UTEP PhD Student Awarded Google HSF Scholarship

Competing against students from all around the U.S., including Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and Guam, PhD Electrical and Computer Engineering student, Salvador Melendez, was one of the few who got awarded the $10,000 Google Hispanic Scholarship Fund (HSF) Scholarship, which will be used for his studies on the Fall 2013.

The Google HSF Scholarship Program awards funds to students studying computer science or computer engineering that are juniors or seniors in college, or pursuing a Master’s or PhD degree. Selected scholars are invited to an all-expenses paid trip to New York City on the week of July 17-20 for a Google Scholars Retreat.

“Besides the award, I’m happy to be receiving this scholarship because it is an excellent opportunity to meet great people during the 2013 Google Scholar’s Retreat at New York this summer,” Melendez said.

Not only will scholars have the opportunity to network with one another, meet Googlers, and attend tech talks and developmental workshops at the NYC Google office; but they will also participate in the very first Scholar’s Retreat edition of 24HoursOfGood, which is a ‘hackathon’ in partnership with non-profit organizations in the New York region.

According to Melendez, scholars will be grouped in teams of 4 and be paired with a non-profit organization that works on education and STEM initiatives to make progress against a technical problem that is mission critical to their organization’s success.

“Salvador is a very talented individual and his dream is to some day work as a researcher for Google in Silicon Valley,” Michael McGarry PhD., said. “This scholarship and scholarly retreat opportunity at Google are a strong first step in the direction toward his dream. I am very proud of him and am happy that he is working in my research group here at UTEP.”

Melendez will not only be attending the poster session, which is an event that showcases scholar’s current or past work or research project, but will also be presenting his current research project done at UTEP.

“My research deals with Wireless Video Surveillance Networks, where we’re focusing in minimizing the average retransmission delay and the average energy consumption by using intermediate nodes as caching routers,” Melendez said.
This error recovery mechanism is called Automatic Repeat request (ARQ) using caching or packets at routers.

“Specifically, Salvador is validating an analytical model we have developed that yields the optimal solution for the placement of caching routers,” McGarry said. “His validation uses a set of physical experiments that include communicating nodes and routers implemented with single board computers called PandaBoards.”

Melendez has used the research startup package given to McGarry by the College of Engineering to fund the purchase of the equipment required for this project.

“The UTEP CoE has not only provided support on the research but has also done a fabulous job at announcing scholarship opportunities for students,” McGarry said. “Salvador became aware of the Google scholarship from an email he received from UTEP CoE administrators.”

According to Melendez, this achievement is the product of the effort of his professors, family and friends that have helped him throughout his career.

“I want to give special thanks to my advisors Michael McGarry PhD., Joseph Pierluissi PhD., and Patricia Nava PhD,” Melendez said. “Not to mention HSF, Google and UTEP for this opportunity.”

**About UTEP College of Engineering**

The College of Engineering is a national leader in engineering education and a leading producer of doctoral, masters and baccalaureate degree Hispanic engineers. The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) is the second oldest academic institution of The University of Texas System. Washington Monthly ranks UTEP as No. 12 in the nation in its annual College Guide and Rankings. The magazine’s rankings were based on a combination of social mobility, research production, commitment to service and cost-effectiveness of degree completion. For more information visit engineering.utep.edu