

# TAMIU marks the beginning of academic year

BY DIANA DE LA GARZA  
Times staff writer

Kicking off a new semester, faculty, students and staff of Texas A&M International University gathered for the fall 2002 convocation Thursday.

Present were Bishop James Tamayo and Senator Judith Zaffirini.

"Today we gather to celebrate an ancient rite, a convocation, a calling together, since the middle ages, a familiar means of marking the beginning of an academic year," TAMIU President Ray Keck said. "For American universities and for us, this day is one to begin together, as a community, the privilege of working and studying together."

Amid the large crowd present for the ceremony, Keck noted some of the university's newest additions.

"The Western Hemispheric Trade Center and the Fine Arts Center all open their spaces to us within two years," Keck said. "Within a few weeks, we will begin construction on the Memorial Garden to be located between the Student Center and Kinesiology buildings. And we should break ground early next year for the science building."

The additions of the new buildings, Keck said, are all part of what being a university is all about.

"All this febrile activity—designing, clearing, building—becomes in a universi-

ty, a physical manifestation of our most essential charge," Keck said. "For at a university, we are here to examine what we are, as individuals and as part of the human family, and to design, to construct, and to build the lifeline and the lives we wish to pursue."

During the convocation, Roberto Hereida was named the faculty scholar of the year.

Hereida has served as assistant professor in the psychology and sociology department since 1998. He holds a Ph.D. in experimental psychology from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Also during the convocation, Laura Elena May was selected as the Judith

Zaffirini Student Recipient while Susan Baker was selected as the Faculty Zaffirini Medal recipient.

May is a sophomore psychology major. She transferred to TAMIU from the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico.

Married and the mother of three children, May mentors troubled and economically disadvantaged families through her volunteer work for the Texas Workforce Commission and Holding Institute.

Baker is an associate professor and director of the Dr. F.M. Canseco School of Nursing. She holds her Ph.D. in preventive medicine and community health from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston.

The Zaffirini Medal recognizes scholarship and leadership.

Following the convocation, hundreds of students participated in the first ever TAMIU pep-rally as they rallied for today's game against the wildcats from Wiley College.

In a gymnasium filled with music, dance and entertainment, students, faculty and staff both celebrated the kick off of the university's athletic program and rallied the players for today's game.

"I am so excited about this," Keck said. "Our university really needed this"

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Times staff photo by GUILLERMO SOSA

**TOP SCHOLAR:** Roberto Hereida, center, is recognized as the University Scholar of the Year. Hereida is flanked by Joe Garcia, left, and Bishop James Tamayo.