



For immediate release

## UTB/TSC commemorates final steel beam for research building

**BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS – DECEMBER 15, 2009** – Bianca Dotson said she sometimes gets stares from curious students as she walks through the halls carrying small experimental animals as part of the neuroscience research she takes part in.

The 25-year-old junior biology major and student assistant researcher in the College of Science, Mathematics and Technology at The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College said she looks forward to the organization, efficiency and space that will be in the Science and Technology Learning Center when it opens in March 2011. Construction began on the building in April.

"We are going to have more room, so that is going to be a great help," said Dotson of Oak Harbor, Wash. and Brownsville. "We are proud of our university to expand in research."

The campus community, building construction workers and representatives from The University of Texas System celebrated the research and education structure's final beam with a "topping out" ceremony on **Tuesday, Dec. 15**. Attendees signed a white beam bearing an orange scorpion logo that will be used in a walkway roof structure connecting the center's two buildings together. Due to inclement weather, the beam will be lifted at a later date.



"You are not only placing your signature there, but your handprint," said Rene Capistran, vice president of the South Texas region for SpawGlass of Austin, Harlingen, Houston and San Antonio, the contractor in charge of the construction project. "Think about today and future generations."

The building is located behind the Life and Health Science Building. The structure will have four classrooms, a science research laboratory wing housing 12 laboratories, three technology labs, eight faculty research facilities, 12 science research facilities and an outreach space. The third floor will be the campus emergency response center used for natural and manmade disasters.

The building will enhance the \$6 million in external research money flowing into the campus each year. Faculty and students will do competitive research to find solutions to major health issues such as diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, cancer and heart disease.

"The research will lead to a better and more productive and healthy life," said Dr. Luis Colom, the University's vice president for Research. "We can meet the future in health related issues."

Funding for the building comes from a 2004 local bond referendum and a Texas tuition revenue bond issued by the state Legislature.

Texas District 27 Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr., D-Brownsville, was one of the key supporters of getting the University the funding needed to make the building a reality.

"It's important for us to come together to acknowledge where we have been, where we are and most important, where we are going and why we are doing this," he said. "This is for the care of our children who are obese and overweight. They suffer from cardiovascular problems, diabetes, cancer, just so many different things we have to conquer on a daily basis."

For additional information on campus construction projects, go to [http://blue.utb.edu/vppa/Bond\\_home.html](http://blue.utb.edu/vppa/Bond_home.html).