants entered due to the prize, a Tres Leches Cake (Three Milks Cake) which is a very popular sweet, wet-spongy cake known in Mexico. Before the contest, the air was heated with competition from each individual contestant. Some would say jalapenos are nothing, especially if you're from South. Most Hispanics would said, Jalapeno Eating Contest? That's a piece of cake! And some would back out and say, "I'm not THAT stupid" or "I don't want to feel that later."

The day of the contest had arrived and we had people who backed out when they saw the giant cans of jalapenos but our club also pulled in participants when they saw the cake. Ten participants (men and women) decided to be courageous and fought through sweat and tears in their quest to bring home the prize!

Coincidentally the one contestant, Malyah Choice, who was hesitant to sign the liability form, happened to win. As she stood to claim her victory, her eyes were full of tears. Myrtle shoved jalapenos into her mouth one after another and finished in 55 seconds while everyone else was still on their third jalapeno. Everything happened so fast. Some were shocked and some were happy to reach over for their bottle of water.







## Spring is in the Air: Easter Enlightenment Sale

by Yadira Deleon

On April 15 and 17th 2014, The Hispanic Leadership Society (HLS) hosted the "Easter Enlightenment Event" to celebrate the tradition of Easter. Easter is a religious holiday that marks the completion of Passover. Passover is the completion of Lent. Lent is a 40-day period of prayer, penance and fasting. The last week of Lent - the week before Easter - is often referred to as Holy Week. Although, nowadays some people celebrate Easter in a less religious way. HLS decided to blend both traditions and teach the religious aspect of Easter and its traditions: but also show them how it's celebrated today. Easter is the second best-selling candy after Halloween. Nowadays eggs are decorated, it is a tradition for children to search for eggs hidden throughout their homes or gardens.

On this Enlightening Event, HLS sold eggs containing holiday for .25 each an egg and a dollar for four eggs. Each person who purchased Easter eggs got a chance to enter the Easter basket raffle. The prize Easter basket contained many goodies such as Hershey's, Dove Chocolate, Twix, and so much more. HLS also displayed a board informing the student population of Easter beliefs and traditions. They also spoke and shared the Easter traditions. When questioned about Lent they were more than willing to explain these this practice. Easter Sunday had many important values that several students were curious about. Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Passover, and Easter Sunday were explained. Although, HLS did have a Hispanic aspect of their sale that drew attention on its own.



Not only were the candy a big sale, but so were the Cascarones (Spanish for confetti eggs) which were .75 cents per egg. For some Hispanic cultures, Cascarones is an Easter tradition where the family would get together for lunch or dinner and crack the confetti eggs on each other's heads. Some students say that the most favorite childhood memory were sneaking around all day trying to surprise a family member with the confetti eggs when they weren't looking. Confetti eggs can be messy but do not worry - having a cascaron broken over your head is said to bring good luck!

As everything was sold out, not only did HLS sold over \$160 on eggs but they announced the lucky winner of the Easter Basket Raffle, Jamie Dunn. Congratulations Jamie!





# **Social Life**

## **On Campus**

## **And Effects**

## **On Academics**

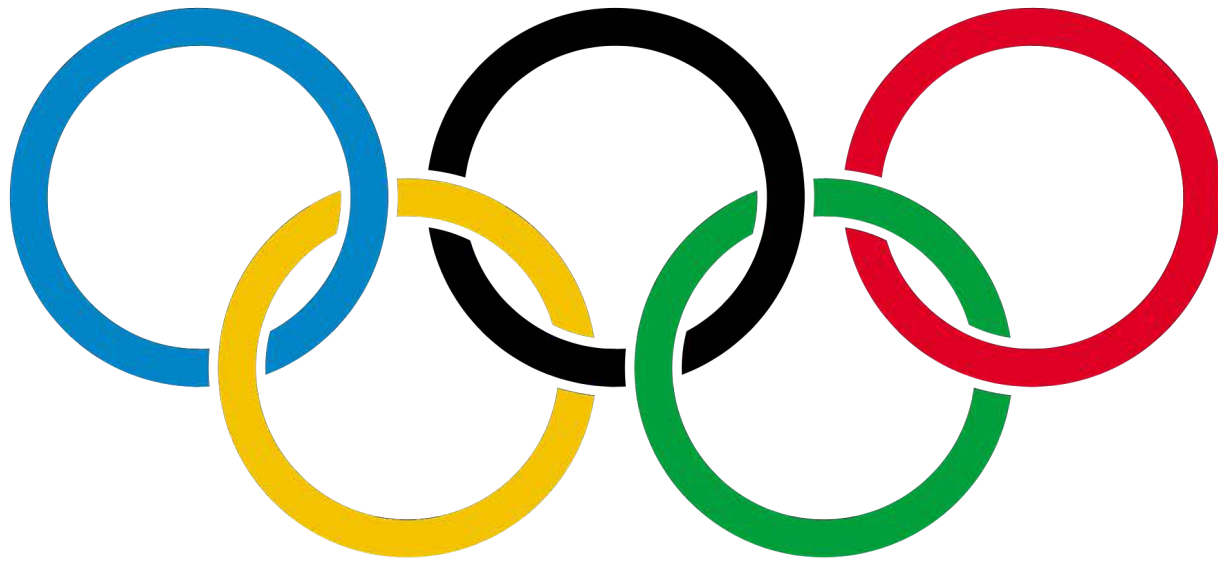
by Ahmet Furkan Ozturk

North American University is a place to excel ourselves in academic ways. In order to do this, one must work hard and be passionate about his/her goals. However, always working is sometimes not the key to success. A hard-working student needs to take a break sometimes to recover. In this case, socializing and having fun is a good idea. Our school features many ways for students to socialize and have fun with friends. NAU organizes school trips to various interesting places. In those trips, students have fun and also learn. These recreational activities affect our academic success. A relaxed body and mind will definitely work better than a an over-worked and stressful one.

Since we have a small and diverse student population, we all know each other. This means you will never be alone because there will always be someone there for you. Sometimes, there is nothing better than a friend to have with you.. Having friends helps you relax. Secondly, North American University has several student clubs. For example, our soccer club is highly active for both boys and girls. Also, we have many other clubs such as, film club, anime club, and journalism club. These clubs are not only fun but they are organizations which give you social responsibilities to maintain. Another way to socialize at NAU is to go on school trips and participate in student events. You can see interesting places such as the Natural Science and History Museum or NASA. These trips provide students a general knowledge and percipience about science, culture and history and are fun and relaxing. Also, school festivals are a good way to entertain in a friendly and safe zone. We have Halloween parties in our school as well as other seasonal festivals and also wonderful banquets. In those events, people relax, socialize and have fun with each other.

In brief, North American University values the success of its students and staff but knows that non-stop working is not always success. NAU organizers knows that it is important to have fun and get relaxed in order to be successful. With scheduled events, festivals, trips and many other social activities, North American University guarantees a successful education that every student can enjoy.





# **NAU OLYMPICS**

## **2014**

### **Olympics Cande**

### **Vargas Atical**

### **for Spring 2014**

### **Edition**

During March 24th – March 28th, The NAU OLYMPICS took place. The Hispanic Leadership Club and The Students Athletic Association presented this activity. The Olympic Games consisted of basketball, volleyball, team challenges, soccer and darts. This was the first annual sport competition at NAU. Many students joined with great excitement.

The NAU Olympics brought a great competition experience all of its competitors. Most of these activities were composed of 6 team members. They were able to improve their self-esteem, develop friendships, and gain an understanding of each other's capabilities through a spirit of equality and team unity.

Indeed, the main purpose of the NAU Olympics was to unify the sports in our school and to dramatically increase inclusion between students by helping us be more unified as a community. At the same time, sports provide valuable opportunities to individuals who are not presently involved with special events or other sports programs at NAU. Some opportunities can be making new friends and create a lifelong friendship with them.

# Volleyball Club

by Amyra Farr



Volleyball is my way of life. It is my way to calm down after a hard day at school. It's mine. Mine to escape the stress of life, the stress of school, the stress of family; just to escape. It's mine to take out my aggression on the world, to be loud and aggressive. When I play volleyball, I totally forget all my problems and focus on nothing but volleyball and the intensity of the game. It's like some people with their music. When they listen to it, they forget all the problems of the world.

Like any other sport, volleyball can be stressful. As tournaments and games approach we work to get all the practice in that we can. But this is a good kind of stress; the kind of stress I am happy to have. The kind of stress that pushes me to work harder in order to get good at what I love. It pushes me to keep on trying so that I can get everything right. It's all about will power and the absolute want to get better. I have learned that you can't get better overnight; you need to devote most of your time and energy and try to get better to really love the sport. .







# Go Stallions!

by Aldair Baranda

## The Beginning of **NAU** Stallions Soccer Team

Spring 2014 was the most successful semesters for the development of the North American University (NAU) Men's Soccer Team. One of the most remarkable accomplishments was the purchase of 17 new uniforms, which included new jerseys, shorts, and socks. This accomplishment definitely will unite the team under same colors during each future soccer match. The principal colors of the uniforms are navy and white with the North American University emblem on the left chest. Another accomplishment was the purchase of new soccer balls and training equipment. In addition to that, the official roster of the team was made for the Spring 2014. This selection of 18 players for the first team was not an easy task because of the talent of many NAU students. On April 23, 2014, the long-awaited friendly soccer match was played against West Houston Youth Advocate Soccer Club. This match took place at George Bush Park at 7:30 pm. Even though the Stallions were defeated 3 – 0, the functioning of the team was outstanding. The good news was that all 18 players had the opportunity to play this historic match and proudly represent, North American University. It is important to mention that all of these accomplishments were possible with the effort and dedication of fellow NAU students Nimet Gorur, Candelaria Baranda, Amyra Farr, Aldair Baranda, Alberto Ramos, and Luis Gallegos and with the cooperation and support of Dean of Students - Dr. Osman Kanliouglu - and Student Services.



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