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## Sulphur Springs, Eustace students graduate with honors

By Mary Lou Hazal, A&M-Commerce News  
Sep 3, 2008

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COMMERCE, Texas - This fall Texas A&M University-Commerce honors graduates Tasia Barrett of Sulphur Springs and Sarah Rodriguez of Eustace will begin graduate work.

Barrett, who graduated with a Bachelor of Science with Highest Honors at Summer Commencement on Aug. 9, will work on a master's in the school psychology program at A&M-Commerce. Her career goal is to become a school psychologist.

Rodriguez, of Eustace, who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with Highest Honors also at Summer Commencement, will enroll at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. The Gates Millennium Scholarship recipient will study higher education administration with the goal of becoming dean of students at a college.

At a luncheon held to honor the two graduates and attended by the students and their families, A&M-Commerce President Dan Jones said, "You should be very proud of what you have accomplished."

"This is a great celebration of academic achievement," Jones said. "Your achievement is a reflection of academic excellence of this university."

The university president said the Commencement ceremony is the beginning of the next phase of a graduate's life. He encouraged the students to consider not only all they have learned in the last four

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years, but "also how you have transformed yourself as a person."

To graduate with honors at A&M-Commerce, a student must complete an honors thesis and earn a grade point average of 3.25 or higher.

Barrett's honors thesis was on "Metacomprehension of Text: Does Testing Enhance Predictive Accuracy?" Her thesis adviser was Dr. Benton Pierce, a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and Special Education.

Rodriguez researched "The Influence of an Honors College Experience on First-Year Undergraduate Students." Dr. Mark Reid, a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, served as thesis adviser for Rodriguez.

"Dr. Pierce was a great encourager and motivator," Barrett said.

"Tasia's talent and dedication set her at the top of students I have to work with," Pierce said.

Rodriguez, an English and Spanish major who spent a semester studying at the University of Granada in Spain as a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation scholarship winner, said that Reid kept her on schedule in working on her thesis.

"Sarah did not know about qualitative research and her honors thesis was wonderful. You set the bar very high," Reid said.

Barrett, who graduated Summa Cum Laude with a 4.0 GPA and is a member of Alpha Chi Honor Society, is the daughter of Gene and Carolyn Barrett. Her grandparents are Nell Tanton and the late Ned Tanton of Sulphur Springs.

Rodriguez is a member of Alpha Chi and president of Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society. Her parents are Donna Woodard of Eustace and Gilbert Rodriguez of Aurora, Colo. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a grade point average between 3.70 and 3.89.

At Summer Commencement, 373 students received degrees, including 15 who were awarded doctoral degrees.



Speaking was Dr. Michael D. McKinney, chancellor of The Texas A&M University System.



**HIGHEST HONORS GRAD** -- Tasia Barrett of Sulphur Springs graduated with a Bachelor of Science with Highest Honors from Texas A&M University-Commerce at Summer Commencement Aug. 9. Honors graduates were recognized at a luncheon on Aug. 8. At right is A&M-Commerce President Dan Jones. At left is Dr. Benton Pierce, a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and Special Education, who served as Pierce's honors thesis adviser. (A&M-Commerce photo/Shelly Cervantes)





SUMMER HONORS GRADUATE -- Sarah Rodriguez of Eustace graduated with a Bachelor of Science with Highest Honors from Texas A&M University-Commerce at Summer Commencement Aug. 9. At right is A&M-Commerce President Dan Jones. At left is Dr. Mark Reid, a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, who served as the student's honors thesis adviser. (A&M-Commerce photo/Shelly Cervantes)

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